

EMundus Project: International collaboration for Virtual Mobility

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This paper will describe the work of the eMundus project that began in October 2013 and report on activities to date. The eMundus partners include organizations from Italy, Spain, the UK, Belgium, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, New Zealand, Indonesia and Canada.

The higher education world is nowadays the subject of intensive challenges, where the pressure to perform placed both on HE institutions and on their graduates has increased, coupled with budget cuts, especially in those countries most affected by the actual economic crisis. The impact of this pressure is partly an efficiency-raising, restructuring, innovating one, but it also contributes to the strengthening of flexibility. Universities today operate in a global environment and are challenged to update and internationalise their study programmes, to establish partnerships, to engage in mobility and, at the same time, to do all of this in a cost-effective way, keeping the cost of HE for learners and governments at reasonable levels.

In this context, concepts of Virtual Mobility and Open Education are gaining ground, often seen as a solution to the need to educate an increasing Higher Education (HE) population within the existing financial constraints, while transfer credit and prior learning assessment and recognition as well as Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices (OEP) are increasingly being considered as options by universities around the world. Technology offers unprecedented opportunities to improve quality, access and equity in education and training. Through open policies and actions, barriers to education can be overcome, including social barriers. People can access learning opportunities wherever they are, whenever they feel the need and flexible pathways are being developed by organizations like the OER universitas to help them access assessment and credentialing opportunities. Institutions need to recognize the needs of learners for virtual mobility by opening up credit transfer, recognizing prior learning including informal learning achievements.

Key Words

Virtual Mobility, Open Education, OER, OEP