



## Report on national projects

Analysis of international/national research projects by members of EurofamNet

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This report is based on the analysis of international/national research projects by members of the COST Action CA18123: The European Family Support Network. A bottom-up, evidence-based and multidisciplinary approach.

It includes current or recently completed research projects, which have been run by Cost Action members at international, national and local levels in 2021-2022. These research projects reflect the contribution of the Cost Action members to EurofamNet and showcase good practices, theoretical and practical implications of the research being conducted by the network. In January-March 2022, all MC and WG members were asked to submit the relevant data regarding their research projects via the Cost Action Intranet <https://eurofamnet.eu/home>. The report was prepared based on the data submitted. Its preparation was discussed during the Management Committee Meeting of the COST Action CA1812, which took place on 28-30 June 2022, in Faro, Portugal. The first version of the report was prepared in September 2022. All the participants had the chance to provide feedback, suggest changes and to add information. The revised version of the report was prepared in October 2022.

The following research methods were implemented:

qualitative intersectional research methodology, needs analysis with the period of implementation; a survey; a report; online survey, content analysis; intervention; a pre-post content analysis of the semi-structured interviews; focus groups; pre and post-test, self-reflective reports, focus group discussions and students' anonymous feedback, interviews, questionnaires, multimodal, multimedia approach, tests, intervention programs.

The research projects were or are being conducted in the following countries:

Belgium (1), Cyprus (1), Romania (1), UK (1)

The research projects have diverse range of topic/themes under investigation and methodology implemented.

The project in the UK context is focused on inclusive education, assessment, teaching and learning at higher education in the post-COVID era. The aim of the study was to empower all students, including multilingual and low-achieving students, to achieve their full potential and ensure that their voices can be heard. The students were trained and then encouraged to use peer assessment and self-assessment for one semester in terms of one module to develop students' professional skills, i.e., teamwork, self-regulation, and problem-solving. Preliminary

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findings indicated that the use of Education for Social Justice and Sustainable Development Framework can improve students' learning experience by improving their writing performance and promoting research-informed teaching and learning that caters for all learners' needs. Moreover, it fosters inclusion of the increasingly diverse student cohorts, develops students' academic, and professional skills, and innovates as it improves students' motivation towards writing and learning in tertiary education.

National project in the context of Belgium examined parental burnout prevention before, during and after the pandemic, and how to raise awareness regarding this issue via podcasts. The researchers investigated many issues of concern to mothers and fathers including: the perfect mother syndrome and its consequences, not just on children, but on the entire family; how important it is for the father to take his place as a responsible family man, even in cases of separation; the efficiency of psychologists' consultations for successful parenting and families' well-being.

The aim of the research project in the context of Romania is the integration of online tools for the prevention of emotional symptoms of children within an integrated platform and test its efficacy in an adaptive trial. The researchers attempted to provide accessible and attractive personalised prevention tools for families with children at risk for emotional disorders. The platform is being tested in an adaptive trial for families with children at risk for emotional disorders.

The focus of the international project in the context of Cyprus is on Study Abroad, Diversity and Inclusion in Education, challenges and needs of both students and teachers. The project implements mixed-method methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Its objective is to describe the state of the art regarding study abroad programs and to raise the awareness regarding inclusive education and accessible to students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

## National projects (3)

Among the national projects, the most prominent research topics are:

### *Family Support: Parental Burnout*

**Dr Johanna Schima** (Make Mothers Matter, Belgium) with **Prof Isabelle Roskam** (University UCLouvain, Belgium), a professor of development and parenting psychology at the University of Louvain, Belgium, and a specialist in child behavioral disorders and parental burnout, are

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responsible for the project titled: **Parental burnout prevention Podcasts**, which is a project implemented online for French speaking parents. Main public addressed: Belgian and French. Regular series of podcasts took place from April 2022. The weekly episode covers many issues of concern to mothers including: The perfect mother syndrome and its consequences, not just on children, but on the entire family. Another topic the program looks at is Parental Burnout – is it a buzzword or a reality in parenting today? The role of the father also comes under the spotlight, because parenthood obviously involves not just the mother but the father too. Isabelle Roskam explains how important it is for the father to take his place as a responsible family man, even in cases of separation. Happy parents, happy children! tackles the key question of whether a happy mother has a more fulfilled child. Isabelle Roskam emphasises that we tend to think only about the well-being of the children, forgetting that the well-being of the parents is just as, if not more essential. Parental burnout prevention and support is an important tool for parents' and families' wellbeing. Parental burnout existed before the pandemic. With the pandemic the number of consultations to psychologists increased and many parents felt more overwhelmed and lacking of support.

<https://makemothersmatter.org/an-almost-perfect-mother-new-podcast-series-with-isabelle><https://soundcloud.com/user-504650562>

#### *Prevention of emotional disorders in children*

**Dr David Oana** (Babes-Bolyai University, Romania) is responsible for the project **REThinkWELL: An evidence-based integrative platform for the prevention of emotional disorders in children** (2020-2022). The aim of the project is to integrate online tools for the prevention of emotional symptoms of children within an integrated platform and test its efficacy in an adaptive trial. The REThink Parenting-Rational Positive Parenting Program and the REThink therapeutic game will be integrated in the REThink EMOTIONS platform with the aim of providing accessible and attractive personalised prevention tools for families with children at risk for emotional disorders. The platform will be tested in an adaptive trial for families with children at risk for emotional disorders. <https://rethinkplatform.ro/> Unitatea executiva pentru finantarea invatamantului superior a cercetarii dezvoltarii si inovarii Relevance to the network: Development of accessible, attractive and evidence-based family support interventions.

*Social Justice and Sustainable Development: Higher Education, Teaching, Learning, Assessment, The Effect of COVID:*

**Dr Eleni Meletiadou** (Metropolitan University, London, UK) is responsible for the project titled: **Inclusive Formative Assessment Practices in Action: Enabling all students to succeed in**

**the post-Covid-19 era**, which was funded by London Metropolitan University Guildhall School of Business and Law through a rescaling fund aimed to enhance students' writing performance and attitudes towards writing and learning in Business and Management Education (01/09/2021-30/5/2022). The research project explored the use of formative assessment strategies such as peer assessment (PA) and self-assessment (SA) as inclusive assessment methods that promote learning with undergraduate students at London Metropolitan University. **Inclusive assessment** refers to an approach to assessment and learning in terms of which individual learners' needs, differences and tastes are taken into consideration, as far as possible, to ensure that all students have an opportunity to succeed. It focuses on students' strengths without highlighting their weaknesses with the aim of unravelling areas for improvement and supporting students throughout this process. As lecturers welcome extremely diverse cohorts nowadays, HEI are increasingly concerned about adopting inclusive teaching and assessment practices to cater for the needs of multilingual and multicultural students who should work together and succeed first in their academic contexts and later in an increasingly complex workplace which has high expectations from individuals who wish to find career-enhancing positions and succeed in their professional lives.

The aim of the current study was to empower all students, including multilingual and low-achieving students, to achieve their full potential and ensure that their voices can be heard. In terms of this year-long project, selected L4 GSBL students were trained and then encouraged to use peer assessment and self-assessment for one semester in terms of one module to develop students' professional skills, i.e., teamwork, self-regulation, and problem-solving. The researcher collected pre- and post-tests (reports) and explored any improvement in students' performance by comparing marks and by analysing students' texts taking into consideration indicators of writing quality. She also used a self-reflective report, focus group discussions and students' anonymous feedback via Mentimeter to explore students' overall attitudes towards the scheme. Preliminary findings indicated that the use of IFAP can improve students' learning experience by improve their writing performance and promoting research-informed teaching and learning that caters for all learners' needs. Moreover, it fosters inclusion of the increasingly diverse student cohorts, develops students' academic, and professional skills, and innovates as it improves students' motivation towards writing and learning in tertiary education.

The current study, **which aligns perfectly with the Action's and London Met's strategic aims**, promotes the creation of learning communities among students, fostering tolerance and enhancing student collaboration outside the university, successfully providing additional learning opportunities for students, and facilitating student transition from secondary to tertiary education as it places an emphasis on feedforward rather than feedback. Despite the implication of the Covid-19 pandemic, the current scheme managed to enhance student participation in their own learning as students were agents of change for themselves and for

others as well. To sum up, this study promoted London Metropolitan University's **Education for Social Justice and Sustainable Development Framework which aligns perfectly with the Action's goals** and explored the beneficial impact of inclusive modern educational assessment practices on student outcomes and overall experience. In the future, a wider implementation of the IFAP in Action scheme aims to increase student recruitment, improve student retention, and promote inclusive sustainable research-informed teaching, learning, and assessment. This is a post-Covid-19 pandemic study. **It aimed to support students in the post-Covid-19 era and foster inclusion.**

## International projects (1)

### *Diversity and Inclusivity: Education*

**Dr Sviatlana Karpava** (University of Cyprus) currently works on international project: **Challenges and Opportunities of the Study Abroad Programs: Evidence from YUFE.** (01.03.2022-31.08.2022) funded by Diversity and Inclusivity Grant: Young Universities for the Future of Europe - YUFE D&I Grants 2021-2022. Research Coordinator of the project is Prof Fabienne Baider (University of Cyprus). <https://yufe.eu/yufe/top-projects-funded-to-promote-diversity-and-inclusivity-within-yufe-alliance/?fbclid=IwAR0x4tNV-323RcnNBmca02KbfVq3D1y09o6j-kErG3tgjLhCBResmrzWxNs>

Multilingualism and multiculturalism have become the norm due to global migration. It is important to include a critical language awareness component in teacher training programmes to provide a link between theory and practice. This research project examines students and teachers' beliefs regarding multilingualism, diversity and inclusivity and their YUFE experience and suggest new educational policies and teaching approaches for better learning outcomes. Educators should move beyond their comfort zones in order to promote active participation and student-centred learning, creativity, critical thinking, productive communication, student agency and autonomy both in and outside of the classroom. Diversity, equity and equality are topics that need to be covered in language teacher education programmes, which is in line with Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Universal Design for Learning, which emphasise the home cultures of both teachers and learners, and frame the preferred ways of engaging in classroom activities by taking socioemotional, relational and cognitive dimensions into consideration, as well as cultural archetypes, learning partnerships, information processing, and the development of the community of learning. These factors/approaches will assist future and current teachers to deliver instruction to all learners successfully, to provide accessible classrooms, and to empower all students via classroom equity. Overall, it is important to promote multilingualism



and multiculturalism, equity, equality and diversity and to view differences not as a problem but as a resource by adopting a multidimensional approach. This can be accomplished by having student-friendly environments and sustainable teaching/learning that is based on critical dialogue, interaction, collaboration and multiliteracy/multimodality.

This research project is focused on the Study Abroad (SA) programs based on the evidence of YUFE. The researchers are investigating the perceptions of both students and academics regarding their YUFE experience in Cyprus and abroad. Multilingualism, linguistic and cultural diversity are closely related to globalisation, increased transnational mobility and SA programs. It is important to pay attention to multilingualism and multiculturalism in educational settings, to increase awareness and recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity at individual and societal levels, and to take historical, ideological, social, economic and political factors into consideration, as well as language policy and the diverse language practices of teachers and students. This research project aims to foster diversity and inclusivity of YUFE. It is important that YUFE becomes a driver for positive change in society and our project team will work together with other members of the YUFE in this direction.

Education should be inclusive and accessible to students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Teachers need to have special training regarding the value of linguistic/cultural diversity in classrooms. This can lead to improved social cohesion and social justice without discrimination, and can result in increased sensitivity and resource-orientation towards multilingualism and multiculturalism, and a better understanding of and enhanced awareness about certain needs and challenges related to education in multilingual classrooms (such as understanding the content linguistically), particularly the geographical and social contexts that affect the cognition, personal and social well-being of the students. More comprehensive and inclusive research on multilingualism and its effect on education is needed. Our research project aims to fill in this gap and aims to provide an active voice to both students and teachers and to provide valuable suggestions for improvement with respect to promotion of diversity and inclusivity in YUFE and other SA programs based on YUFE participants' experiences.