

**Partnership
Experiential
Knowledge**



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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**Erasmus international partnership
Experiential Knowledge and Experiential Learning
in Higher Education**
A new dimension in personalized inclusive education

Welcome to the second newsletter.

It has been a busy time since our first newsletter . All countries involved in the project have been busy developing their [work packages](#) with much collaboration between us to extend our mutual knowledge and understanding of different countries' practices of involving people with lived experience in education.

For anyone new to this project, there are 12 higher education institutes in 10 different countries, with local experts by experience partners, sharing and developing approaches of personalised learning and inclusive education, with an emphasis on experiential knowledge. The focus is especially on bachelor and master educations of social work and nursing, as well as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration in the field of social services and health care services. Project participants have been meeting online and in person to build this network.

In this newsletter we report on two significant ways this has been achieved in the past year.

1. International webinar series
2. Conference and learning event in Vilnius, Lithuania.

International webinar series

Project participants are making key contributions to an international webinar series, established by PowerUs in partnership with the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) on '*Critical Perspectives on Service User participation and Experiential Knowledge.*'

Members of this project have strong involvement and connections with PowerUs so creating this space has enabled us to profile the project and important aspects of our work. All sessions are recorded and uploaded via you tube, however wide participation is encouraged of people with lived experiences, students, lecturers, and researchers.

Webinars took place monthly and soon the series will be published in a new 'social dialogue journal online.' We are pleased to have such global exposure.

Highlights from the series so far include,

Jean Pierre Wilken leading this project from Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands, delivered an enlightening session on the subject of *'Integrating experiential knowledge in social work education and research: a necessary and challenging innovation.'* This subject provoked lively discussion demonstrating that there is wide interest in our work and many people are looking forward to accessing the project's resources and findings.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axwzYKuo2xs>

Cecilia Heule and Tabitha Wright Nielsen from the School of Social Work, Lund University, Sweden, presented on *'Gap-mending as a Critical and Reflective Practice'*. Sharing the wealth of experience of this innovative practice that began at Lund University that has inspired many other countries to take up the gap mending approach, is a key example of how knowledge is exchanged within the Erasmus partnership.



<https://youtu.be/uHlzKy-kXV8>

In a similar way, Helen Casey and Bini Aria from The Open University UK shared their experiences with participants of a Mend the Gap programme in North East England on *'Mending Gaps with Asylum Seeker communities to Achieve Change.'* This opened discussion about the commonalities of migrant's experiences in many countries and how marginalised migrants fleeing to other countries become. Cultural knowledge exchange is an important feature of the Erasmus partnership.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAfFJhQxhtw>

Kristel Driessens and Pascal Maes from Karel de Grote University of Applied Sciences, Antwerp, Belgium presented their work on *'People in poverty as tandem partners in social work education.'* Sharing personal experiences of poverty and how education is an important platform for examining policy and practice in this context is essential to integrating learning from lived experience in Higher Education.



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyjlioDvoyzRLt47wjmknY6SLI2N84ew>

One final session to reflect upon, was delivered by Peter Beresford, Chair of Shaping Our Lives which is a UK based organisation led by disabled people, who are a partner within the Erasmus project. Peter presented on *'The Future of Social Care - from Problem to a Rights Based Sustainable Solution.'* This session highlighted the importance of experiential knowledge as a foundation for learning about people's rights and how to promote them.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EV062OfcbjA>

The international webinar series has been a particularly good way to spotlight some of the important work we are engaged in with the partnership in education project and we are very excited about contributing to the establishment of the new online journal.

Conference and learning event *Experiential Knowledge in the Spotlight*

In May 2023, the first conference and learning event took place at Vilnius University, Lithuania. This event enabled all participating countries to bring researchers, educators and experts by experience as partners together .



The aim of this event was to share progress on the different work packages and engage with some of the content to promote experiential learning and share critical feedback on approaches taken. A further aim was to disseminate learning from varied and creative approaches that people could take back to their own universities to try out.

This began with a conference on May 22nd, followed by two days of workshops and meetings, concluding on May 25th with reflections upon learning as input for further development of work packages. From a very full three day schedule some highlights of activities include

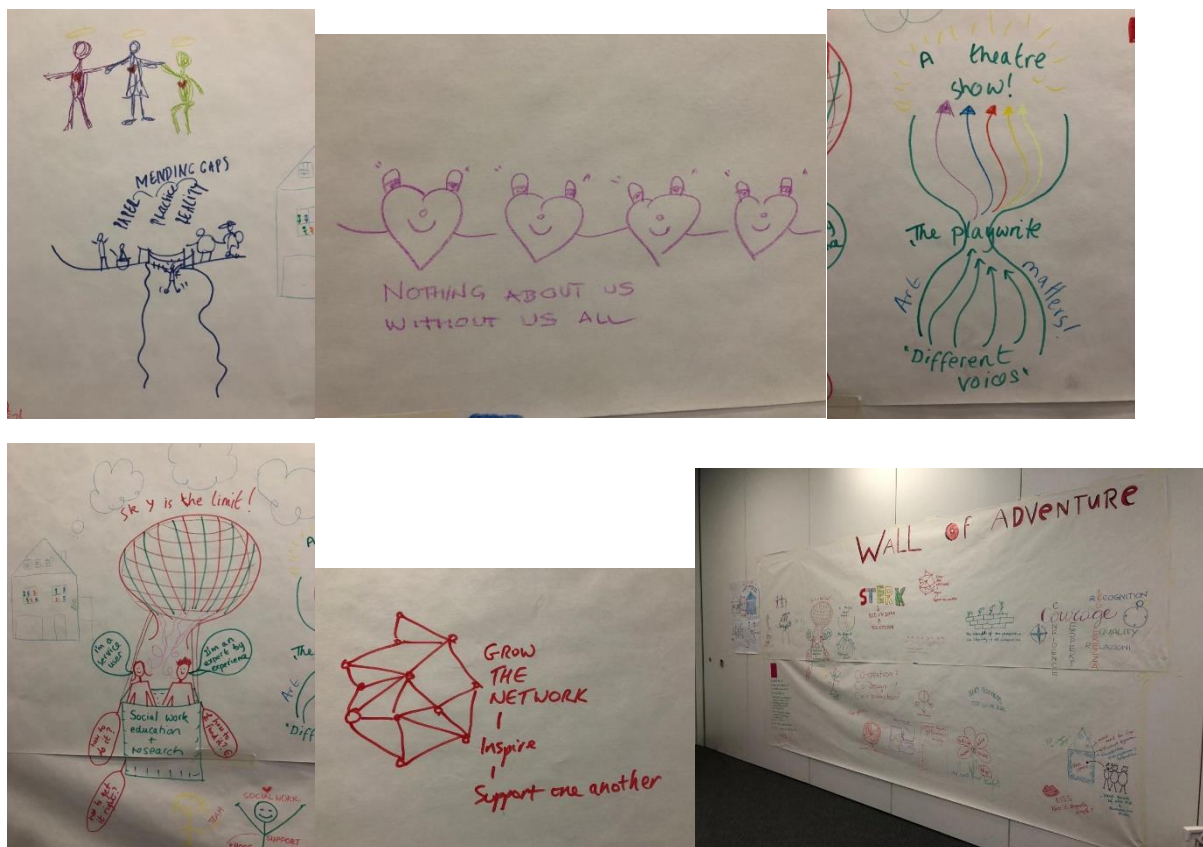
- Providing an overview of the Gap Mending approach with examples of practice.
- Exploring the impact of involving experts by experience in education – the difference participation makes is key to meaningful action.
- Sharing an exercise on letter writing that experts by experience give feedback on how they would feel at the receiving end of a letter.
- Using art as a medium for expression of lived experiences.
- Creatively gaining insight of the effects of domestic abuse on families.



Further information about the presentations and full gallery of photographs are being made available on the PowerUs website where we have a dedicated site for our project.

[Partnership Experiential Knowledge | Powerus. You can also follow us on LinkedIn.](#)

Below are some pictures which capture some of the activities and emotions experiential learning and knowledge exchange inspires. These pictures were taken from a 'wall of adventure,' expressing that inserting experiential knowledge as a primary source of knowledge in the curricula of social work and nursing is a challenging journey.



The most inspiring comments from the conference came from Experts by Experience whose contributions were central to the success of our event.

'This was a great conference where I felt welcome and equal '

'It is important that students learn about this project and people's different experiences to understand how to be better in their helping role'

'It is good to be part of something which usually only academics get to do, there should be more events like this where more Experts by Experience attend'.

'It is good to see that teaching and learning can be on more equal terms.'

Events to come.

- September 2023: online meeting of university representatives to reflect on the learnings from the webinar series and the meeting in Vilnius as input for developing further the different work packages.
- November 2023: online transnational meeting to discuss drafts of work packages.
- March 2024: 2nd conference and learning event in Malmo, Sweden.

Other news

- During the European Social Work Research Conference in Milan, April 2023, insights from the project about the nature of experiential knowledge (work package 1) were shared by Jean Pierre Wilken en Kristel Driessens in the Special Interest Group on Service User Involvement.
- Colleagues from the Catholic University of Milan, OCELLIA, Jönköping University, and Artevelde University of Applied Sciences have completed the Erasmus+ SWEET project, which goal was to develop a pedagogical program to promote participation of service users in social work education. The results can be found on the website <https://www.sweet-project.fr/>. We will gratefully use the resources that were developed, especially for work package 4 (Supports for experts by experience to be co-lecturer) and work package 5 (Framework for integrating user involvement in the curricula).

