



SOCIAL WORK-VIRCAMP CONSORTIUM YEAR REPORT 2016-2017

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION 3

Status of the Vircamp consortium..... 3

 Consortium partners..... 3

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES 4

 Module 1: Social Work in Europe..... 4

 Module 2: Comparative Social Work. Social exclusion and inclusive practices in social work..... 5

 Module 3: Community Work from an International Perspective..... 7

 Overall evaluation of the courses 9

Workshare 10

STAFF INVOLVED 2016 - 2017..... 10

 Consortium Management Group..... 10

 Steering Committee 10

 Teachers and Assessors..... 11

Account 12

Activities..... 12

 Meetings 12

 Dissemination 13

 Website and facebook 13

Future plans 14

INTRODUCTION

SW-VirCamp is a consortium of 5 universities and universities of applied sciences from 5 European countries at present that specialise in offering online courses in the field of social work. We have 1 associated partner from Lund. 2 new partners were interested in joining the consortium this year, Vaasa and Federation University. For the first time a partner from outside of Europe (Australia) showed interest in becoming a partner.

The SW-VirCamp consortium organises three online courses for Bachelor students in Social Work.

- Social Work in Europe (5 ECTS)
- Comparative Social Work (10 ECTS)
- Community Work from an International Perspective (15 ECTS)

For lecturers, there is a possibility to apply for an E-pedagogy course (10 ECTS) to become a trained e-teacher. Teachers in the SW-VirCamp courses have succeeded this course.

In this year report, an overview of the VirCamp activities is presented for the academic year 2016/2017.

First the status of the VirCamp is described with a description of the partners. Main part of this report will present the main activity of VirCamp, namely the educational programmes organised in the past year. For each module information is given about the course, the students, the evaluation and assessment results. At the end of this part, an overall evaluation is presented with points of attention regarding all the modules. To run the VirCamp courses, human and financial resources are necessary. An overview is given about the staff involved, the hours invested in workshare and the account and budget. In addition a brief overview of other activities is presented. We end this year report with the future plans of the consortium.

STATUS OF THE VIRCAMP CONSORTIUM

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Thomas More University College - Geel - Belgium (TM)

Bergen University College (HiB) - Western Norway UAS – Bergen – Norway (HVL)

Bergen University College (HiB) existed till the end of 2016. From January 2017 the institution merged with two other university college and got the name Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL).

Inholland University of Applied Sciences – Haarlem – Netherlands (INH)

Complutense University – Madrid – Spain (UCM)

Mannheim University UAS – Mannheim – Germany (HSMA)

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

Lund University – Lund – Sweden (LU)

POTENTIAL NEW PARTNERS

Federation University – Ballarat – Australia (FU)

Vaasa University of Applied Sciences – Vaasa – Finland (VU)

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

During the study year 2016/17, three modules have been organised by the SW-VirCamp Consortium: Module 1, Module 2, Module 3.

MODULE 1: SOCIAL WORK IN EUROPE

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

This is a 5 ECTS credits course about general social work aspects. Module 1 focuses on basic knowledge about social problems occurring in Europe. The module is about how to do comparative studies in international social work. Students describe, analyse and compare living conditions and the social problems in different European countries, and how they are met in social work. Students explore commonalities and differences in welfare systems and social policies, and how these may affect social work and social work education, related to one of the following themes they chose to work on: child welfare, elderly care or drug abuse to concretise the context of social work in at least two other countries than their own.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Table 1 – Amount of students per HEI - Module 1

HEI/YEAR	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
HIB/HVL	7	5	4
TM	18	12	7
UCM	17	8	8
HSMA	5	5	6
INH	15	6	13
Total	63	36	38

Like every year, the course started in the beginning of the autumn semester. The 8 weeks course started 19th of September 2016 and ended 14th of November 2016.

Table 1 gives an overview of students during the past 6 years. This year 38 students took part in this course. The amount of participants remained the same as compared to the year before. There was a decrease in the number of participants from Thomas More. This has been compensated by a rise in the number of students participating from Inholland. All partners were able to deliver students. Some universities promote this course as an option for incoming students to complete the ECTS credits for their study abroad. In this course 5 exchange students participated. It was possible to build a strong international group of students. This is a key success factor for 'comparative learning', one of the core learning aims in the course.

In module 1 Jochen Peter (HSMA) has been head teacher. Teachers in this course were: Katrien Verelst (TM), Inger Kristin Heggdalsvik (HIB/HVL), Ulla Törnig (HSMA) and David Alonso (UCM). Winfried Weber (HSMA) and Rammelt Veenkamp (INH) acted as external assessors.

RESULTS OF THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT

The final assignment in M1 is a combination of tasks done during the course. Of the 38 students who started, 31 students passed the exam and 1 failed for their first chance. 6 students did not submit their exam. The marks given on a scale from A-F (F is failure) were: 4A, 6B, 12C, 6D, 3E, 1F.

Re-examination is available for students in June.

EVALUATION

The first part of this evaluation is based on the survey at the end of the course. The questions in the survey are based on the quality standards, formulated in the quality guide. Students are asked to fill in the online survey at the end of the course. The response on this survey was only 37% (N=38, n=14). This is a low rate of responses.

Students are positive about the learning material: lectures, triggers and readings. They find the feedback helpful (100%) and constructive (100%). All students would recommend the course to their fellow students (100%).

Although in general, students are positive about the learning material, they are more critical about the reading list.

Due to changes in the social policies of the Netherlands and Belgium it became obvious that an update of this course is needed.

The topic of elderly care was only chosen by a few students this year. They came from the same country. Because of the limited number and the fact that comparison between counties was not possible, the topic was not arranged.

MODULE 2: COMPARATIVE SOCIAL WORK. SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN SOCIAL WORK

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

This module allows students to understand commonalities and differences in relation to vulnerable groups in our societies nowadays. In what way are social work theories and methods suitable to deal with questions concerning discrimination and oppression. In some places, anti-discriminatory practice has come to be seen as an integrated part of good social practice. In other words, one cannot have good social work practice without it. But how far is this reflected in the reality of everyday practice, and to what extent are students given the knowledge and skills they need to practice it?

The module demonstrates that discrimination and oppression are not homogenous concepts but focus on different target groups in various ways, and therefore are different in their manifestations in relation to these groups. A range of disadvantaged groups will be considered, but particular emphasis will be put on cultural and ethnic diversity, and racism. The implications of discrimination and oppression of marginalized groups for European social welfare and social work will be considered.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Table 2 – Amount of students per HEI - Module 2

HEI/YEAR	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
HIB/HVL	7	5	4
TM	23	2	2
UCM	8	4	3
HSMA	2	3	4
INH	0	0	0
Total	40	14	13

The course started on the 7th of November 2016, and ended after 12 weeks on the 10th of February 2017. We had 2 incoming students. One from Sweden and one from Finland (PhD student).

The students have been divided into 2 groups. These student groups were balanced this year with 3 German, 2 Norwegian and 2 Belgian and 3 Spanish students.

Jose Ignacio Pichardo Galan (UCM) has been teacher in this course. Remmelt Veenkamp (INH) has been head teacher and teacher. Tabitha Wright Nielsen (LU) acted as external assessor. This year one fee paying student, a doctoral student at the University of Eastern Finland (Doctor of Social Sciences), took the course. She is currently writing her dissertation about comparative research in school social work. She successfully completed the course and quoted on it as follows:

'It was a very interesting course and I was really glad that I was able to participate. I also enjoyed working with the other students and to get some insights how social workers act in other countries. I think this is a very innovative project which helps students to connect without travelling, as not all students are able to do this for different reasons. So I think that it would be a good thing if there would exist more courses like this one. I think I expected a little bit more focus on comparative research, but I know that this was not the primary intention of the course; it was nevertheless a very good experience.'

RESULTS OF THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Of the 13 students who started, 11 students passed the exam and 1 failed for the first chance. 1 student did not submit the exam. The marks given on a scale from A-F (F is failure) were: 1A, 7B, 3C and 1F.

Re-examination is available for students in June.

EVALUATION

The first part of this evaluation is based on the survey at the end of the course. The questions in the survey are based on the quality standards, formulated in the quality guide. Students are asked to fill in the online survey at the end of the course. The response on this survey was 58% (N=12, n=7).

One significant outcome of the end evaluation is that 100% of the respondents would recommend this course to fellow students. 85% of the respondents think the course is appealing and interesting in content. All the respondents mention that the case of Mrs. K and her Family stimulated them to reflect on social work interventions and all value the clear assessment criteria.

Points of improvement are the timetable of the course which 25 % of the respondents find not flexible. Another potential area for improvement is the way to guide students through the course and the timing of the feedback given.

For most of the students, the planning of this course is not congruent with the semester system. This means that the course interrupts with an exam period. This gives problems for students in planning their tasks. Students that took module 1 before, noticed that the structure is quite different than what they are used to.

Finally there were some respondents who suggested to update the learning material.

It has been decided that an update of this course is needed.

MODULE 3: COMMUNITY WORK FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

Module 3 is a 15 ECTS course. The theme of the course is 'Community Work from an international perspective'. Community work is a planned process to mobilize communities to use their own social structures and resources to address their own problems and achieve their own objectives. Community work focuses on participation and fosters empowerment, emancipation and change through collective action. Community work is closely related to work for human rights. The community work process is about people in communities creating opportunities for growth and change. The course focuses on different theories, methods and approaches in community work from an international perspective, and consists of several parts. One part focuses on theories and methods, another parts consist of a case-study related to a virtual case. Students make a project plan related to the case, by collaborating and comparing different approaches. The students learn about community work and its historic background and come to understand the risk of manipulation when community work is not worked out from a grass-root level. Students also learn about the advantages and power in approaches carried out from a bottom-up perspective. One of the main aims of the course is that students develop a critical understanding of the wide range of theories and methods of community work, develop the ability to recognize these in current projects and are able to design a project plan of community work, and show which steps and facilities are needed for realising and managing processes and products.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

The course started the 24th of January 2017, with a duration of 18 weeks until the 29th of May 2017.

Table 3 – Amount of students per HEI - Module 3

HEI/YEAR	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
HIB/HVL	2	7	6
TM	8	17	23
UCM	5	5	5
HSMA	6	4	5
INH	3	0	3
UIN	0	5	
Total	24	38	42

As shown in the table the amount of students varies every year. This year there was a high number of TM students that took the course. In order to allow them to compare between countries, students were set up in pairs and took up a buddy role.

42 applied for M3, 40 students started the course but 4 dropped out in the first weeks.

There were also two incoming students for this course.

Bieke Dierckx (TM) has been head teacher and teacher. Other teachers in this course were Carmen Arenas (external teacher) and Lennart Loraas with the support of Anne Karin Larsen (HIB/HVL). Tabitha Wright Nielsen (LU), Susanne Lang (HSMA) and David Alonso (UCM) were the external assessors.

RESULTS OF THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT

To finish module 3, students have to deliver a portfolio exam. Tasks students have been working on during the course are assessed. Part of the final assignment is two group tasks.

36 students passed the exam in the first chance. The marks given on a scale from A-F (F is fail) were 13A, 9B, 12C and 1D and 1E. 6 students did not submit their exam. Re-examination is available for students in August.

EVALUATION

This evaluation is based on the survey at the end of the course. The questions in the survey are based on the quality standards, formulated in the quality guide. Students were asked to fill in the online survey before their final assignment was done.

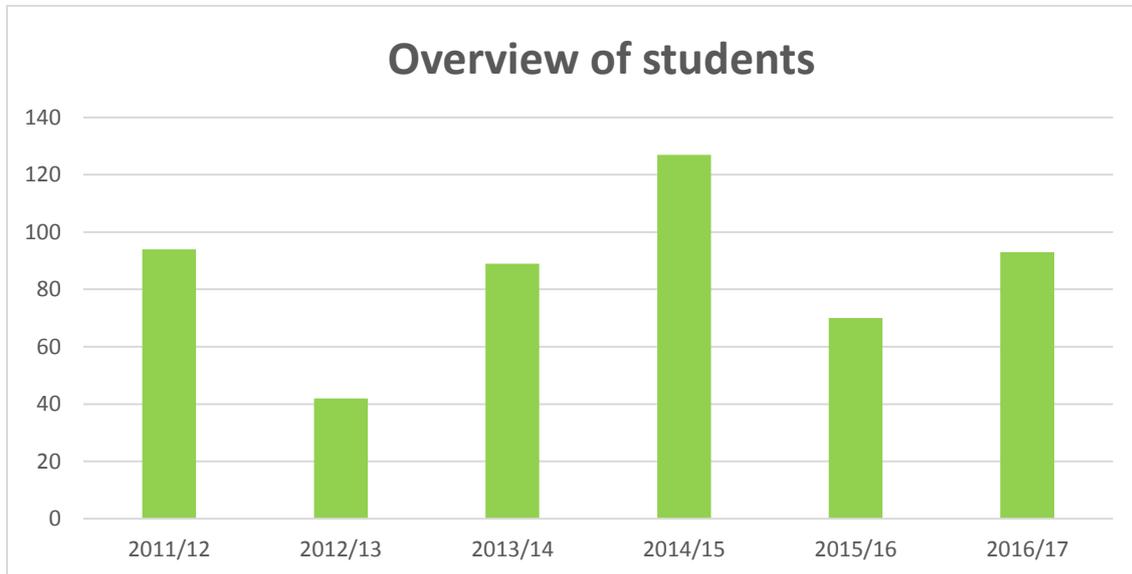
The response on this survey was 47,6% (N=42, n=20).

95% of the students would recommend the course to fellow students. Regarding the learning material, students are very positive about the case. A 100% of respondents acknowledge that it helped to put the theory into practise and that it inspired and motivated them to realise tasks and assignments. 90% says that feedback is helpful and 95% of the respondents thinks that feedback is given in a constructive way.

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE COURSES

STUDENTS

Graphic 1 –Overview of students M1, M2, M3- 2012/2017



This graph shows the evolution of the total number of students in 3 modules over the years. As shown in the graph above the amount of students participating in the VirCamp courses reached the highest number in 2015. Due to the large number of students from Belgium in M3 the total number of students rose again in 16/17 as compared to the previous year. To have a stable number partners have done a lot of effort to integrate the modules in their various curricula.

EVALUATION

Although students have an overall satisfaction with M1 & M2, as teachers we see the need for an update of the courses and the learning material in order to have high quality courses that are in line with current developments in our societies. We highlight that these 2 courses initially started in 2006.

M3 started as a course in 2010. Evaluations show that the course is still in line with the initially defined learning outcomes. Literature and curriculum material is still adequate.

There is a need for more teachers. New partners will engage teachers. Therefore an E-pedagogy course in the near future needs to be organised in order to have qualified e-teacher team.

WORKSHARE

Table 4 – Overview workshare

Partners	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
HIB/HVL	322,5	263	321
UCM	241,5	297,5	266,5
TM	445,5	371	352,5
INHOLLAND	337,5	324,5	309,5
Mannheim	291	221,5	213
Nordland/Nord	20	174,5	0
Mittweida	47	45	0
Lund	35	15	33,5
TOTAL	1740	1712	1496

Table 4 gives an overview of the workshare in the past years.

The principle in the consortium agreement is that there is an equal workshare. This is not always possible. Partner institutions need to have the necessary resources. Teachers need to be qualified as e-teachers and for the subjects and content of the courses.

Some partners invest year after year above the average (250 hours) per partner. Only if there is a underachievement with more than 10%, other partners are compensated for this lack in performance.

STAFF INVOLVED 2016 - 2017

CONSORTIUM MANAGEMENT GROUP

- Ulla Törnig, HSMA (Chairwoman)
- Svanaug Fjær, HIB/HVL
- Carla Rinkel, INH
- David Alonso, UCM
- Christien Broeckmans, TM
- Alexander Noyon, HSMA
- Anneli Nielsen, LU

STEERING COMMITTEE

- Inge Vervoort (TM) Consortium Coordinator
- Rimmelt Veenkamp (INH) Coordinator of Education
- Anne Karin Larsen (HIB/HVL) Coordinator of Webportal
- David Alonso (UCM) Coordinator of Development Research.
- Ulla Törnig (HSMA) Chairwoman for CMG

TEACHERS AND ASSESSORS

	TEACHERS	EXTERNAL ASSESSORS
M1	<p>Jochen Peter (HSMA) <i>Head teacher</i></p> <p>Inger Kristin Heggdalsvik (HIB/HVL) Ulla Törnig (HSMA) Katrien Verelst (TMUC) David Alonso (UCM)</p>	<p>Winfried Weber (HSMA)</p> <p>Remmelt Veenkamp (INH)</p>
M2	<p>Remmelt Veenkamp (INH) <i>Head teacher+ teacher</i></p> <p>Ignacio Pichardo (UCM)</p>	<p>Tabitha Wright Nielsen (LU)</p>
M3	<p>Bieke Dierckx (TM) <i>Head teacher</i></p> <p>Carmen Arenas Carbelido (EXT) Bieke Dierckx (TM) Lennart Loraas/Anne Karin Larsen (HiB/HVL)</p>	<p>Tabitha Wright Nielsen (LU)</p> <p>Susanne Lang (HSMA)</p> <p>David Alonso (UCM)</p>

ACCOUNT

VIRCAMP ACCOUNT 2016-2017			
Revenue		Expenditure	
<i>Booked</i>			
Contributions 2016 - 2017	€ 22 650,00	Staff coordinator	€ 17 600,00
		Webhosting	€ 211,30
		Zoonlog	€ 190,00
		M3 Extra cost	€ 3 590,00
<i>Expected</i>			
Unpaid contribution	€ 1 815,00		
TOTAL	€ 24 465,00	TOTAL	€ 21 591,30
RESULT 2017	€ 2 873,70		
SURPLUS 2016	€ 11 995,84		
TOTAL SURPLUS 2017	€ 14 869,54		

ACTIVITIES

MEETINGS

TEACHER MEETINGS

The yearly teacher meeting took place in Mannheim on 30/05/2017 and 31/05/2017. In all modules, teachers meet only online during the course.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The SW-VirCamp Steering Committee (SC) is an executive committee. The SC monitors the Virtual Campus. Decisions about amendments in budget allocations will be taken by the Steering Committee.

Besides the daily care about the courses, the main themes on the agenda were: website, future plans for a European strategic partnership and applying again, the re-working of M1&M2, how to engage new partners, how to involve better partners that are not member of the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee met 5 times online. The yearly meeting took place in Mannheim 01/06/2017.

CONSORTIUM MANAGEMENT GROUP

The CMG Meeting is the General Assembly of the Consortium. In order to take decisions on the overall organisation of the Virtual Campus and its activities.

The CMG met 1 time online: 02/12/2016

The yearly meeting took place in Mannheim 02/06/2017.

EXTENDED MEMBER MEETING

During the academic year 2016/17 new partners joined the consortium. They are not part of the Steering Committee and would therefore only meet the other members at the yearly meeting.

In order to have a good involvement with all partners on the one hand and keep a steering committee that functions efficiently on the other hand (also when the consortium grows in number) the consortium decided to install online extended member meetings 2 times a year. Each consortium member has appointed a contact person for VirCamp. This contact person has the role to forward the minutes and other relevant information on VirCamp internally within his/her own institution.

The first extended member meeting was organised 21/04/2017.

DISSEMINATION

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCE

Larsen, A.K. (2016) Place prosjektet (1). International Week, Bergen University College, 26.10.2016.

Veenkamp R. (October 2016) VirCamp, The international way of learning. Higher educational faculties in Health Care & Social Work, 27.10.2016.

Törnig U. (November 2016) Presentation of VirCamp at the yearly congress of Social Work departments Germany in Mannheim

OTHER DISSEMINATION ACTIONS

Basstanie, J. (2016) Presentation at Vaasa about VirCamp.

Törnig U. (May 2017) Internally Presentation (for other departments): "Virtual Mobility"

Alonso D. & Vervoort I. (January 2017) Presentation for Federation University on VirCamp, Keith Peter (online)

Veenkamp R. (August 2016), Internal presentation at Inholland on VirCamp

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

The [VirCamp website](#) was restyled in 2016.

The [VirCamp Facebook page](#) is not an active page. Until now it does not have much added value for the consortium. Therefore, in the coming year, Facebook updates must appear frequent. This is a point of attention for all the steering committee members.

FUTURE PLANS

Next academic year the consortium will update M1 & M2 in order to have up-to-date courses that take into account the newest developments in social work.

The consortium has a lot of interest from potential new partners and is currently in the process of integrating them in a good way. Re-working the courses is a good opportunity to get them involved and engaged. Teachers in VirCamp courses have taken the E-pedagogy course. From January 2018 until May 2018 a new E-pedagogy course will be organised. We expect approximately 10 teachers of our institutions to take part in the course and as such fulfil the need for new teachers.

In 2015/16 the consortium wrote the PLACE project. Since there is a lot of eagerness to work in an interdisciplinary way. There might be potential in the topic of 'Street Pedagogy' that was introduced by Federation University as associated partner.

Partners agreed on investing more time in external communication, be it working more actively with the Facebook group, disseminating VirCamp in conferences or other actions.