



EU Partnerships & International Cooperation

with Jordan, Lebanon, Syria & Palestine

European Partnerships & International Cooperation (EPIC)

Erasmus Mundus Action 2, Strand 1

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Cardiff
Metropolitan
University



Erasmus
Mundus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cardiff Metropolitan University would like to thank the EPIC partners and associate partners for their continuous support and hard work throughout the duration of the project. Your contributions have made EPIC a great success and we hope that cooperation will continue beyond the project lifetime.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to the EPIC alumni for sharing their stories with us. The scholars' contributions throughout the project have been incredibly valuable and demonstrated the academic, personal and professional impact of the scholarship. We are very glad to see how worthwhile the experience has been for you and we wish you all the best of luck in your future endeavours.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) branch of the European Commission for financing this initiative. We are very grateful for your consistent support and guidance throughout the lifetime of EPIC.

WHAT IS ERASMUS MUNDUS ACTION 2 (EMA2)?

Erasmus Mundus is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with Third-Countries. In addition, it contributes to the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in Third Countries by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries.

Partnerships in the Action 2 framework of Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 are the basis for enhancing academic cooperation and exchanges of students and academics, contributing to the socio-economic development of non-EU countries targeted by EU external cooperation policy. Action 2 provides:

1. Support for the establishment of cooperation partnerships between European higher education institutions and higher education institutions from targeted Third Countries with the objective of organising and implementing structured individual mobility arrangements between the European and Third Country partners.
2. Scholarships of various lengths - depending on the priorities defined for the Third Country concerned, the level of studies or the particular arrangements agreed within the partnership - for European and Third-Country individuals (students, scholars, researchers, professionals).

THE EPIC PROJECT

In accordance with the overall Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Strand 1 objectives, the EPIC project aims to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives in order to contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.

Cardiff Metropolitan University was granted the EU Partnerships & International Cooperation with Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine (EPIC) on 15th July 2012 through the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Strand 1 programme. This action aims at fostering structured cooperation between European and third-country higher education institutions through the promotion of mobility at all level of studies for students. The EPIC project offers scholarships for undergraduates, masters, doctorates, post-doctorates and staff. Scholarships can be either degree-seeking or exchange.

The project aims at enhancing the academic cooperation between European, Syrian, Jordanian, Palestinian and Lebanese universities by bringing together students, staff and researchers involved in the same disciplines or forming multidisciplinary teams to cover research domains identified by the third country universities as “priorities”. Another very important objective of this project concerns the sharing of best practices between the participants’ staff, in the field of “university governance” and in the implementation of the Bologna process. The project therefore aims to have structuring effects within Higher Education institutions and to build sustainable synergies. This action will have long term impact upon the harmonization of Higher Education systems across the regions involved thus decreasing the gap existing between these institutions and contributing to the recognition of the degrees delivered in the third-country HE institutions at international level.

The project overall aims to facilitate lasting cooperation between Europe and the Middle East on an individual and institutional level.

EPIC PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The EPIC project has set objectives which are in line with EMA2-Strand1 objectives which contribute to the mutual enrichment of third-countries and the EU, not only in academic matters, but also in political, educational, cultural and economic matters. These objectives are:

- To better adapt the Jordan, Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian institutions to contribute to national development needs and to respond to globalisation challenges.
- To better integrate the Third-Country universities within the Euro-Mediterranean area.
- To contribute to the mutual enrichment of societies by developing the qualifications of the three target groups at all levels.
- To promote mobility both for students, researchers, academics and administrative staff from third countries, especially from vulnerable groups, selected on the basis of academic excellence, to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union.
- To raise the academic level and international visibility of the third-countries partners' Higher Education through joint degrees, co-tutorship of thesis, new programmes and exchange of academic staff. This will develop and strengthen the HE teaching and learning capacity of the Third-Country institutions.

PARTNERSHIP

Coordinating Institution: Cardiff Metropolitan University

European Partner Universities	
Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)	Technische Universität Berlin (Germany)
Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK)	University of Liège (Belgium)
La Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)	University of Lorraine (France)
Politecnico di Torino (Italy)	University of Salamanca (Spain)
Sciences Po (France)	Vilnius University (Lithuania)

Third Country Partner Universities	
An-Najah National University (Palestine)	Modern University for Business and Science (Lebanon)
Arab International University (Syria)	Princess Sumaya University for Technology (Jordan)
Damascus University (Syria)	University of Jordan (Jordan)
German-Jordanian University (Jordan)	University Saint Joseph (Lebanon)
Lebanese University (Lebanon)	Yarmouk University (Jordan)

ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

Associate Partners play an active role in the project but they are not beneficiaries and may not receive funding from the grant. Their role greatly assists in the dissemination process for the recruitment of Target Group 2 and 3 applicants and also dissemination of the final project results. In addition, the Associate Partners WHEEL and SAR are key to promoting the project to vulnerable and less represented groups.

The EPIC Associate Partners are as follows:

Association of Arab Universities (Jordan)	Ministry of Higher Education (Palestine)
Euro Mediterranean University (EMUNI) (Slovenia)	Ministry of Higher Education (Syria)
European Students' Union (Belgium)	Scholars at Risk (SAR) (UK)
Ministry of Higher Education (Jordan)	Women in Higher Education Elite Leadership (WHEEL)
Ministry of Higher Education (Lebanon)	



JORDANIAN PARTNERS

GERMAN-JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY



About

Established in 2005 as a binational project following the initiative of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and the former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, GJU's roots and aims were quickly defined: Based on the German model of Universities of Applied Sciences, GJU aims to provide high-level education that goes hand-in-hand with practical relevance facilitated through a mandatory year in Germany. At the same time, our goal is to raise our students to internalize multinational cultural relations, tolerance, dialogue, and mutual understanding.



What German-Jordanian University thinks of the EPIC Project...

"The German Jordanian University (GJU)'s perspective on the EPIC project can best be described as a gateway to Europe, whose significance couldn't be foreseen when we joined the program in 2012. Having celebrated our tenth anniversary only recently, we as indeed the youngest university amongst EPIC's Third-Country partners steadily seek to widen our partnerships and connections further. Over time, this endeavour caused our German Jordanian dimension to be understood in a wider perspective: as a link between Europe and the Middle East. And so it was GJU's participation in the EPIC

program – marking the first chapter of our cooperation with Erasmus Mundus - which supported us in pursuing this new understanding.

Our outreach has grown both on the German, as well as the European level: As the majority of our scholars were hosted at the Technical University (TU) of Berlin, a valuable partnership outside our usual realm of Universities of Applied Sciences emerged. On a broader level, connecting with EPIC's partners in Liège, Cardiff and Rome paved new ways on international territory.

Testimonials of GJU's participants bear witness to this diversity and the effect their participation in EPIC had on them on personal and scientific levels: Students repeatedly described the outcome of their mobility as being more „independent, self-responsible, persistent and determined“; having made „friendships with people of different backgrounds“, and thus having become „an international person“. On their part, colleagues from GJU could establish new collaborations with international partners, and were enabled to open up new career opportunities for themselves through acquiring a second higher education degree. With regard to EPIC's local partners at the International Office of GJU, a range of colleagues were able to benefit from the knowledge gained from both coordinating the exchange, as well as from the inter-institutional contacts established in its course.

Looking at the impact GJU's participation in the EPIC project and the following programs had in many personal and institutional ways, we very much look forward to continue this experience with Erasmus in the coming years, as it has not only been a journey marked by shared values, but a journey that encouraged us to grow and broaden our perspectives."

PRINCESS SUMAYA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



About

Founded in 1991, Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) is the only private and non-profit university in Jordan. It is owned by the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), the foremost applied research center in Jordan. Like RSS, PSUT is part of EL Hassan Science City located in Amman, Jordan. PSUT's main mission is to educate students and qualify them to pursue careers in the fields of information and communications technology (ICT), electronics, computer engineering, communication engineering, and business.

In less than twenty years, PSUT has become the leading university for the study of information and communication technology, electronics and computer engineering, and a centre of educational excellence both in Jordan and the surrounding region. Graduates are in high demand and often receive job offers before they complete their degrees. Moreover, PSUT research activities are focused in the key areas of interest to EL Hassan Science City to help with Jordan's economic drive.

What Princess Sumaya University of Technology thinks of the EPIC Project...

"PSUT has been part of over 10 Erasmus Mundus projects. This has provided a wealth of opportunities to PSUT students to benefit from scholarships to study abroad. There have been especially encouraging numbers of undergraduate exchange, giving these students the chance to experience a new perspective on their chosen subject. Outgoing students have returned with high grades and have also participated in extracurricular activities to boost their CV such as conferences.

EPIC has also had a very positive effect on PSUT in terms of capacity building through mutual staff exchange. This has resulted also in research collaborations. PSUT will continue cooperation with EPIC partners Cardiff Met and TU Berlin through Erasmus+, building on its successful involvement in Erasmus Mundus."



UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN



About

The University of Jordan is both a modern as well as old institution of Higher Education in Jordan. Established in 1962, the University has, since then, applied itself to the advancement of knowledge no less than to its dissemination. In its capacity as a comprehensive teaching, research and community-service institution, the University of Jordan enables its students to choose from a wide range of programs- more than 3500 different courses are offered by some 18 faculties.



What the University of Jordan thinks of the EPIC Project...

"Internationalization is very important to the University of Jordan. The University offers about 90 bachelors, 110 Master's, 16 higher specialization programs in medicine and dentistry, and 40 doctoral programs. Involvement in Erasmus Mundus through EPIC and other projects helped to support the overall internalization strategy and further strengthen the university's capacities to host international students and also encourage outgoing mobility.

The EPIC project was very successful in terms of incoming and outgoing scholars for the University of Jordan, sending 23 scholars and receiving 16. This mutual exchange created opportunities for lasting cooperation both for individuals and the institution. The University of Jordan is now looking to the future with a number of Erasmus+ Key Action 107 agreements with European institutions, including EPIC partners La Sapienza University of Rome, Sciences Po and Vilnius University."

YARMOUK UNIVERSITY



About

Yarmouk University (YU) of Jordan has been established in 1976 with a mission to provide quality of education to its students to providing Jordan and the region with calibre graduates who will contribute to the development of these third countries. In order to do so, YU pays attention to the significant role of the internationalization dimension in its strategic planning to achieve this mission. The European Commission launched the Erasmus Mundus mobility programs that in principle support the mission of YU, where students in different majors and degrees as well as staff from partner countries can travel to program countries in Europe to exchange knowledge, build partnership relations in teaching and research, and most significantly to share common cultural background that helps bridging the cultural gap between the west and the east.

What Yarmouk University thinks of the EPIC project...

"EPIC was established based on the partner countries" teaching and research priorities, which is key. The coordination of the EPIC activities was a great experience in learning how to manage international projects, especially as EPIC was one of the first Erasmus Mundus projects where YU participated in. Also, EPIC's partnership umbrella for both partner and program countries was broad which opened up many collaboration opportunities, as well. Prof. Aljarrah, who also directs the international office at YU, said:



"the staff in the international office of YU has gained a lot of experience from EPIC – starting from building project proposals, to reaching out students and staff to know how to apply for the scholarships offered by EPIC, to facilitating the in-bound and out-bound staff and student mobility, etc."

One of the significant outcomes of EPIC is that YU was able to market its name worldwide through the unique programs it provides. "The language and refugee studies centres at Yarmouk University are great place to learn the Arabic language and to understand the dynamics in the region," Luis Melian Rodrigues said (Incoming scholar from University of Salamanca, Spain).

EPIC's experience was really an added value to YU. It contributes to the administrative, teaching, and research improvement process at YU. Dr. Abdel-Karim Al-Tamimi who conducted research activities at the Technische Universität Berlin, Germany said "EPIC was a spectacular experience as it opened up my eyes on many research collaboration opportunities later." With confidence, YU has carried the experience of EPIC later in different EU-funded projects, including Erasmus Mundus, which has been proven by excellence."





LEBANESE PARTNERS

LEBANESE UNIVERSITY



About

The Lebanese University was established in 1951 to serve the diverse social groups that make up Lebanese society and to provide a high-level institution in which students can acquire university degrees. The Lebanese University is the only public institution for higher learning in Lebanon. The university has 16 faculties as of 2014 and serves various cultural, religious, and social groups of students and teachers.

The independent university enjoys administrative, academic, and financial freedom. Among its educational goals are creating a unique mix of cultures and providing the basic and necessary education allowing students to enter various professions when graduating from the university.

What Lebanese University thinks of the EPIC Project...

"EPIC continued our Erasmus Mundus connection to Cardiff Metropolitan University, following on from the success of the 2011 project ELEMENT. The project provided a further opportunity for Lebanese University's students to take advantage of a period of study abroad and helped them to gain a new international perspective which they have carried with them back to the institute. It has also given new exposure for the university to well established universities across Europe, providing new scope for collaboration. We hope to continue cooperation with Europe through Erasmus+ Key Action 1 and 2 and build upon the success of Erasmus Mundus."



MODERN UNIVERSITY FOR BUSINESS AND SCIENCE



About

The Modern University for Business and Science (MUBS) has embarked on an Internationalization journey since 2006 which encompassed the establishment of the Office of International Affairs, global visibility, international activity, student and staff mobility and international research. Since then, the University has had myriad successful cooperation projects with various European universities under the Erasmus Mundus projects. Such projects contribute to preparing students and staff for leading roles in an Innovation-Driven Economy.

Fostering greater international exposure for staff and students has always been a crucial part of MUBS's vision. Furthermore, MUBS highly believes that internationalization is not only indispensable in today's globalized higher education but also views it as an added value and as an essential asset for progress. Based on the aforementioned, student and staff mobility is an opportunity for any higher education institution that wishes to internationalize at the academic and professional levels.



What Modern University for Business and Science thinks of the EPIC Project...

"The university's past and current experiences with Erasmus Mundus in general and EPIC in specific, have proved that internationalization is a portal to cultural exchange, cultural understanding and constitutes an opportunity for enriching international exposure. Staff who have spent a mobility period outside Lebanon under the EPIC project, the main host being Cardiff Metropolitan University in the UK, have returned as more qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced. Moreover, these staff, by spending a period of time outside their country, benefit from personal development and labor market returns. Being internationally exposed, they would also benefit at the educational, cultural and linguistic levels.

MUBS has come a long way in terms of learning and acquiring international experience. In this regard, the EPIC Partnership has paved the way to further collaborations with different partners under the Erasmus + programme, thus, strengthening ties between all partner universities (Lebanon and EU). Not only EPIC has greatly contributed to the internationalization of the partner universities but also has built effective communication and cooperation bridges between the various parties in the Arab region and the world."

UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH



About

Université Saint-Joseph (USJ) is a Lebanese private higher education institution founded in 1875. With over 2,000 professors, 500 employees and 12,000 students, USJ includes today 13 Faculties and 25 Institutes covering all majors except fine arts. Since 2003, USJ follows the European Credit Transfer System.

In addition to the laboratories and research units, USJ has created Berytech, a technology pole aimed at developing technology start-ups, through incubation, business support, counselling, funding, networking and company hosting. In 2011, The Health and Technology Pole (PTS), is the first of its kind in Lebanon dedicated to health research and biotechnology.

In the framework of its international strategy, USJ has developed partnerships with over 250 higher education institutions worldwide and grants high importance to international cooperation collaboration and international student exchange.



What University of Saint Joseph thinks of the EPIC Project...

“Our Erasmus Mundus journey started in 2011 with ELEMENT, a project also coordinated by Cardiff Metropolitan University. Almost a year later, we joined the EPIC family where cooperation could bloom even more.

Many students have profited from a scholarship and have had an extraordinary opportunity to experiment study outside their usual classrooms. EPIC was most surely the end of life as they knew it, a “break” half-way through their academic development process. Benefits were also much appreciated by staff members who grabbed the opportunity of a staff exchange scholarship period.

Most importantly, we have learned a lot, as a partner in the consortium in terms of best practice and as a team in our own university. We have smiled over phone calls, laughed together over lunch and cheered after a successful video conference, we have learned to deal with crisis situations, short notices, visa problems and delayed flights. We have bonded with students and staff members from our university that we never met before.

EPIC has marked us all, students and staff who worked for and in the project. Sustainable institutional outcomes will surely come out of this lovely human experience”



PALESTINIAN PARTNER

AN-NAJAH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



About

Since it was chartered as a full-fledged university in 1977, An-Najah has promoted the acquisition of modern knowledge whilst remaining committed to the transmission and preservation of Palestinian history, heritage and culture. Today, as the largest University in Palestine, An-Najah educates over 22,000 students and is home to 13 faculties, offering numerous undergraduate and graduate specialisations.

What An-Najah National University thinks of the EPIC Project...

"EPIC was one of the first Erasmus Mundus projects for ANU, aiming to contribute to intercultural understanding not only in the field of academics but also in education, politics and culture. EPIC contributed to the development needs of ANU and supported it in response to internationalisation challenges, taking in consideration particulars of the political situation in Palestine such as refugees. A variety of well-known universities from both Europe and the Middle East formed EPIC; such a consortium offered to ANU students and staff a special experience to study and perform research in an environment of excellence. It also offered to many ANU students the chance to travel for the first time in their life and experience life outside their comfort zone. One should not forget that the ANU outgoing scholars contributed in reflecting an image of the daily life of Palestinians who are putting a maximum effort towards excellence in such a state of development. ANU incoming scholars were also confronted with a new environment and surrounded by a new culture that challenged prior conceptions.



Although coordination of the EPIC project at ANU passed through change of the coordination, one never felt unwelcomed in the EPIC family. Personnel at ANU working for the coordination of EPIC always sensed a joyful environment of work and enthusiasm to achieve goals under the best conditions both through virtual and direct exchange. It wasn't always easy to face the challenge arising from the political instability in the Middle East region but without a doubt the EPIC family could show solidarity and efficiency in solving emergent complications. Interaction with the EPIC family was not exclusive to work issues. We have found that despite vast differences in cultures and origins, we have been able to bond over our obscure interests and passions whether it be culinary tastes, motor racing, shopping or the bizarre antics found behind the closed doors of all our universities. Thus EPIC will remain a space where laughter and unforgettable memories are created. EPIC has the power to reach across cultural differences and boundaries and forge relationships that are not easily broken.

EPIC has paved the way for ANU to be more involved in other projects. It helped the public to be aware of exchange opportunities. Students and staff who could benefit from the project passed their experiences to their peers. Compared to few years ago, there is an increasing demand for such programs. Students, especially girls, are more confident to apply to similar programs like Erasmus+. Palestinians are now aware of the importance of international interaction and the positive change taking place in their studies, employability and careers.

ANU is now more visible at the international level and certainly advancing with higher capacities and strength. ANU is keen to explore areas of future cooperation where it can be involved in EPIC's sustainability plan and future projects. Thank you EPIC!"



SYRIAN PARTNERS

ARAB INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



About

As an institution of higher education and academic research, Arab International University (AIU), strives to be a centre of excellence that conforms to international standards in education and research. Our mission is to provide a platform for conveying knowledge, values and traditions in the spirit of "good neighbourliness" between Arab countries and Europe, America and all other parts of the world. We are keen on enhancing interaction and cooperation in social, cultural and economic spheres. AIU

offers Bachelors and Masters Degrees. Its administration and academics are modelled on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The language of instruction is English.

DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY



About

Damascus University is not only the largest of five universities in the Syrian Arab Republic, but also the oldest for it traces its beginning back to the early twentieth century. The University of Damascus consists of several faculties, higher Institutes, intermediate institutes and a school of nursing. One of the institutions specializes in teaching the Arabic language to foreigners, which is the largest institution of its kind in the Arab world.



EUROPEAN PARTNERS

ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY



About

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań is the major academic institution in Poznań and one of the top Polish universities. Its reputation is founded on tradition, the outstanding achievements of the faculty and the attractive curriculum offered to students.

The University was founded in 1919. In addition to its facilities in Poznań, AMU has campuses in Gniezno, Kalisz, Piła and Ślubice/Frankfurt-Oder. The University currently employs nearly 3,000 teaching staff and has approximately 49,000 students, 1000 of whom are international.

What Adam Mickiewicz University thinks of the EPIC Project...

"The EPIC family is a big and diversified family, with a lot of weird uncles, bright grandchildren and eccentric aunts, not to mention the caring and dynamic grandparents in Cardiff Met. If we had to place Adam Mickiewicz University in this family tree, AMU would definitely be one of those distant cousins of the grandmother. He appears at family dinners, smiles a lot, is friendly and not conflictive, but few really know him. That is: until some the EPIC grandchildren, mostly master students and PhD students, discovered Uncle AMU's beautiful cabin in a far off land.

AMU is a warm hospitable university located in Poznan, Poland, that might be somewhat off the radar for most Middle Eastern scholars and students of the EPIC project. Nonetheless Poznan is a vibrant city with a lot of green and has an energetic academic community. Its location, right in the middle of the Berlin-Warsaw route, makes the city connect directly with Western and Central Europe. While only a few grandchildren make the trip to uncle AMU, none were disappointed.

And they definitely will have something to talk about at the next family reunion.

EPIC scholar and students that did come to AMU found an interesting mix of North, East and West that is both reflected in the research fields of scholars as in the identities of their classmates and colleagues. AMU knows it plays somewhat the role of distant uncle within EPIC, but due to small amount of mobilities (both in- and outgoing), we were able to give special attention to each scholar. Even when our number of exchanges has been low in term of quantity, quality-wise all sides are content and more personal contacts were established."



CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY



Cardiff
Metropolitan
University

About

Cardiff Metropolitan University is a global university that has been integral to the City of Cardiff since 1865. The university currently has over 12,000 students enrolled across 5 academic schools and at 36% Cardiff Met's postgraduate numbers make up the highest proportion of all Welsh Universities. The University has been ranked as the top UK University for International student support 6 years in a row in the International Student Barometer (2010 – 2015) based on the overall average measure for overall international student satisfaction. Furthermore, in November 2014, its commitment to enhancing the student experience was recognised at the Times Higher Education Awards, where Cardiff Met won the 'Most Improved Student Experience Award' - as voted for by students. Moreover, Cardiff Metropolitan University's International Office has been shortlisted in the annual Times Higher Education Awards in the International Student Strategy category. In addition, in November 2015 Cardiff Metropolitan University is delighted to have been recognised in The Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education at a ceremony at St James' Palace in London. Cardiff Metropolitan University has received one of 21 prizes, which are within the UK's national honours system and are one of the UK's highest accolades open to a UK academic or vocational institution. Cardiff Met has the highest number of coordinated EM projects in the UK (6 in total) and is a partner in a further 12 projects across various regions.

What Cardiff Metropolitan University thinks of the EPIC Project...

"Cardiff Metropolitan University had already experienced coordination of Erasmus Mundus projects before 2012 but EPIC marked a new adventure for us and allowed us to establish firm connections with the Middle East region.

We found the experience of coordinator extremely rewarding and we have also very much enjoyed hosting student and staff scholars from across the region. We have hosted some excellent scholars and have been happy to see their progress, both academically and personally. Staff exchange has allowed for further mutual training and allowed us to share best practices and gain new knowledge. Along with the other EM projects, EPIC has diversified our international portfolio and allowed us to develop our intercultural understanding. It has also raised our profile internationally and allowed us to work with some of the most prestigious universities in Europe and the Middle East.

EPIC provided an opportunity to consolidate Cardiff Met's existing partnerships and also forge new collaborations. We hope to continue this cooperation in future and indeed, we have already been successful in gaining Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility funding for mobility with two EPIC partner universities. We value the connections made through EPIC and as coordinator, would like to thank everyone involved in the project for making the experience so enjoyable."



POLITECNICO DI TORINO



**POLITECNICO
DI TORINO**

About

The Politecnico di Torino, which in 2009 celebrated its 150th academic year from its foundation, has become over the years an international school, where traditions and future, past and modernity are all interlinked. The university has around 32,000 students, with 50% from outside the region and about 15% who are foreign - the highest percentage in Italy. Degrees are internationally recognised and students can choose to follow degree courses taught in English or undertake periods of study abroad as part of their course.

What Politecnico di Torino thinks of the EPIC Project...

"Politecnico di Torino (POLITO) participates in Erasmus Mundus programme as a part of its wider internationalization strategy: the University was able to create a true international and multicultural environment and a world research network on the main subjects of reference by strengthening education in English; supporting international mobility of students and teachers; attracting foreign students, doctoral students, and researchers; taking part in combined research projects and programs. International students are now about 15% of students enrolled (an excellent result if compared with the Italian average 4.5% and OCSE countries average 8%) and Erasmus Mundus projects do their part in

attracting brilliant students from extra European countries and creating fruitful relationships with their home universities. POLITO participated in EPIC project with the aim to strengthen cooperation with Middle East region, where it participated in other two EMA2 partnerships.

EPIC project took place in a very special and troubled period for Middle East region, coinciding with Syrian war. Because of this, and because of the choice of target countries involved, we observe that it had a more substantial component of "aid" and required more intensive efforts by EM Team in the initial phase, if compared with other Erasmus Mundus projects in which POLITO was involved. For our Syrian grantees EPIC scholarship transformed from an opportunity to access top education facilities for a period, into the only possibility to continue and complete their studies. Indeed, from an academic point of view, results achieved have been great not only for Syrian grantees but for many other students too. All degree seeking students got high grades and three of them got highest honours."



SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY OF ROME



About

Sapienza University, which was founded in 1303 by Pope Boniface VIII in Rome, is one of the oldest universities in the world and a top performer in international university rankings. The future of Sapienza is firmly rooted in its rich past and the academic and research excellence of its community. Sapienza's mission is to catalyse the development of a knowledge society by promoting research, education and international cooperation. The 115,000 students enrolled at Sapienza can choose from over 250 degree programmes (Bachelors, Masters and PhDs) and 200 specialisation courses, while the "Scuola Superiore di Studi Avanzati" runs honours programmes and free tuition for its best students. Sapienza has 11 Faculties, 63 Departments and various research centres that drive high levels of excellence in archaeology, physics and astrophysics, as well as humanities and cultural heritage, environmental studies, nano technology, cellular and gene therapy, design and aerospace.

What Sapienza thinks of the EPIC Project...

"Sapienza is a very large university, with a great variety of students of different nationalities, studying a big variety of different disciplines. This environment is of mutual benefit both for the regularly enrolled students of the institution and for the incoming ones, no matter if exchange or degree seeking.

The impact that Erasmus Mundus EPIC and the other EM projects concerning the same geographical area had on our university are deemed of great importance, since we had a qualitative and quantitative increase of Middle Eastern students. Sapienza is committed to the Erasmus and to the Erasmus Mundus programmes

since the very beginning: enhancement has consolidated in around 27 years of ongoing projects. Such growing experience has brought to a major awareness of the importance of internationalization at home and thus, for instance, the number of courses offered in English has increased consistently during the past few years. The Erasmus programme solely did not foster internationalization at home that much, since mobility of students is aimed at exchange, but EM has brought also degree seeking students, and Sapienza had to face this challenge by creating whole degree courses taught entirely in English, not only single modules for the Erasmus exchange students. The strategy of our university has changed, it has developed into a more internationally oriented one.

Cooperation with the consortium partners has grown radically during the years. Sapienza entered this way into different Tempus and Capacity Building projects, which turned into a great step forward in the comprehension of the concerned geographical area, and this experience has undoubtedly led to a strengthening of the management capacities of both students' services and capacity building within Sapienza."



SCIENCES PO



About

Sciences Po is an international research university, both selective and open onto the world, ranking among the finest institutions in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Sciences Po's international dimension was established in its founding documents. Driven forward by this vocation for nearly 150 years, today Sciences Po stands out as a world-class university: internationally-recognised degrees and research, a multicultural community and a worldwide network of partners. The university has approximately 13000 students, 47% of which are international and represent 150 different nationalities.

What Sciences Po thinks of the EPIC Project...

"As Sciences Po stands out for combining approaches and confronting different worldviews, it was natural for us to join the EPIC Project family and its academic cooperation goals. We actively participated in the mobility dynamics of the EPIC Project, improving our tradition of diversity, our students' international awareness and also contributing to affirm worldwide our multidisciplinary approach. Sciences Po's student body brings together 13,000 students, half of whom are international. Taking part of the EPIC project became a remarkable mean to attract the best students from the MENA region, and award several scholarships. We had the opportunity to open up to new selective partnerships in a strategic zone as well as boost existent cooperation. EPIC project improves our mobility dynamics and gives both Sciences Po students and students from the Region the possibility to be part of an international academic experience."

TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN



About

With almost 32 000 students, circa 100 course offerings and 40 Institutes, the historic Technische Universität Berlin is one of Germany's largest and most internationally renowned technical universities. Located in Germany's capital city – at the heart of Europe – outstanding achievements in research and teaching, imparting skills to excellent graduates, and a modern service-oriented administration characterize TU Berlin.

The range of services offered by the institutes seven Faculties serves to forge a unique link between the natural and technical sciences on the one hand, and the planning, economics and social sciences and humanities on the other. In 2013, TU Berlin initiated a vision of its own future. With broad support from all status groups, the university adopted a strategy for future university priorities up to the year 2020. These ranged from establishing a new culture of teaching and learning and further developing of quality management systems, to promoting diversity in career paths, reinvigorating existing structures and developing modern campus management approaches.



What Technische Universität Berlin thinks of the EPIC Project...

EPIC Team at TU Berlin:

"We have experienced the overall management and coordination by Cardiff Metropolitan University to be excellent in terms of structure and available forms for all administrative issues. We have always received very competent and friendly answers to all our questions and felt supported throughout the project lifecycle."

EPIC scholar Yaman Hebbo:

"I'm really proud to be part of the EPIC programme. (...) The programme encouraged us a lot to build on an academic life here at university. We have been encouraged to attend delightful courses, to increase our skills and capacity and to learn more about intercultural work and most importantly to learn the language and engage and try to speak the language here at the university. In total, it helped me a lot in putting my research on track (...) All the best wishes for the lovely students that I met. I could say: Yes, we do have an EPIC family."

UNIVERSITY OF LIÈGE



About

Located in the heart of Europe, one of the University of Liège's main priorities is to open itself to the world. This determination is manifest in a series of initiatives which have brought together more than six hundred partners in Europe and throughout the World. It is home to more than 20,000 students, including 4600 international students and consists of 10 Faculties and 1 School.

What the University of Liège thinks of the EPIC Project...

"Institutional involvement in worldwide mobility has contributed to highly develop the internationalisation of the University of Liège and has reinforced the capacity of the international office. The objective of the Erasmus Mundus programme to develop human resources and international cooperation capacity of Higher education institutions in Third Countries by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries has been totally achieved for our institution, by welcoming students, doctoral students and professors from all over the world, who are now back to their home countries, with new knowledge and competences, and with strong links with Europe in general, and the University of Liège in particular.

Thanks to the EPIC programme, the University of Liège has strengthened existing cooperation links with universities from these countries and enlarged the field of studies targeted by the former cooperation. For example, we received 3 students from Saint Joseph University in Beirut, in the field of translation, which was not included in former agreements, but due to this new cooperation possibility, the ULg will include Lebanon in its application for Erasmus + International Credit Mobility application. We will also consider applying with other EPIC partners.

The coordination of the EPIC programme did a great job among the consortium and organizing the mobility between partners. It was a great pleasure to participate to this project for our International office. We received excellent and committed young researchers, in particular from Syria, who did a high quality, internationally recognized research work. Our Belgian researchers also learned a lot by being in contact with the highly qualified EPIC researchers."



UNIVERSITY OF LORRAINE



About

Université de Lorraine promotes innovation through the dialogue of knowledge, taking advantage of the variety and strength of its scientific fields, and aiming at the promotion of knowledge transfer to irrigate innovation and economic growth as well as the progress of fundamental science.

Being the only university of a whole region, Université de Lorraine is a major actor in its economic and social development, building on intercultural and intergeneration links, coordinating a regional research policy, and giving access to higher education to as many inhabitants as possible.

What the University of Lorraine thinks of the EPIC Project...

"Being a part of the Erasmus Mundus projects is an important opportunity and also a challenge. The main objective for the University of Lorraine, through this kind of programme, is the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with the third countries which we definitively consider as an asset for the university.

Thanks to the EPIC implementation and its 2 cohorts, we had the opportunity to welcome individual students (Master level), researchers (Doctorate & Post-Doctorate level) and university staff (Professor and administrative) with a very high academic level for some of them. Therefore, it was an amazing opportunity for the scholars but also for the University of Lorraine which, as a host and home university, have benefited from different knowledge, skills and know-how.

We also discovered a reality that we sometimes couldn't imagine. Indeed, some of our scholars, due to the critical political situation in their countries, explained us their lives (professional and personal). Then, this kind of exchange is also a way to understand the socio political issues beyond our borders. We consider that this kind of mobility is an added value for our university. It allows to have an international vision. Thus the wealth of our university is the diversity of our students.

The EPIC mobilities have contributed to the development of human resources and to the international cooperation. We developed useful contacts with the partners' universities that will be fruitful for extended collaborations. The International Department of the UL is now studying new partnerships and a new staff has been recruited to strengthen our management capacities in the region. We'd really enjoy to carry on and to be a part of the future collaboration programmes as a host and home university."



UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA



About

The University of Salamanca has 9 teaching and administrative campuses which house 22 faculties, 22 libraries and around 35000 students. It is the oldest university in Spain and the third oldest in Europe, having been founded in 1134. The formal title of "University" was granted in 1254 and recognized by Pope Alexander IV in 1255.

What the University of Salamanca thinks of the EPIC Project...

"The "EU Partnerships and International Cooperation with Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine" (EPIC) project has fulfilled the overall Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Strand 1 objectives: it has promoted European higher education and it has enhanced intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education. In particular, EPIC Project has been incredibly beneficial for the Arabic and -Islamic Studies area at Salamanca University. Before the project, students from Arabic Studies could benefit from a mobility in Europe through the Erasmus Programme, but thanks to EPIC they have the opportunity to study in an Arab university, which provides the student a true linguistic immersion. This project has also opens possible partnerships with a new geographical area, since we have strengthened bonds of collaboration and cooperation based on an atmosphere of mutual confidence.

The overall experience of being part of the EPIC project consortium has been exceptionally enriching. Coordination and implementation of the project at institutional level has brought some difficulties since the very beginning but with effort, dedication and frequent communication with the Coordinator we have managed to solve them.

EPIC Project has promoted mobility for students, researchers, and academic staff from third countries especially from vulnerable groups, selected on the basis of academic excellence. These scholarship holders have obtained qualifications and/or experience in Europe, which will be very useful in their academic future.

We have witnessed positive experiences, both of incoming and outgoing students. For example, one of our PhD incoming student is going to write the thesis in Spanish even though when he arrived in Salamanca, he practically didn't speak Spanish. We have also collected encouraging testimonials from our outgoing students. For example, one of the PhD students said: "My mobility has helped me a lot in improving my Arabic and also in gaining more experience and field knowledge for my PhD research". Finally, EPIC Project has contributed to open new paths for future collaboration with partners of the consortium."



VILNIUS UNIVERSITY



About

Vilnius University is the oldest and largest Lithuanian higher education institution. Since its establishment in the 16th century, Vilnius University, as an integral part of European science and culture has embodied the concept of a classical university and the unity of studies and research.

The University of Vilnius has 12 faculties, 7 institutes, 4 interdisciplinary study and research centres, 3 University hospitals, an astronomical observatory, a botanical garden and the Church of St. Johns'. Currently there are 20,643 students attending Vilnius University including international students from over 50 countries all over the world. The university employs a total of 1,329 members of academic staff and 523 research fellows.

What Vilnius University thinks of the EPIC Project...

"With Erasmus Mundus programme Vilnius University stepped forward to look outside Europe. It really became as a "window" to a wider academic world with its diversity, challenges and new opportunities. Erasmus Mundus EPIC project has offered us a unique opportunity to exchange knowledge, skills and experience, to find commonalities and share challenges, to build partnerships with the universities from Middle East countries.

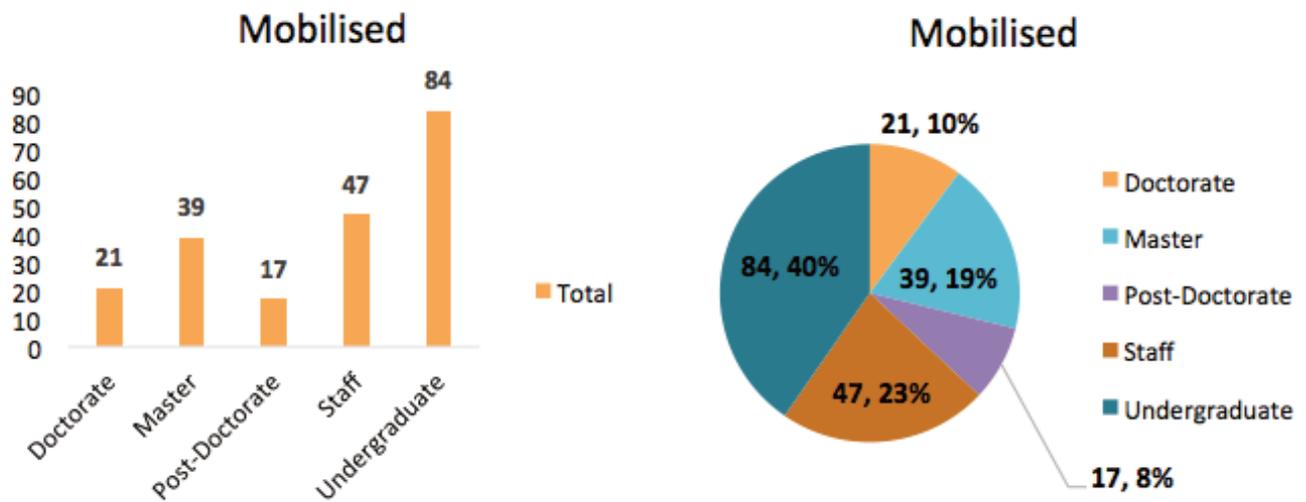
EPIC project, thanks to perfect coordination by Cardiff Metropolitan University, has brought different universities together and enabled them to network, exchange the knowledge, skills and experience. Students have got a unique opportunity to discover partner countries by studying there. They have obtained new knowledge and competencies, international experience through exchange mobility or degree studies. Thus, I hope, will help them to be more competitive, open-minded and better prepared for the future challenges.

Academic/administrative staff mobility has aimed at strengthening internationalisation of our institution through academic and research collaboration. Erasmus Mundus EPIC project contributed to strengthening academic dialogue with Middle East universities bilaterally and regionally, to work on common fields of academic and research interests and to give new impetus for further joint actions, building the capacity of higher education sector under Erasmus + programme."

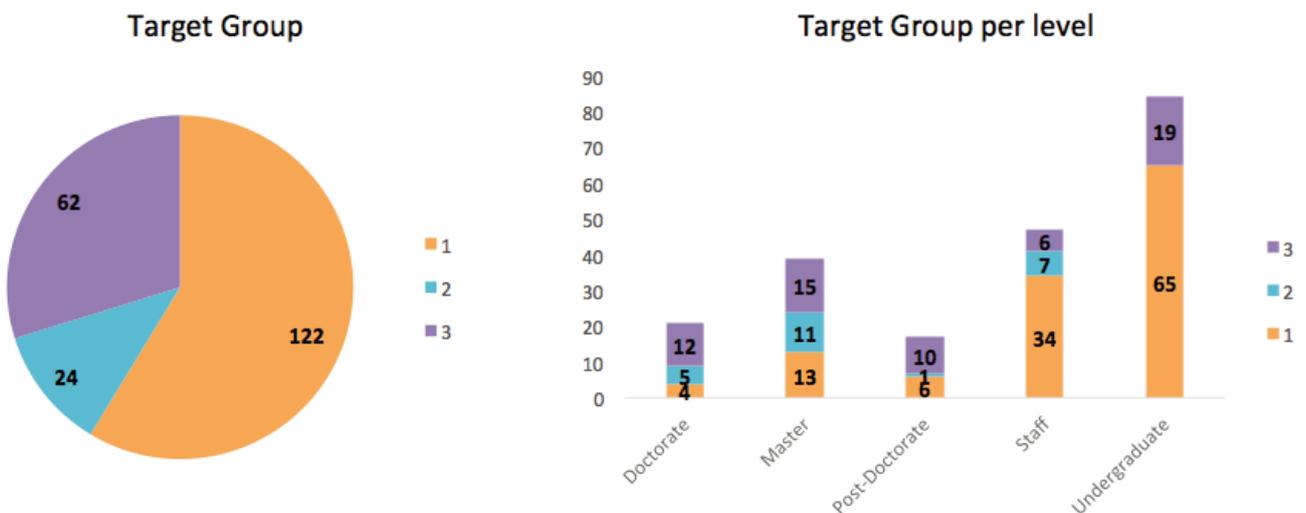


EPIC MOBILITIES

The Project was successful in achieving 208 scholar mobilities across all five mobility levels (undergraduate, master, doctorate, post-doctorate and staff).

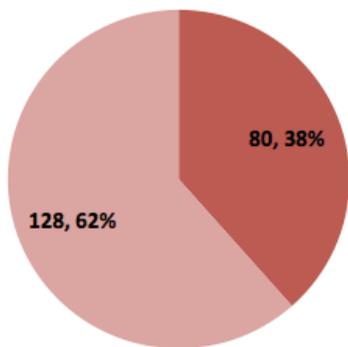


58.65% of scholars were Target Group 1, belonging to universities that were part of the EPIC partnership. A further 11.54% of scholars were Target Group 2, coming from other universities across Europe and the partner countries in the Middle East. Target Group 3 scholars accounted for 29.81% of scholars – these were scholars who were considered to be in a vulnerable situation.

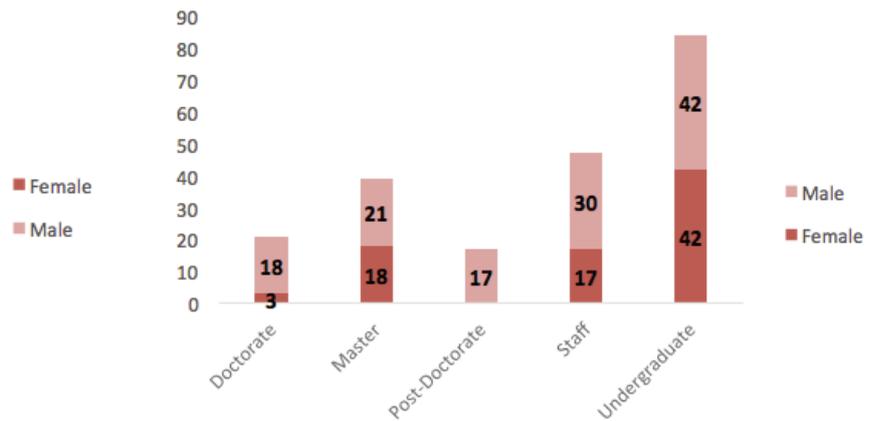


The final statistics on gender balance are presented below. The project experienced a number of female scholar drop outs in the final months (at staff level) but has nonetheless retained an excellent balance. European outgoing mobilities were almost equally split between male and female scholars. Furthermore, the project successfully mobilised 61 female scholars from across the Middle East region.

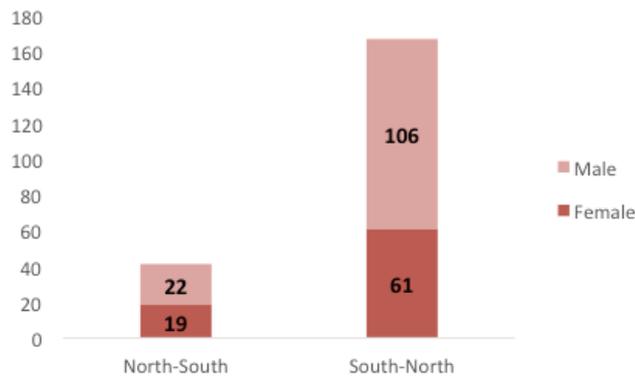
Gender Balance



Gender Balance per level



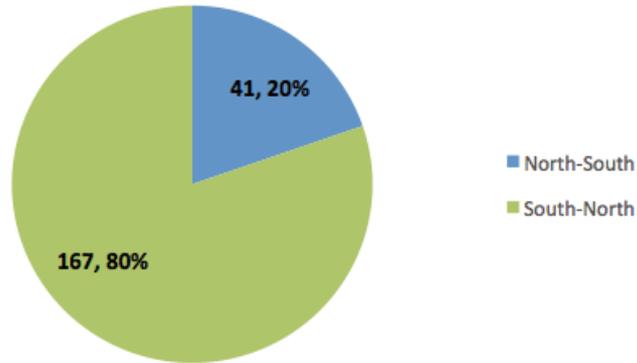
Gender Balance per direction of mobility



In addition to this, the EPIC project aimed to facilitate a balanced geographical distribution across Europe and the partner countries. It was of course not possible for our Syrian partners to act as host university but nonetheless all universities involved in the project sent or received scholars.

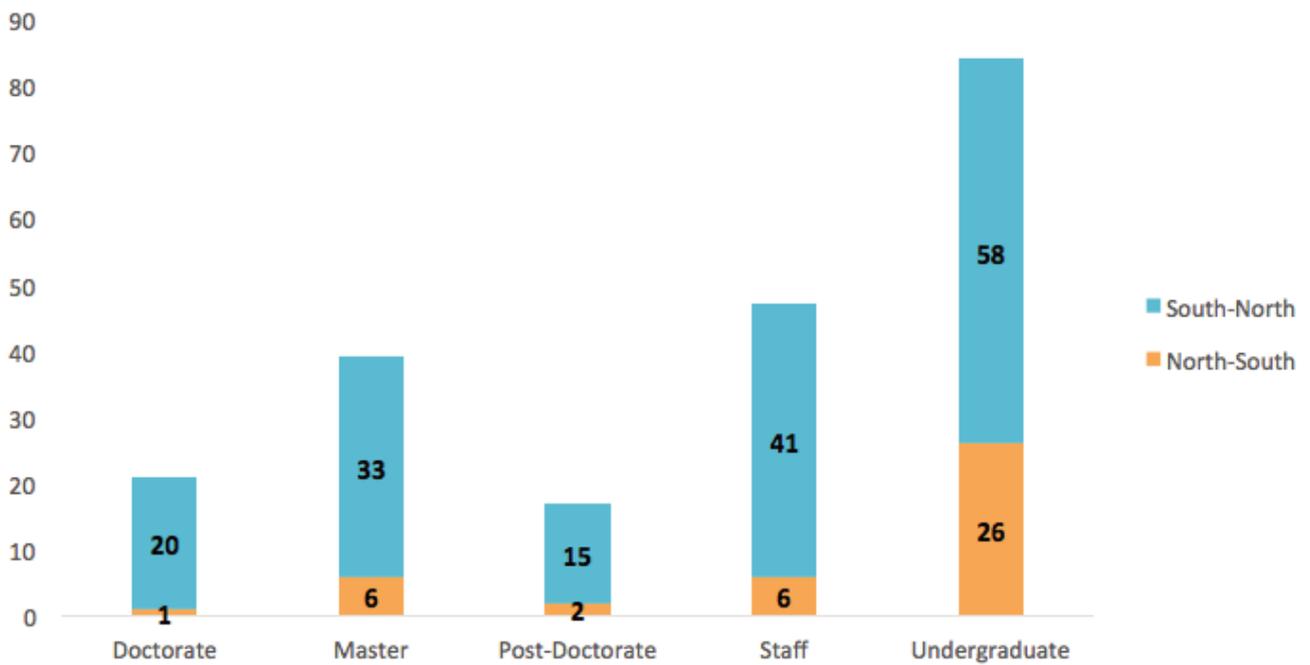
There were 167 South-North and 41 North-South mobilities, as the below graph demonstrates. The project is proud to have facilitated 41 mobilities from Europe to Partner Countries, particularly in light of the ongoing difficulties facing the region.

Direction of mobility



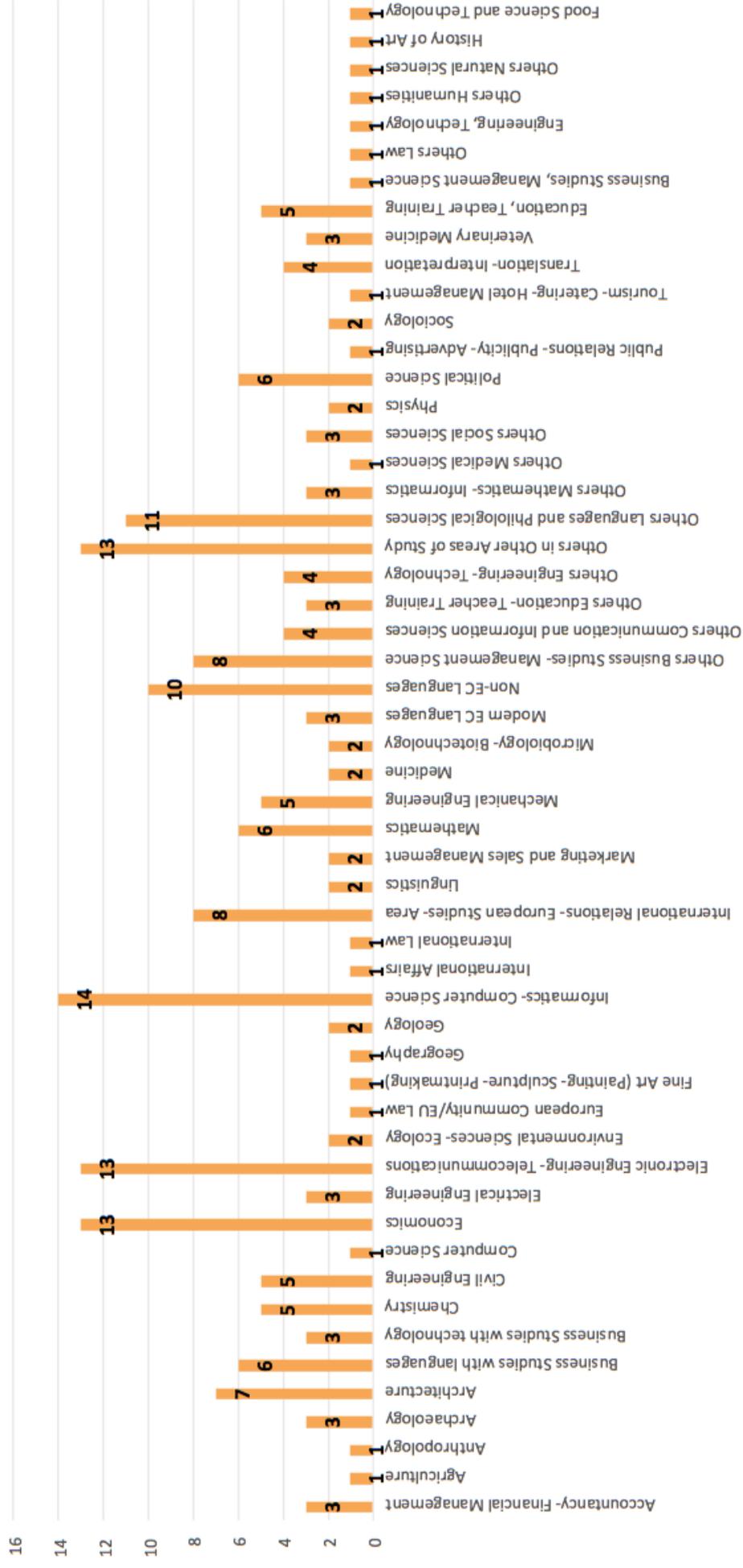
Maximum number of mobilities in both directions was achieved at Undergraduate level however there were also high numbers at Staff and Masters level for South-North scholars.

Direction of mobility



Thematic Fields

Finally, we present the wide range of thematic fields covered by our scholars throughout the project.



EPIC SCHOLAR TESTIMONIALS



Name: Mohammad Abubiah
Host University: Politecnico di Torino
Mobility Level: Masters

I finished my Bachelor studies in 2013, and then I started my search to find a university where I can complete my studies and have a master degree with a subject that satisfied my ambitions. However, the problem was to find a scholarship, since it is hard for me to complete my studies abroad without a financial

aid. After searching I found a poster in my home university (An-Najah National University) talking about Erasmus scholarship.

It was a very nice time to me when I heard that I had been accepted from Erasmus-EPIC project to complete my studies in Politecnico Di Torino University in Italy for two years. Getting chosen for this scholarship was a perfect opportunity for me to develop and acquire new skills.

It was not really easy to deal with the new life, culture and different rules and language from the first day, but after few days I familiarised myself with the basics of this new exciting life. Moreover, the international office in the host university helped me a lot especially at the beginning in both technical and practical information.

I had an amazing time here in Italy, it was both instructive and interesting. I also met many fantastic students and people from all over the world and especially from Italy were they helped me a lot to make my stay very easy and comfortable. I had the chance to travel around in Italy and in Europe in general during the holidays. It was an adventure and great experience for me to see different countries and cities.

Needless to say, this was the most valuable chance in my life as a student, so thanks to everyone who gave me this chance, and special thanks to EPIC and to my home and host universities.



Name: Diana Abu Ghunmi
Host University: Cardiff Metropolitan University
Mobility Level: Staff

Erasmus Mundus EPIC staff mobility programme has given me an invaluable opportunity to cooperate with a scholar from Cardiff Metropolitan University on a research level, to get involved and to engage in the UK academic environment and to enjoy the UK summer. It has been a very rich experience that has upgraded my teaching, research and inter-cultural capacities. EPIC Project Team has been very helpful and professional which made my visiting fellowship very productive and enjoyable. I had not only benefited academically but also I had lot of fun exploring the spectacular landscape of Wales.



Name: Al-Hajaj Rasheed
Host University: Vilnius University
Mobility Level: Undergraduate

The skills and knowledge you gain cannot be taught in schools or in books. How to deal with other people from different countries, environments, and cultures, with different habits, norms, and traditions are remarkable. This one thing won't be in every CV when you apply for a job, this thing will give you an advantage over other candidates. I highly recommend everyone to apply for a

scholarship to study abroad as it will open your eyes to the true meaning of life.



Name: Paul Barrett
Host University: University Saint Joseph
Mobility Level: Post doctorate

I came to Lebanon to carry out post-doctoral research into cultural tourism in the country. Personally, I have found this to be an incredibly rewarding experience and the EPIC Erasmus Mundus programme must have had the same effect on a large percentage of the people who have been able to take advantage of it. It allows you to meet people who you may never have thought of interacting with

before on a professional and social basis and to visit places you might only have dreamt of. I can't recommend it highly enough.'



Name: Wazen Shbair
Host University: University of Lorraine
Mobility Level: Doctorate

In the first place, when I present my motivation letter, I wrote that I hope to get the chance to live in the other part of the world, (since I am from the Middle East). And what happened, that I get much more than I have expected. I hope these program continue to give the chance for others to explore and learn what I learned and of course to transfer these knowledge to their country and society.



Name: Patrycja Misiuda-Rewera

Host University: German-Jordanian University

Mobility Level: Undergraduate

When I read the message from the EPIC Team that I won the scholarship I was in the computer lab in my University. I stand up and start to scream... screaming of joy!

Jordan is a country full of mysterious, magic and beauty. I am impressed by the unbelievable beauty of the

nature, rivers, mountains, green paths surrounding by deserts. It's hard for me to write about it because such a beauty is only understandable by seeing it. The nature of Jordan is breathtaking and I had the fortune to see it all.

Of course is not only about the nature, is more about the people. I met a very interesting group of other exchange students, mostly from Germany. I made deep friendships with the local students, they showed me their country, their traditions and they took care of me. I am impressed by the hospitality of the Arabs and the interest for foreigners. I understand more the Arabic culture and the traditions, it is a rich and deep culture.

Of course I must say something about the German Jordanian University, the university when I made my exchange. It's a great University, well organized and with interesting and good conducted lectures. The University helped me a lot in my stay, and I felt very "at home" and without fear. They organized a lot of activities for the exchange students to show them the country and help to get acclimatized in Jordan and in the University.

It was an experience that opens my mind to the world, and helps me to be an "international" person. I don't want to stop exploring the world, the experience in Jordan makes me "hungry" of the understanding to different cultures.



Name: Rouba Chbeir

Host University: Cardiff Metropolitan University

Mobility Level: Masters

If you ever get the chance to travel abroad to pursue your studies, I urge you, please do not to miss out on it. If you are unsure about the where to, I urge you not to get overwhelmed by choices; my experience at Cardiff Met has changed my life. It changed the way I think. It altered my own perception of my potential. Thus, now two months already following my graduation, I am

certain that your lives can change and your future kick-started. The opportunity to travel and learn does not come too late or too early in life.



Name: Ghadeer Issa Abd-Alrahman Al-Shakhra
Host University: Adam Mickiewicz University
Mobility Level: Undergraduate

Erasmus Mundus has changed a lot of things in my personality and I think this experience will affect me in whole my life. Finally, I want to mention that before I participate in this programme, I read that Erasmus Mundus is not a year in your life; it is a life in one year. In that moment, I didn't understand what they meant, but now I do really understand what they have meant by this sentence.



Name: Kinda Dalla
Host University: Vilnius University
Mobility Level: Masters

One of the most remarkable moments in my life, was that moment when I received the final confirmation email which I read over and over again with mixed feelings of excitement, joy, and a bit of fear of the changes ahead. It even brought tears to my eyes to be blessed with such a life changing opportunity during extremely difficult times my country was & still is going through. It felt like the countless hours I spend looking for scholarship opportunities to pursue a Master's Degree have finally paid off and I had been waiting for that moment for so long!!

Our class had students from over 15 countries; thus I greatly enjoyed meeting them, exchanging ideas, seeing things from different perspectives, and breaking stereotypes I had about certain cultures. We had so many fun during our after-exams gatherings, trips and regular classes and I made so many great friendships being with them and other international students in other faculties.

All professors were really qualified and helpful, and showed a high level of understanding to our needs and differences which is appreciated at all times. We were constantly invited to evaluate courses and provide feedback and our notes were taken into consideration. The International Studies Coordinator was also very kind and collaborative and that ensured an overall smooth management of the entire program.

I've been involved in many interesting projects such as an internship in an international Lithuanian company through one of our professors who shared this opportunity with our class. Additionally, I've volunteered to teach English to an amazing group of Lithuanian teenagers during my summer break that I spent here because I learnt about this project while I was studying Lithuanian language in Soros International House in Vilnius which was a marvellous addition to my personal and professional profile.

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Cardiff
Metropolitan
University



Erasmus
Mundus

