The NICE Programme

Your Roadmap to Starting Virtual Exchange

The Network for Intercultural Competence to Facilitate Entrepreneurship

Foreword

I was delighted to be asked to write this foreword to the NICE Programme handbook as the resources that have been developed to support this programme are comprehensive and timely. The Covid-19 health crisis has necessitated a large-scale re-think of teaching approaches across the global education sector. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have had to adapt quickly and at scale to provide emergency remote teaching in what has become known as the online pivot and are now re-thinking their pedagogical models beyond the pivot adopting online, blended or hybrid approaches for the 2020-21 academic year.

Many universities have experience of providing online and distance programmes including the University of Edinburgh where I'm based. This expertise has been useful as there is a good understanding of online pedagogy and the support required to engage students in the digital learning environment. The NICE Programme is a welcome addition to the resources available for both university staff and students as they adapt to the changing educational landscape.

The NICE Programme has collaborative and innovative practices at its core, with a framework for facilitating teamwork online which will be incredibly useful to help facilitators provide appropriate support for programme participants during their studies. This will enable students to develop a skill set of Intercultural Competencies that will be vital as they adapt to evolving working practices which are changing rapidly in response to Covid-19. NICE Programme participants will be able to respond creatively and innovatively to the global challenges that graduates will encounter in their working lives.

The goals embedded in this programme are reflected in the flexibility of the design offering opportunities to students who would otherwise not have experienced the benefits of an international exchange programme due to personal circumstances. The virtual exchange aspect of this programme will be attractive to many students and other stakeholders particularly during this time of uncertainty and restricted travel.

Celeste McLaughlin
Head of Academic Development for Digital Education
The University of Edinburgh

Foreword

I have heard about and engaged with the NICE project with multiple hats on. First of all as an educator at the University of Padova, one of the partners of the NICE project, with our students taking part in this project and discussing their experience and progress through the modules as the COVID-19 pandemic was erupting. I also engaged as a researcher of Virtual Exchange working on the monitoring and evaluation of the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange project, since the second iteration of the NICE modules came under the E+VE umbrella, and some of the E+VE facilitators joined the NICE team. The facilitators appreciated the innovative dimension of this project which brought challenge-based learning and entrepreneurship education to virtual exchange. Finally, as chair of the Education Innovation working group of the Coimbra Group, a network of European Universities I have seen how the NICE project has been able to put into practice multilateral university collaboration in the development and implementation of this blended mobility project which has successfully brought together students and staff from multiple universities.

As the authors of this handbook point out, this type of project is of particular value to students who, for a multiplicity of reasons, may not be able to engage in mobility programmes. The relevance of this aspect of the project was highlighted by the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic for which most universities were completely unprepared. Although the NICE project was affected, in that the summer school planned for 2020 could not take place, the project was still able to meet its aims. The participants I spoke to strongly valued how it had equipped them to cope with the sudden transition to remote study, as they had experience of online learning and collaboration. They had already developed a small online community with their teams with whom many shared their experiences, feelings and unfolding understandings of the pandemic and how to live and cope with it.

As many have stated in recent months, COVID-19 has highlighted the need for educational projects which support global collaboration embedded in values of mutual learning and reciprocity rather than domination and exploitation. However there is often an assumption that such projects will organically emerge, all that is needed is an internet connection, content and putting students in touch. What this guide shows is the complexity of multilateral online and blended educational projects, the extensive planning and

intentional pedagogic design as well as creativity that such a project requires. There are many components to the NICE project that contribute to the quality of the participants' learning experience: the engagement with global challenges, the theoretical frameworks that participants are introduced to in the Online Modules, the activities they participate in individually and with their groups, the support of facilitators in the group process and the guided reflection. Yet as the authors point out, the framework and outline are there, and can stay the same, but as in all virtual exchanges the outcomes and the conversations will vary, for each individual and for each group. This is partly because virtual exchange is a relational mode of learning, the outcomes of which do not depend on the contents, or on the individual alone but on the group, the facilitators and the process of learning and collaborating together. And it is through projects such as this that young people learn to understand what co-dependency and collective learning really mean.

Francesca Helm

Assistant Professor, University of Padova
Chair, Working Group in Education Innovation
in the Coimbra Group of Universities

Declaration

This publication is a part of the Network for Intercultural Competence to facilitate Entrepreneurship (NICE) Project, an Erasmus+ KA203 Strategic Partnership project funded by the European Commission for the period 2017-2020.

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336.

www.nice-eu.org/about (hyperlink)

Partner Institutions

The University of Edinburgh. University of Amsterdam. University of Goettingen. Lund University. Alexandru Ioan Cuza University. University of Padova. University of Salamanca. University College Dublin.

For any questions or comments regarding this publication, please feel free to send an e-mail to goabroadprojects@ed.ac.uk (hyperlink)

Executive Summary

The Network for Intercultural Competence to facilitate Entrepreneurship (NICE) Programme is an international, blended exchange programme. NICE responds to a growing need for working professionals to engage with global audiences, especially in a virtual environment. The programme is designed specifically to enhance students' employability by developing intercultural competencies and entrepreneurial skills, applying them to address global and societal challenges, while collaborating virtually as transnational teams.

This handbook offers strategy, procedure, and resources for enacting the NICE Programme. The handbook is presented in two companion documents: a summative print text, and an interactive virtual text.

The print text offers an overview of key information and is a practical introduction to the NICE Programme. The virtual text expands on this introduction and is embedded with links that connect readers to supplementary Resources Packs. Resource Packs include multimedia, ready-to-use reference materials crucial for starting your own programme and are indicated by mention of hyperlink. This document is a Plain Text version of the print text. Full Resource Packs are available via the virtual text on www.nice-eu.org/outputs (hyperlink).

Content of the handbook includes a description of the Project Background which presents the scope of the NICE Programme, its seminal features, including target stakeholders and key concepts. Thereafter follow 6 parts:

Part One: NICE Programme Fundamentals details the first steps for starting your programme. It takes you through the necessary components of blended learning, and what partners are required to start the development process.

Part 2: Virtual Learning informs about the virtual component of NICE blended learning. Course content, student team development, and the virtual platform requirements for engaging students throughout the modules are explained.

Part 3: Face-To-Face Learning details the physical component of NICE blended learning – an international summer school. How to plan and enact the NICE Summer School from the perspectives of the host and sending institutions is described. In addition, the experience from the NICE Virtual Student

Conference is presented. The virtual conference framework is suggested as an alternative to the physical summer school in the event travel is not feasible.

Part 4: Engagement, Impact, and Dissemination offers suggestions for encouraging student and stakeholder engagement at all stages of programme development, including promotional materials, cross-institution partnerships, and measuring impact.

Part 5: Additional Resources combines resources from across all sections, providing an overview of what supplemental materials are available in the virtual handbook.

Part 6: Appendix contains a glossary and contact information for members of the NICE Programme for any follow up queries.

We hope you will find the information provided in this handbook useful, and that it will inspire more blended, international exchange programmes that consider the skills needed for the future.

Table of Contents

Contents

Scope of the Work

The Network for Intercultural Competence to facilitate Entrepreneurship (NICE) Programme is an Erasmus+ KA203 Strategic Partnership. KA (Key Actions) refers to projects and activities funded under the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission. The NICE Programme received funding for the period 2017-2020.

Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education (KA203) enable university development of collaborative projects with partner organisations across Europe. These projects emphasise fostering relationships, cooperating to develop shared solutions to problems, exchanging skills and expertise, and creating new educational and learner support practices.

Collaborating participants use funding support to improve their provision for students. These improvements are accomplished through innovative practices, and they are designed to increase the positive impact of European activities and ensure benefits for the students and organisations involved in the projects.

The NICE Programme meets funding objectives through uniquely innovative outputs, including:

- an online course on Intercultural Competence (IC) and Entrepreneurship (ENT) drawing from academic theory with experiential learning components
- an open-source, plug-and-play, interactive digital platform to host the programme
- a framework on how to facilitate transnational teamwork online
- a curriculum model to deliver an in-person summer school that builds upon the virtual resources
- the present implementation handbook to guide those interested in replicating the NICE Programme in their own learning environment.

A NICE Introduction

Now, more than ever, we are living in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent global society. The dynamics of both Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the labour market reflect this globalisation. As described by the British Council, "employers are under strong pressure to recruit employees who are not only technically proficient, but also culturally astute and able to thrive in a global work environment" (Culture at Work, 2014).

It is imperative that students, graduates, and staff are equipped with Intercultural Competencies (IC). This includes the confidence and skills to work in diverse international settings – virtual formats, in particular. Further, horizontal skills such as leadership and entrepreneurship (ENT) are crucial characteristics for success in the globalised labour market.

Developing these crucial competencies is not easy. The structures of culture and communication that influence our behaviours are complex, and we do not typically dedicate formal opportunities to understanding them before we are expected to put them into practice.

In response, the NICE Programme creates a blended exchange system that ensures students and staff develop the skills:

1. to identify how these structures influence their own lives
2. and consequently, how to work with people from other cultures in a positive and productive manner.

The objectives of the NICE Programme call for participants to develop this robust, transversal skill set, improving their employability after graduation in a fast-evolving, international workforce.

Blue Sky Thinking

What does your blended learning programme look like in an ideal world? You can do anything! Imagine that challenges related to resources, funding, and time do not exist. What would you do if you could do it all?

Blue Sky Thinking is the practice of generating new ideas without imposing limits on a brainstorming session. This method of thinking was fundamental to developing the NICE Programme. Encouraging student participants to practice Blue Sky Thinking further contributes to engaging student participants throughout the learning process and provides a novel critical thinking skill for day-to-day life outside of the programme.

When starting a project, it is often natural to first identify limitations and then build an idea that fits within these parameters. In doing so, however, we limit our possible outcomes. By encouraging complete creativity Blue Sky Thinking moves us beyond restrictions towards novel solutions.

There is no set way to practice Blue Sky Thinking. The important part is to be creative and confident! According to Blue Sky Thinking, every proposal (including the ridiculous!) is comprised of smaller ideas, concepts, or thoughts that, when broken down or combined, become a solution. Using "out of the box" ideas helps us discover something that is both feasible and innovative.

When we brainstormed about the NICE Programme, we considered the number of students that go without international experiences each year. Many students in higher education are excluded from traditional international exchanges due to caring responsibilities at home, the high costs of going abroad for an exchange, and/ or accessibility obstacles related to Disability, while some students simply do not consider exchange.

We asked: why must options for an international experience be limited for certain groups of students? How can we confront the obstacles preventing students from participating in exchange programmes? Even further, how can we build an exchange experience that prepares these students for entering a challenging job search and diverse workplace after graduation?

The following goals developed:

- To encourage and support students to learn from their peers and really take ownership of their learning

- To create a platform for students to build the skills that they might not otherwise build in their classrooms
- To empower students to learn about themselves, how they think, and how that impacts their conversations at work
- To help students understand what being an entrepreneur means, even when you're not running a business
- To provide traditionally excluded students with an accessible option to see a new place and meet new people
- To give students an opportunity to talk about something that is important to them in the world today, we wanted them to feel as though their voice is worth being heard
- To attract the students who are interested in exchange, but believe they cannot 'go away'

We created a transferrable programme to meet these goals. NICE is flexible enough that students in high school could benefit, or young people in community centres, or senior citizens who are looking for greater connectivity. We wanted to ensure that the programme we built was adaptable, but focused, so it could be applicable for varied populations. The framework and outline would stay the same, while the outcomes and the conversations would vary.

Throughout their NICE learning experience, it is important for students to continue this fundamental practice of Blue Sky Thinking. As participants progress, they work in international teams to devise innovative solutions to Global Challenges and build on their entrepreneurial skillset. Remaining open to all the possibilities contributes to student efficacy and success throughout this process. It can be overwhelming and disheartening to be part of a small team tackling big challenges, but by encouraging students to think outside of the box, assess all options, and understand that no idea is a bad idea, they can effectively collaborate in search of possible solutions.

Student-Centred, Shared Stakeholders

While the student educational experience is the core of the NICE Programme, developing a robust system of virtual, intercultural, and entrepreneurial exchange has positive implications well beyond the classroom – or chatroom!

The target stakeholders of the NICE Programme can be categorised into the following groups: students, academic and professional staff, educational organisations, and policymakers.

Students: The first target group of the NICE Programme are students at the Consortium institutions. Specifically, students who would benefit from participating in a programme focused on virtual exchange, with a shorter physical exchange component. The blended format offers an exchange opportunity that is accessible for a wide range of students historically excluded from participating in traditional study abroad or exchange opportunities.

Examples:

Jon cares full time for his daughter and therefore cannot go on physical exchange. Virtual international exchange through NICE is the perfect solution.

Ashley wants to learn intercultural competence but has anxiety and does not want to go abroad for a year. Virtual exchange with a weeklong summer school are the perfect alternative.

Claire is a widening participation student who wants international experience but cannot cover study abroad costs. NICE provides an affordable opportunity to develop this experience.

Academic and Professional Staff: The second target group is academic and professional staff (within and outside of the NICE Consortium) who wish to help their students develop knowledge and skills in Intercultural Competence, Entrepreneurship, and teamwork. These stakeholders include Facilitators, Tutors, and project management staff. It also includes university senior leaders globally who wish to implement blended learning programmes. All NICE outputs and resources created during the programme period will be published as Open Educational Resources.

Examples:

Jamie is a facilitator and encourages students to work together to find a solution to a global challenge. This develops skills like navigating group dynamics and motivating a team.

Ian is a NICE SLICC tutor and challenges students to specify their learning outcomes. He helps them reflect on their virtual learning experience with an international team. This develops his knowledge of experiential learning methods.

Cyril is project management staff within the NICE Consortium who liaises with partners to ensure intellectual outputs are met. She supports NICE as a way to pilot virtual exchange to expand on the pros, and identify opportunities.

Olga is a university senior leader wanting to implement blended learning programmes for their diverse student body. She is interested in NICE to teach students intercultural competence in a virtual environment.

Educational Organisations: The NICE Consortium also anticipates interest from vocational training institutes, professional development providers, and lifelong learning organisations who wish to engage with innovative teaching methods for distance learners.

Examples:

"Tomorrow's People," a professional development provider, would be interested in NICE to provide intercultural competence training to employees in a virtual environment for its clients.

"The Knowledge Foundation," a vocational training institute, would be interested in NICE to teach entrepreneurship and teamwork to their international online student base.

"West Phoenix University" would be interested in NICE to introduce virtual exchanges to the university. The NICE SLICC is an effective way to familiarise students with experiential and reflective learning methods.

Policymakers: Another target group for the programme is policymakers in Europe and further afield, as the NICE Programme evidences the benefits of funding blended learning initiatives and embedding them in the curriculum. The NICE Programme presents a rewarding and dynamic way to introduce

virtual exchange in policy decisions. Policymakers would be interested in witnessing how virtual international exchange improves students' job prospects, enhances teaching practise, and culturally enriches the university community.

Key Concepts

The NICE Programme utilises terms that have varied definitions according to language, location, and field of study. Fundamental concepts are defined below to assist you as you discover more about NICE and consider developing your own programme. Additional terms and definitions can be found in the Glossary.

- Employability
- Intercultural Competencies (IC)
- Entrepreneurial Skills (ENT)
- Reflective Learning
- Experiential Learning
- Global Challenges
- NICE Global Challenges

Employability

Employability is understood as the relative chance of finding and maintaining different kinds of employment. Many aspects of the NICE Programme include actions identified by the EU Europe 2020 Strategy to promote youth employability, improve skills employers look for, promote opportunities abroad, and encourage entrepreneurship. Moreover, Intercultural Competencies and virtual collaboration (working in virtual teams) were identified among the 10 skills needed for the future labour market in the Future of Work study (Institute for the Future, 2011).

Intercultural Competencies (IC)

The globalisation of the labour market is creating a need for employees that have intercultural competencies and are confident and able to work in an international setting. The structures of culture and communication that influence our behaviours are complex. The NICE Programme is constructed so students develop skills to identify how these structures influence their own lives and, consequently, how to work with people from other cultures in a positive and productive manner.

For this reason, the intercultural content has a strong emphasis on communication and collaboration in a transnational and virtual context.

The current need for online education is demanding higher education institutions offer high quality and diverse virtual opportunities for students. This need is not limited to higher education. As remote working is a growing reality, digital competence and virtual collaboration are key for employees. Virtual Collaboration uses technology to connect people to communicate, share ideas and work together. The NICE Programme aims to help students from different cultures learn to use shared digital workspaces and practice how to work effectively in a virtual team, which is essential in the current digital age.

The NICE Programme created an innovative learning technology platform to facilitate virtual mobility and collaboration. The NICE modules require students to use a multitude of virtual tools to work in virtual teams and to find a solution to a real-life Global Challenge.

Entrepreneurial Skills (ENT)

One of the objectives of the European Commission is to encourage people to become entrepreneurs. By supporting students to further develop their entrepreneurial skills, the NICE Programme is helping to shape creative, innovative risk-takers who can plan and manage projects to achieve success.

For this reason, the entrepreneurial content has a clear focus on the development of practical skills for the application of knowledge to a real-life Global Challenge.

Reflective Learning

Through the NICE SLICC (Student-Led, Individually-Created Course), we want students to better understand reflection and to be able to use it in their daily lives.

University is about more than academic disciplines. We want to help students engage in different types of learning and understand the benefits this can bring.

Reflective learning is "the conscious examination of past experiences, thoughts and ways of doing things. Its goal is to surface learning about oneself and the situation, and to bring meaning to it in order to inform the present and the future. It challenges the status quo of practice, thoughts and assumptions and may therefore inform our decisions, actions, attitudes, beliefs and understanding about ourselves." (SLICC Reflection Toolkit)

This kind of learning is a new concept for many students, and one that we wanted to feature as it is uncommon in universities. Reflection can provide a great deal of value in both academic and personal life.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is linked to reflective learning with an added practical step, as it refers to the process of learning through reflecting on doing. The introduction of experiential learning pedagogy is evidenced by NICE's project-based assignment (the Business Model Canvas) accompanied by regular prompts to reflect on each module and capture their reflections. The seamless merging of IC and ENT content into one unified course represents an advance in multidisciplinary studies. NICE showcases

this combination on a brand-new online platform, along with many interactive elements to keep learners engaged and stimulated throughout the NICE journey.

Global Challenges

Throughout the learning experience, students work on real-world problems to address one of the NICE Global Challenges. These Global Challenges are modelled after the European Commission's 7 Societal Challenges in the context of Horizon 2020 policy priorities. To accomplish these objectives, participating students are presented with opportunities to build entrepreneurial and intercultural skills. They do so by working in international teams for the purpose of building an innovative business solution for a Global and Societal Challenge of their choice.

NICE Global Challenges

1. Health, wellbeing, and changing societies
2. The future of food and its origins
3. Secure, clean, and efficient energy
4. Smart, green, and integrated transport
5. Climate action, environment, and resources
6. Inclusive, innovative, and reflective societies
7. Secure societies, protected freedom

Part 1: NICE Programme Fundamentals

"The opportunity for students to develop intercultural as well as entrepreneurial skills by means of a free, online programme is unique. Learning to successfully work together cross-borders in a virtual way is exactly what is needed in this era of health and environmental challenges." -Claudia Van Den Bos

NICE Programme Fundamentals

What does the NICE Programme "look like"? How is it structured, and how do the different components interact? What partners do you need for a NICE programme, and how will the varied partners collaborate? This section identifies the steps taken by the NICE Consortium as a KA203 project and can be used as a guideline for personalising a programme to suit your needs.

1.1 NICE and Blended Learning

NICE is a unique, blended learning programme that combines Virtual Learning and a physical Summer School to fully immerse students in experiential learning. Blended learning refers to the pedagogical practice in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching. In the NICE context, participants engage in virtual learning via 7 Online Modules across 16 weeks, followed by a period of face-to-face teaching at the NICE Summer School (2019 only).

The NICE Programme's blended approach, focus on 21st-century skills, and emphasis on collaborative work, make the programme an innovative and relevant intervention in the current course offering of the European Higher Education sector and transferrable to varied fields.

Virtual Learning: NICE Online Modules (See Part 2)

The online course on Intercultural Competence and Entrepreneurship was designed by the Consortium to integrate both subjects fully into one seamless learning experience. A cohort of students, across levels and disciplines, participate in seven Online Modules as members of intercultural teams according to their preferred global challenge. The Online Modules take the students through the process of working together to develop a solution to that Global Challenge.

NICE students are also invited to earn credit for the course by enrolling in the online NICE Student-Led, Individually-Created Course (SLICC). The NICE SLICC is an independent, reflective learning course designed by the University of Edinburgh. This optional component of NICE creates a virtual space for students to reflect on the skills they are developing as they progress through the Online Modules. The NICE SLICC also creates an avenue for awarding course credit.

Face-To-Face Learning: NICE Summer School (See Part 3)

At the midpoint of the Online Modules, NICE students are invited to apply for an in-person Summer School. The Summer School incorporates interactive sessions with lecturers and entrepreneurs, working in student groups, and an extensive cultural and social programme to foster a sense of community. It is designed to build on the knowledge students acquired from the online programme, as well as provide a chance to apply their newly developed Intercultural Competencies.

The Summer School is hosted by one of the Consortium members on a rolling basis. Participants are assigned new teams and tasked with devising a new solution to a different Global Challenge and ultimately translating their solution into a "business pitch" presentation to a mixed panel of industry experts and academics, who select the winning team.

1.2 Fundamental Elements in Action

There are varied intersecting components that make up the NICE Programme. These components include the project management tasks; 16 weeks of Online Modules on the NICE platform; the optional, concurrent NICE SLICC; and the NICE Summer School.

The NICE Summer School (2019) and NICE Virtual Student Conference (2020) occurred in July after all the teams completed the Online Modules and all the SLICC students submitted their final assessment. The application period for summer programmes may overlap with the Online Modules.

The NICE SLICC takes place at the same time as the Online Modules, with the SLICC students being required to submit three pieces of reflective work to their SLICC Tutor during that period in order to pass.

1.3 Consortium Development

What is a Consortium, why is it necessary?

When starting your exchange programme, a fundamental question is: who will we exchange with? Developing relationships with key partners is a fundamental step. These partnerships determine the parameters for your

programme such as course development, available resources, diversity in student participants, and more!

NICE is a KA203 Strategic Partnership between 8 research-intensive universities located in 8 European countries. The partner institutions form the NICE Consortium and include: The University of Edinburgh, University of Amsterdam, Lund University, University of Padova, University of Salamanca, University College Dublin, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, University of Goettingen.

Each partner contributes a wealth of expertise, skills, interests, and resources to the project. The partners are also members of several international networks, such as Universitas 21 and the Coimbra Group, and build upon established working relationships to strengthen their partnerships and the quality of the project's outputs.

Process and Administration

To establish a NICE Programme, your chosen Consortium will collaborate on various tasks. The following administrative structures are crucial to planning, developing, and implementing the NICE Programme:

1. Transnational Meetings
2. Content Development
3. Multiplier Events
4. Staffing
5. Summer School Logistics

Extended details about these structures are available in the Resource Pack.

1.4 EAC Development

What is an EAC, why is it necessary?

The Evaluation and Advisory Committee (EAC) for NICE was formed at the onset of the project and met at key points throughout the NICE Programme. The remit of the EAC is twofold: to provide guidance and advice to the Consortium as the NICE project progresses, and to act as champions for the project to enhance visibility of NICE in the local community. Both activities are key functions to this type and level of programming.

The EAC is primarily composed of external and well-respected professionals with expertise in relevant project areas. EAC members are nominated by the

Consortium institutions. At key stages of the programme, the EAC evaluates its progression and disseminates project results to their wider networks within and outside of the field of Higher Education. EAC members are also asked to act as champions for NICE, promoting the work of the project within their local area.

The EAC Key Functions are:

1. To provide feedback on the strategic direction of the NICE Programme.
2. To monitor NICE Programme output and activities against regular progress reports provided by the NICE Consortium.
3. To evaluate the work produced by the project:
   a. The Intercultural Competence and Entrepreneurship Online Modules
   b. The NICE Student-Led, Individually-Created Course (SLICC) and associated training programme for academics delivering the course
   c. The NICE Summer School
4. To assess the appropriateness of the technology employed by the project, to ensure that it is suitable and sustainable for the duration of the project and beyond.
5. To evaluate measures taken by the NICE Consortium to ensure that all beneficiary student groups will have appropriate access to project services and benefits during and after implementation regardless of location and circumstances (Widening Participation students, students with disabilities, students of all genders). These measures will be assessed based on student feedback from both NICE participants and applicants.
6. To evaluate the ability and commitment of the NICE Consortium to deliver the project, and to continue providing services beyond the time frame of the project itself.
7. To evaluate the transferability and scalability of the project results for stakeholders and beneficiaries within and outside of the NICE Consortium, and to review financial expenditures when necessary.
8. To review and sign off on an independent external evaluator's audit report on the NICE Programme at the project's end.

Process and Administration

EAC meetings were organised and administered by the University of Edinburgh (UoE). A staff member from the UoE's NICE team attends each meeting to record minutes and ensure that these minutes are circulated to all EAC members and NICE Consortium member teams within a timely manner.

Members of the EAC are required to participate in five separate, hour-long virtual meetings that roughly align with the dates of the NICE transnational meetings (September 2018, February 2019, April 2019, August 2019, August 2020). The NICE Consortium provides the EAC with a two-page Progress Report and agenda one week in advance of meetings that details project progress from the last EAC meeting. Professor James Smith, Vice Principal International at the University of Edinburgh, acts as Chair.

1.5 Reflective Summary

Consider institutional-specific areas of expertise. What specialties does your institution offer? Are there any gaps in course offerings, specialities, or resources a partner institution can fill? Consider opportunities for collaboration. How are you ensuring a diverse group of programme participants and programme supporters?

Part 2: Virtual Learning

"…These modules helped us in both our entrepreneurial skills and our intercultural communication. Different cultures tackle the same problem differently. Early on in our process, this became very obvious as the communication between members of the group started clashing. We were unaware that this was due to the fact that we did not understand where the others were coming from. After our module on interculture communication, we recognized the signs and learned several measures to help overcome this lack of proper intercultural communication. In the end, the NICE Programme gave me a toolkit to work in a virtual environment with people of different cultures. Something that is increasingly important in our globalized world…"

Jorrit Van Bennekom, student from the University of Amsterdam

Virtual Learning

The NICE Programme presents virtual learning as an accessible, innovative way for students to engage in intercultural and entrepreneurial learning as they develop a solution to a real-life global challenge in a transnational team. This section identifies the requirements for enacting such a programme, how it works, and some recommended steps for developing the Virtual Learning component of NICE.

Introduction

The objective of NICE Virtual Learning is to prepare students to live and work in an increasingly globalised world and, by extension, enhance their employability. Course content empowers students with self-efficacy, effective team working and leadership skills, and a sense of global citizenship and belonging. As a standalone programme, NICE Virtual Learning itself is rich and diverse. It combines several components from existing learning pathways such as traditional online courses, autonomous learning groups, and facilitated tutorials, all through international collaboration.

2.1 Virtual Learning Platform

The NICE Virtual Learning Platform was developed by the University of Edinburgh's Interactive Content Services unit according to the specifications provided by the NICE Project Management Group. It is the primary learning resource for the NICE Programme and hosts the programme's 7 Online Modules. The platform records students' comments throughout the course and allows Facilitators to monitor group engagement with the Online Modules. Comments can be discussed directly with students during facilitated sessions or via email.

2.2 Developing Virtual Teams

The Virtual Teams consist of university students from across Europe and are the primary medium for intercultural exchange. Team exchanges are fundamental to the reflective learning experience and are how intercultural competency develops. As NICE students work in these teams, they will develop the set of skills embedded in the entrepreneurial and intercultural

competencies, as well as apply and test these skills in a collaborative environment.

Student Application Process

Each partner university organised an application process and selected the NICE student participants from their respective institution. In the applications, students were asked to provide their contact details, consent to a privacy policy, and to select their top three Global Challenge preferences. A uniform application form was used during the first year. The second year, some partners created their own applications that captured the same information.

Group Assignment

Virtual Teams were formed according to students' Global Challenge preference while also avoiding assigning students from the same university in the same group. Diversifying group members is a necessary practice to broaden intercultural exchange. Assigning students to a group where the selected Global Challenge was either their first or second choice gives students ownership over their learning and further motivates student participation. A staff member at the University of Goettingen divided students into teams of five and assigned each team a Global Challenge. Student teams use the Virtual Learning Platform to collaborate, complete the Online Modules, and develop a solution to their Global Challenge. Five students per group allowed for in-depth collaboration while remaining small enough to avoid communication chaos.

Administration going forward was run centrally by the NICE Projects team at the University of Edinburgh. This included introducing student team members to each other, to their Global Challenge (via email), and assigning a Facilitator. The Projects Team encouraged students to create a team group chat using a messaging app and Facilitators were responsible for contacting their groups and scheduling an introductory online session to kick-start the course. The Facilitators were fundamental to encouraging group discussions and monitoring team progress throughout their NICE journey, and are further discussed below.

Facilitators

Staff Facilitators play a key role in the success of each Virtual Team. The Facilitator's primary purpose is to lead sessions at the end of the modules – roughly on a biweekly basis. These sessions allow students to gauge their

progress according to the set milestones and deliverables, as well as the learning objectives of the course. Each module builds on the previous one and acts as a guide for students developing their Global Challenge solution. The facilitated sessions can be moved to accommodate the Facilitator's and students' availability, but a regular day and time are recommended. We encourage students to meet online with their team during the week between facilitated sessions.

Facilitators begin as an active presence during the official facilitated sessions. They lead the discussion during the introductory session and answer questions from students. Facilitators gradually become "hands-off", and student participants take control as the course progresses. Eventually, Facilitators strictly ask questions to stimulate the discussion and ensure that the students have done the preparatory work on the modules.

The Facilitator's role is to support student engagement with the virtual environment, but Facilitators are not expected or required to be experts in Intercultural Competencies, Entrepreneurship, or Global Challenges. The Facilitators are not teachers who impart knowledge, share opinions, or correct students. Instead, Facilitators support a collaborative environment where team members work together with clear objectives (the WHAT) and in alignment with the purpose of the project (the WHY). Facilitators ensure that students are on track with the tasks they need to complete (the WHAT) and that the process stays meaningful for all (the WHY). Facilitators are process leaders who do not contribute to the substance of the discussion (the HOW).

The Facilitator's aim is to contribute to the group process, helping the students to improve the way they communicate, examine, and solve problems, and become self- reflective. To achieve this and to empower the group, Facilitators must remain neutral. A Facilitator's personal expectations can influence how they facilitate an activity. Even a subtle negative reaction by the Facilitator can be hurtful and can make students feel like they said something wrong. This effects how students view the safety of dialogue. Therefore, the Facilitator needs to be able to hear different understandings and accept all the ways participants define their positions, without judgement.

Facilitators are asked to engage with the NICE modules and complete the assignments. In particular, the exercises in Module 2 can help raise awareness of a Facilitator's own preferences in communication styles. Navigating the modules before the students start will help clarify the process at hand.

Considering they do not grade student assignments, Facilitators can be recruited from both academic and professional staff. They are given access to the NICE Virtual Learning Platform that hosts the course and receive training from the project coordinator on how to effectively facilitate teams and support students. We have created a Facilitator Roadmap outlining expectations, explaining the structure of the course, and providing hints and tips to facilitate groups. The Facilitator Roadmap, training presentation, and additional resources for Facilitators are available in the Virtual Learning Resource Pack.

2.3 Online Modules

Modular Content

NICE students will complete seven online modules in Intercultural Competence and Entrepreneurship. These modules are introductory courses that assume students have little to no knowledge in either topic. Content begins with the foundations of intercultural communication and entrepreneurship and becomes more complex with each following module. As they complete one module at a time, students begin to understand how to utilise these concepts in their work both within the modules and as the concepts apply to their Global Challenge. Emphasis is placed on the collaborative work within their virtual teams, participative learning, and reflection. By the time students complete Module 7, they will have a thorough understanding of both concepts, experience communicating with and working in a transnational virtual team, and produce a fully developed Business Model Canvas that outlines their Global Challenge solution.

Each module requires students complete individual work on their own time, meet virtually with their team to complete group work, and attend an online session as a team with their Facilitator to discuss progress and milestones and clarify any misunderstandings. Each team submits the final output (the Business Model Canvas) to their Facilitator at the end of the online programme. To emphasize collaboration and reflection as opposed to traditional assignment-based structure, the Business Model Canvas is not assessed. These modules are listed below, and full descriptions are included in the Virtual Learning Resource Pack.

Module List:

Module 1: Introduction

Module 2: Working in a team

Module 3: Identifying entrepreneurial opportunities

Module 4: Testing ideas

Module 5: Asking for resources

Module 6: Making decisions

Module 7: "Now then…did it work?"

2.4 SLICC

Background

Student-led, Individually-Created Courses (SLICCs) are a framework designed at the University

of Edinburgh to wrap around the summer activities that students find or create themselves in order for them to receive 10 ECTS credit. SLICC students submit an initial proposal, interim report, a final reflection report, and regular blogs that encourage reflection and the development of personal and professional skills.

The NICE SLICC adapted the SLICC framework to suit the NICE online course. Students who wish to participate in the NICE Programme for academic credit enrol in the NICE SLICC and submit the required reports and blogs as a formal reflection on the experience of collaborating with their team throughout the modules. Students auditing the course are not required to complete the SLICC.

SLICC Journey

As a supplemental and optional component of the NICE Programme, the NICE SLICC adds an extra layer of virtual learning to the NICE experience. Unlike the Online Modules – which require groupwork and interpersonal communication – the SLICC involves intrapersonal communication. Students reflect on their individual learning goals. The SLICC journey begins with a student proposing the learning outcomes that they plan to focus on during the NICE Programme. SLICC students are required to blog regularly and collect evidence of their experiential learning throughout the Online Modules, producing an interim

report. The interim report becomes a final report – a formal piece of graded coursework.

SLICC Tutors

Each SLICC student is assigned a SLICC Tutor who provides feedback on the student's proposal and interim report and grades their final reflective report. Unlike Facilitators for the student groups, SLICC Tutors act in a formal academic capacity and as such, are either academic members of staff or PhD students with teaching experience. The average Tutor workload is 4h per student over the course of the SLICC. Students may request extensions if they are encountering issues to complete their assignment on time due to special circumstances, and their Tutor may grant it to them. The project coordinator is responsible for arranging training of the SLICC Tutors. Comprehensive guidelines on SLICC pedagogy, Tutor Training, and student responsibilities are available in the Virtual Learning Resource Pack.

SLICC Platform

The NICE SLICC is housed on the learning journey platform PebblePad – a licensed product that is used by several universities worldwide. PebblePad allows students to access resources, collect evidence of their learning, and submit their reflective report. It also allows Tutors to view those reports and reflective material to provide feedback that is accessible to students within the platform.

2.5 Challenges and Recommendations

We encountered challenges throughout the Virtual Learning experience, as expected for any pilot project. The Consortium developed response plans that we highly recommend to any organisations replicating the NICE Programme. Further advice regarding:

1. Developing an Effective Privacy Policy

2. Scheduling Facilitated Sessions

3. Student Retention and Adapting to Student Dropout

is available in the Virtual Learning Resource Pack.

2.6 Reflective Summary

A Resources Check: What technological, human, and academic resources are available within your institution and, as you develop a Consortium, amongst your partners? Consider plans for staffing the roles of Tutors and Facilitators. Is there a pre-existing Virtual Learning Platform available? Do students have access to a virtual platform for the reflective practices associated with the SLICC?

Part 3: Face-to-Face Learning

"What made the NICE Project special to mea, was how it completely changed my perspective without forcing me into anything. Through the half-year theory in the online course and through practical activities during the summer school in Dublin, we were taught many important [communication] skills. To actually listen and understand. To disagree in a respectful way. To appreciate the cultural differences of our team members and notice how they broaden our horizons and enrich our souls. To overcome stereotypes and really connect with the person we meet. Apart from that, we also learnt, that there are no bad ideas and no unmanageable tasks, but it is all a matter of our imagination and good teamwork. All in all, I find it amazing, how a spontaneous idea of participating in this programme, became a valuable life lesson for me."

Alisa Denisiuk, student from the University of Goettingen

Face-To-Face Learning: The NICE Summer School

The face-to-face component of the NICE Programme is a physical, international Summer School. What is required to facilitate the face-to-face component of a blended learning exchange programme? How can you structure a Summer School, manage student recruitment and applications, and what are the components of the NICE Summer School in action?

3.1 Objectives, Outputs, and Outcomes

The NICE Summer School is a short-term, residential study programme. The Consortium designed the Summer School to build on the conceptual knowledge of Intercultural Competence and Entrepreneurship that students acquire during the NICE Online Modules. The Summer School is an opportunity for face-to-face transnational teamwork. The focus is innovative, interactive teaching methods that enhance the student experience and maximise the acquisition of collaborative intercultural skills. In line with the overall goals of the NICE Programme, the Summer School continues to prepare student participants for the globalised job marketplace.

Summer School participation is not a requirement for NICE students. In fact, hosting a Summer School is not a requirement to run the NICE Programme! The programme can end after the online modules are finished. However, if your area of interest is a blended exchange – specifically, a physical and virtual learning experience for students – coordinating a physical Summer School is key. As an event, it is valuable and proved to be an attractive part of the programme for student participants.

Summer School content encourages learners to dig deeper into the concepts from the Online Modules through an intensive "fast-track" version of the programme. The interactive programme condenses the virtual experience into 5 full days – from forming new teams to pitching business ideas to a panel of experts, all while students build personal relationships and immerse themselves in a new culture.

3.2 Student Recruitment and Application Process

Each NICE Consortium partner will host and lead in organising the annual Summer School, on a

rolling basis. A subset of the students participating in the virtual course will be able to attend the NICE Summer School. The parameters (budget, venue,

supervisor capacity, and so on) for the NICE Programme determined that 80 students (a maximum of 10 representatives per university) may enrol. Students interested in attending this face-to-face component of the NICE Programme will apply directly to their home university, and then each university will be responsible for selecting the 10 students that will attend.

Ideally, the selection process for Summer School attendees begins once the Online Modules of the exchange programme have been completed. This schedule permits coordinators time to objectively identify those students who have completed the 7 Online Modules as well as verify that these students have satisfied all the Programme requirements.

The differences in academic calendars at Consortium partner institutions may lead to challenges. The application and selection process must be flexible enough to accommodate the requirements of country-specific transparency laws, as, for example, is the case in Italian universities. It is highly recommended recruitment efforts for the Summer School begin when students are halfway through the Online Modules.

In advance of the recruitment process, Consortium partners must finalise the following timeline:

1. The opening and closing dates for students to submit applications to their home university.
2. The period for all partner universities to select their students (comprised between the deadlines from points 1 and 3).
3. The deadline to communicate to the host university the number and personal details of the selected students by the rest of the partner universities.

More detailed information, recommendations, and adaptable materials about the recruiting process are available in the Face-to-Face Learning Resource Pack.

3.3 Summer School Structure

The NICE Summer School is comprised of 4 main components:

1. Academic sessions: Interactive classes on Intercultural and Entrepreneurial themes
2. Student teamwork sessions assisted by a team coach/facilitator
3. Non-academic sessions: Social and cultural activities

4.   Pitch event: Students' business idea presentations

The programme schedule is straightforward and takes into consideration that, in addition to learning new concepts, students are in a new place and need to devote time to exploring the culture and building friendships. The schedule also accounts for group work, as the final pitch presentation is fully driven by each student group.

University College Dublin hosted the first NICE Summer School in July 2019. More than 60 students from over 20 nationalities, studying at 8 universities, participated. The face-to-face Summer School takes place over five days. Days 1 – 4 are dedicated to academic sessions and group work so teams can develop solutions to an assigned Global Challenge. Each team is designated one staff Facilitator to assist preparation for the Pitch Event on the final day, Day 5. Facilitator Training Materials are available in the Face-To-Face Learning Resource Pack).

Academic sessions include two hours of in-class learning focused on entrepreneurship and intercultural competence. This does not mean two hours of lectures. Sessions are a mixture of direct instruction, group work, and learning by doing. Students are introduced to the concepts and then challenged by follow up activities. Students should be presenting to one another, they should have the security to try new things in front of their team and succeed or fail, but also learn from the experience.

Refer to our Summer School Resource Pack for detailed schedules that incorporate examples of these activities and helpful tips for developing your own Summer School!

3.4 Host-Specific Considerations

Coordinating a Summer School requires that the host institution pay specific attention to several areas. Extended host guidelines and suggestions are incorporated in the supplemental Resource Pack.

3.5 Alternatives to Physical Mobility

The second annual NICE Summer School was scheduled to commence July 2020. In response to the worldwide pandemic COVID-19, growing concerns surrounding international travel, and out of an abundance of care and caution for students, staff, and local communities, the NICE Consortium elected to transition to a virtual summer learning experience.

Considering NICE students have participated in a semester-long virtual learning environment, and that the large majority of aspects related to their education had also transitioned to virtual engagement, the NICE Consortium aimed to produce an experience that accomplished the Summer School objectives in an accessible, palatable, and unique way. Students are inundated with technology. Lockdowns and quarantines have created a new dependency on virtual exchange not only in students' academic lives, but their social and personal lives. The Virtual Student Conference builds on student's NICE Online Module experience while remaining flexible and feasible given restraints on time and resources.

The Virtual Student Conference retains several of the key components from the traditional Summer School. The academic sessions are offered as shorter, interactive workshops designed to either deepen students' knowledge of the global challenges and IC/ENT content or to refine their entrepreneurial solutions. Students are also able to participate in team pitches. They present the solutions they have developed in groups and receive feedback on their ideas from staff and other students in the programme. These components can be supplemented with additional facilitated teamwork sessions and (virtual) social sessions.

Producing the traditional Summer School in the format of a Virtual Student Conference accommodated the parameters determined by the Summer School objectives, restrictions for travel, as well as promoting a positive, formative student experience. Compared to the traditional Summer School, the Virtual Student Conference offers key benefits. Eliminating limitations to student numbers caused by accommodation, travel costs, and so on, means that the entire NICE cohort can participate. The virtual format's flexibility also allows students to pick and choose which aspect(s) of the conference they want to attend if they cannot commit to the entire schedule. Similarly, removing these limitations for staff members means a potentially greater number and wider range of colleagues and partners can contribute.

Please refer to the Resource Pack for detailed schedules related to the Virtual Student Conference!

3.6 Reflective Summary

How will participants of your programme engage with NICE beyond the Online Modules? Consider the requirements for the Summer School and the Virtual

Student Conference. What does your desired programme aim to accomplish? Is one format preferable for your goals? How? Why?

Part 4: Engagement, Dissemination, and Impact

"The knowledge that students gain by taking part in the online interactive education program gives them the means to successfully cooperate internationally and to contribute to a better world in their future jobs."

Jan Willem Oosterbroek

Engagement, Dissemination, and Impact

Developing a high quality, successful programme required that, in addition to the virtual and face-to-face learning experiences, the NICE Consortium dedicate time and resources to key support efforts. Personalised recruitment efforts, regular formative and summative assessments of the programme, and formalised dissemination practices contributed to programme development. How will you attract participants and supporters to your programme? Once involved, how will you keep individuals engaged? This section addresses best practices and suggestions for building, maintaining, and sharing your programme.

4.1 Encouraging Student Engagement

The NICE Online Modules and Summer School were designed to be inherently attractive, accessible, and readily applicable for students – including those who typically do not undertake a traditional year-long international experience. Programme flexibility means that students can choose to pursue a totally virtual exchange and participate solely in the Online Modules or continue in a blended learning programme and apply for the Summer School. Students can choose the path that suits their needs!

Marketing the NICE Programme in a way that will recruit such students began with the design of an attractive logo and subsequent launch of the website (www.nice-eu.org). The NICE website hosts general information about the project, along with specific instructions for students who might be interested in getting involved with the programme, eligibility criteria, and a link to the application form.

The University of Edinburgh (UoE) communications team created a Promotional Pack to engage potential applicants across the Consortium. This user-ready pack includes targeted social media Tweets and sponsored Facebook posts, bulk email templates, newsletter articles, and various reminders of application deadlines. Each partner institution was able to adapt the marketing material and tailor it to their own student body.

NICE was advertised to university students via university websites, emails, newsletters, and social media. On campus promotion at UoE, for example, included temporary stalls in university libraries with staff and student volunteers talking about the programme to prospective applicants, and a range of branded postcards that were distributed around university buildings in areas

most frequented by students, such as undergraduate common rooms and student services waiting areas. Flexibility in promotional materials allowed the partner universities to adopt the advertising and communication method(s) that worked best for their institution and student body. Despite the range of advertising materials, a majority (60%) of students from the 2018/19 cycle (as reflected by our survey) heard about the NICE programme through their home university's website.

The inherent attractions of the NICE Programme discussed above and the combination of online and in-person promotion across the partner universities resulted in a high number of applicants for both years of the programme. The total number of applications (from all eight partners) for the 2018/19 cycle was 320.

As students progress through the Online Modules, Facilitators play a crucial role in encouraging and maintaining engagement. As discussed, Facilitators have access to the NICE Virtual Learning Platform and can directly monitor each student's engagement. If intervention is needed, the Facilitator can raise the issue during one of the facilitated sessions or communicate directly with the student(s) by email. Making engagement an important criterion for selecting students to attend the Summer School, with its limited number of places, can also help to incentivise students to fully engage with their team.

Discussing student engagement during the Consortium-wide meetings can help identify and rectify any obstacles in their early stages. It is important to maintain an open line of communication with Facilitators, Tutors, and programme coordinators.

4.2 Partnerships on Campus

Collaborating with individuals and groups throughout your institution will create a diverse community of skills, resources, and ultimately contribute to the success and sustainability of your programme. Working with staff members from other offices within your institution will help you create your own version of the NICE Programme. To effectively develop the NICE Programme, the Consortium members liaised with several different offices throughout their institutions, detailed below.

1. Marketing Office

Coordinating with your marketing office can assist with developing promotional materials and advertising the programme to students and staff. The messaging will generate excitement amongst students to participate in the programme and will help understand the benefits of the programme and how building these skills will help their employability after graduation. Whether this marketing is done through a central marketing team or the team that is running the programme, the Promotional Pack will assist.

The Promotional Pack can also be provided directly to a marketing team and they will be able to implement the posts to encourage both staff and student participation. The Promotional Pack is included in the online Resource Pack.

Careers Department

Considering the NICE Programme is built to help students enhance employability, partnering with the Careers Department is highly recommended. This department is positioned to advise on career guidance provided to students, and how the NICE Programme can complement the career development work already happening on campus. Individual persons within the Careers Department would also be considered excellent Facilitators, should they wish to become more involved. The Careers Department is uniquely positioned to provide a marketing pathway to students as they meet with students regularly and can act as spokespeople for the NICE Programme.

Academic Schools

For institutions intending to utilise the NICE SLICC framework, this is best accomplished in partnership with a School or Faculty that aims to use reflective learning going forward. As credits are awarded to students who complete the NICE SLICC, the School that is going to be supporting the NICE SLICC will need to be able to recognise these credits and have a mechanism for doing so. Alternatively, credits may be awarded strictly for the Online Modules or participation in the Summer School, or not at all.

4.3 Multiplier Events

Definitions and Objectives

Multiplier Events are dedicated opportunities for disseminating the outputs of the NICE Programme. These events target attendees that are not affiliated with any of the Consortium partners as a way to amplify the impact of the

programme. As previously described, the aim of these events is to inform potential stakeholders about the project development, find champions who will support and promote the future of NICE, and perhaps even implement the programme at their own institution.

Organising a Multiplier Event: The University of Amsterdam Perspective

The University of Amsterdam (UvA) hosted one of the NICE Programme's Multiplier Events. This event acted as an opportunity to test ideas and to receive feedback (including criticism, advice, and so on) from experts on Intercultural Competencies and Entrepreneurship.

To organise and facilitate this event, UvA planned the Multiplier Event in conjunction with a pre-existing event on campus – the annual Study Abroad Fair. In addition to the regular Study Abroad Fair audience, we approached several target groups invested in the NICE Programme topics such as start-ups, the Centre of Intercultural Competences, and colleagues from other national educational institutions beyond universities (Colleges of Applied Sciences, community colleges, staff from the Dutch National Agency).

We also collaborated directly with members of the EAC who acted as event presenters and recruited participants from their specialised areas of interest. In line with the digital aspects of the NICE Programme, Consortium members were able to participate and present topics virtually.

To sustain the impact of the event and build relationships with participants, a key factor of the Multiplier Event is maintaining a contact list for participants and providing regular updates about the programme.

Multiplier Event To-Do List:

1. Determine event date
2. Design a budget
3. Compile a guest list of institutions, organizations, and individuals
4. List key persons to forward an invitation
5. Invite internal and external event speakers
6. Create and send an invitation letter (multiple languages)
7. Facilitate reservations for event space, catering, accommodation, and so on
8. Design and publish event programmes, slides, and presentations
9. Create a participant contact list and event evaluation form

10. Disseminate outcomes, evaluation, presentations slides, and so on to all participants

4.4 Measuring Impact

In order to determine what is driving the students toward the NICE Programme, the Consortium carried out a survey on each of the two cohorts of students (namely, the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 cycles). The surveys were used to collect feedback from the students and evaluate the virtual course and the related activities.

A key aspect of the survey was determining the reason students applied for the NICE Programme. According to the respondents from the 2018/2019 cohort, the overwhelming attraction of NICE was the content of the course itself. In the first cohort, 73% of them cited a desire to learn more about entrepreneurship and 66% expressed a wish to improve their intercultural competencies. Beyond that, the Summer School was the most attractive aspect of the programme for applicants, with 41% of survey respondents selecting it as a reason for applying to NICE. This was followed by wanting to participate in a virtual course, an option chosen by 25% of respondents.

Responses varied in the second cohort but did not greatly impact the broad picture. The 2019/2020 cohort responses first cited acquiring intercultural skills (85%), followed by entrepreneurship (64%), participation in the NICE Summer School (45%) and in the virtual course (24%). One can see that the latter two options carried almost the same weight in both cohorts.

A few observations should be made here. First, in answering the question, the students could either choose one of the predefined variants (the four categories mentioned above) or write their own responses. Very few free-text answers were given, and reviewers noted that free-text answers were typically restating the same reasons in a different manner, which confirms the validity of the feedback.

Second, it would be tempting to explain the shift in the preferences of the students from one year to the next by the Covid-19 pandemic, which naturally emphasised the importance of long-distance communication between people, while the appeal of entrepreneurship diminished. However, the students applied to the NICE Programme before the emergence of the pandemic. What remains is the fact that, for both cohorts, most of the students were interested in both aspects covered by the course content.

The third observation is that most of the students who applied to NICE came from various fields of study, few of which were connected to either entrepreneurship or intercultural studies. For the second cohort, the category best represented was from the broader domain of economics, business administration, finance, and accountancy (14%), but less than half of them had direct connections with business or entrepreneurship. The next best represented domains were psychology (11%) and medicine and molecular biology (11%). Data is not available for the first cohort.

Results also confirmed that the Global Challenges were a fundamental motivation for students to participate. Participants across all 8 partner universities were invested in finding solutions for these expansive global issues. Students were creative in both their solutions via the Online Modules and at the Summer School. While they were not expected to come up with viable solutions that could be enacted the next day, participants were given the opportunity to think deeper about these big problems and consider how they could positively contribute. What was their Blue Sky Thinking? If they had no limits, what would they do?

The results of the survey from the first cohort were used to improve the student experience for the second year (and so will be data from the second survey, for the possible subsequent implementations of the project). The core of the questionnaire was focused on the students' satisfaction with the various aspects of the project: application process, the NICE Virtual Learning Platform, course content, facilitation, team communication, the time spent on each course module, and the SLICC. Also, the students were asked to assess their own levels of knowledge on both entrepreneurship and intercultural competence after the completion of the course. Based on such data, important changes were made in the course content, the structure of the NICE platform, and facilitation procedures, but all directions were covered with appropriate adjustments. As a result, the increase in the level of satisfaction of the students was significant from one year to another.

While the end-of-cycle surveys proved very useful, they were not the only way of communicating with the students. To provide a quick response to the various issues, direct contact with the students was provided on several levels. The Edinburgh team, as the project coordinator, was continuously responding to the students' requests and complaints. Also, the project teams in each

partner university acted as intermediaries and addressed the internal problems specific to their institutions.

Nevertheless, the most effective communication channel was represented by the Facilitators. In addition to being most frequently and most regularly in contact with the students, a Facilitator had the advantage of usually coming from another university than the students themselves, which made it far easier to start informal discussions. Also, a Facilitator was not necessarily a specialist in any of the fields of the virtual course, so the conversations could easily blend with other subjects. As a general approach, the students were encouraged by the Facilitators to be confident in their own abilities, to speak their mind and not to avoid any issues, which normalised the communication of conflicts. As a result, many problems were communicated that way. While most were technical details, a variety of subjects were discussed, such as the amount of effort required for completing the modules, the practical value of the Business Model Canvas created by a team, and the relevance of the Global Challenges. In some cases, the Facilitator simply directed the student to the person able to solve their problem; in other cases, answers were provided on the spot. Moreover, some of the comments received through the student surveys were already known, due to this informal communication. Numerous discussions were carried out on the module contents and on the usage of the Virtual Learning Platform, and some of the issues could be fixed on the fly, without having to wait for the end of the cycle.

Communication carried out by the Facilitators led to some conclusions that match the information gathered through the surveys. Overall, the students largely confirmed the validity both of the concept of the NICE virtual course, and of the connection between entrepreneurship and intercultural competence, and that is the reason why the project raised such an interest among them.

4.5 Reflective Summary

Consider what avenues are available to promote fruitful experiences for all stakeholders, as well as programme sustainability, at your institution and across your Consortium. Who will you partner with across your institution? How will you monitor progress? In what ways will you adapt and disseminate your programme?

Part 5: Resource Pack Index

Resource Packs are available to view and download via the Virtual Handbook at www.nice-eu.org/outputs.

Part 1 NICE Programme Fundamentals Resource Pack

- EAC/Consortium Process and Administration (p. 123)

Part 2 Virtual Learning Resource Pack

- NICE Virtual Learning (p. 130)
- NICE Virtual Learning Platform (p. 139)
- Facilitators (p. 141)
- Facilitator Roadmap (p. 143)
- Training Presentation (p. 176)
- Module Descriptions (full descriptions) (p. 191)
- SLICC Pedagogy (p. 194)
- Challenges and Recommendations (p. 198)

Part 3 Face-to-Face Learning Resource Pack

- The Recruiting Process (Summer School) (p. 200)
- Facilitator Training Materials (Summer School) (p. 203)
- Host Guidelines and Suggestions (p. 205)
- Virtual Student Conference (p. 212)

Part 4 Engagement, Dissemination, and Impact Resource Pack

- Promotional Pack (p. 216)

Part 6: Appendix

Glossary

- Blended Learning: the pedagogical practice in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching. In the NICE context, participants engage in virtual learning via 7 Online Modules across 16 weeks, followed by a period of face-to-face teaching at the NICE Summer School (2019 only).
- EAC: External Advisory Committee - provides expert guidance and advice to the NICE consortium regarding the direction and impact of the NICE programme
- ECTS: European Credit Transfer System
- ENT: Entrepreneurship
- Employability: gaining set of skills, knowledge understanding and personal attributes for a person's future employment and career
- EU: European Union
- European Commission: The executive branch of the European Union
- Facilitator: a member of staff (an academic or a professional services staff member) assisting NICE students to work together as they work through the online modules. The facilitator answers questions and signpost students towards further resources and help
- Global Challenge (NICE): In 2015 world leaders agreed to 17 goals for a better world by 2030. These goals are called: The Global Goals for sustainable Development. The NICE project chooses seven of the Global Challenges to work on
- HEI: Higher Education Institution
- IC: Intercultural Competence
- ICT: Information and Communications Technology (the Technical Support)
- Multiplier Event: Formal project event where coordinators disseminate the project by presenting the goals and outcomes to the world
- NICE: Network for Intercultural Competence to facilitate Entrepreneurship
- NICE Consortium: group of eight European Universities that work together to achieve the goals of the NICE project

- Pitch Event (NICE): occurs the final day of the NICE Summer School, student(s) facilitate short presentations to an audience that solutions to a designated
- Global Challenge in the form of a business pitch
- SDG: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- SLICC: Student-Led, Individually-Created Course
- SLICC Tutor: Member of Staff (academic or professional support staff member who guide the students through the SLICC and provide feedback on the Reflective Report.
- Summer School (NICE): a week-long Summer School to experience the online modules in a face-to-face setting

Contact Details

Please refer to the following contact details to follow up with representatives of the NICE Programme partner universities. Feel free to write them if you have questions!

University of Edinburgh

Isabell Majewsky Anderson: Isabell.Majewsky@ed.ac.uk

Anna Creery: Anna.Creery@ed.ac.uk

University of Amsterdam

Willeke Jeeninga: W.F.Jeeninga@uva.nl

Guido De Wilde: G.C.Q.deWilde@uva.nl

University College Dublin

Eve Brosseau: eve.brosseau@ucd.ie

Lindsey Pamlanye: nice@ucd.ie

Georg-August-Universität Goettingen

Alexandra Schreiber: alexandra.schreiber@phil.uni-goettingen.de

Johanna El-Ouardy: johanna.elouardy@uni-goettingen.de

Lund University

Marie Löwegren: marie.lowegren@fek.lu.se

University of Padova

Elisabetta Pavan: elisabetta.pavan.1@unipd.it

Laura Brandolin: laura.brandolin@unipd.it

University of Salamanca

Laura Celaya Irigoyen: celaya@usal.es

Mabel Santa Daría Hernández: mabelsd@usal.es

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi

Vlad Rădulescu: rvlad@info.uaic.ro