

EucA

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION



# Soft skills in action

Halls of residence as centres for life and learning

**Second Edition**

Maria Cinque



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The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the author and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

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*Gian Luca Giovannucci*

*President of EucA (European University College Association)*

In the two years since the first edition of this volume was published, many things have happened. First of all, new members have joined EucA, which now represents ten different European countries and more than 30,000 University students. With the cooperation of its new partners, EucA has strengthened its commitment to promote cultural exchanges and experiences among students, to encourage active European citizenship and to spread excellence among university halls of residence. To achieve these goals, various events have been organised: soft skill training sessions in Brussels, Milan, Madrid, Dublin; different editions of the EucA Summer School in Cambridge; international exchanges and study visits, internships in different companies etc.

The first edition of *Soft skills in action* was presented at the European Parliament in May 2013. Three Members of the European Parliament hosted the event: Silvia Costa, Marco Scurria and Marek Migalski. They discussed with the students the situation in the European Union, the new Erasmus programme and the possibilities the European Union can offer to them.

Furthermore, in July 2013, EucA promoted and contributed to the Chartering of IASAS (International Association of Student Affairs and Services). Mr. Rob Shea - IASAS President, Ms. Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo - IASAS Secretary, and Mr. Fabio Monti - IASAS Treasurer, signed all the necessary documents establishing a legal seat for IASAS in Brussels. IASAS was founded in 2010 and now includes more than 1200 members from over 25 countries around the world. They provide services and programmes among student affairs organisations and agencies for professionals in student affairs.

In July 2013, staff members of student affair services and halls of residence worked together on soft skills development programmes and best practices in a meeting in Brussels organised by EucA and IASAS. Among the guests, NACA (National Association for Campus Activities) and NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (formerly the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators).

In collaboration with IASAS and NASPA, EucA organised in Rome (23-24 October 2014) the second edition of the *International Global Summit on Student Affairs and Services*, that brought together delegates from all over the world, discussing

employability, competences and global civic engagement.

All these events – and many other activities that are described on the website ([www.euca.eu](http://www.euca.eu)) – can be considered further steps towards EucA's vision to become internationally the benchmark for high quality and relevant university education, based on three pillars: residentiality, soft skills and internationalisation. To this end, EucA has continued in these years to promote and develop at international level the educational model of the university colleges by engaging in all possible fields (Universities, institutions, enterprises and civil society).

This new edition of *Soft skills in action* was published to give an overview of all the activities carried out by EucA and its network in the specific field of soft skills and to update the map of best practices in European colleges and halls of residence, carried out during the ModEs project. Furthermore a new project is described, that can represent an outcome of the previous programme. The soft skills model designed in the ModEs project was the starting point of another project funded with support from the European Commission (Lifelong Learning Programme), E-QUA (Erasmus QUALity hosting framework). This three year project aims to improve the quality of students' mobility through the definition, validation and transfer of quality mobility's criteria related to the hosting and learning programmes offered by the structures that host Erasmus students

EucA's future goals will be aimed at increasing the impact of the colleges' educational model towards institutions by multiplying lobbying activities in order to strengthen, protect and promote a model that, with its uniqueness and specificity, can be considered a 'label' of quality.



## FOREWORD

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Gian Luca Giovannucci

President of EucA (European University College Association)

*Nurturing talented individuals has always been central to the mission of universities and becomes ever more vital as knowledge becomes central to social and economic development, and as global competition for talent increases. As European universities develop their own specific profiles, this requires renewed commitment to a 'community of purpose' that encompasses all elements of the university mission – teaching, research and service to society – and unites European universities in a common European system of higher education and research, balancing the need for competitiveness with that of enhanced cooperation, social cohesion and solidarity. (EUA, 2011)*

Many academic institutions in Europe originated as university colleges founded in the Middle Ages. These were in countries such as Italy and France, where social cohesion through academic study flourished. Clerical scholars were given free accommodation and support in their academic studies. From the 13<sup>th</sup> Century onwards collegiate halls began to develop across Europe, most notably through accepting non-ecclesiastical students. In Anglo-Saxon countries these halls tended to be integrated into universities, whilst in Italy and Spain they formed separate organisations aimed at providing similar support to that of clerical students. This is why they are known as university colleges in Anglo-Saxon countries and as halls of residence in Italy and Spain. Furthermore, in each country, these institutions assume peculiar traits, grounded in national traditions. They do, however, all aim to build 'communities of purpose' that encompass all elements of the university mission – teaching, research and service to society.

Since 2006 the main collegiate institutions in Europe have joined the EucA federation. It represents 30,000 students and 200 collegiate halls of residence. Its concern is the professional, academic, cultural and human development of university students. It is based in Brussels and collaborates with EU institutions.

University halls of residence in different countries have differing models of governance and admission criteria. They offer various services and facilities that help students to pursue both academic and personal excellence. Halls of residence are fertile environments for cultivating human development, through the intellectual growth, social enhancement, and professional development of students.

Although institutions, priorities and curricula change, students remain the university

colleges' most valuable resource and asset. They encourage college students, from all backgrounds, to develop into well-rounded citizens, capable of tackling the many challenges of life and work.

Common traits of EucA halls of residence are the following:

- Collegiality through *shared experiences and responsibilities*, through activities such as communal sports and excursions. Facilities, such as a canteen, communal kitchens, study rooms and libraries also assist in providing a collegiate atmosphere, enhancing the students wellbeing.
- Complementary *training activities* provided by the halls support and encourage students in reaching their potential for academic and personal fulfilment. This is made possible through various activities including tutoring, organised sporting and cultural pursuits and through contact with academics and working professionals. Students are also supported in external activities and especially in travel study programmes.
- *Scholarships* for new students encourage the students' creativity, responsibility and mutual solidarity.
- Getting in contact with students of other countries through the *networking and activities* of the European University Colleges Association (EucA).
- The college environment encourages the development of students' *life skills* through individual tutoring, enabling the students to prepare for work after university. The environment also assists in developing a greater understanding of other cultures.

The objectives of halls of residence provide for academic opportunities and an environment that will encourage a sense of dignity and self-esteem within students.

This is a real 'competitive advantage' for students living in halls of residence. The programmes of most EU universities are still focused on teaching traditional scientific skills rather than paying attention to soft and complementary skills. Universities do not tend to provide those '*skills and competences needed to make a rapid and successful transition to employment*' (EESC, 2010).

The ModEs project, financed by the EU programme 'Lifelong Learning Erasmus', involved 14 partners from 9 countries in a three-year programme. The aim was to create a white paper based upon the collective experience of university collegiate halls of residence.

The main goal of the ModEs project was to integrate a common European programme on soft skills in the academic curricula. As result a new curriculum has been developed to enrich the students' profile with new employment-oriented competencies.

The two main deliverables of the ModEs project are:

- A handbook in 4 languages (Italian, English, Spanish and Polish) containing a set of guidelines and a unified teaching and accreditation methodology to teach soft skills at the undergraduate level.
- A prototype of a serious game in 4 languages (Italian, English, Spanish and Polish) to assist in developing some of the soft skills identified.

In order to achieve these goals, the ModEs project relied upon interaction between the three main sectors involved in research: universities, colleges (collegiate halls of residence) and companies. Each provided a significant contribution to the project, in a process that has taken into account the companies' needs, but has been driven by academic and collegiate concerns. We are firmly convinced of the strength in this approach. According to some commentators (scholars, researchers and policy

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makers) the best possible response to the economic crisis depends upon increasing levels of training in soft and transversal skills such as team building, problem solving and public speaking. These are all important skills for the job market that are not taught at universities. It is necessary to invest more in the higher educational sector, to promote 'qualitative mobility' among students and professors, to build structured relations across different countries and between higher education and business in order to encourage active citizenship.

*'We need to create a flexible environment to empower people to continuously learn and adapt to change, to provide them, from early childhood to maturity, with [the] skills needed to cope, to develop their talent and to transform their ideas into social and economic value...'. (Barroso, 2009)*



## PREFACE

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*Andrew Hegarty – NEA (Netherhall Educational Association)*

There are to be found in European collegiate halls of residence common root-elements as well as, both naturally and unsurprisingly, many regional variations arising from distinct local histories. It is difficult to point to a single or comprehensive blueprint applicable everywhere. Nonetheless, there are certain characteristics common to many if not all collegiate halls across the continent.

Perhaps most obviously, and by no means insignificantly, there is *commensality*: student residents eating together and sharing certain domestic and recreational resources. In colleges and halls with a religious ethos - and this was almost always to be found in the original medieval institutions - there may be also common worship and other religious observances in chapels. Frequently life in common extends to shared study facilities and libraries as well. Students often engage through their halls in artistic, musical, and other cultural pursuits which are 'extra-curricular' from the perspective of examined academic diplomas. Many halls facilitate a fruitful, and even quasi-tutorial, contact with academics, and indeed invited visitors from professional life, outside the formal context of the lecture-hall or laboratory. Very importantly, in a world of faculty-based university teaching, halls almost always bring together students from a wide range of disciplines, enriching each other's lives at many levels.

The value of all this can hardly be overstated, and the time students spend in such institutions has almost invariably a significant role in forming their minds and characters. Not least, the variety of people encountered in such a shared home-away-from-home has long been acknowledged as a good socialising preparation for professional and public life. It is invariably the case that students at Oxford and Cambridge universities identify more readily with their colleges than with their universities.

Students will often hold offices in student societies that may be associated either with a particular collegiate hall or, as is often the case in the non-collegiate universities of England and Wales, with more centralised student unions that have taken on - but not in a residential manner - some of the social and sporting functions. The elective offices in question are often very responsible and develop in their holders organisational and presentational skills of no mean order. Such skills have long been seriously considered by potential employers as important elements in the formation of university students and as very useful preparation for effective professional work.

Such aspects of collegiate life are long-established and well-respected. Traditionally, in some countries at least, employers have paid considerable regard to the *curriculum vitae* presented by applicants for jobs, and have looked in their selection processes to extra-curricular achievements (presidency of a political or debating club, captaincy of a sporting club, serious involvement in music or drama, commitment to voluntary social work, evidence of leadership or organisational capacity, etc.) in addition to strictly academic measures of attainment. The names of two or three 'referees' offered by applicants at the foot of their CVs will often include persons who can comment authoritatively on these matters, e.g. wardens of collegiate halls of residence, as well as academic lecturers and tutors. However, there is some evidence to suggest that such practices are in decline and that some formal or certified recognition of involvement and achievement in the wide field of what has come to be termed 'soft-skills' is likely to be of great benefit to both students and employers of graduates.

While collegiate halls and even the more centralised and non-residential student unions already foster quite widely and thoroughly soft-skills among students, the implementation of all or most of such an articulated curriculum as is put forward in the ModEs Handbook (Haselberger, Oberhuemer et al., 2012) is something for which, on the evidence of some national surveys, collegiate halls do not currently have the resources (either financial or in terms of personnel) to implement.

In such an environment, it would seem that implementation of an accredited curriculum in a collegiate hall of residence would either have to be undertaken in direct and close collaboration with some academic department of a recognised university (which would depend on considerable enthusiasm and determination in both parties to the arrangement), or have to depend, at least until its success has been proven, on some system wholly external to academic university structures, perhaps related to the professions, which themselves examine in particular ranges of skills.

This last option might be feasible and attainable in the short- to medium-term. Once in place, if it were to prove a success and to gain the wholehearted approval of employers, the scheme might eventually lead to universities in which students take their academic degrees showing a greater openness to offering accreditation in joint ventures with collegiate halls of residence.

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# INTRODUCTION

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Maria Cinque

In an article dated 1957, Doris Thoday – a Former Research Fellow of the Faculty of Commerce and Social Science, University of Birmingham – wrote:

*The University Grants Committee has recently set up a committee on halls of residence to consider, amongst other things, 'the nature and importance of the role which should be played by halls of residence in the education of university students, and its relationship to that of other forms of students organisation'. This enquiry has resulted from criticism 'by industry, the Professions and Civil Service of today's university product, not so much because of lack of intellectual or academic ability but on the general count of narrow specialisation, lack of initiative and leadership'. It is thought that the provision of more halls of residence might help to remedy these deficiencies.*

*Now the provision of halls of residence on a large scale is expensive and those who have to decide about its advisability will wish to take into account all available evidence about their effectiveness in promoting the general intellectual and social level of student life.*

*It is of course difficult to define the intangible qualities of a 'general education' or to judge other than subjectively whether the student is obtaining something more from the university than a specialized training. But it is possible to investigate those aspects of university life which are often supposed to develop a broader outlook, and to provide facts with which to compare our impressions.*

*Apart from the stimulus received from their teachers to take an interest in the broader aspects of their own and general subjects, it is generally agreed that students can be stimulated to broaden their interests by participating in the activities and facilities provided by the university and by the interchange of ideas between students, especially those taking different subjects. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to compare the use made of these opportunities by students living in Hall, in lodgings and at home.*

*(Thoday, 1957)*

Doris Thoday's argumentation sounds very modern. The 'criticism' towards university students', narrow specialisation and their 'lack of initiative and leadership' is an important subject-matter, very often discussed today when talking about the need to 'bridge' university study with the professional world. Employers want to recruit people who are able to deal competently with the complexities that are inherent in many jobs and, above all, in a continually changing environment. Universities do not often provide these skills. Enhancing the employability and mobility of European citizens was an overarching objective of the Bologna Process (1999-2010), along with increasing the attractiveness of European Higher Education in a global market. The expected effects of the Bologna Process are still not detectable. It has, however, raised some important questions.

These issues have been debated, comparing the relatively intangible effects upon students and upon society of alternative types of development, such as the one performed in halls of residence. Such comparisons can hardly be made in the absence of relevant facts. Unfortunately, even today, when there is a wealth of opinion and individual experience to draw on, there is very little objective information about the advantages and disadvantages of halls of residence and their effects upon students.

In another article, written to answer to criticism made against the costs of halls of residence, Thoday (1960) explains:

*We have some such information from an enquiry carried out in the University of Birmingham in 1951-52. The investigation there indicated that students in the halls of residence led a more active university life than the rest, and also mixed more with students of other disciplines. When students of different disciplines live together in the way that halls make possible they are forced to meet and are provided with the necessary time together to get to know each other and for casual social gatherings. (Thoday, 1960)*

Already in the Fifties and Sixties, Thoday wanted to gather all available evidence about the effectiveness of halls of residence in promoting the 'general intellectual and social level' of student life. She investigated those intangible qualities of a 'general education' and identified key aspects in three elements: teachers' stimuli, participation in activities and facilities, and interchange of ideas among students studying different subjects. The investigation that Thoday carried out in Birmingham University (in the session 1951-52) found that 'hall students' not only took more active part in sports and societies, but also were more likely to read books outside their subject, and had friends in other departments and faculties. Three-quarters of male residents in Birmingham University halls of residence (and over half of females) had friends in other faculties. Amongst other students the proportion was never higher than a third.

The need to provide adequate evidence of the benefits of halls of residence on students' skills for employability is still a very important task today, as demonstrated by the ModEs project. A specific part of the ModEs project was aimed at investigating soft skill development in halls of residence. In this volume we will present quantitative and qualitative data resulting from this study.

We aim at:

- Creating a plan for the development of soft skill teaching in collegiate halls of

residence across Europe, analysing and comparing the circumstances of all four countries' scenarios (quantitative research).

- Mapping the best practices and teaching/learning/assessment methods for the development of soft skills in halls of residence (qualitative research).

Before presenting the results of the project and of this specific deliverable, we will carry out a comparison of different models of halls of residence in Europe. We will also describe EucA, the largest network of halls of residences in Europe. Furthermore, we will outline the core values of education in halls of residence, highlighting academic and social effects of living in halls of residence.









# CHAPTER 1

## COLLEGIATE HALLS OF RESIDENCE IN EUROPE

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### 1.1 COMMON ROOTS AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES\*

In Ancient Rome the word *collegium* (plural *collegia*, 'joined by law') indicated any association with a legal personality. It could be a club or society, or simply a group of people living together, under a common set of rules (*cum*- = 'together' + *leg*- = 'law' or *lego* = 'I choose').

Historically *collegia* could function as guilds, social clubs, or funerary societies. The purpose of the guild in each case was to protect and represent the interests of the trade, but little information about them exists until the age of Cicero, when they reappear in the form of political clubs (*collegia sodalicia* or *compitalicia*), principally with the aim of securing the election of candidates for magistracies. The political *collegia* were suppressed in 64 BC, revived by Publius Clodius Pulcher, a Roman politician, six years later, and finally abolished by Julius Caesar, as they were thought dangerous to public order. The principle of the trade guild reasserted itself under the Empire, and was applied in Rome and in the majority municipal towns. Seemingly, each trade and business throughout the Empire had its *collegium*, as it is by the inscriptions collected in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* from any Roman municipal town. The primary objective was still to protect the trade, but as time went on they tended to become associations for feasting and enjoyment, and depended more and more on the munificence of patrons.

In medieval Bologna the body of teachers was called the *collegium* and the student body the *universitas*, though some students lived in *collegia*. The first example of a modern college was the Collegio Avignonese, founded in Bologna in 1257.

The term *universitas* itself originally could mean any community or corporation, unless qualified by the use of such expressions as *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* or similar. The more ancient and more customary term was 'studium' and subsequently 'studium generale', with 'universitas' being confined to the scholastic guild within the studium. The *universitas* often meant simply the student body, usually called *the nation*, organised for the communal protection of the foreign student body, men who otherwise, being foreigners, were at the mercy of local inn-keepers and tradesmen.

In most universities of the later Middle Ages, *collegium* meant an endowed residence for students, usually housing candidates for both bachelor and advanced

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\* This and all the texts in this chapter that are not specifically attributed to another author are by Maria Cinque

degrees. The colleges grew strongest at the University of Paris and at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Each had colleges in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, notably Paris' Sorbonne (1257), Oxford's Merton (1264), and Cambridge's Peterhouse (1284). By 1500, few students lived outside colleges. The colleges kept libraries and scientific instruments and offered regular salaries - occasionally chairs - to doctors and tutors who could prepare students to be examined for degrees. College teaching took precedence over university teaching. Eventually, the holder of a university chair had little to do besides examining students who had been prepared in the various colleges.

The collegiate movement in Italy grew especially in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, together with the practice of reserving places for students from specific provenances. The most famous example of this was the Collegio di S. Clemente and the Collegio di Spagna in Bologna, founded by Cardinal Gil Albornoz in 1365. The central role that this institution played in the education of the elite and in the intellectual relationships between Spain and Italy is well known. Apart from the Collegio di Spagna only a handful of Italian foundations envisaged the inclusion of 'foreign' students. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, however, a new type of college emerged which opened up places to German students (and others) on a different basis. When the Sienese Casa della Sapienza opened its doors in 1416 it was not, as it had originally been envisaged, to host local 'pauperes' but for fee-paying students from outside the city's jurisdiction. This was not the only case: the older Collegio Gregoriano of Perugia, on which the Sienese college was heavily modelled, began to charge an admission fee at about the same time. The authorities' strategy was soon vindicated: the success of the Sapienza as an attraction for foreign students was demonstrated by the need from the earliest years for a waiting list, and the constant flow of petitions from eminent figures across Europe points to the diplomatic fruits of this policy as well.

A non exhaustive list of the university colleges founded in Europe between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries is provided by Table 1.

**Table 1:** Chronology of Medieval and Renaissance university college Foundations

1257	Collegio Avignonese	Bologna
1257	Collège de Sorbonne	Paris
1263	Balliol college	Oxford
1264	Merton college	Oxford
1284	Peterhouse	Cambridge
1326	Collegio Bresciano (later called Gregoriano)	Bologna
1362	Collegio Gregoriano (later called Sapienza Vecchia)	Perugia
1362	Collegio Reggiano	Bologna
1365	Collegio di Spagna	Bologna
1367	Collegio Tornancense	Padova
1405	Colegio viejo de San Bartolomé	Salamanca
1416	Casa della Sapienza	Siena
1429	Collegio Castiglioni	Pavia
1441	King's college	Cambridge
1599	Colegio Mayor de Santo Ildefonso	Salamanca
1546	Trinity college	Cambridge
1555	Trinity college	Oxford
1561	Collegio Borromeo	Pavia
1567	Collegio Ghislieri	Pavia
1592	Trinity college	Dublin



Colleges disappeared from Paris and the rest of continental Europe during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. The colleges in Oxford and Cambridge have remained, although they now tend to share instructors and resources among themselves and the wider universities. The Swedish *nations*<sup>1</sup> and the Spanish *colegios* are contemporary continental efforts take advantage of the collegiate system.

Secondary schools are sometimes called colleges. England's Winchester and Eton colleges, which date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, are examples. From 1539 to 1773, the Jesuits built *collegia* in Catholic countries and colonies. In post-Napoleonic France municipalities founded *collèges* where the central government's lycées were not available. Today the usage of the word college varies in English-speaking nations. A college may be a degree-awarding tertiary educational institution, an institution within a federal university, an institution offering vocational education, or a secondary school. In the United States and Ireland, 'college' and 'university' are loosely interchangeable, whereas in the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and other Commonwealth nations, 'college' may refer to a secondary or high school, a college of further education, a training institution that awards trade qualifications, or a constituent school within a university.

## 1.2 EUCA: A NETWORK OF TALENTS FOR EUROPE

by Simona Miano

The European University Colleges Association (EucA) was founded in 2008, to bring together and represent university colleges and associations of colleges in Europe.

From 4 founding partners (the Italian CCUM-Conferenza dei Collegi Universitari di Merito from Italy; the Spanish CCM - Consejo de Colegios Mayores; the Polish WUT - Warsaw University of Technology and the British NEA - Netherhall Educational Association), the association has gradually expanded to 10 Countries and in the last six years has worked with the following as its strategic objectives: the colleges' accreditation by European institutions (Parliament and Commission) as a reference actor in the European scenario of Higher Education in order to enhance the quality of education; the promotion, through European policies, of the ideas of talent, quality, and additional training in soft skills; and support for the internationalization process of each member in its country. EucA has worked to accomplish full European integration and has helped broaden the cultural and personal horizons of young people by exposing them to experiences different from those in their own culture.

EucA's vision aims to make the university colleges become the international benchmark for quality university education based on three pillars: residentiality, soft skills and internationalisation.

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<sup>1</sup> The student *nations* or *nationer* at the two ancient universities in Uppsala and Lund (now 13 at each university) are the oldest student societies in Sweden. The Uppsala nations have a history stretching back to around 1630-1640, and were probably formed under the influence of the *Landsmannschaften* in existence at the northern German universities frequented by Swedish students. The nations in Lund were formed at the time of the foundation of the university (1666) or shortly thereafter. In addition to Uppsala and Lund, student nations were also formed at the university of Tartu and Royal Academy of Turku (now university of Helsinki), the second and third oldest universities in the Swedish Empire. Today, student nations exists at other Swedish universities as well, but they are strictly social organisations and membership is not required to be a student.

The mission of the association is promoting and developing at the international level the educational model of the university colleges by becoming involved in all possible fields (universities, institutions, enterprises and civil society).

EucA operates in the following areas:

a. European and institutional relationships

EucA aims at increasing the impact of the colleges' educational model towards institutions; promoting the model (due to its uniqueness and specificity) and spreading it where it doesn't exist; achieving the recognition and certification of the educational activities in EucA colleges (based on soft skills training through informal and non formal learning); strengthening EucA's position as a qualified interlocutor of European institutions and other international organisations on issues relating to higher education, international mobility and student services.

b. University students' training

EucA proposes training programmes focused on the development of soft skills. It facilitates exchanges among the colleges of the network and the mobility of students, not least by encouraging intercultural dialogue and active citizenship. All EucA's activities have a strong international connotation, play a significant role in building the European Higher Education Area (EHA) according to the Bologna Process and contribute to the development of high skills for employability as indicated in the 'European 2020' strategy and in the Commission's Recommendation 'Rethinking Education'.

c. Research

EucA promotes innovative practices in the field of education through initiatives, projects and scientific publications in the areas of:

1. Soft skills training and their recognition
2. Quality international mobility
3. European active citizenship
4. University-business cooperation

EucA develops effective partnerships for the planning and management of European projects with a significant European-wide impact.

d. Training for trainers

EucA promotes the professional growth of the colleges' managerial staff through the exchange of best practices, regarding both training methods and management of facilities at the European and international level.

EucA is part of the "Business Platform for Multilingualism" promoted by the European Commission and it is a founding member of IASAS (International Association of Students Affairs and Services).

IASAS is an advocate for higher education students and their learning and development.

Through its programmes and services, IASAS is also an advocate for enhancement of the student affairs profession and student service professionals worldwide.

IASAS is a legally recognised entity under the Belgian law.

It was founded in 2010 and now includes more than 1200 members from over 25 countries around the world.

**Table 2:** *Chronology of EucA*

<b>2005</b>	A strong project of collaboration is set up between the Italian Conference of colleges and the Spanish Consejo de Colegios Mayores with the aim of establishing a network of European colleges called EucA-European University College Association. This collaboration follows the numerous partnerships created by each college with prestigious institutions all over Europe.
<b>2006</b>	Easter enlargement of the network due to the collaboration with the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) aimed at the transfer of best practices and, more specifically, the model of residential colleges in new countries.
<b>2007</b>	EucA's network expands westwards to include the British Netherhall Educational Association.
<b>2008</b>	EucA is formally founded on the 6 <sup>th</sup> of June and its Statute is registered in the Moniteur Belge. In collaboration with AESI (Associazione Europea di Studi Internazionali), EucA promotes the first European universities youth Forum (EuyF): EU students met in Brussels and in Rome to discuss the environment, human rights, peace, co-operation and the future of the European Union.
<b>2009</b>	EucA wins its first European projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ModEs (Modernising higher Education through soft skills accreditation), financed by the EU programme 'Lifelong learning Erasmus' (2009-2012);</li> <li>• Promoting responsible European Citizenship, financed by the EU programme 'Europe for Citizens (2009-2010).</li> </ul> First international and intercollegiate video contest, 'Message in a bottle', to celebrate the European year of creativity. EucA is invited to the Business platform for Multilingualism, promoted by the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission.
<b>2010</b>	First edition of the EucA Cambridge Summer School: 'European political identity: past and present'. Participation in different European events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TNT Festival (Rome)</li> <li>• 'Looking for a European Citizenship' and 'A soul For Europe' (Berlin)</li> </ul> Final event in Brussels of the project 'Promoting a responsible European Citizenship' at the European Economic and Social Committee, with the participation of 150 university students from 12 countries; keynote speaker Cecile le Clerq, representative of the European Commission.
<b>2011</b>	International Leadership Conference (Prague). EucA enters as 'multiplier' in the new EU project 'CELAN - network for the promotion of language strategies for competitiveness and employability'. EucA participates as stakeholder in the Festival of Europe, held in Florence where the second edition of the international and intercollegiate contest 'Message in a bottle' is launched on the theme 'Youth and Volunteering'. Second Edition of the Cambridge Summer School: 'European Political Identity and Its New Challenges' International seminar 'Volunteering builds Citizenship', held in Madrid as part of the 'Youth in action' EU-funded project 'El voluntariado en la construcción ciudadana de Europa'. EucA and the European Commission organise jointly the 'Languages Mean Business' essay competition for collegiate students. The award ceremony is held in Warsaw within the 'Languages competences for professional and social success in Europe' conference. EucA organizes the first course together with the Rajk László College in Budapest on 'Consequences of great recession in political economic theory'. Three new partners join EucA: Creef (France), Campus asbl (Belgium), Schweidt College (Germany).
<b>2012</b>	EucA expands its network to Romania (Mikò Imre College), Hungary (Rajk László College) and Ireland (Brosna Educational centres). In Bilbao, EucA launches the project Upgrading Europe (2012-2015) together with Dr. Susana Del Rio Villar, author of the creative idea and Academic Director of the project. EucA organizes the event 'The Role of the European Youth Mobility on Future Employment' in Rome, at the Chamber of Deputies, in cooperation with Adenauer Foundation. Round Table in Rome, at RUI College, about the new European mobility programmes: keynote speakers from the European Commission and the Italian Ministry of Education. Third edition of the Cambridge Summer School: 'European Political Identity at Crossroads: Advancing European Integration'. Final event of Modes Project, in Brussels: keynote speaker Vanessa Debais-Sainton, Team leader Erasmus, European Commission. EucA starts working on E-Qua (Erasmus QUALity hosting framework), a 3 year project financed with the support of the European Commission.

2013	<p>First Italian EucA Ambassador day: training session on communication and social media.</p> <p>'Rethinking Education for the Erasmus Generation. Combining Knowledge and Soft Skills': presentation of the book 'Soft Skills in Action' at the European Parliament and soft skills training for students.</p> <p>'International exchange on soft skills practices', directors' meeting organized by EucA and IASAS, together with the official chartering of IASAS' statute.</p> <p>'Present and future of the European Labour Market': event for Spanish students organized in Madrid by CCM and EucA.</p> <p>Fourth edition of the Cambridge Summer School: 'European Political Identity at the Crossroads'.</p> <p>IESE Online Coaching Day.</p> <p>EucA presents the Cambridge Summer School in the European Parliament during the Lifelong Learning Week.</p>
2014	<p>EucA organizes 'Soft skills 2.0: Employability in a Digital World', 2 days of intensive softs skills training for more than 70 students in Dublin, with a special attention to the new jobs in the ICT sector and a special visit to Google..</p> <p>Fifth edition of the Cambridge Summer School: 'European Political Identity at the Crossroads: Advancing European Integration'.</p> <p>EucA, together with IASAS and NASPA organizes the second 'Global Summit on student affairs and services' in Rome.</p>

### 1.3 UNIVERSITY HALLS OF RESIDENCE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

#### 1.3.1 The role of halls of residence in the Italian university system

by Fabio Monti

##### *History, characteristics and aims*

The university colleges, each with their own history but with the same aims, are legally recognised by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca: MIUR). They are unique within the Italian university system and have strong traditional roots in Europe. Their foundation is linked with a medieval tradition, which started in 1180 when an English pilgrim on his way back from the Holy Land purchased a dormitory from the Hotel Dieu in Paris, in order to accommodate, free of charge, eighteen *scholares clerici* in need of financial aid. Thus university colleges have coexisted with universities since their foundation - a history that coincides with modern western culture. The first Italian university colleges date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and have changed over time. Their principal objective is and was to offer concrete help and accommodation without charge to students who are not financially wealthy, favouring social promotion based on merit rather than wealth.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century these institutions obtained State recognition. The 'Regio Decreto' of 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1933, number 1592 (*Testo unico dell'istruzione superiore*) stipulated in article 191 that '*The work and the foundations whose aim is to develop further learning and which provide assistance in various forms for university studies and in institutes of further learning, are regulated by the supervision of the Minister of Public Education*'. This regulation constitutes the legal foundation that recognises the existence of these institutions. Some colleges are private but are still governed by the Statute. This allows greater access to further learning, assisting students throughout their university studies. Due to their aims, these institutions are under the supervision of the Ministry. The university colleges have continued to remain within state jurisdiction.

The State has become more aware of the aims and objectives of university colleges. This has been demonstrated by various legal and administrative guarantees,

culminating in article 25, III paragraph, of Law n. 390 of 2 December 1991, concerning the 'norms on the right to university studies', which within the text, clearly states that '*the dispositions concerning the legally recognised university colleges remain in force and subject to the vigilance of the Ministry of University, Scientific Research and Technology*' (which in the meantime came under the Ministry of Public Education). In 1997 the legally recognised university colleges decided to form a body to give them collective corporate representation and which would fulfil the role of co-ordinating and promoting their common actions. This resulted in the permanent Conference of the legally recognised university colleges (CCU: Conferenza dei Collegi Universitari di merito legamente riconosciuti).

The institutional aims are:

- To represent in Italy and abroad, to governments and the public, the particular nature of the State recognised university colleges, committed to the development of further learning, having a private judicial nature and aiming to meet public interests with regard to education.
- To promote studying and other cultural initiatives aimed at generating knowledge of the existence of these institutes, both in Italy and abroad.
- To formulate proposals to legislative and administrative powers, in order to obtain further recognition and increase the value of the roles of colleges within the university system.
- To promote collaboration between the colleges, and other Italian and foreign institutions.
- To encourage collaborative research initiatives by the colleges regarding university, professional and educational development for students.

The Decree n. 338 of November 14<sup>th</sup> 2000 concerning 'Disposizioni in materia di alloggi e residenze per studenti universitari' (dispositions concerning university student accommodation and colleges) has included the legally recognised colleges among the institutions subject to state financing. This provides for the development of adequate structures aiming to tackle the problem of the right to further education. Emerging from this are the essential defining factors of the organisations in question, and the method by which functions are organised. The aims of each residence are clearly set out in their enabling statutes. The Ministerial Decree of May 9<sup>th</sup> 2001, aimed at defining the criteria for the allocation of the state contributions to the university colleges, explicitly stated in the preamble that these institutions serve public interests.

Further on in the decree, the value of the educational aspect of the legally recognised university colleges was given high recognition. On May 15<sup>th</sup> 2002 a protocol of understanding between the Conference of Rectors (CRUI, Conferenza dei rettori universitari italiani) and the CCU was signed, recognising university credits for the knowledge acquired by students through training activities, even though these activities are external to the 'atenei'. In particular, this extended recognition of some education and training activities offered by the colleges was seen suitable to satisfy the growing and different demands of university students. One common denominator among all the legally recognised university colleges, whilst autonomous of one another, would be the existence of a targeted training and personalised educational project, founded on one clear premise: each student joins freely a demanding programme for intellectual development, at both a university and personal level, through the use of guidance and tutoring services.

The recent Decree of the University Reform (Law 240/2010), states in art. 5 the objective to strengthen the colleges of Merit through the definition of specific

regulation. This is the final step of a process that will define the institutional, juridical and administrative role of the colleges as a tool to improve the quality of Italian universities and promote merit.

A further support system is offered by the alumni associations, which constantly follow and organize activities in the respective college. MIUR respects the autonomy of each college, but also monitors activities ensuring that the agreed objectives are fulfilled.

### Key facts

14 institutions manage the 47 residential colleges in 14 Italian cities (from Milan to Catania) where over 3,000 students are selected on the basis of academic excellence and personal skills.

### Objectives

- To foster and reward talent and merit.
- To guarantee excellent study conditions for bright and highly motivated students regardless of their financial status, enabling them to complete their university studies within the correct timescales and with the best academic results.
- To support the students job prospects both at a national and international level, by providing them with the best possible credentials.

In brief, the Italian colleges represent a multicultural and interdisciplinary melting pot, a 'life skill school', where students from various backgrounds and nationalities meet, all pursuing the same objective of building their future (both personal and professional) in a stimulating environment.

### Results

- *Job placement.* A recent international survey shows that, less than one year after graduation, 66% of the colleges' residents secured a job (a 12 points difference in comparison with Almalaurea national university figures).
- *Women's education and equal gender opportunities.* In marked comparison with national figures, most of the female students graduated in scientific disciplines (mainly in engineering and medicine). That is a major step forward for the Italian benchmarks in the Lisbon Strategy standards.
- *International Dimension.* Almost 9% - approximately four times more than the national average - of the college community is made up of international students. The colleges encourage student exchange programmes and provide their residents and Alumni with research opportunities both at national and international university institutions (grants, fellowships, etc.).
- *Educational and Academic Activities.* The halls of residence promote more than one hundred university courses, accredited by over 20 academic institutions. These broad opportunities are open to the whole student community free of charge. In addition, the colleges offer a full multidisciplinary cultural programme, filled with conferences and debates, concerts and film clubs, all of which enrich college life.
- *Connections with Companies.* The colleges' traditional connections with local, national and global entrepreneurs provide the residents with excellent opportunities for enhancing their professional skills: enterprises see college students as welcome candidates when hiring. The colleges support their students in developing soft skills motivating them in accordance with the European benchmark of a flexible economy of knowledge.

### 1.3.2 Colegios Mayores Universitarios in Spain

by Carlos García

#### History

In Spain there are numerous residences that accommodate students. Most of them are private, and in some cases they belong to an institution, but there are also Colegios Mayores founded directly by public universities and institutions. They have private or shared rooms, and they offer various services such as meals, laundering of clothes, room cleaning, etc.

The Colegios Mayores Universitarios are university centres that, integrated in the university, provide residence to the students and 'promote the cultural and scientific formation of the residents, projecting their activity to the service of the university community'<sup>2</sup>.

They are not just halls of residence, but also offer their students a comprehensive and extensive range of cultural and leisure activities and, in many cases, a complementary academic education. In most of the cases the residents themselves are also in charge of the organisation of these activities, and together with the Direction of the Colegio Mayor they take part in the administrative decisions of it. Social life is very intense in the Colegios Mayores so that they play an important role in the cultural life of their university and social environment. These institutions have a long tradition in Spanish university life. Their origins go back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when it became necessary to find accommodation for those students who, coming from all over the country, came to certain Spanish towns to try to find out what it would be like living together in groups. As time went on, those residences acquired a much greater importance; in some cases, they became the basis of the university. In other cases, they became cultural entities which were more important than the university itself. From the common will of the students from Colegios Mayores Universitarios who attended the Second Conference on halls of residence, held in Cordoba in September 1979, came the statement that:

*'The university halls of Spain feel solidar in a common effort to improve university education; therefore its directors decide to form a Council'.*

This new entity was named Consejo de Colegios Mayores. On September the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1980, at the Third Conference of colleges, which took place in Madrid, was adopted the Council Regulation, before a National Commission, the *Comisión Nacional de Colegios Mayores*.

#### Key facts

Today the Consejo de Colegios Mayores Universitarios is a national association whose 125 members are university halls and colleges (public and private) from 27 different universities in the most important Spanish cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Granada, Salamanca, Santiago, Sevilla, Bilbao...).

This partnership represents the colleges in various Spanish and international institutions, working with universities to develop activities related to studies, social and cultural development and improvement of professional skills of staff and college students. In addition, the CCM offers a social network that facilitates the exchange of students and lecturers from different universities, both in Spain and abroad.

Colegios Mayores are legally recognised like educational institutions by the Ministry

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<sup>2</sup>LOU: Ley Orgánica de Universidades (Organic law for universities)



of Education. They have to be affiliated to a university, which, in most of the cases, has at least one 'Colegio Mayor'.  
The number of sleeping accomodations is quite similar, even in colleges of different universities (average: 110 residents per college). The average stay in the college is three years.

**Table 3:** Colegios Mayores in numbers

125 Colegios Mayores
17,000 students
27 different universities
30 different cities
2,100 activities per year (cultural events, sport competitions, courses, seminars, workshops etc.)

Spanish colleges aim at educational excellence through their activities and services. Students take part in those activities and are in charge of some services. Most part of the administrative staff live in the colleges (average: 10% of the residents).

Education

Colegios Mayores' mission is aimed at promoting student 'comprehensive training' in the service of the university community and society. The activities most college offer range from cultural events to sport competitions, language courses, soft skills training, seminars, workshops, etc.

**Table 4:** Main activities and services offered in the Colegios

Cultural activities (100%)
Tutoring/Study methodologies (83.3%)
Library (100%)
Sport activities (94.4%)
Training activities (88.9%)
Internet (100%)

- Colegios Mayores' vision include the following goals:
- promoting students' sense of community living together in order to complete their training; human, civic, social and ethical;
  - enhancing students' responsibility, especially through study and participation in activities;
  - encouraging an active participation in society, integrating the university in the social environment in which it operates;
  - ensuring that colleges are rooted firmly in some basic values such as freedom and discipline, thrift, love of work and solidarity;
  - offering students an opportune environment for the full development of his/her potential;
  - promoting the convergence of scientific/technological learning/education and the general development of the person, enhancing the understanding of the human as a 'whole'.

Furthermore, one might recall the aspect of training centers that the residence halls



play in the field of the universities to which they belong, promoting, thus, a comprehensive learning that encourages, develops and complements both the personal and social maturity of its students.

### **1.3.3 Halls of Residence in Northern Europe**

#### **Collegiate Halls of Residence in England and Wales**

by Andrew Hegarthy

##### *Historical background*

Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Oxford and Cambridge were the only universities in England and Wales. From the late 16<sup>th</sup> century it has been required that students at these universities belong to a constituent residential 'college' or academic 'hall'. These institutions will present pupils for matriculation into the university. This distinguishes Oxford and Cambridge from historic Continental universities where a collegiate experience was accessible only to a tiny elite minority of students. Historically, Oxford and Cambridge were small urban centres focused on the universities. Young men would leave home and enter into residential institutions that took responsibility for them in *loco parentis* during their studies. (Women were not admitted until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century). During the 16<sup>th</sup> century central university teaching withered away in good measure, and colleges and halls took over the teaching of the Arts course (and, to some degree, the Civil Law course which was the only real alternative for undergraduate studies). Internal lecturers were salaried to do much of the formal teaching, but each 'pupil' was assigned to a 'tutor' (terms adopted from the Roman Civil Law concerning the guardianship of an under-age heir) who took responsibility for him in *loco parentis* (often liasing with parents) in regard of finances and moral formation. In the early period tutors did not necessarily teach their pupils in matters strictly academic, and the full development of the 'tutorial system' as it exists today came only with changes that took place in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. After 1970 when the age of majority was reduced to 18 from 21 the legal function in *loco parentis* has, naturally, rather faded, although a certain discipline is still maintained and in better instances the relationship remains profoundly formative. The tutor's role has, however, become more focused on academic matters. It should be noted that since the 19<sup>th</sup> century there has been a multiplication of schools and faculties, meaning that colleges are truly interdisciplinary, with each college having small numbers of students in most disciplines.

Throughout their history the colleges and academic halls of Oxford and Cambridge have offered more than merely physical accommodation: common and individual academic tuition (even the small early scientific laboratories were collegiate foundations rather than university); common worship in Chapel; 'commensality' in a common dining hall; common study facilities in libraries; common social facilities; common domestic staff (porters, cooks, kitchen staff, cleaners, etc.); common musical, theatrical and other cultural pursuits; common sports facilities and teams. Students have long had their own committees and clubs to organise activities which are loosely supervised by collegiate authorities.

Another crucial point to bear in mind is that English and Welsh universities offer an undergraduate education that is in most cases not 'vocational'.

Students may study any subject or group of subjects they wish (from Physics to Chinese and on to Music and Theology) for three or four years, and only then start

thinking about what they wish to do professionally for the remainder of their lives. (Engineering and Medicine would normally require dedicated undergraduate study, but even those who take these courses move on afterwards to completely different careers.) Banks, the legal and accountancy professions, and business operations seek to take on the best students they can find from all and any undergraduate disciplines, and hold that it is their task to train them 'on the job'. Naturally, they expect universities to have equipped them to some extent with logical and analytical skills, the capacity to solve problems, and reasonable writing skills, but those are often difficult to measure except through marks obtained in final examinations. This background is essential to any serious understanding of the manner in which 'collegiate halls of residence' have arisen in modern times elsewhere in England and Wales, and of the missions they have sought to take upon themselves: Oxford and Cambridge colleges hover in the background as an ideal (or as reacted against).

Since the 1830s many new universities have been established, starting with Durham and London, through to former polytechnics recently granted university status. It was intended that Durham copy the collegiate set-up of the older universities, and some other institutions created at various times have attempted in greater or lesser degree something similar. Usually the resources have not been available readily and effectively to realise this ideal, and most universities today do not attempt it, except in terminology. They have adopted instead a spread of central facilities and have created central and non-residential 'student unions', administered by the students themselves, which seek to provide common social, welfare, cultural and sporting arrangements echoing those of small colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. These unions represent the student body in dealings with university authorities.

Nonetheless, some universities have sought to establish 'collegiate halls of residence', offering the social experience of common life for at least a proportion of their students. Generally, however, these have tended to develop over time into simple blocks of accommodation that often lack even a common dining room (other than small kitchens shared by groups of three and four residents). Where collegiate halls of residence, offering a more holistic common life, do exist today (officially or independently of a university) they are most often the works of independent foundations and/or religious bodies which have procured the ongoing resources needed to maintain them and have provided the dedicated personnel required to establish and keep up a distinct ethos attractive to at least a minority of students. Examples of such are Goodenough college, Netherhall House and Ashwell House in London; Wills Hall in Bristol; Wantage Hall in Reading; and Greygarth Hall in Manchester. The officially recognised colleges of universities like Durham and Lancaster, which differ somewhat in ethos among themselves, offer to students something of the same - reaching beyond mere accommodation. In some cases academics from local universities are associated with such collegiate halls as 'wardens' and 'tutors', but many are wholly independent of universities and lack even formal recognition from them.

There has hitherto existed in England and Wales no formal or certified recognition of activities undertaken by students in 'colleges', collegiate halls of residence, common student societies, or student unions - even in those administered by universities themselves. Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged by employers that active participation in such societies does, on the one hand, 'socialise' students in a manner that might well indicate good teamwork skills, and on the other foster

some of the other 'soft-skills' identified in the ModEs Handbook.

#### *Netherhall Educational Association*

NEA (Netherhall Educational Association) aims to provide all-round formation for people of all ages, especially the young, to help them develop their talents to the full and use them in the service of society.

Personal development is seen as a harmonious union of all the following components:

- Academic & Professional development enables men and women to do their work well, and to be more aware that study and work are principal means both of personal growth and of serving others.
- Social development promotes understanding and empathy with others regardless of background, race or creed, and fosters friendship and co-operation across cultural divides.
- Character development is founded on human virtues such as sincerity, loyalty, self-discipline, service to others and a spirit of hard work, with a deep appreciation of personal freedom and the corresponding responsibility.
- Spiritual development allows men and women to find God in their family and working lives and to practise Christian principles and ideals.

To achieve these aims the Association owns and operates a variety of centres in Great Britain, including halls of residence for students in higher education, clubs with study facilities for young people, vocational training centres, and venues for residential courses and seminars.

NEA provides accommodation and complementary activities for university students at Netherhall House in London and Grandpont House in Oxford; courses for the hospitality industry at Lakefield Training Centre in London; support for selected educational and social projects outside the UK in NEA International Projects; personal development courses for people working in the City of London or nearby at Crosmore; clubs for young people and school-level study centres at Kelston in Wandsworth, Westpark in Ealing and Dunreath in Glasgow; outreach activities that enable many more people to benefit than those who live in or attend our centres regularly such as taking part in ReachOut activities; and residential courses and retreats at Wickenden Manor in Sussex.

### **The collegiate model in Ireland**

*by Simona Miano and Mirela Mazalu*

#### *Historical background*

The university tradition in Ireland started in the 15th century but it was in the late renaissance that the collegiate university model was implemented. In 1592 Trinity College Dublin was created by royal charter. The organisational design of the new institution was influenced by Oxford, Cambridge and continental precursors, but from the beginning it was an autonomous corporation governed by 'provost and fellows', committed to teaching and to scholarship, the first and (as it turned out) only college of the degree-awarding University of Dublin.

Other Universities were founded in the following centuries, in particular in XIX century. Nowadays in Ireland there are 7 Universities that provide accommodation and tutorial services as well, but there are also other institutions, independent of the university, that provide accommodation together with educational programmes, tutorials and informal activities for the development of the soft skills. Five of these, belonging to the Brosna network, are members of EucA.

Brosna Educational Centres Ltd is a registered charity for the advancement of education and character development in accordance with Christian principles and ideals. Their mission is to provide all-round formation for people of all ages, but especially for the young, to help them develop their talents to the full and use them in the service of society. To achieve these aims, Brosna operates educational initiatives throughout Ireland. These include Halls of Residence for third-level students (e.g. Cleraun, Glenard, Gort Ard), youth clubs (e.g. Anchor, Glenbeag, Nullamore), and adult education centres. Participation in activities at these centres is open to people of all creeds or none, and from all social and cultural backgrounds. There are currently five Halls of Residence in Ireland part of the Brosna network, in Dublin and Galway: Glenard University Residence, Cleraun Study Centre, Ely University Centre, Ros Geal University Residence, Gort Ard University Residence.

### **1.3.4. University colleges in Central Europe**

*by Mirela Mazalu and Simona Miano*

Although the collegiate model disappeared from Paris and the rest of the continental Europe during the French Revolution, we can find nowadays several examples of university colleges in France, Germany and Belgium. Their model is based upon the Italian and Spanish tradition of 'Colegios Mayores' or 'Collegi di Merito': a hall of residence that provides residence to the students and a comprehensive and extended range of cultural and leisure activities and complementary academic education as well.

#### **Internationales Studentenzentrum Schweidt of Cologne**

Schweidt is a private intercollegiate Hall of Residence in Cologne. In the style of an Anglo-Saxon college, it has, since 1963, offered male students optimal conditions for successful studies. Living together with students from different disciplines and of diverse nationalities, combined with get-togethers hosting speakers from political, economic and other fields, as well as sports and cultural activities all promote the development of one's personality.

Schweidt offers each student the opportunity to develop himself. This offer is oriented not only to academic performance but also to socio-civic involvement and social competence. At the same time, help from senior students and graduates is available, on request. They facilitate the first steps at the university and are available to serve as mentors during the semester. Style and environment promote the development of personality. Openness to diversity and generosity toward others are also indispensable. Hence, in Schweidt, residents of diverse beliefs, confessions and religion have a place. All these characterize an attitude that is committed to Christian values.

The college proposes seminars and lectures with people from science, culture, politics and economy. In cooperation with the prestigious IESE Business School, Schweidt has organized since 2010 a summer academy in Barcelona.

#### **CAMPUS, Belgium**

Campus is the association in Belgium that promotes residential facilities for university students which stimulate a qualitative academic, cultural, human and professional development. These facilities are open to all students, residents or not, without any discrimination, always in compliance with the rules and regulations of the halls. The main objective is to foster training and social promotion including providing

practical assistance to deserving students, with a special focus on students from disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to help them throughout their education and prepare them better for the world of work. Through numerous educational activities, scientific guidance and tutoring, students can flourish and complement their academic training, while facilitating graduation on schedule and with the best results.

The Halls of Residence not only provide high quality accommodation services, but also provide additional value in the promotion of cultural and human development of students. The educational project, developed in close collaboration with professors and academic institutions, is personalized for each student. There are currently two halls of residence in Belgium part of the CAMPUS network in Louvain-la-Neuve, Neussart and Bauloy. These residences cooperate with other two residences in Leuven, Steenberg and Arenberg.

### **CREEF - Coordination des Résidences d'Étudiantes et d'Étudiants de France**

CREEF is a network of halls of residence throughout France for university students that, in addition to accommodation, provide a complementary formation to that proposed by Higher Education Institutions based on soft skills achievement. These activities are offered without discrimination to residents and everyone else who wishes to participate in accordance with the statutes of the halls of residence. At the moment there are three halls of residence in the network: Les Ecoles in Paris, Frehel in Rennes and Nideck in Strasbourg.

### **1.3.5. University colleges in Eastern Europe**

*by Csaba Bakos, Agnes Zelei, Dori Balint, Filip Eckstein and Radek Kuca*

#### *Introduction*

In Eastern Europe countries there are very few examples of university colleges. They are to be found in countries with older university traditions, such as Poland, Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic.

Some of them are specialised in technical or scientific academic education. Many of them offer housing solutions in university halls of residence.

In the Czech Republic, Brno university of Technology (BUT) (Vysoké učení technické v Brně, VUT) founded in 1849 as a German-Bohemian Technical college (Německo-české technické učiliště) and transformed into the Czech Technical university (České vysoké učení technické) in 1899 with Karel Zahradníček as its first rector. In 1956 it was transformed into Brno university of Technology (Vysoké učení technické v Brně) and after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 it was reorganized and new faculties were founded.

We will analyse the cases of Mikó Imre College, Warsaw University of Technology and Rajk László College of Budapest.

### **Mikó Imre College**

#### *Introduction*

In Romania, one of the oldest universities, founded in 1581, is the Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB-Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai) in Cluj-Napoca. With almost 50,000 students, the university offers 105 specialisations; 105 are available in Romanian, and also 67 of them in Hungarian, 17 in German and 5 in English. The university was named after two prominent scientists from Transylvania, Romanian bacteriologist

Victor Babeş and Hungarian mathematician János Bolyai.

The university has several student housing areas, most notable being Haşdeu with more than 20 dormitory buildings. The Lucian Blaga University Library is located in the city centre. The university also has several colleges located in 18 cities spread across Transylvania.

### *History*

The Mikó Imre College of Advanced Studies was founded in 1999, based on the, by that time well-established, Hungarian model of an Advanced Studies College (Szakkollégium). It has been especially inspired and given support by the Rajk László College from Budapest. The main difference between Mikó College and the other Hungarian colleges is the absence of university control - ever since its establishment, it has been a largely independent, student-managed organization, with support from the local universities and companies. At its establishment, it aimed to provide students with courses in Hungarian that were unavailable at the time for students who were members of the Hungarian community in Cluj-Napoca. The name of the college was inspired by a local jurist.

After more courses became available in Hungarian, the college had to broaden its perspective into what it stands for today - a place to deepen and refine university-acquired knowledge, but also a community for like-minded people, with similar interests, namely: law and economics. The college also managed to create a possibility for accomodation in the college house, a commonly rented larger house which changes every now and then.

### *Mission and organization*

The college seeks to have a dual role: foster professional development of its members but also help the formation of a community - two goals which reinforce one another. The college is self-managed by the students themselves, in a democratic spirit. Every year the students elect the members of various committees that, for one year, will be responsible for the management of different aspects from the college mission statement. These responsibilities could include the management of professional growth or community activity, and also the administrative aspects of maintaining the house, finances and fundraising.

### *Activities*

To fulfil its objectives, the college provides its members with the opportunity to grow professionally by organizing advanced level courses, seminars, workshops, conferences and camps. Some of these events are organized yearly, are open to public and have gained a high popularity among the law and business students studying in Cluj-Napoca.

The college focuses on being informed about the current political, economic, juridical and social situation of the world and to provide its members a support in their initiatives and interest by involving experts and professors in their academic development. The college organizes debate-nights, and invites experts to hold lectures to suit this purpose.

The college also organizes community-centered activities, such as summer/winter camps, trips, movie and game nights, barbeques and other activities. The strongest link in the community formation process, however, is the house, where members live together and have many occasions for self-organized community events.

## **Warsaw University of Technology**

### *Introduction*

The Warsaw University of Technology is the largest and oldest university of technology in Poland, ranked as number one among 18 similar institutions. It has two locations, in Warsaw and Plock. Almost 33,000 students, of which 950 are at doctoral level, attend 19 faculties together with the College of Administration and Social Science. The academic staff is composed of 2,331 employees.

The university offers engineering degrees, Masters of Science and PhDs in all areas of technology, ranging from civil engineering and architecture - which are the faculties with the longest tradition - up to more modern specialisation, such as optoelectronics, nanotechnology, biotechnology and biomedical engineering. The College of Administration and Social Sciences provides a natural complementation in the areas of economics, social sciences, management, administration and business. The university is an extremely student-friendly environment and it fulfils the mission of creating the Polish technical intelligence through a flexible programme of studies, a wide-ranging curriculum, and a well-functioning scholarship system. Accommodation opportunities include over 5,700 places in 12 student dormitories. The history of the origins of Polish universities of technology goes back to the 18th century. They were related to either military technology or mining, which demanded complicated technological processes as a result of the exploitation of deeper seams. The model school of technology, a university of technology, was designed by the French, who in 1794 founded the School of Technology in Paris. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century universities of technology were opened in Prague (in 1806), Vienna (1815) and in Karlsruhe (1824).

In Poland, the first multidisciplinary university of technology was the preparatory School for the institute of technology, which was opened on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1826. The Warsaw University of Technology (WUT), so named in 1915, continues the tradition of the preparatory School for the institute of technology set up in Warsaw in 1826 thanks to the efforts of Stanisław Staszic. The university's roots also reach down to the Hipolit Wawelberg and Stanisław Rotwand School of Machine Construction and Electrical Engineering, created in 1895. The many generations of engineers it has educated and its significant contributions to the development of technical sciences has earned the Warsaw University of Technology an acclaimed position in the country as well as international renown.

### *Mission*

The Warsaw University of Technology is a community of students and teachers. Students of the Warsaw University of Technology, through the Students' Union, participate in the decision-making process with regard to every aspect of their faculty, and are indeed themselves alone responsible for some areas of its operation.

Its mission is stated as follows:

"The Warsaw University of Technology is an academic institution of higher learning, shaping the future social elites - educated people with a broad outlook on the world, conscious of their own views but also understanding and respecting the world views of others. The University not only gives shape to the minds of its students but also forges their characters, awakens in them the kind of creative attitudes engineers should display, furnishing them not only with knowledge but also with skills. Knowledge is best imparted by those who actively expand it, and skills passed on by those who had to learn them through practice".



All students and staff, together and separately, are required to safeguard the good reputation of the Warsaw University of Technology. Such is the tradition of the university, passed on from generation to generation. The students are also required to honestly apply themselves to their studies and properly represent their university at all times, both within and beyond its walls. The Warsaw University of Technology maintains ties with its graduates, expecting them to demonstrate dignified attitudes in professional and public life, to add to the achievements of the university and to continue upholding its tradition.

#### *The role of students*

The Students' Union of WUT consists of all WUT students. Through its organs, the Students' Union of WUT represents students inside and outside the university and aims to express their opinions and defend their rights. The Students' Union Council also participates in undertaking important decisions concerning the university. It has representatives in collegial bodies of WUT such as the Senate of WUT, Faculty Councils and other such bodies. Each year there are elections to Faculty Councils (WRS). Every student of the Faculty can vote. Also, elections are held in Student Dormitories to Student Dormitory Councils (RM) – only Dormitory inhabitants can vote in them.

Members of each WRS and RM take care of the integration of students; they organize balls for students of the first and third year, camps and many other events. They offer a helping hand in case of any problems with studies, teachers or adaptation.

The Union expresses the opinion of the student community regarding: classes, examination sessions schedule, planning of classes and rules of registration for upcoming semesters. It also monitors development of the students' scientific movement, culture, entertainment and sport and recreation. The Main Students' Council consist of 8 commissions dealing with following issues:

1. Social issues, scholarships, subsistence allowances, dormitories and accommodation (Student Dormitories Committee, Student Welfare Committee, Student Accommodation Committee)
2. Students' cultural life - parties, concerts, going to theatres, Juwenalia and many more... (Cultural Matters Committee)
3. Sport and tourism - camps, sailing, skiing, ice-skating, hiking, external trips and more (Sports and Tourism Committee)
4. Education and teaching - students' research (Academic Matters Committee)
5. International Issues - cooperation, exchanges, information (International Matters Committee)

Students' Union contributes to a significant extent to the internationalization and international cooperation at WUT.

Flagship projects are the organization of student exchanges with Universities from Düsseldorf, Kyiv, Budapest and St. Petersburg, the organization of European Dimension Activities during ATHENS Programme, the cycle of cultural events Feel The World and cycles of language lessons.

The Students' Union and the International Affairs Committee combine several main student organizations at WUT that are related to international cooperation. By working together, they intend to create and realize larger and more efficient projects for all students of WUT.



## **Rajk László College of Budapest**

### *History*

The Rajk László College for Advanced Studies (Hungarian: Rajk László Szakkollégium) is an educational institution offering accommodation as well as advanced courses in the fields of economics, business and social sciences, establishing a community for students that excel in these fields. It was founded in 1970 by the students of the Corvinus University of Budapest (then the Karl Marx University of Economic Sciences), with Attila Chikán as its first principal. It is the oldest existing institution of this kind in Hungary, providing a model and support for Hungarian colleges founded later, such as the Bibó István College for Advanced Studies. Furthermore, Rajk László College served also as a model for foreign colleges, such as the Mikó Imre College for Advanced Studies in Romania. The college was named after László Rajk, a leading Hungarian communist, who was proclaimed enemy of the regime and was executed in a show trial in 1949. The idea behind the naming of the college was to express criticism towards the system at the time.

The college played a politically active role during the time of the communist regime. In the 1980s, it served as a base for the opposition and organized several political events and took part in political movements such as Fidesz, contributing to the transformation of Hungary to a democratic country with a market economy. Today, the college does not have a political role, but naturally, it does not forbid the individual political activity of its members.

### *Organization*

There are several inner institutions that are responsible for organizing the college's operations in different fields.

The main power of the college is the General Assembly in which every member of the college has the right to vote. It meets three or four times a semester. For general activities, the annually elected Student Board has regular meetings every week. Its members are the Director, the Senior Advisor, the Chairman of the Student Board and six other students elected by the assembly every February. The Committee for Academic Activities – made up by students – is responsible for the educational and research activities. It organizes and supervises the courses and promotes academic publications. The operation of the college is based on self-governance and the volunteer activity of the members.

Applicants to the college must be full-time first or second year students of either Corvinus University of Budapest or the Applied Economics major of Eötvös Lóránd University. College membership ends with earning a Master's degree. The seven-member Admission Committee chosen by the Assembly decides on admissions. The financing of the college is based on a number of sources. Various foundations, governmental and business institutions give their support based on occasional donations. The respective universities pay a nominal fee for each of their students living in the college. However, members of the college are also required to pay a certain amount that is decided by the Assembly. Contributions from the Alumni also play an important role.

### *Activities*

The college invites respected professors to give courses on various subjects within the fields of economics, econometrics, economic and public policy, finance, monetary policy, business, management, sociology, political science, international relations and other related fields. Every college member has to participate in at least one

course per semester; after each course, students give account of their professional work mostly by writing a paper.

Besides the core course activities of the college, evening lectures are organized once or twice a week. These cover a wide range of topics, mostly contemporary issues in economics and social sciences or relevant problems within Hungary. A large proportion of prominent personalities of the Hungarian economic and business life, both academics and decision-makers, regularly give lectures in the college. The Rajk László College organizes several major conferences each year. These are about topical issues, varying from the questions of economic theory to current social problems of Hungary and Europe.

Every two years, an international student conference is organized on Central European issues, called CEC (Central European Conference), inviting students and teachers from all over Europe. The college organized the 9<sup>th</sup> CEC in 2013. Finally, two very important annual events are the John von Neumann Award - established in 1994 and given to an outstanding scholar in social sciences - and the Herbert Simon Award - established in 2004 and awarded to scholars whose scientific achievements have contributed to the understanding or solution of practical business problems and inspired the students of the college. What makes these awards unique is that students give them to the candidate rated the highest. The students select the nominees during a long pre-selection procedure with many debates and they vote for the winner in a General Assembly after a review and debate regarding the selected candidates.

Thanks to these occasions, the Rajk László College hosted a number of outstanding scholars from abroad, amongst them, several Nobel laureates (for example, Kenneth Arrow, Gary S. Becker, John Harsanyi, Herbert Simon, Robert Solow and Vernon Smith).

#### 1.4 A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNIVERSITY HALLS OF RESIDENCE IN EUROPE

Basing on different studies on halls of residence (Santambrogio, 1997; De Vivo et al., 1999; Pizzini et al., 2009, Catalano, 2013) and the investigation we carried out during the ModEs project, we can divide halls of residence into three groups:

- *Dormitories and student hostels*, which are 'places to sleep and eat only' – without any opportunity of participation in a soft skills development programme or learning course. No other facilities are provided apart from, eventually, library, gym, kitchen, swimming pool or meeting room.
- *Halls of residence*. Besides basic services such as canteen, library, spaces for socialization and cultural activities, courses on hard and soft skills are provided. Students attend different faculties and different universities. The education provided by halls of residence does not substitute or overlap to that of universities and is complementary to the scientific academic curricula of students. Sometimes there are agreements with universities and companies to provide these kind of integration activities or work experiences (*stages*, study visits, job opportunities) .
- *Colleges* in the British and American tradition, with some more recent similar examples also in France (*Grandes Écoles*) and in Italy (*Scuole di eccellenza*). As said before, a college may be a degree-awarding tertiary educational institution, an institution within a federal university, an institution offering special paths/curricula for talented students (as *Honors college* in the USA).

Within these typologies there are many differences due to the following issues:

- models of organisation;
- student admission and permanence criteria;
- activities (learning and social activities);
- networks.

These areas can be furthermore investigated analysing single aspects, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Areas of inquiry to investigate differences among colleges/halls of residence

Models of organisation	Student recruitment & performance criteria	Educational activities	Networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance and Statutes</li><li>• Funding schemes</li><li>• Cost schemes</li><li>• Services and facilities offered</li><li>• Personnel employed (qualitative and quantitative)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student admission criteria</li><li>• Student performance criteria</li><li>• Student average stay</li><li>• Student group composition: heterogeneity versus homogeneity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typologies: formal, non-formal, informal</li><li>• Contents: hard versus soft skills</li><li>• Teaching methods</li><li>• Assessment tools</li><li>• Structures devoted to these activities</li><li>• Teachers/tutors involved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Link with universities</li><li>• Link with Companies</li><li>• Career service and placement</li><li>• Alumni Associations</li><li>• International Networks</li></ul>

**1.4.1 Models of organisation**

As far as *models of organisation* are concerned, we can further investigate on the different aspects.

*Governance.* This might be dependent or independent from a university. The college/halls of residence might have its own Statute or adopt that of the university it belongs to. Sometimes the single structure has not a Statute but its own internal rules.

Either dependent or independent from university, the college/halls of residence Governance can be composed by:

- President / CEO / Scientific Committee / Board of directors (of the single colleges/halls of residence)

This structure is that of the biggest institutions, which normally have more than one college/hall of residence. The smaller ones have just a director or a team of tutors (and/or advisors), who live in the college - although in some cases they might live separately.

*Funding schemes.* In the majority of cases, financial resources are provided from different sources: private, public, private/public. Halls of residence get support from foundations, governmental and business institutions (grants), contributions from alumni.

*Cost schemes.* The costs of halls of residence include, generally, costs for administration, costs for services and facilities and costs for educational activities. Although the last ones are more important for the mission of the institutions, very

often the first two ones are predominant, representing an important element in the budget of a college. This is why in many cases 'alternative' solutions have been found in order to reduce the costs of 'material' services. One solution, for example, is represented by the *outsourcing* of some services which are considered *no-core business* and/or needed to be provided from external entities. This solution allows to do savings and to allocate more resources on the educational activities.

*Services and facilities offered.* In colleges as well as in halls of residence, whose core business is education, lodging and catering are considered 'services' or facilities, whilst in dormitories they are the core business. Facility Management in this kind of organisations is aimed at a 'global care'; it is devoted to providing the highest quality of services, focusing on student wellness, education and growth. It is a kind of Facility Management addressed not only to people needs but also to their feelings, values and emotions.

*Personnel employed.* The different kind of student residential structures have also different kind of personnel employed, not only quantitatively (bigger structures, of course, tend to have more employees), but also from a qualitative perspective (directors and tutors might be graduated or not; some of them follow periodical training courses).

#### **1.4.2 Student recruitment and performance criteria**

*Student admission criteria.* The majority of colleges develop and manage tools, resources and information for recruitment activities and events. Student admission can be based on different criteria:

- scholastic curriculum;
- scholastic curriculum and interview;
- scholastic curriculum, online (or paper) questionnaire and interview;
- entrance test.

*Student performance criteria.* In halls of residence, the individual merit is recognised through study grants and free accommodation. Furthermore, in many of them, in order to stay in the college, the student has to guarantee an excellent academic performance.

The main criteria used to evaluate student performance are the following:

- credits and marks obtained during the academic year;
- prizes and awards obtained during the academic year;
- grants obtained during the academic year (different from those that could be awarded by the college or hall of residence).

In order to evaluate the performance of the entire structure (hall of residence or college) some further criteria can be used, as for example, student average time to get a degree; the average time between the degree and the first job.

*Student average stay.* The length of student stay in a college can vary, but normally the average is 3 years. Of course, the drop-out rate is significant not only for university but also for the colleges.

*Student group composition.* Normally, halls of residence host undergraduate, graduate and PhD students.

They can belong to different faculties and different universities, thus assuring interdisciplinarity and metadisciplinarity. In some cases - Grandes Écoles, Polytechnic universities and colleges - the target is more homogeneous.

It has been widely debated if it is better to have 'vertical', thematic, environments, where students studying the same disciplines can help each other, or to prefer a more heterogeneous student group composition.

We will discuss about the academic effects of living in a college in chapter 2.

Student living in halls of residence often come from different regions; sometimes from different countries and continents.

### **1.4.3 Educational activities**

We will give here only a brief overview, since a wider panorama on those activities is illustrated in the last chapter.

*Typologies.* Halls of residence organise social, educational and cultural activities. Some of them can be recognised by universities (i.e. students receive credits for activities performed outside the university). Besides the formal activities, colleges organise many non-formal and informal activities that contribute to student development and to their personal growth. Although not formally recognised, these activities are very important for the development of those skills that are most required by the companies.

*Contents.* Halls of residence do not limit to 'soft skills' courses but also organise integration activities for curricular competences that are not fully covered by university curricula.

*Teaching methods and assessment tools.* Normally teaching methods are more 'active' than those used for university lectures, although it is possible to identify different kind of teaching strategies, as reported in the ModEs project (see chapter 3). These strategies include both university educational methods and Company training techniques. Assessment is only sometimes 'formal' (for academic courses), consisting of a written test or an oral colloquium. Otherwise teacher or tutor observations is provided on students learning outcomes. Self-assessment and peer assessment is also used (see chapter 3).

*Structures.* Most halls of residence and colleges have structures and facilities specifically devoted to educational activities: lecture halls, laboratories, small classrooms for workshops and so on. Only occasionally they use university structures and sometimes it is possible that universities use halls of residence structures for their activities.

*Teachers and tutors involved.* Teachers involved in halls of residence educational activities can be university teachers or companies experts. Sometimes psychologists and counsellors are provided. Tutors are often elder students.

### **1.4.4 Networks**

*Link with universities.* As mentioned before, the college can be independent from the university or be part of it. In both cases it can be situated inside or outside the university. Sometimes the college is born as a 'spin-off' of the university, in other

cases a *consortium* (a more formal partnership) is provided. Even if independent, halls of residence have various forms of agreements with the university, for example to provide grants and accommodation for students, to provide exchange of teachers and tutors etc. In any case, the college is often endowed with scientific, administrative, organisational and financial autonomy.

*Link with companies.* Halls of residence have various form of partnership with different kind of companies. The main aim is to provide a preferential channel for career service and placement, but - as a matter of fact - also other forms of exchange are included. For example: study visits and stages for students, companies can access students' curricula database, company experts can held seminars and training activities in the college, etc.

*Career service and placement.* These services are aimed at creating a point of contact between job demand and supply, cutting costs and time for personnel research, through the intermediation and selection of halls of residence students; defining future-training paths that will meet requirements from job market. Normally the job placement office draws up every year CV books that include students' professional profiles and is addressed to partner firms; organises inner-seminars on editing and updating a CV and cover letter; plans recruitment meetings and company-presentations; carries out recruiting activities for organisations and companies that require experts (up to 8 years of experience); provides information for opportunities of job-placements present on the market: open positions, competitions, etc.; provides advice to companies to identify a shortlist of candidates with a professional profile in accordance with the companies' needs.

*Alumni association.* Graduates or, more broadly, former students of the colleges/halls of residence often form groups with alumni from the same organisation. These associations often organise social events, publish newsletters or magazines, and raise funds for the organisation. Many provide a variety of benefits and services that help alumni maintain connections to their educational institution and fellow graduates. Additionally, such groups often support new alumni, and provide a forum to form new friendships and business relationships with people of similar background.

*International relationships.* Although many halls of residence encourage students to enjoy the benefits of an international education, it is often very difficult for students to take up such opportunities. Not only can such programmes be expensive, but they can be quite daunting for students, particularly those with limited or no travel experience, to consider venturing to a new country. This is why thanks to an international network, like the EucA network, student mobility has been encouraged and enhanced. Some institutions have direct exchange programmes with other colleges/halls of residence in and outside Europe.

## **1.5 NEW AND OLD MODELS OF HALLS OF RESIDENCES**

*by Simona Miano*

The models of university colleges (halls of residence) in Europe are different, as we said, due to the following items: the organisations and governance, the educational

activities, the students' recruitment and performance criteria, and the networking activities.

Nevertheless, they have something in common: the 'collegiate life', the unique mix of competences development through informal activities and extra curricular activities with the added value of sharing facilities, resources, experiences.

In Italy, Rui Foundation has developed a new university college model, structured into a network of apartments located just a few hundred meters from the central building where students take meals in common, find libraries and study rooms, and discover where educational and recreational activities take place. In the apartments a maximum of 4 students live together with an 'apartment tutor', a senior student, whose role is coordinating and creating a positive and collaborative environment.

This model keeps together the educational programme and the relational dimension of a university college (hall of residence), with a more independent life in the apartments, which can help the growth of a sense of responsibility as well. The residents, as in the more traditional model of a college which comprises a single building, follow the courses and the coaching activities of the JUMP project (Job University Matching Project, see page 111), attend conferences and seminars, are supported by a tutor to develop an effective study methodology, and define and pursue a path of personal development focused on soft skills. Thanks to this innovative model, the colleges of Fondazione Rui realize a cost saving programmes in the management of accommodation services and buildings, adapting the resources to the right number of residents. This allows increasing investments in the educational programmes and in scholarships for students.

This innovative model is not so new: also in Oxford and Cambridge the model of the collegiate university is unique because of a system of services, including the tutorial, which are provided to all students, as confirmed by Caroline Thomas, Home Bursar & Fellow of New College, Oxford\*. Each student is enrolled at the University of Oxford and at the same time a member of a college. Most of the accommodation is provided within the walls of the college. However, there are some external buildings, a few minutes walk in the case of New College: Savile House, Warham House, Weston Buildings. The accommodation outside the walls of the college is very common in all the colleges of Oxford: gradually each college bought land and enlarged the buildings available to students, while maintaining access to all the services even for those who live outside. All the students, both living inside and outside the college walls, benefit from the 'life in common' or 'collegiality' which characterizes the model of Oxford and Cambridge: from the tutorial system, to sharing study areas and libraries, from taking meals together, to participating in sports and cultural initiatives, they all consider themselves as part of a tradition and a group that shares a lifestyle. The model of providing the same services both to students living 'in campus' and to the ones living 'off campus' is quite spread in the United Kingdom, for example in Lancaster University or in York University, which is closer to the American model of the 'campus university'.

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\* We thank Caroline Thomas, Home Bursar & Fellow, New College Oxford; Hilary Simmons, Head of Colleges and Student Life-Student Based Services, Lancaster University; Peter Quinn, Director of Student Support Services, University of York; Zoe Devlin, Executive Assistant to the Academic Registrar, University of York for their availability to be interviewed about their residential models.





## CHAPTER 2

### HALLS OF RESIDENCE AS CENTRES FOR LIFE AND LEARNING

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

*Learning is a peculiar compound of memory, imagination, scientific habit, accurate observation, all concentrated, through a prolonged period, on the analysis of the remains of literature. The results of this sustained mental endeavour is not a book, but a man. (Mark Pattison, Isaac Casaubon, 1875, p. 491)<sup>1</sup>*

In both America and Britain the students' accommodation during their academic career has proved to be a factor of great importance in understanding the pattern of student life and the individual behaviour and attitudes. Designed to be a microcosm of the wider and necessarily more formal and impersonal world of the university, the residential setting is the context where students learn to balance personal needs and group demands, where they integrate their public and private worlds, and where they are initiated into ways of thinking and behaving that have important psychological, social and educational consequences.

In French colleges the educational goals of the halls of residence were aimed at building the *homme complet* or of the *honnête homme*.

To understand current values of residences and the social structures used to express them, it is necessary to be aware of the ideas and social conditions that brought them into existence and of the way they were modified or developed by particular circumstances.

There is some evidence about the economic benefits of higher education but for many observers its most important benefits – in theory at least – are non-economic. Many of the educational advantages are taken for granted, and such assumptions are integral to a large volume of discussion about higher education. Until now, there has not been any substantial longitudinal study designed to demonstrate how the orientations and opinions of university students change (or perhaps remain the same) under the impact of higher education.

The mere description of the changes taking place in students' orientations

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Pattison (1813–1884), rector of Lincoln College, Oxford.

contributes only to a limited extent to the goal of understanding the functions of residences. It is also necessary to analyse where these changes originated from. In the attempt of assessing the functions of residences, some studies (for example Brothers and Hatch, 1971) examined by which extent they could influence students, and tried to illustrate the elements that within the residential environments encourage - or inhibit - certain developments and changes. This involved, on the one hand, looking at higher education as a process of socialization whereby knowledge, skills and rules are acquired; on the other, involved considering the impact of the institutional setting upon the afore-mentioned process. To do this it is necessary to take into account the position of residences in the wider context of higher education, that of higher education in the overall educational scene and, finally, of higher education in the overall social context.

The analysis of the institutional setting of the residences can lead to three other specific areas of inquiry about how students' life is affected by the place they live in:

- 1) The influence of residences on the scope of higher education. What determines the extent and the nature of the students' involvement in the student role and in the institution where they study?
- 2) The character of students' 'sub-cultures'. Do students develop distinctive sub-cultures in different types of accommodation and are these sub-cultures in competition with the academic goals or complementary to them?
- 3) Social networks and patterns of interaction. Between the individual and the higher education institution, there are the informal groups to which the students belong. These may be far more relevant to understand how changes occur than formal objectives and institutional structures. How do the informal groups relate to the place where the students live and to the orientation towards fulfilling the student role?

Centres for life and learning, like residence halls, seek to integrate students' academic and residential lives through courses offered for credit-awarding and non-credit-awarding activities within the residence hall itself. Most research tends to support the notion that halls of residence have a positive influence on students' academic and social development. It has been demonstrated that students residing in these centres achieve higher grade point averages than students living in other housing arrangements (Kanoy & Bruhn, 1996) and report greater satisfaction with their environment (Clarke, 1988).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found that students living in halls of residence '*rated the institutional environment significantly stronger in intellectual press and sense of community and also reported significantly greater freshman year gains, as far as cognitive development was concerned*' (p.151).

Pemberton (1969) found similar results and also noted that the transition from high school to college appeared easier for students in halls of residence because of the supportive atmosphere.

In fact, one of the most often cited important features of a living-learning centre is a student's self-reported feeling of connectedness to his or her living environment (Schein & Bowers, 1992).

This is also true for PhD students. As illustrated by Marco Santambrogio (1997):

*Halls of residence are the 'natural seat' for PhD students, the 'home' that can accommodate them at a lower cost than they would face in almost every other case [...]. The benefits of living in a college, especially for a PhD student, are not limited to having a place to stay. An extraordinary enrichment derives*

*from taking part in the life of a college: PhD students live side by side with their peers in an environment in which excellence in various fields of scientific research is the objective and the common goal.*

## **2.2 ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF LIVING IN HALLS OF RESIDENCE**

### *Academic achievements*

Many researchers have studied the effects of on-campus living versus off-campus living, generally finding that living in residence halls is positively associated with both academic and social development.

One of the earliest studies on the impact of residences on academic performance was published by Walker (1935). Walker used both multiple regression and a quasi-experimental design to investigate on the changes in performance as the same students moved from one residence type to another. He found that students did best in residence halls, followed by living at home, off-campus apartments, and finally fraternity or sorority houses.

Although an abundance of literature exists regarding the social climate of residence halls, the academic climate of residence halls has been examined far less frequently (Denzine, 1998). Living in residence halls is often anecdotally associated with gains in students' academic development, although the research in this area is less certain. In his meta-analysis of 21 studies that compared residence hall students with those living at home, Blimling (1989) found that the first seem to perform better academically than students living at home. However, when prior academic achievement was double-checked, research did not generally support the notion that students living in residence halls would perform better academically than students living at home. High-achieving students still performed well regardless of their living arrangements. Although the evidence is uncertain regarding the relationship between living in residence halls and academic achievement, research has supported the belief that living on-campus is associated with persistence and graduation from college.

Blimling (1989) used meta-analysis to integrate and summarise empirical research from 1966 to 1987 regarding the relationship between college residence halls and academic performance of undergraduate students in the United States. In the comparison of the achievements of on-campus students versus students living at home, he found the major differences in the studies that checked the presence of past discrepancies in academic performance versus studies that did not. Among the studies included in the former category that he considered in his analysis, there were Pugh and Chamberlain (1976), Grosz and Brandt (1969), Hountras and Brandt (1970), Hunter (1977), Musanno (1976), Call (1974), Graff & Cooley (1970), Grant (1968), R. G. Taylor and Hanson (1971), and Ridge (1968). The latter category consisted of studies by May (1974), Ryan (1970), Lemoal (1980), A. L. Taylor (1970), Belock (1979), Burtner and Tincher (1971), Nowack and Hanson (1985), Simono, Wachowiak, and Furr (1984), and Dollar (1966). When studies did not check the presence of past discrepancies in academic performance - like SAT scores or high school scores - the studies tended to find that residence hall students performed better academically than students living at home. When control groups were included, the differences between the two groups were negligible. The meta-analysis also indicated that residence hall students did tend to perform slightly better academically than students living in off-campus apartments or in fraternities and sororities, though most of these studies did not include check of past academic performance.

The studies that were not included Bliming's synthesis have generally supported his conclusions. Delucchi (1993), Hatch (1971), Thompson, Samiratedu, and Rafter (1993) have all found little evidence of gains to academic performance from on-campus living after considering other factors. Chickering found that residents had higher average scores, though the difference was not significant. Pascarella et al. (1993) did find that residents had significantly higher gains in critical thinking skills on the basis of test scores, after reviewing pre-college cognitive level, academic motivation, age, work responsibility, and extent of enrolment, but differences in reading comprehension and mathematics were not significant. These results are supported by the researches by Dollar (1966), Hawkins (1980) and Kuder (1970), and Stockham (1974) suggesting that living on-campus does not appear to enhance study habits over living at home. Generally speaking, the literature suggests that residences do not appear to have a strong direct influence on academic performance or cognitive development.

#### *Academic integration*

With a few exceptions, the literature appears to agree that resident students are more integrated into the academic domain of their institutions than their peers living at home and/or commuting to college. Pascarella (1985) found that living on-campus had significant, positive, and direct effects on an index of academic integration. Other multi-institutional longitudinal surveys of post-secondary students - as Astin (1977), and Chickering (1974) - have found that students living in residence halls have the most frequent interactions with the faculty, by attending classes more regularly in comparison to commuters, who live at home, and with students living in off-campus apartments, who lay somewhere in between. Chickering also found that commuters who live at home are the least frequent to be tutored or to study with another student. These results are consistent with a survey of low-income students in New England conducted by O'Brien and Sheed (2001), which found that 89% of on-campus students spoke with an advisor, faculty member, or other school official seen as a mentor, at least several times a semester, versus 59% of off-campus students and 65% of those living at home. In addition, almost two-thirds of on-campus participants strongly agreed that their school made a genuine effort to make all students feel welcome and part of the community, versus 46% of off-campus participants. Selby and Weston (1978) found that students living in the residence halls at the University of Southern California were significantly more likely to use academic advisory services than their counterparts living in off-campus apartments. Based on multiple regression analyses, Astin (1972) found that living on-campus increased the chances that students would be satisfied with their contact with faculty members. Ballou, Reavill and Schultz (1995) examined individuals who had lived in more than one type of residence and found that students who previously lived in university housing, but currently lived off-campus, reported more frequent contact with faculty than students who currently lived in university housing and students who had never lived in university housing.

One exception to these findings comes from a survey carried out at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and Michigan State University. Davis and Caldwell (1977) found that the commuter students (broadly defined) identified more with their academic community than did the residential students. The commuters also felt that their environment was intellectually stimulating and that the faculty was responsive to their needs and to them as individuals. One more exception: in a survey of students

from small liberal arts colleges, Chickering and Kuper (1971) found that commuter students (students living at home) actually reported slightly more faculty contact than did dormitory residents. Pace (1990) also reported no significant differences in experiences with faculty members based on where students lived.

### *Social integration*

The literature on residence and social integration is more extensive than that on residence and academic integration and more consistent in its findings. Pascarella and Terenzini, (2005) summarised the literature in this area when they concluded that, *'living on-campus (versus living off-campus or commuting) was the single most consistent within-college determinant of the impact of college'* (p. 603). Their synthesis suggested that living on-campus *'appears to foster change indirectly, by maximizing the opportunities for social, cultural, and extracurricular engagement'* (ibidem). Their conclusions appear well-supported by research.

Using data from 74 four-year colleges and universities, Pascarella (1985) found that living on-campus had a direct, positive, and significant effect on an index of social integration; these results are consistent with LaNasa, Olson, and Allemen (2007) and Pascarella (1984) and from a survey of liberal arts college students by Chickering and Kuper (1971), which found sharp differences between residents and students living at home in terms of extracurricular activities and peer relationships. *'Commuters participated in extracurricular activities much less frequently, the range of activities was more limited, and commuters much less frequently occupied positions of leadership,'* the authors concluded (Chickering and Kuper 1971, p. 258). *'They were acquainted with a much smaller proportion of students.'* A broader survey of students from higher education institutions documented similar findings. Chickering reported that students who lived at home were less involved in extracurricular and social activities in comparison with students living in the dormitories, and that the gap grew in course of their college careers. Findings from another national study suggested that having ever lived on-campus dramatically and significantly increased reported satisfaction with a student's social life (Knox, Lindsay, & Kolb, 1992). Ballou, Reavill and Schultz (1995) documented residual effects from on-campus residence on student involvement in activities related to art, music, and theatre, and group facilities activities as student union, athletics, and clubs and organisations. Students who had never lived on-campus had the lowest involvement in such activities.

## **2.3 CENTRES FOR LIFE AND LEARNING**

### *The role of residence halls in student development*

As widely explained before, the study about the development of university students often includes students' residences (i.e., residence halls, off-campus apartments, parents' homes, etc.) because researchers are aware that there are other influences on the development of university students apart from the classroom or classroom-related activities.

Attending university does not just mean attending classes. Researchers often emphasise the role of residence halls in the development of university students because residence halls provide *'more opportunities to influence student growth and development in the first year or two of college than almost any other program in student affairs'* (Blimling, 1993, p. 1). This is due to the fact that students spend more time in their living environment than anywhere else. The importance of a student's residential environment has been supported by many researchers (e.g.,

Astin, 1977; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). To illustrate this point, Chickering (1969), in his psychosocial theory about the development of college student, argues that development can be influenced by five major institutional factors, including:

- residence hall arrangements (others include clarity and consistency of institutional objectives);
- institutional size;
- curriculum, teaching, and evaluation;
- faculty and administration;
- student culture.

Through these institutional factors, students are supported in their development along seven vectors, namely:

- achieving competence;
- managing emotions;
- becoming autonomous;
- establishing identity;
- freeing interpersonal relationships;
- clarifying purposes;
- developing integrity.

#### *The sense of community*

Research generally supports the notion that students living in campus-organised housing tend to be more socially involved and tend to participate more often in extracurricular and campus activities than students living off-campus (Lundgren & Schwab, 1979). Living in dormitories maximizes opportunities for students to become involved in social and extracurricular activities. This involvement largely accounts for student growth and development, including a general increase in 'self-concept' (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), simply by exposure to other students and opportunities. In fact, students often mention social opportunities and the opportunity to meet other students as reasons for re-applying to live in residence halls (Cleave, 1996). Of course, living in a residence hall does not automatically provide a community-like atmosphere for college students. Clark and Hirt (1998) show that living in a small residence hall does not provide a better community atmosphere than living in a large residence hall.

Students living in a residence hall may tend to identify with other students in their residence hall, thus viewing themselves as part of a group. In a study of 142 students living in residence halls, Bettencourt et al. (1999) found that social identification within a residence hall group increased adjustment to college, including both academic and social adjustment. Residence halls promote a sense of community that is both inclusive and exclusive. Residential communities are inclusive because they convey a sense of belonging to group members, which is exclusive because only certain group members are allowed to belong to the community: those who live in the residence hall.

The safety a student feels within a residence hall community can thus represent a starting point for student exploration. Students have the freedom to explore the campus but are also protected by the safety net of their residence hall. The residence hall then becomes the '*psychological home and the locus of identity development during the most concentrated and intense learning period in the lives of students*' (Hughes, 1994, p. 191).

Since the residence hall is the locus of identity, it seems that the influence on student

personality and achievement must be very high. A debate exists regarding whether or not matching room-mates by academic discipline will influence academic achievement. Schroeder and Belmonte (1979) found that students assigned to residence halls by their 'academic major' performed better academically than students in the same major who were assigned randomly to a residence hall. On the other hand, Elton and Bate (1966) argue that the housing of students by academic major does not affect their academic achievement at the end of their first semester in college. Some other researchers maintain that heterogeneous residence halls environment (with students belonging to different universities and studying different disciplines) offer more stimuli to students than homogenous halls.

#### *The environmental 'press'*

Another possible reason for an increase in achievements among students living in halls of residence is the environmental press theory. Using 1,722 students enrolled at 140 different colleges and universities, Thistlethwaite and Wheeler (1966) studied the effects of the college environment, especially of teachers and peer subcultures, on students' aspirations to seek graduate level degrees. Thus, if students with high achievement and high aspirations surround a gifted college student, the student is likely to raise his aspirations to meet those of students around him.

Many researchers, including Pascarella (1980) and Rossi (1966), agree that students tend to change in the direction of the environmental press, thereby reducing the differences between themselves and others. While the academic effects of the environmental press are well noted and tend to be positive, the social effects are typically less evaluated. In other words, the literature is unclear as to whether or not intellectual environmental presses have a positive or negative influence on the social development of gifted college students.

One more effect of living in halls of residence is that this type of accommodation allows an easier transition from school to university. Upon initial arrival at university, students living in halls of residence may experience an easier social adjustment to university life through interaction with other students and the formation of a community (Rutland Gillison, 2000). In the initial stages of transition to university life, especially if a student does not know any other student, the transition can be eased by the formation of structured peer groups, especially through residence hall arrangements. Instead of leaving students to develop their own friendships and social groups in a new environment, students might benefit from being automatically placed in a group. Once students have had the time to settle in their new environment, they can then begin building their own peer groups and friendships. In a study on the development of peer networks university freshmen that participated in structured networks reported making a more successful transition to university life, both academically and socially, than students who did not participate (Peat, Dalziel, & Grant, 2001). Students that fail to develop successful peer relationships, particularly with their residence hall room-mates, may receive lower grade point averages and have lower retention rates than students with successful peer relationships (Pace, 1970; Waldo, 1986).

Conversely, collegiate students mentioned *'isolation from the mainstream student body'* as a major disadvantage to participation in halls of residence (McClung & Stevenson, 1988). As seen before talking about inclusivity and exclusivity, residence halls only attract a certain group of students. Some scholars affirm that collegiate students tend to consider themselves as belonging to an 'in-group' and to view other students as an 'out-group' (Aronson 1999). To avoid this kind of prejudice and









seclusion, many European collegiate halls organise activities that involve both collegiate and non-collegiate students.

Although stronger evidence has still to be provided, the research literature generally offers support in favour of the positive academic and social effects of living in college or university residence halls (e.g., Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Living in conventional residence halls is likely to contribute to persistence and eventual graduation from college, leads to an increased social adjustment, provides a sense of community, decreases feelings of isolation, and generally results in a greater satisfaction with the university experience.

## 2.4 ACCESS AND EXCELLENCE: 'TWIN POLES'?

*Prerogative of collegiate halls of residence is the offer of residencies of high quality, where hospitality is addressed firstly to the person and then to the student. The halls of residence put together, in fact, high conditions of studies and life, offering suitable places for all students' needs. Moreover, sharing a living place helps socialization and conviviality and it increases the capability of working together.*

*Sports activities, concerts, parties, discussion between engineers and doctors or philosophers, are not only occasions of aggregation but also occasions of solid friendships. (...).*

*This is way students of halls of residence do not feel ever lonely but part of an intellectual free communit, that does not know limits of census, class, nationality, faith and race. [...]. (CCU 2005, pp. 9-14)*

The mission statement of many halls of residence includes the twin poles of 'access' and 'excellence'. Awareness of and sensitivity to social class, economic class, ethnicity and gender have been important goals of the university and of halls of residence for the past few decades. During this time the academy, which has always primarily been the domain of the middle and upper class, has reached out to help the so-called 'disadvantaged'. In the majority of the halls of residence, individual merit is recognised through study grants and free accommodations.

In the USA, many 'honors programmes' and 'honors colleges' have been opened to students coming from different socio-economic backgrounds. Researchers found that the benefit of such diversity to an honours programme is even greater than to its home institution. Given the emphasis in honours on small classes and discussion-based instruction, representation of the full range of social and economic perspectives is essential to effective education.

In many European halls of residence the room price depends on the student's merit, the financial situation of the family and the facilities offered by the halls of residence. Places are mainly allocated by competition.

In some cases, admission is not fee-based, as specified in the Statutes of some institutions welcoming male and female students from low-income families, who have shown outstanding performance at school.

Halls of residence are 'talent-powered' organisations in which broad-based merit and socioeconomic diversity are integrated values. Consequently, access and excellence are not 'twin poles', but can be combined as 'access to excellence', which is one of the main aims of halls of residence, i.e. to allow even economically disadvantaged students to access the highest grades of studies.

This is also a goal of the American honors education, as nicely illustrated by the father of honors education in the United States, Frank Aydelotte: *'The best education*

*for any individual is that which will develop his powers to the utmost* (cited in Rinn and Cobane, 2009).

Similarly, the motto of the University College of London (IUC) is '*Let all come who by merit deserve the most reward*'.

Besides succeeding in overcoming the 'twin poles' of access and excellence, the atmosphere of residence halls reflects so many different and unique voices that it has been described as pluralistic. Pluralism implies that no group or perspective dominates; there are so many voices that there is no majority. But pluralism also implies no identity. This is why it is better to avoid this expression and prefer 'talent-powered' organisations, to stress the fact that the goal of halls of residence is the improvement of the potential for the identification of talent among minority and disadvantaged students.

Students at halls of residence have diverse needs and social identities. The different cultures and identities represented in a collegiate hall highlight the responsibility for administrators and educators to identify the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance and support the educational experience. The many differences among students include learning styles, cognitive development, as well as physical, and psychological abilities.

Researchers have highlighted that attracting students from different social classes, ethnicities and nationalities brings at least as much benefit to the college as to the students recruited. Broad-based merit and socioeconomic diversity in halls of residence help create breakthrough insights at the intersection of classes, cultures, fields and disciplines.

Halls of residence programmes are one example of a response to supporting students - particularly those from under-represented backgrounds - in their transition to and progression through university.

It is important to remember that the programmes offered by halls of residence work so well because the achieved involvement of students in their own development and engagement increases the odds that students, notwithstanding their educational and social backgrounds, will attain their educational and personal objectives, and acquire the skills and competencies required to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **2.5 LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM**

It is now widely accepted that a considerable amount of student learning and development takes place outside traditional academic contexts like the lecture theatre, tutorial room or laboratory (Terenzini et al., 1994).

Indeed, the skills that our current cohort of undergraduate students need to master to face their future employment and the challenge of becoming 'global citizens' are now seen as being provided or achieved through a number of means: on the one hand, they gain knowledge through their course work or completing their undergraduate degree; on the other they also develop essential skills alongside the academic knowledge, either through internships, work experience, community and volunteer work, or through everyday peer-to-peer interaction and social integration (Krause, 2005; Steffes, 2004). All of these experiences roughly fall under the umbrella of what has come to be commonly referred to as 'engagement'.

When we speak of the importance of providing ongoing support, particularly to those from non-traditional backgrounds, ensuring that students are 'engaged' throughout their time at university is one way to achieve this objective (Hu and Kuh, 2002).

The halls of residence model is centred on the unique role that students themselves can play in enhancing their own and other fellow students' development and in creating an equally important learning environment outside the classroom. The model revolves around a cyclical process of introducing and integrating new students into the college and university community, providing them with ongoing guidance to succeed both personally and academically. The next step is the opportunity for students to participate and contribute using their own experiences to empathise and subsequently be better equipped to engage with their peers. Benefits are consequently offered in two linked areas: student personal and professional development and the creation of a vibrant and diverse 'beyond the classroom' living and learning environment.

The halls of residence model provides outcomes in employability skills and career readiness. Through training and experiences that develop competencies in key areas, such as effective communication, teamwork, leadership and project management, participants acquire skills acknowledged to be essential in graduate-entry roles.

The model also offers pathways to students towards personal growth. Volunteering, mentoring and peer support, global mobility programmes, and student leadership opportunities contribute to transforming lives in ways that are lasting in almost any case. When much of the content of an undergraduate degree may have been forgotten, what remains is often students' development of self-confidence, maturity and community-mindedness.

Definitely, a key benefit of the halls of residence model is the creation and ongoing facilitation of an undoubtedly vibrant and diverse all-round living and learning environment. Learning is not confined simply to coursework or to the tutorials and lectures attended by students, but rather extends beyond the classroom to involve a wide range of experiences: from moving away from home for the first time; to sharing a living space; to participating in the wide range of new and exciting activities and programmes on offer as part of the university life. It is also the contribution of each individual student with their diverse background and experiences to add to the quality of the learning environment.

Resident welfare and wellbeing is an extremely important concern for the halls of residence staff, and a series of tailored programmes are in place to ensure that students are offered the support and guidance they need not only to survive, but also to flourish, in their transition from high school to university. In some cases, a one-week orientation and transition programme is scheduled for all first-year residents prior to the beginning of the academic year and in addition to the orientation programme hosted by the university. Organised by senior student leaders, with the assistance of the halls of residence staff, the programme engages new residents in a wide range of activities, from campus tours to 'meet and greet' sessions designed to introduce and integrate students into the residential and wider university community. Finally, halls of residence Services provide a carefully structured tutoring service, involving senior students, that support students not only in their academic activities but also to make them 'feel at home'. As one resident commented:

*'You share an environment with people who have just moved out of home or who are in their first few years at university. The friends you make become like your family. You become much more open-minded living with up to 40 other people, and you become also much more independent'.*

The provision of academic support beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom is a significant feature of the halls of residence approach to providing an

all-round education and learning experience. The tutoring programme is designed to ease the transition from high school to university for the significant number of first-year students who live in residences. As part of this programme, all students are assigned to discipline-specific study groups, which are hosted by a trained student leader. The first months at university have been demonstrated to be particularly crucial to a student's perseverance in their careers, and tutoring services are carefully designed to introduce residents to essential details regarding lectures and timetables, while providing elements of their coursework.

These services are a benefit also for students involved in tutoring. Carefully selected and trained, tutors offer residents dedicated care, organise a diverse range of events and provide tailored mentoring and learning support. Such positions are generally highly sought after among students as they attract significant benefits, including financial remuneration, training in key employability skills, and hands-on leadership experience, while affording a high level of status among other students. The students selected to occupy these positions also contribute to the operation of the residential colleges in several key ways. First, since they live among students in residential colleges, they have the opportunity to deal with issues or problems as they arise, from the management of a misbehaving resident to the care of a student struggling with homesickness. Second, their role as peer leaders enables them to provide more effective assistance to residents, having a better understanding of the common problems students of university age face and promoting appropriate behaviour through role modelling. Third, student leaders act as an excellent connection between the university, the hall of residence and the residents, passing on news and information and providing feedback to staff on important issues.

## 2.6 CONCLUSIONS

### *Halls of residence 'added value'*

In this chapter, besides providing evidence - through literature reviews - of possible outcomes of living in halls of residence (academic achievement, academic integration, social integration), we investigated the role of halls of residence for students' development, analysing the influence of residences upon the scope of higher education. Selection, study support and environmental press can account for this outcomes. From an empirical examination of the core values, best practices, and special challenges of this distinct group of educational institutions emerged that, although quite similar to the majority of their counterparts, collegiate halls of residence may also be unique in their selected core values and programme design. First of all, they aim at balancing the twin poles of access and excellence through recognition of individual merit. Secondly, programmes are designed in order to ease the transition to university of first year students and to enhance leadership skills of students involved in tutoring. Peer learning and peer-to-peer effects are also relevant.

In interviews carried out during the ModEs project, investigating the distinguishing features of collegiate halls of residence among students, one main feature was the prominence of debate teams. Additionally, many students mentioned 'leadership' as a major core value. Emphasis on 'social justice' and 'economic empowerment' may also be unique to these institutions. Such core values are deeply linked to the origins and historical background of halls of residence. Other core values identified in this study may not necessarily define halls of residence only; these include critical thinking, academic/intellectual excellence, community service, service learning, globalization, and research.

*Evaluating success*

Programmes within halls of residence are assessed regularly both at local (college) and institutional level, although assessment is not formal and structured. There are many benefits that have emerged through the implementation and ongoing development of such programmes. These include improved academic performance, increased student retention and enhanced student enrichment and engagement. Combined, these factors also lead to the development of core graduate attributes, skills essential for students seeking employment opportunities after completion of their degree programme. Most notable in terms of the overall integrated success of such programmes has been the excellent academic results achieved by residents, particularly by first-year students.

*Exporting the success of residential services*

There is a number of elements and important considerations arising from the success of the halls of residence model, which has the potential to be transferred to a wider university setting. The first possible action is to build stronger links between residential and non-residential students or departments, exploiting the close community connections to expand social and academic networks. This could entail:

- connecting students academically by offering non-residential students the opportunity to join academic study groups (as it is already done by many halls of residence, even through the creation of study clubs);
- opening up selected orientation activities to all students or extending the activities and programmes offered in the current university orientation programme;
- providing the option for university students to join selected halls of residence activities and programmes, from opening up participation in community and outreach programmes to social and cultural events that run throughout the year.

The second, and perhaps the most viable way to transfer the halls of residence model to a wider university setting is duplicating selected initiatives and offering them on a larger scale to all university students. This might include:

- expanding opportunities for students to travel and participate in community volunteer work by offering a larger and more diverse number of short-term global and local outreach programmes;
- providing students with appropriate support and guidance as part of their academic transition to university, for instance, by creating a spin-off, short-term version of tutoring and coaching programmes hosted by trained and carefully selected later-year students;
- facilitating students' transfer from high school to university by introducing a buddy programme, pairing groups of first-year students with trained later-year students prior to their arrival at university and through at least the first crucial six weeks of the term;
- and lastly, in conjunction with such programmes, introducing student leadership opportunities, offering later-year students the chance to contribute as 'buddies' or 'mentors' and providing them with creative rewards, from team-building activities, to employability skills training and acknowledgement of their involvement on their academic transcripts.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE MODES AND E-QUA PROJECTS

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#### 3.1 BACKGROUND

According to the European Union soft skills are closely connected with employability, especially with regard to the transition of young people into the labour market<sup>1</sup>. Skill development is one of the four main areas of the flagship initiative *An agenda for new skills and new jobs* (EESC, 2010) that is part of the EU's overall strategy Europe 2020. Opportunities should be given to young people to develop entrepreneurial skills, soft skills and coping skills (i.e. the capacity to deal with a problem in a creative way) that will help them to make a successful transition from full-time education to entering the labour market.

If, on the one hand, delivering the right mix of skills is important, on the other, it is just as essential to avoid under-utilisation of people's talents and potential. This requires better cooperation between the worlds of work, education and training, and an increased transparency in the labour market, beyond traditional approaches, which measure skills only through formal qualifications. The shift towards competence and skill-based approaches is already leading to a significant change in the education systems, labour markets, and their possible interaction.

A crucial question is how to create an effective connection between the entry into the labour market and the performance of the education system. Businesses and stakeholders in the economy should play an active role in helping develop the content of education, especially of vocational training and of higher education, in order to create a better match. The lack of adequate skills is an important issue and should be at the heart of European employment strategy<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.euractiv.com/en/socialeurope/soft-skills-seen-key-employability-news-505005>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=958>

*Education and training systems must deliver the right mix of skills, including digital and transversal key competences, media literacy, and communication in a foreign language. They must also ensure that young people, graduating from secondary and tertiary education, possess the skills and competences needed to make a rapid and successful transition to employment. (EESC, 2010)*

The pressure to focus university education towards enabling graduates to fit into the job market is common and makes a lot of sense, yet it also has its limitations. As some experts claim, the role of the university is not exhausted in tending to the private and individual demand of each moment. It is important to remember that due to the university's cultural place in society, to the public nature of its production and knowledge dissemination, and to the continuity of its work through generations, the university's objectives include but also transcend those that revolve around the graduate's individual progress.

University, as part of the education system, should not educate students based solely on productive demands, but must also go further, seeking the integral education of the person. Universities should consider offering students transversal majors or areas of specialization. In this view, this consists of students themselves realizing that they need to acquire knowledge in other areas as well. Higher education should help student build a wider base on which they can build their future professional competences. Fast changes in technology – and generally in the way we work - make hard skills rapidly obsolete and learning to learn – one of the seven key competences of the European Framework.

In Italy, a law passed in 1999 had already introduced a description of the learning activities, which included soft skills, such as: proficiency in a foreign language, information and networking skills, relational skills.

Since 2001, the Dublin Descriptors have been adopted as cycle descriptors for the qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area.

As a matter of fact, they are generic statements about achievements and abilities that are expected to be acquired by students at the conclusion of each Bologna cycle:

- knowledge and understanding;
- applying knowledge and understanding;
- making judgements;
- communication skills;
- learning skills.

The Member States have gradually integrated the descriptors within their higher education systems. In Italy, for example, in 2010, the Ministry of Education published the Qualifications Framework for Higher Education<sup>3</sup>, which summarises the main features of the Italian higher education degree system, describing each course in terms of credits and general learning outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.quadrodeititoli.it](http://www.quadrodeititoli.it)



**Table 1:** Italian academic Degree scheme (referred to the academic year 2011/2012)

Cycle	Degree name	ECTS	General learning outcomes
1 <sup>st</sup> cycle	Laurea	180	<p>Qualifications of the first cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;</li> <li>• can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments, and through solving problems within their field of study;</li> <li>• have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;</li> <li>• can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;</li> <li>• have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue their studies with a higher degree of initiative.</li> </ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle	Laurea Magistrale	120	<p>Qualifications of the second cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances those typically associated with the first cycle, and that provide a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;</li> <li>• can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;</li> <li>• have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments;</li> <li>• can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;</li> <li>• have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle	Dottorato	n.a	<p>Qualifications of the third cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;</li> <li>• have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;</li> <li>• have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which deserves national or international refereed publication;</li> <li>• are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;</li> <li>• can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;</li> <li>• can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.</li> </ul>

In spite of this general trend, the focus of the programmes offered at most EU universities is on teaching traditional scientific skills rather than on soft and complementary skills.

The ModEs project fully responds to the questions raised by the 'New Skills for New Jobs' European policy and has been developed to address the needs of modernisation of the European Higher Education System, as expressed by the Bologna Process (1999-2010).

*'To provide job opportunities for all and create a more competitive and sustainable economy, Europe needs a highly skilled workforce able to meet current and future challenges. To ensure this, it is urgent to invest in the right skills and improve matching of jobs with these skills in the EU, by effectively anticipating future trends.'*

However, it is clear that the fields of education and training need to be adapted and connected more closely to the world of work, overcoming the division between academia and the labour market. Mismatches between skills and jobs, such as skill gaps in the workplace, shortage of adequately skilled figures for certain positions or the abundance of candidates in sectors where there are not enough suitable vacancies need to be corrected.

Effectively anticipating which skills will be required by companies in years to come is crucial in order to equip future workers with the 'right' competencies. The ModEs project aims to build a 'think tank' composed of universities, collegiate halls of residence, and companies, in order to monitor the needs of the labour market and to improve the programmes offered at higher education institutions.

A unified methodology for teaching soft skills, recognised throughout European higher education institutions will surely make international exchanges easier for students all over Europe.

These institutions will surely benefit not only from job-specific skills, but also from those skills required to behave effectively in a working environment, and to lead an active life in society, thus also contributing to develop an active citizenship attitude.

### **3.2 PREVIOUS PROJECTS AND BEST PRACTICES**

Before the ModEs project there had already been some European Projects on soft skills, both under the SSH (Social Sciences and Humanities) Theme and ICT Theme of 7<sup>th</sup> Framework programme (see Table n. 2).

In the ICT theme, soft skills and competencies were mainly considered in connection with technology-enhanced collaborative learning, problem-solving, cognition and creativity, social skills, interactivity, serious gaming, new pedagogical approaches and the classroom of the future, etc.

**Table 2:** Examples of best practices: Projects funded by the European Union

SSH Theme	ICT Theme
<p>WorkAble (enhance the social sustainability and economic competitiveness of Europe by strengthening the capabilities of young people to actively shape their personal and work lives)</p> <p>ENTRANCE (help young at risk of social exclusion improve social skills such as communication skills, problem solving, negotiating and planning ahead)</p> <p>YOYO (promoting young people's active participation in their transition to the labour market)</p> <p>LLL2010 (knowledge-based society, lifelong learning and social inclusion)</p> <p>GOETE (the role of school in reconceptualising education in terms of lifelong learning)</p> <p>ACRE (assess the impact of the emerging 'creative class')</p>	<p>ITCOLE (computer-supported collaborative learning)</p> <p>LEAD (collaborative, face-to-face learning and problem solving)</p> <p>CoFFEE (foster communication and problem solving in class)</p> <p>SIREN (to create an intelligent interactive software system, specifically a serious game, which supports the teachers' role in educating young people on how to resolve conflicts)</p> <p>iClass (personalised learning)</p> <p>iCAMP (software that links student blogs and other social software tools into a virtual collaborative learning environment)</p> <p>L-CHANGE (the impact of new technologies on education, training and lifelong learning)</p> <p>MOBlearn (context-sensitive approaches to informal, problem-based and workplace learning by using key advances in mobile technologies)</p> <p>CREATE (enterprises, the creative process and innovation)</p>

None of these projects were aimed at proposing a structured curriculum on soft skills and at modernising higher education.

Existing best practices - in European and non-European countries - have also been explored in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. Among them, some academic programmes in European and non-European countries, as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Examples of best practices: Academic programmes in European and non-European countries

European Countries	Non-European Countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Generic skills programme</i> – University of Dundee (Scotland)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• In February 2009, the <i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i> wrote that by early 2009, 80% of German universities were offering training in soft skills</li> <li>• Best practice examples in Italy:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bocconi (Milan)</li> <li>– Luiss (Rome): <i>Public speaking</i><sup>5</sup></li> <li>– Campus Bio-Medico Campus Bio-Medico (Rome): Medical humanities; Anthropology and ethics; Learning and communication skills.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tolerance to stress and Work/life balance</i> - Prof. Carlos A. Armenta, IPADE Business School (Mexico)</li> <li>• <i>Soft skills for medical students</i> – University of Pretoria (South Africa)</li> <li>• <i>Blended learning for soft skills development</i> – York University (Canada)<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• <i>Client based projects to teach soft skills to Business students</i> – Regis University (Denver-Colorado, USA)<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/genericskills/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.masterin.it/post-laurea/Luiss\\_bs52-corso-in-soft-skills-for-leaders.html](http://www.masterin.it/post-laurea/Luiss_bs52-corso-in-soft-skills-for-leaders.html)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Research/FundedResearch/201009AdamsHanesiakMorganOwstonLupshenyukMills.html>

<sup>7</sup> [http://regiscollege.academia.edu/ChristinaMcCale/Papers/104750/\\_Its\\_hard\\_work\\_learning\\_soft\\_skills\\_Can\\_client\\_based\\_projects\\_teach\\_the\\_soft\\_skills\\_students\\_need\\_and\\_employers\\_want\\_](http://regiscollege.academia.edu/ChristinaMcCale/Papers/104750/_Its_hard_work_learning_soft_skills_Can_client_based_projects_teach_the_soft_skills_students_need_and_employers_want_)

At present, EU countries have different methodologies and approaches to the teaching and recognition of skills for employability. This had lead to a mismatch between academic education and skills required in the open job market. The presence of such discrepancies - in particular in certain areas of study - requires that cooperation is strengthened among the different stakeholders to find common solutions and educational models that provide a common set of skills matching the demand from the job market.

Starting from the existing analyses of the different needs emerged with regard to the various educational contexts and skills, the aim of the ModEs project is to create a standardised methodology for the recognition of soft skills to facilitate recruitment at EU level. Existing best practices were the starting point of the discussion. The existing models for teaching soft skills in some countries were analysed and integrated into a common accredited curriculum, which represents added value for European higher education.

The main goals identified by the ModEs project are the modernisation and the improvement of the competitiveness profile of the whole European higher education system, in response to the most urgent issues raised by the Bologna Process (1999-2010), which remain important after the creation of the EHEA (European Higher Education Area):

- *Mobility*: the possibility to move from one country to the another (within the European Higher Education Area), for the purpose of further study or employment;
- *Attractiveness of European higher education*: the reasons that bring many people from non-European countries to study and/or work in Europe;
- *Active Citizenship*: the European Higher Education Area provides Europe with a broad, high-quality advanced knowledge base, and ensures the further development of Europe as a stable, peaceful and tolerant community.

A unified soft skills teaching methodology, widely recognised among European higher education institutions, will undoubtedly make mobility easier for students all over Europe.

Modernised and improved, the European higher education system has a real chance to be attractive to students who come from non-EU countries, thus being more competitive if compared to the U.S. higher education system.

### 3.3 GOALS OF THE MODES PROJECT

As mentioned earlier, the ModEs project is aimed at integrating a common European programme on soft skills in the academic curricula, and the diploma supplement. As a result, a new curriculum has been designed to enrich students' profiles with new employment-oriented competencies.

The main outputs of the ModEs project are:

- a Handbook describing a unified soft skills teaching methodology and a course in four languages (Italian, English, Spanish and Polish);
- a Prototype of a serious game on soft skills in four languages (Italian, English, Spanish and Polish).

These outputs were the results of a three-year process, including different actions, as described in the work-packages of the project. Below, the main issues encountered during the project are listed:

- definition of the term 'soft skills', in order to get to an unambiguous description;

- mapping the best practices as put in place in the halls of residence across Europe;
- a survey of the soft skills most required by companies;
- drafting a Handbook to catalogue soft skills and to use them in order to develop guidelines for teaching them at undergraduate level; definition of the number of credits to be granted (ECTS) and integration of the course in the diploma supplement;
- designing and developing of a web-based serious game prototype to train soft skills, both from a technological and a methodological point of view.

**Figure 1:** *The main work-packages of the ModEs Project*



The main target groups of the project are:

- *Students.* They will be formed in view of companies' needs, though a broader set of aptitudes that will facilitate better access to the labour market. Greater mobility of students and young professionals will also be possible through accreditation and mutual recognition of the module on soft skills.
- *Universities.* They have been involved in the project to assess the strength of what they can offer in terms of soft skills, and they have realised that they need to offer better and more effective courses, if they want to be more competitive and more responsive to the needs of the labour market.
- *Companies and stakeholders.* Thanks to the work already completed, they are now co-actors in the development of university curricula through direct consultation on professional profiles and the complementary skills that are required. Besides this, companies are increasingly likely to benefit from employees with a more rounded employment profile.

The main tools used to analyse 'offer and demand' of soft skills were questionnaires. They were created and validated by experts in psychology, sociology and statistics. The reports from these surveys represented the two main deliverables (WP 3 and WP 4) of the first phase of the project:

- a report on a survey on the development of soft skills in halls of residence and universities (WP3);







- a report on the soft skills required by companies in the countries of the ModEs partners (WP4; see table n.4).

These two reports formed the base for the draft version of the final ModEs Handbook, which describes teaching methodologies and learning outcomes for each soft skill identified in the previous phase. It also presents a mini-curriculum for soft skills development and includes a section - the Appendix B, Part C: Mediating Soft Skills - 'Best Practices' - where many examples drawn from the experiences of the halls of residence illustrate the development of the soft skills selected during the ModEs project, which are grouped into three main clusters: social, personal and content-reliant / methodological.

**Table 4:** *ModEs soft skills*

Personal	Social	Content-reliant/Methodological
Learning Skills Tolerance to stress Professional Ethics Self-awareness Commitment Life balance Creativity/Innovation	Communication Teamwork Contact Network Negotiation Conflict Management Leadership Culture Adaptability	Customer/User Orientation Continuous Improvement Adaptability to Change Results Orientation Analytical Skills Decision Making Management Skills Research and Info Management

It is out of the scope of this publication to describe in details all the work packages of the project but we will focus mainly on those which involved halls of residence, namely on the report of the soft skill survey, including both quantitative and qualitative data, and on the research for best practices concerning soft skills development both in halls of residence and in universities.

### 3.4 MAPPING THE BEST PRACTICES: SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN HALLS OF RESIDENCE

#### 3.4.1 Goals and methodology

The main aim of work package 3 was to map the best practices and methodologies applied for the development of soft skills through the analysis and comparison of the scenarios in four countries (Italy, Spain, Great Britain and Poland). Beside this, plenty of information concerning colleges and halls of residence was collected with the aim to understand how the soft skills theme is approached in different institutions. We developed the research in two phases. In the first phase we designed a questionnaire, composed of open and closed question, which was conducted in 93 institutions in 3 countries<sup>8</sup>.

The survey included 78 questions, divided in 8 sections:

- general information (type of institution, foundation year, website, network and connections, location, structural features, population, admission criteria, staff, training goals and offered courses);
- composition of the students' population;
- soft skills development programme (presence/absence, features and objectives, opinion about our project);

<sup>8</sup> This part of the research was carried out by a psychologist of La Cattolica University, dr. S. Anfuso, and his team.

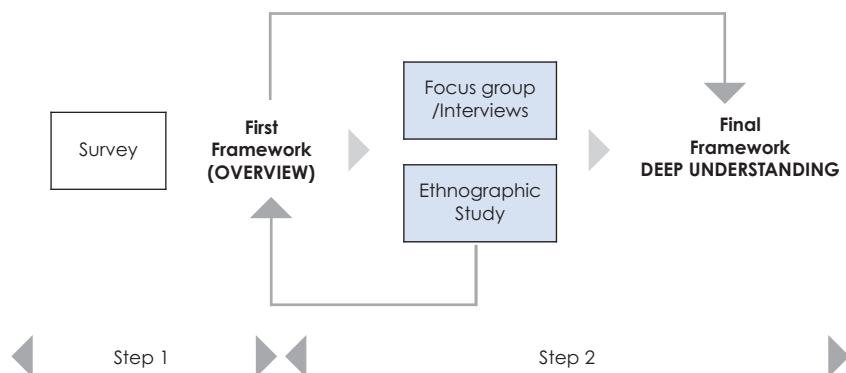


- soft skills mapping model (competencies and assets, relation with training course, field of work);
- soft skills assessment model (typology, expected outputs, frequency, role of staff and student);
- description of soft skills development model;
- students' involvement;
- connections with the professional and labour market.

After gathering quantitative data through the survey, a further phase of qualitative research was necessary in order to map the best practices and analyse teaching, learning and assessment methods concerning the development of soft skills in halls of residence. This second phase was carried out through focus groups and interviews with directors of halls of residence and an ethnographic study<sup>9</sup>, i. e. 'a portrait' of the halls of residence, based on information collected through observation on the field.

Thus, after constructing an initial framework, giving us a general overview of the nature of soft skill learning and teaching in halls of residence, we carried out further enquiries to gain a more thorough understanding of the practice, gathering evidence about formal, non-formal and informal activities carried out in halls of residence for soft skill development. As discussed above, some best practices were included in the Handbook of the project, while some others are described in this and in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, in order to illustrate both common elements and differences in the different countries. The main idea is to build a framework which incorporates the various practices across a broad spectrum of halls of residence, and emphasise the unique role that halls of residence play in higher education.

**Figure 2:** Soft skills development in halls of residence: quantitative and qualitative research.



<sup>9</sup> Ethnography is the art and the science of describing a group or a culture. Ethnographic accounts, classic and contemporary, are descriptive and interpretive; descriptive, because detail is so crucial, and interpretive because the ethnographer must determine the significance of what he or she observes without gathering broad, statistical information. Particularly suited to exploratory research, ethnography draws on a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, moving from 'learning' to 'testing' while research problems, perspectives, and theories emerge and shift.

In the following paragraphs the results of both the quantitative and the qualitative research will be presented with a focus on the soft skills development programmes, and on mapping and assessment models and on the description of soft skills development models.

### **3.4.2 Some results from a survey**

From the analysis of the answers collected<sup>10</sup> in the survey (93 institutions in 4 countries), the development of soft skills emerges as a popular theme, especially in Italy, but only half of the halls of residence that completed the survey have a programme for the development of soft skills, and a structured assessment model. Skills mapping models only exist in Italy and Spain.

Their descriptions articulate different circumstances, in line with the colleges' declared goals.

On the one hand, Italian halls of residence focus on managerial capabilities, while in Spain, personal skills (for example, creativity and innovation, tolerance to stress etc.) receive more attention. In general, the two countries place a lot of importance on relational skills, intellectual abilities and learning skills.

#### *Training goals declared to the students*

The open answers (193) coming from the Italian and Spanish halls of residence questionnaires were classified in the following categories:

- intellectual and cultural training (16% in Italy; 13.2% in Spain);
- ethical, spiritual and human growth – social values diffusion (21.5% in Italy; 30.9% in Spain);
- language training (3.2% in Italy; 2.9% in Spain);
- personal growth (10.4% in Italy; 11.8% in Spain);
- professional and academic excellence – Studying capabilities development (31.2% in Italy; 20.6% in Spain);
- relational and team work skills development (8.8% in Italy; 11.8% in Spain);
- complementary skills development (10.4% in Italy; 2.9% in Spain);
- artistic capabilities development (5.9% in Spain).

Except for a few training goals the results obtained by the Italian and Spanish questionnaires are similar: the activities carried out in both countries focus on students professional and academic excellence.

Colleges focus on the transmission of methods of study and to the development of learning capabilities, while intellectual and cultural goals, represented by the transmission of general contents and information, are reputed less important.

This is probably due to the fact that knowledge transmission is considered the aim primarily pursued by universities rather than by colleges. Furthermore, in the Spanish colleges (and in a very high percentage of Italian colleges), ethical, spiritual and human growth and the diffusion of social values are considered the goals most worth pursuing.

The tools adopted to achieve these goals are indicated in Table 5.

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<sup>10</sup>In this paragraph only some results are reported. For a complete and detailed description of the results see WP 3 report by S. Anfuso on the ModEs website ([www.modesproject.eu](http://www.modesproject.eu))

**Table 5:** Tools adopted to pursue the declared goals

	Training goals category	Tools
1	Intellectual and cultural training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training courses</li> <li>- Round tables, events, conferences, books presentations, meetings</li> <li>- Various cultural activities</li> </ul>
2	Ethical, spiritual and human growth – Social values diffusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charity work and social activities</li> <li>- Religious activities</li> <li>- Internal cooperation</li> <li>- Lessons and events</li> </ul>
3	Language training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal courses</li> <li>- International exchanges</li> </ul>
4	Personal growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duties, responsibilities and roles attributions</li> <li>- College activities management</li> </ul>
5	Professional and academic excellence – Development of studying capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning methodology training</li> <li>- Coaching, tutoring, mentoring, counselling</li> <li>- Orientation interviews</li> <li>- Individual interviews</li> <li>- Study rooms availability</li> <li>- Meetings with professionals</li> </ul>
6	Development of relational and team work skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Team work</li> <li>- Project work</li> <li>- Journey and sport</li> <li>- Collaboration</li> </ul>
7	Development of complementary skills	The tools used for the development of soft skills are not specified: as for the previous question, colleges seem to have just a vague idea of what soft skills are and how to develop them
8	Development of artistic capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Art activities and courses</li> </ul>

Soft skill development is also fostered also through international exchanges and the promotion of an intercultural environment. International exchanges are available for students at all the English colleges, in most of the Italian colleges (86.2%) and in the 64.7% of the Spanish ones. Poland does not offer any opportunity in this respect. This data are also in line with the answer collected about students' nationality: the majority (97.5%) of them comes from Poland. By contrast, the results obtained from the English colleges show a very high percentage of non-English students (79.5%).

#### *Skill development model*

As previously mentioned, only half of the answering halls of residence have a programme for the development of soft skills and a structured assessment model. A very high percentage of Italian and Spanish colleges offer their students internal courses. The situation is slightly different in Polish colleges: none of them offers internal courses. In England there are activities aimed at soft skill development, but very few formal course.

Traditional lessons are offered in particular in Italian colleges, while they represent just the 25% of the whole training activities in Spain. The other activities may be clustered

into two main groups: 'connection with external professionals and companies' and 'internal practical activities'. The percentages of these two categories are similar, even if internal activities reach a higher percentage and this because they are easier to organise and manage. The efforts made by the colleges to invite professional or to offer external *stages* (even if it doesn't happen very often in Spain) are due to the importance of these in regard of the students practical professional experience.

The percentage of internal and external activities are linked to the complexity of managing them: professional speakers invitations are more frequent than courses; workshops represent a bigger part of the training activities in comparison of internal project works.

**Table 6:** Planned course and practical experiences

	Italy			Spain		
Compiled questionnaires	23			8		
Classic lessons	16	69.6%		2	25%	
Invitation of external speakers	16	69.6%	26 56.5%	8	100%	9 56.2%
Stages	10	43.5%		1	12.5%	
Internal project works	13	56.5%	31 67.4%	5	62.5%	10 62.5%
Workshops	18	78.3%		5	62.5%	

Connect with external professionals or companies

Internal practical activities

Italian and Spanish colleges have adopted two different policies in regard of students' development. In Italy courses are mandatory and prescribed according to the colleges' rules in the most part of institutions. In Spain the colleges encourage students to take part in courses but they are not mandatory. In all the English halls participation in soft skill development activities is purely voluntary. However, in general, collegiate halls across Europe do have a role in encouraging students to take part in activities to develop soft skills, either through a collegiate ethos that encourages participation, or by making participation a condition of residency in a collegiate hall.

Only in a small percentage of colleges, courses are programmed after assessing the students' needs. Defining an educational path after assessing skills and knowledge would favour a more specific training, aiming at improving students' lack of preparation.

**Table 7:** A comparative framework of soft skill development models  
More than one answer was possible

Soft skill development model	England	Italy	Poland	Spain
Mandatory training programme based on basic courses	-	37.5%	-	15.4%
Training system available on request	50%	18.8%	50%	46.2%
Predefined training programme offered to the students	-	31.3%	50%	30.8%
Competence/skill programme and personal training paths	100%	43.8%	50%	30.8%
Linking competence described in a model with initiatives offered by the college	-	75%	100%	61.5%

Except in Spain, the courses proposed in the other two countries are not linked to those offered by the universities. The presence of a supervisor or tutor characterises most part of the colleges, though are absent in just 4 colleges out of 33. The presence of coach, mentor or sponsor is well thought of by the colleges and only a few of them answered negatively to this question. On the whole, the most part of mentors, coaches, and sponsors is represented by external people (consultants or professionals).

#### *Connection with universities and companies*

Connections with universities are present in all the countries in a high percentage, except of Poland. Not all the colleges completed this section of the questionnaires and the answers provided were in the most part unspecific. As far as Italy and Spain are concerned, this connection can take the form of:

- course recognition through credit acknowledgement (13% in Italy and 25% in Spain);
- jointly course and projects organisation (8.7% in Italy and 16.7% in Spain);
- agreement about grants and hospitality (39.2% in Italy);
- collaboration (unspecified) and promotion (26.1% in Italy and 58.3 in Spain).

The relationship between skills development, degree courses and the job market is not as strong as we expected. In half of the colleges, this relation is not even perceived and, in the most cases, the other structures focus on basic and unspecific competences.

The connections with the job market vary to a great extent in the four countries: with the exception of Italy, the majority its relevance have no connection with the labour market and the percentage of negative answers is very high. This aspect should be improved, because of its relevance for the attractiveness of colleges. As a matter of fact, it may play an important role in influencing the students' choice of living in a college.

The types of connections include the following:

- Involvement of professionals in training activities (31.5% in Italy; 26.1% in Spain)
  - contacts
  - training courses
  - events

- Partnerships with external companies (47.3% in Italy; 47.8% in Spain)
  - stage and placement
  - scholarship
  - masters
- Connections with trade-unions (21.2% in Italy; 50% in Spain)
- Certification of the training activities carried out by the students (50% in Spain)

The situation in Italian and Spanish questionnaires shows two different sets of circumstances: Italian colleges often create partnerships with external companies in order to offer a 'stage & placement' service for their students. The contact with professionals is enhanced through events and training courses organised by the college itself, where representatives from the job market are invited as guests. Trade unions are another way for improving links with the labour market, though to a lesser extent.

Spanish colleges issue individual certificates, containing details of the activities completed by the students and their professional relevance. This CV can be shown to companies or institutions when students are looking for work. This tool is not used in Italian colleges. Half of the Spanish colleges maintain contact with specific enterprises and training companies, but they do not involve professionals in the college activities, nor they are connected to trade unions.

### **3.4.3 Qualitative research: formal, non-formal and informal activities**

This part of the research was performed in different phases. After sending a template for best practices, we asked to interview the directors of the colleges (or the people working at educational and cultural activities in the colleges) and gathered raw data which were collated with the information available on the websites of the halls of residence, annual reports, or internal journals.

The product of this qualitative research was used both to inform the Handbook of the ModEs project with best practices drawn from the experiences of the colleges, and to gain a deeper understanding of soft skill development in halls of residence. This is often based on very informal practices, and difficult to standardise and formally acknowledge.

Only the very effective 'best practices' were selected for the Handbook. The information was organised in such a way to allow us to fill in the best practices templates provided by the authors of the Handbook. In some cases, the templates were sent back to the interviewees for a double check. All the other activities, mainly the informal ones that were not suitable for inclusion in the 'best practice template', were analysed and included in this publication. This second step of the research was also useful to investigate the pedagogy of soft skills, i. e. innovative teaching and learning methodologies and assessment tools for soft skill development in halls of residence.

In this paragraph, a general overview of the results obtained from the qualitative research is presented. Chapter 4 contains a more detailed description of the programmes offered at the halls of residence in the different countries for the development of soft skill.

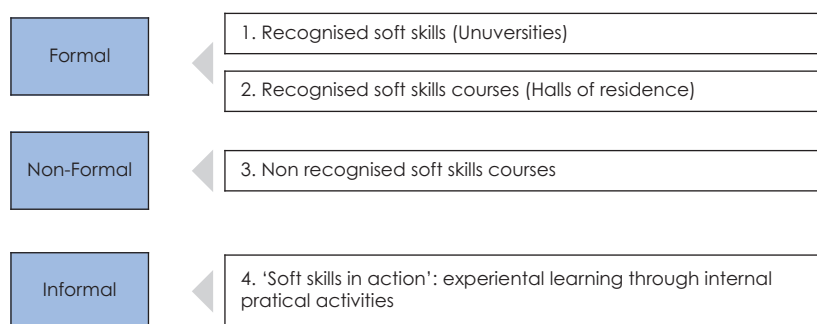
In the halls of residence, soft skills are developed through formal, non-formal, and informal activities, that can be divided into four main typologies:

1. Recognised (i.e. accredited according to the European Transfer Credit System) soft skills courses organised by Universities or at Universities by halls of residence's teachers and tutors. They can be offered in different forms: development of soft

skills performed within regular course, examples of independent courses, mini-curricula.

2. Recognised soft skills courses organised in halls of residence and colleges – attended by residential and non-residential students.
3. Non-recognised soft skills courses organised in halls of residence.
4. Soft skills in action: experiential learning through practical activities.

**Figure 3:** Soft skills development in halls of residence.



In the first two groups only formal activities are included because, they are accredited both if they are carried out at Universities and in halls of residence. Consequently, we can have academic, recognised activities and non-academic, recognised activities.

The third group is composed of activities that are non-academic and non-recognised, although the structure of the courses is similar to the previous ones. Non-academic, non-accredited and informal activities belong to the fourth group since they do not have the structure of a course but mainly consist in tasks and forms of 'social learning'.

Generally soft skill development can be performed under different forms and with various tools:

- Mini-curricula
- Programmes, Workshops and Labs
- Training Sessions (sometimes with outdoor activities)
- Projects (Internal Project Works, External Cooperation Projects etc)
- Internal and External Competitions
- Cycles of Seminars (face to face lessons) and/or Colloquia (guest speakers)
- Company visits, Journeys (study tours), Internship and On the job Training
- Individual or group tasks / learning based on practical activities

Some of these forms will be illustrated in the following paragraphs.

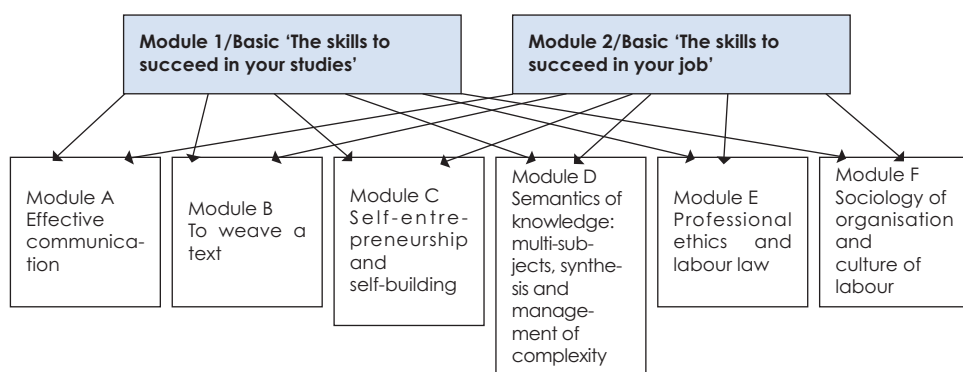
#### *Formal activities*

Regarding the first group of activities, it is necessary to emphasise that they include teaching activities organised by teachers, and tutors working in the halls of residence and at colleges'. This group of activities can be integrated in regular courses or carried out in independent courses.

There are even examples of mini-curricula, i.e. of activities that can refer to more

than one course and that are recognised by Universities with ECTS credits.

**Figure 4:** Example of a mini-curriculum for the development of soft skills at university



In Italy, the halls of residence belonging to CCU (Conferenza dei collegi universitari di merito legalmente riconosciuti) receive a funding from the Ministry of Education. This takes place on the basis of the ECTS credits gathered in a year through the organisation of courses at university and in halls of residence and recognised by university with ECTS credits. These halls of residence have specific agreements with Universities for this purpose. Every legal entity of CCU must draft an annual report on accredited courses<sup>11</sup>. For example, in 2008/09 (last CCU report), a total of 124 recognised courses were organised (15.205 ECTS credits). In some cases it is difficult to distinguish if these courses focus on the development of hard or soft skills. In some other cases, halls of residence organise international post-graduate courses (for example IPE in Naples organises a post-graduate course in Media Education) and PhD courses (S. Carlo in Modena: PhD in Sciences of Culture). Some colleges (for example those in Pavia) are among the so-called schools of excellence. These are a set of completely independent institutions which offer advanced training and research through university-type courses or are dedicated to teaching at graduate or post-doctoral level<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Fondazione RUI obtained 8.807 ECTS credits in independent undergraduate courses (2002-11) mainly focusing on soft skills; further 3.540 ECTS credits were granted to post-graduate courses (2007-11), mainly on hard skills. Fondazione RUI has agreements in place with different universities: in Rome (La Sapienza, LUMSA, Campus Bio-Medico), Milan (Bicocca, Politecnico delle Scuole Civiche), Bologna, Perugia (Statale e Università per gli stranieri), Pisa, Palermo, Sassari.

<sup>12</sup> The Schools of excellence or Superior Graduate Schools are recognized by the Ministry of Education, universities and Research as fully autonomous. There are three Superior Graduate Schools that are granted the status of 'university' (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, Scuola Superiore Studi Pavia), three institutes with the status of PhD colleges (International School for Advanced Studies di Trieste-SISSA; Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane di Firenze – SUM; Institutions Markets Technologies – IMT Institute for Advanced Studies Lucca), which function at graduate and post-graduate level. There are some other schools, that are direct offshoot of the universities (i.e. do not have their own 'university status').



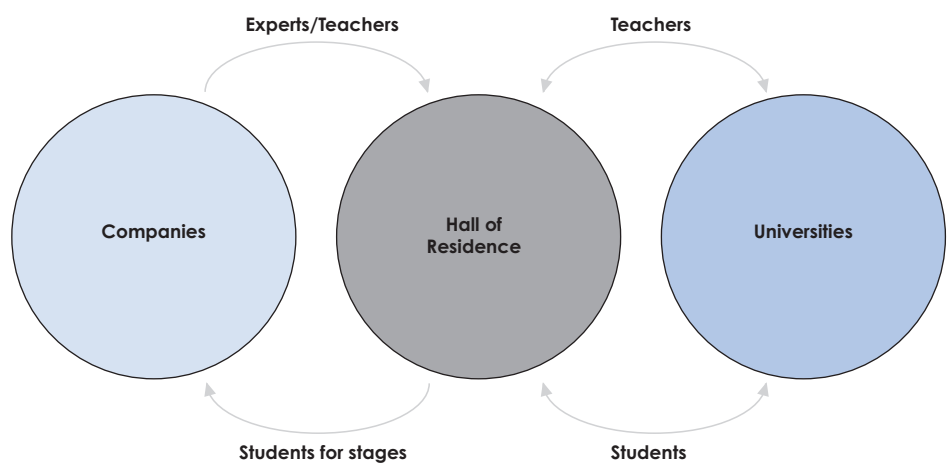
*Non-formal activities*

There are many non-formal activities organised by halls of residence to enhance the development of students' soft skills. Some best practices are identified through mini-curricula or programmes, with different durations (one semester, one year, three years), comprised of different modules and involving the development of different soft skills. Furthermore, there are many types of courses: university courses, workshops and labs; training sessions (sometimes with outdoor activities); projects (internal project works, external cooperation projects etc.); internal and external competitions; cycles of seminars (face to face lessons) and/or colloquia (guest speakers); company visits, journeys (study tours), internship and on the job training, etc.

Among the explicit aims of the majority of course descriptions features the offer of the soft skills that are required on the job market. Some courses are conceived jointly by universities and companies, or by halls of residence and universities and/or by halls of residence and companies.

Soft skills courses give halls of residence the possibility for multiple interactions with companies and universities (as shown in Fig. 5). Halls of residence 'borrow' experts and teachers from companies to teach in their soft skills courses and send their students for internships. Halls of residence and colleges maintain a relationship of mutual exchange with universities: the latter send /receive teachers and students for soft skills courses (many of the courses organised in halls of residences are open to non-residential students).

**Figure 5:** Relationships and exchanges among halls of residence, companies and universities



Among the non-formal courses, different types of mini-curricula exist, depending on the length: a semester, a year, three years (a whole degree). Many courses are not structured as a curriculum but they consist of different modules and are often 'programmes' (the length of the programme is not always specified).

**Figure 6:** Examples of best practices in soft skills courses: mini-curricula and programmes



Of course, learning outcomes of the mini-curricula refer to different soft skills areas. For example, the mini-curriculum FIRE (Formazione Integrata per le Relazioni e l'Eccellenza – Integrated Training for Public Relations and Excellence), organised by Fondazione Rui, aims to develop the following soft skills areas: continuous improvement, leadership, creativity/innovation, teamwork, communication, conflict management, negotiation, management skills.

The *International undergraduate soft skill programme* of CCM is targeted at developing teamwork, leadership, continuous improvement, management skills. The *WUT Soft skill training sessions* are addressed to the development of leadership, communication, cultural adaptability, analytical skills and management skills.

One noteworthy example is the course *Sustainable innovation, management and soft skills development*, run by the Colegios Mayores of Spain in collaboration with the Universidad de Mondragón (Basque Country), the Engineering School of Bidart and the regional government.

It is a three-day journey, aimed at soft-skills training in a specific organisational environment, among company staff or within a social group. For students such

courses represent an 'immersive' experience and the opportunity to enhance/develop the soft skills connected to different areas: creativity/innovation, adaptability to change, management skills, analytical skills etc.

Even single courses and laboratories address more than one area of soft skill development at the same time.

For example, a course focused on learning skills (Arces – Palermo) also aims at developing communication skills and information research and management skills.

The course *Laboratory of theatre improvisation*, organised by the Collegio Don Mazza in Padua, aims at enhancing communication, team work, negotiation and conflict management. The course on *Emotional Intelligence*, carried out by the ColegiosMayores in Spain, focuses on life balance, tolerance to stress, conflict management and leadership.

Some examples included in the best practices contained in the Handbook are illustrated in Table 8.

There are also programmes involving cross-cultural and generational dialogues, such as the project Seniores on-line carried out by Collegio Einaudi di Torino, focusing on young people using their knowledge of technology to help those over 64 to use the internet and social networks.

While building relationships between the generations, the project is also designed to be mutually beneficial for both age groups (young people will acquire leadership, communication customer/user orientation and culture adaptability skills). The initiative was created in 2005 and 6 editions have been performed so far.

There are some more examples on non-formal activities aimed at developing soft skills. These activities can take the form of contests and competitions or project work. Among them: *Message in a Bottle*, a video contest, organised by EucA every two years on a different subject (creativity in 2009; volunteering in 2011), which required students to put creativity into action, employ effective communication and team working skills, manage their time effectively to meet a deadline.

Another important initiative is the *M'Imprendo* project, which began in 2009 offering students at the University of Padua the chance to have a formative experience in the course of their academic career, being in contact with local Companies. Through this scheme, students have had the opportunity to work for companies in the Veneto Region that are seeking innovative and fresh solutions and that are looking to develop their services and products.

As you may see in Table 8 many different formulas (programmes, projects, journeys, etc.) can be employed to foster the acquisition of soft skills. Some of these activities are in-between non-formal and informal activities.

**Table 8:** Soft skill best practices included in the ModEs Handbook (Haselberger, Oberhuemer et al. 2012)

AUTHOR	TITLE	TYPE	Soft Skill 1	Soft Skill 2	Soft Skill 3	Soft Skill 4
Arces 1	Team Working	Course	Teamwork	Communication	Analytical Skills	
Arces 2	Learning Skills	Course	Learning Skills	Communication	Res & Info Management	
CCM 1	International Undergraduate Skills Programme	Programme	Teamwork	Leadership	Continuous Improvement	Management skills
CCM 2	Oratory for university Students	Course	Communication	Leadership	Teamwork	
CCM 3	Sustainable innovation, management and soft skills development	Journey	Creativity/Innovation	Adaptability to Change	Management skills	
CCM 4	Emotional Intelligence	Course	Life Balance	Tolerance to Stress	Conflict Management	Leadership
Collegio di Milano	Leadership and Meritocracy	Mini-curriculum	Leadership	Decision Making	Communication	Negotiation
Collegio Don Mazza 1	Laboratory of theatre improvisation for soft skills development	Activity	Communication	Team work	Negotiation	Conflict Management
Collegio Don Mazza 2	Entrepreneurship Initiative (M'imprendo)	Contest	Creativity/Innovation	Analytical skills	Results orientation	
Collegio Einaudi 1	Seniores on-line	Project	Customer/User Orientation	Team work	Negotiation	
Collegio Einaudi 2	Soft skills Programme	Course	Communication	Continuous Improvement	Management skills	
Collegio Nuovo 1	Women Leadership and Role Models	Programme	Life Balance	Leadership		
Euca 1	Promoting a Responsible European Citizenship	Project	Negotiation	Cultural Adaptability	Teamwork	Communication
Euca 2	Message in a Bottle	Contest	Creativity/Innovation	Communication	Teamwork	
Euca 3	Euca – Rajk László college Study Exchange	Programme	Negotiation	Cultural Adaptability	Teamwork	Communication
Fondazione Rui 1	JUMP (Job-university Matching Project)	Mini-curriculum	all the 21 ModEs soft skills, except Customer/User Orientation			
Fondazione Rui 2	FIRE (Formazione Integrata per le Relazioni e l'Eccellenza)	Mini-curriculum	Continuous Improvement	Leadership	Creativity/Innovation	Teamwork
Fondazione Rui 3	Global Mindset	Course	Adaptability to Change	Cultural Adaptability		
NEA 1	Volunteer Trip To Burma	Activity	Teamwork	Negotiation	Conflict Management	Cultural Adaptability
NEA 2	Seniors Activity Project: Making the Bench	Activity	Teamwork	Results Orientation	Communication	Creativity/Innovation
WUT	Soft Skills Training Sessions	Training	Leadership	Communication	Cultural Adaptability	Analytical Skills

Although professional ethics, together with commitment and self-awareness, were left out from the set of soft skills contained in the Handbook (since they were considered attitudes rather than skills), we collected some examples involving not only ethics but also other skills such as decision-making and problem-solving. Legal and business cases in the 'Jump' mini-curriculum and were included in the soft skills programme because their focus is on skills or activities that are not usually taught at university.

### *Informal activities*

Formal and non-formal activities are supplemented by various learning opportunities outside the classroom, ranging from casual conversations to formal dinners and talks where students actively engage with distinguished visitors and interesting speakers. Furthermore, halls of residence place greater emphasis on student development through active involvement: students are often required to find a balance between studying and contributing to the life of the residence by initiating events and activities, thus promoting a collegial culture or ethos.

Halls of residence offer students an integrated living and learning experience where the line between formal and informal learning is blurred. The idea that learning involves a thorough process of participation in a 'community of practice'<sup>13</sup> has gained significant ground in recent years. Communities of practice have also become an important focus within organisational development and have considerable value when thinking about working with groups.

Soft skill development is pursued through various cultural activities (round tables, events, conferences, books presentations, meetings with professionals), art and creativity labs, charity work and social activities, peer tutoring and internal cooperation, international exchanges, attribution of tasks and responsibilities. Promoting this kind of activities is not limited to soft skill development but involves even wider aims, that can be grouped in the following four areas:

- to develop a community;
- to educate;
- to involve students in their own learning;
- to provide an outlet for the release of emotions.

After describing some examples concerning these four areas, specific goals will be identified.

One interesting best practice among informal activities is the *Volunteer Trip to Burma* (Myanmar) organised and carried out by tutors and residents of the Netherhall House in England. The primary aim of the volunteering activity was building a kindergarten in Burma. This was not a project designed for learning but learning was an inevitable part of the process of carrying out the project.

Consequently expected outcomes may refer to various areas of soft skill

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<sup>13</sup> The expression 'community of practice' (CoP) is relatively recent, even though the phenomenon it refers to is not new. A tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques: are all examples of communities of practice. A CoP is formed by 'people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour' (Wenger 1998). Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning should not be viewed as simply the transmission of abstract and decontextualized knowledge from one individual to another, but as a social process whereby knowledge is co-constructed; they suggest that such learning is situated in a specific context and embedded within a particular social and physical environment. The concept of the CoP has found a number of practical applications in business, organisational design, government, education, professional associations, development projects, and civic life.

development: teamwork, negotiation, conflict management, cultural adaptability. Similarly the students of Collegio di Milano organised an art exhibition in 2012, *Mirografie*: for the first time in Milan, an important private collection of 70 works by Joan Miró was shown to the public in the prestigious Hospitale of pilgrims SS. Peter and Paul. The curators of the exhibition were 12 students with different academic backgrounds and level of studies. They were given the ambitious task of setting up a real art show, taking care of every aspect, from the design, to the catalog, the communication plan, within a training project included among the cultural activities that the Collegio di Milano offers.

Another interesting example is the Programme *Women Leadership and Role Models*, created by Collegio Nuovo di Pavia. The programme is aimed at developing leadership in young women through 'role models' and training courses.

Between 2003 and 2011, more than 40 important women, who contributed to different fields of knowledge (scientific and economic fields, social sciences and humanities, communication) and areas of society (political parties, universities, public institutions and private companies), were invited to tell their stories and share their experiences.

Specific initiatives were undertaken, specifically focusing on women in education. Once a year students from Collegio Nuovo participate in the WEW (*Womens' Education Worldwide*) Conference; in 2011 this conference was held in Pavia. As mentioned above, some examples are in-between, non-formal and informal activities. The goals of these activities are several. For example:

- to create a relaxed atmosphere in which students may meet one another and strengthen already established relationships;
- to introduce students to topics which they know very little about as well as explore in depth interests that students already have;
- to offer students a chance to sharpen their own leadership and communication skills;
- to give students the opportunity to meet formally and informally with people from outside of the college or university;
- to serve as learning situations in which student leaders work to create a worthwhile experience for their peers;
- to aid in the adjustment of a student to college life;
- to make students aware of the needs, interests and desires of those working in and out of the university community;
- to supplement and make more valuable the academic course work that students are involved in;
- to encourage students to heighten their self-awareness.

### 3.4.4 Pedagogical background and environmental conditions

Although never mentioned before (neither in the programmes nor in the interviews with the directors), some pedagogical background elements can be identified in the different kinds of activities examined. In line with the pedagogical framework of the *ModEs Handbook* (Haselberger, Oberhuemer et al., 2012), we can say that:

- Halls of residence are **communities of practice**:
  - '... people are involved in joint activities and discussions, help each other share information' (Haselberger, Oberhuemer et al., 2012, p. 92);
- Learning in Halls of residence is **situated**:
  - '... attention is paid to the contextualisation of values, feelings and thoughts ...' (Haselberger, Oberhuemer et al., 2012, p. 94);

- Learning in Halls of residence is **person-centred**:
  - '... climate can be characterized where persons are able to mature, improve functioning, develop' (Haselberger, Oberhuemer et al., 2012, p. 10).

According to Carl Rogers (1958), the founder of this approach in psychotherapy, the person-centred approach is based on the three attitudes or core conditions, that are basic to relationships in which persons can unfold, develop. They are:

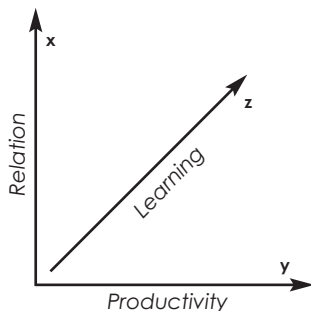
- genuineness or realness in the facilitators of learning;
- prizing, acceptance, trust;
- empathic understanding.

These three conditions are always present in halls of residence. Halls of residence are environments in which 'prizing, acceptance and trust' are the core conditions for talent development and management, places where the many skills and competencies required by 21<sup>st</sup> century organisations can be developed and nurtured. Also constructivism and the adult learning theory provide an opportune pedagogical framework for soft skills development in halls of residence. In a constructivist setting, the instructor becomes a coach helping learners by forming a learning environment where they can gain insights themselves and by applying teaching methods that facilitate individual knowledge acquisition (von Glasersfeld, 1997 cited in Haselberger, Oberhuemer et al., 2012, p. 92). Andragogy, the theory of adult learning (Knwoles 1983), stresses the importance to assist adults to learn in a way that enhances their capability to function as self-directed learners (Mezirov 1981).

Adult learning is about the promotion of active learning grounded in the previous experience of the learner and in the application of the knowledge at a personal level. Different adult learning behaviours have been identified: problem solving; experiential learning; empowered self-direction; self-correction; progressive mastery; active seeking of meaning; critical reflection; reciprocal learning; interaction with teachers and other learners; and identifying own learning goals within the context of community goal and needs (Terry and Higgs, 1993).

Furthermore, as far as soft skills development is concerned, specific learning indicators can be identified taking into account three principal axes:

- (x) personal and environmental conditions (i.e. the relational axis);
- (y) decision making/management factors (i.e. the productivity/goal achievement axis);
- (z) learning indicators (i.e. the learning outcomes axis).



**Figure 7:** Three axes of soft skills development

Although coming from educational programmes to develop clinical reasoning skills (Terry and Higgs, 1993) - the following table provides an overview of environmental

conditions that promote soft skills development, decisions the educator and the learner need to make to engage successfully in learning and the characteristic behaviours of effective adult learning.

**Table 9:** *Environmental Conditions, Decision Making and Learning Indicators*

x) Environmental conditions	y) Decision making/ management factors	z) Learning indicators
Motivation Freedom/autonomy Individuality Emphasis on abilities/experiences Student-centred learning Resource-rich environment Mutual respect/trust Teacher support/facilitation Learning via experience relevant to the learner Praxis – integrating reflection, theory, practice, experience Interaction between learners Effective/appropriate group dynamics Security/support	Shared goals Shared management Mutual decision making/planning Shared resource acquisition Learner involvement in learning needs, diagnosis and evaluation Learner direction in posing questions/seeking answers Effective communication Choice in participation Collaborative facilitation On-going review by tutors Learner identification of community goals and needs as part of own learning contexts Learner acceptance of responsibility	Problem solving Interaction with tutors and other learners Active participation in learning Self-correction Interdependence Critical reflection Progressive mastery Active seeking of meaning Individual pacing Empowered self-direction Internal drive/motivation Reciprocal learning Experiential learning

### 3.4.5 Effective halls of residence programming and communication

Normally, the programming formal and non-formal activities consists of five phases: assessment of needs, formulation of the idea, programme planning, programme implementation, evaluation.

Based on the interviews and on the data gathered during the qualitative research, we can describe every phase as follows.

- *Assessment of needs.* The procedures for finding out what programmes are required or useful for the students. Sometimes an initial, entrance assessment is provided; in some other cases, it is possible to use information from interest surveys. Very often the assessment of need is carried out through informal student contacts, i.e. talking to people about what they are interested in, and most importantly, listening to what they say. In some cases, the assessment of needs is not provided and courses are based on the previous years' programmes. This can lead to some problematic issues, for example: making assumptions about what people want or need; having predetermined programmes in mind before doing an assessment of needs; assuming that student needs do not change.
- *Formulation of ideas.* Reflecting on data gathered during the assessment of needs (ideas and options about what programmes would fit in the assessed needs) and then making an informed choice based on priorities and limits. Sometimes a brainstorming can take place, a non-critical analysis of all the ideas, with high value placed on creativity. It is also useful to compare with similar or related programmes from other halls of the same institutions, other institutions, university programmes, etc.
- *Programme planning.* This phase consists in determining the goals of the



programme, the evaluation criteria and the organisational strategies, the theme or the subject of the programme/course/seminar, time and date, location and budget. Very often in this phase a planning committee is selected that will take responsibility for every further step and task of programme implementation. In this case, it is often advisable to make a checklist and an assignment sheet (nevertheless directors have always to follow up delegated responsibilities).

- *Programme implementation.* As said before, a group of students is often responsible for putting the actual programme in practice. They are always supervised by a tutor or by the director, but they are in charge of the effective execution of the programme. They have to contact speakers, guests, lecturers etc. to arrange and verify details; reserve space and coordinate plans with other groups in the hall; reserve/provide audio-video equipment or check for any other special equipment needs; arrange for staffing (at doors, exits, refreshments); order refreshments and serving items (napkins, cups, plates, etc.). Furthermore, if it has not been done in the planning phase, they have to determine marketing/communication strategies, in order to inform internal and external people about the event.
- *Evaluation.* Determining if the programme was successful and worth repeating. There can be various degrees of sophistication for measuring and defining success<sup>14</sup>. Programme goals, evaluation strategies and evaluation criteria are usually set up in the programme planning stage. It is important to encourage honest feedback from the participants and to reflect on what the programme planners learned from planning the programme and/or from the programme itself, in order to improve the organisation of future events.

The survey was also a tool to collect some information about the *Communication of the soft skills model and process outside the organisation*. Presentation at universities is the preferred tool of communication outside the organisation: it allows reaching a larger number of students and is normally based on a presentation of the main features of the hall and of its soft skills model. Generally, direct forms of interaction with external stakeholders, such as meetings with companies, invitations of experts and students and presentation of colleges at universities, are preferred in comparison to magazine and newspapers advertising.

Another important form of external communication are students' informal links, such as their networks and contacts, which are the only channel of communication that escape the direct control of colleges. Normally 'word of mouth', i.e. the passing of information from one student to another via oral (but also computer-mediated) communication, is the best way to spread the popularity of the residence among young people.

From the open answers highlighted the importance of Internet and institutional websites, even if nowadays a higher number of answers about the web were expected.

For the moment, there are very few initiatives concerning online communities and the web 2.0 organised by this kind of institutions. One example is EucA Facebook group which is very popular and active.

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<sup>14</sup> Different from evaluation is assessment, which is more related to the efficacy of the programme for student learning. We will talk about that later on.

**3.4.6 Soft skill teaching, learning and assessment tools**

With the qualitative research on the best practices applied to soft skills, it was possible to identify different kind of teaching strategies used for the development of soft skills, that can be divided into three groups: expository, guided and active (see Table 10) strategy. The strategies include both university teaching methods and Company training techniques.

**Table 10:** Teaching methods in halls of residence

Expository	Guided	Active
Lecture Seminar Conference Demonstration Video education	Discussion, Debate Workshop Case study Project Assignment Simulation	Brainstorming Role play Business game Visits, Journeys Outdoor training

Except for a few, smaller residences, in the majority of colleges it is possible to apply for a tutor or a supervisor. Coaching is very rare and when the service is offered, the activity is carried out mainly by the Director.

The tutorship by a senior student for soft skills development is not practiced very often. In many cases, senior students play a role in tutoring younger students in a specific curricular area, for a specific subject, but not for soft skill development.

This would surely help young students' growth, but maybe it is a too heavy responsibility for senior students, who are still focused on their own development process.

Soft skill training in halls of residence takes normally place trough 'face-to-face' activities, but it is also possible to use other types of settings. Blended learning, i.e. combining traditional face-to-face classroom methods with computer-mediated activities, is very rare.

Many activities aimed at soft skill development can be performed outdoor, with specific activities and experiences for the development of the 'whole person'. In outdoor education, the emphasis for the subject of learning is placed on relationships: relationships concerning human and natural resources. Soft skills are also developed through other experiential methods of learning by doing, such as the on-the-job training (for example, stages in companies) and the on-the-field-activities (for example work camps in developing countries).

Different kinds of teaching methods and educational settings can produce different kind of learning, which are described in Table 11.

It is important to stress that in halls of residence students are set in a collaborative/competitive environment and they learn from each other and through the exposure to authentic, complex and real-life problems. Furthermore, the learning that occurs in halls of residence is 'meaningful', since it is a wilful, intentional, active, conscious, constructive, and socially mediated practice that includes reciprocal intention - action - reflection activities.

**Table 11:** Learning strategies in halls of residence

Learning strategies	Description
<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	Students work in small groups on an assigned project or problem, under the guidance of the facilitator who monitors the groups. There are various kind of cooperative learning techniques, for example the Jigsaw method <sup>15</sup> .
<b>Problem-based/ Project-based learning</b>	The problem is used as the starting point and motivation to learn. Participants work in small groups and are guided by a tutor-facilitator. The analysis of the problem by the group determines the learning objectives that are pursued individually by each participant.
<b>Action Learning</b>	It is a process that facilitates and enhances the learning of groups of people coming together to tackle real challenges and at the same time learning from experience through reflection and action.
<b>Experiential learning</b>	It is the process of grasping meaning from the experience itself. The student must be willing to be actively involved in the experience, must be able to reflect on the experience, must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience.
<b>Reciprocal learning</b>	It is a student-pairing strategy designed with the principles of effective coaching in mind. During the Reciprocal Learning process, two students form a learning partnership committed to helping each other reach a particular learning goal. Each student in the partnership plays two roles: As a player, each student works to complete an activity or solve a problem while 'thinking out loud'; as a coach, each student observes the player's work and listens to the player's thinking while providing praise, feedback, and clues that help the player complete the activity.
<b>Progressive mastery</b>	It is characterised by sequential micro-reinforcement in units of knowledge with respect to an object whose complete knowledge is guaranteed by the performance of the entire path.
<b>Critical reflection</b>	It emphasises both the continuity of learning and the demonstration of performance at a given standard. Progression results from requiring the demonstration of skills, techniques, knowledge and understanding. The breadth, depth and relationship between these qualities alters according to the level of mastery that is expected at a given stage in the development of the student.
<b>Active seeking of meaning</b>	It consists in helping student to actively seek the personal and social meaning of whatever they are doing, of their activities and experiences, in order to overcome difficulties that arise during study.

<sup>15</sup>The learners are divided into small groups of 5-6 persons that are called 'Jigsaw groups'. The initial problem is assigned to each 'jigsaw group' to let them solve it. The group nominates a leader who is responsible for organising the group, for assigning projects to the members of it and for solving the conflicts and the problems that emerge from the collaboration among them. Each member of these groups studies in depth a part of the problem and belongs to another group that is called the 'Expert group'. The learner studies with the members of his 'expert group' the same sub-problem and tries to collect as much information as possible from their exchange of ideas. Then, he returns to his 'jigsaw group' and shares with the other members, the knowledge and the experience that they acquired, towards the solution of the initial problem. In this way, each learner is responsible not only for his own learning but also for the learning experience of his group. In the final phase, all the 'jigsaw groups' share the results of their collaboration in the classroom.

### Assessment

Various forms of assessment are used in halls of residence to evaluate students' improvements. The majority of colleges assess students' skills at the beginning and at the end of the training course but sometimes, assessment models are not structured. Occasionally, only an evaluation form (measuring students' satisfaction of the courses) is provided.

Very rarely assessment is 'formal' and quantitative, through written or oral tests. This kind of assessment is normally used for academic courses. Generally, assessment of soft skill courses is based on teachers' or tutors' observations of individuals working in groups or on their own. This observation can be unstructured and based on teachers' or tutors' free descriptions; sometimes an assessment grid or a checklist can be provided. Another tool is self-assessment, which is probably the most popular method in halls of residence to evaluate students also during courses; nonetheless, also in this case there is a lack of structured tools.

Self-assessment and interviews are widely used to examine students entering in colleges; only some Italian residence have adopted assessment centres. Assessing students' capabilities is a fundamental step to define their training paths, focusing on the areas to improve and determining the selection of courses to attend; ignoring this phase will strongly influence learning and personal education goals. Assessment at the end of the process (at the end of a course, of a year or of a whole period in the hall of residence) is important to verify the fulfilment level of the set goals. At the same time, it is also true that accurately summarizing learning - especially the breadth and depth of learning that occurs across different years in collegiate halls of residence - in a few simple quantitative parameters is a difficult task. Not only do tests of this type tend to measure merely factual knowledge (as compared to understanding, reasoning, or creative ability), but they do so in a manner that lacks meaning to the student. As a matter of fact, halls of residence are shifting the focus of assessment from quantitative to qualitative assessment but the problem is that very often, as we have seen, this kind of assessment is not systematic or structured.

In its ideal form, systematic assessment is a legitimate way for halls of residence programmes and colleges to gauge strengths and weaknesses, measure the effect of various learning environments, and evoke positive institutional change based on objective, empirical data. Such assessment can take two main forms. *Programmatic assessment* (also known as programme evaluation: both quantitative and qualitative) is an extremely useful tool for gathering evidence and evaluating if residence halls programmes meet their own institutional goals, e.g. higher rates of retention, graduation, graduate/professional school acceptance, and successful competition for national fellowships. The second main type of assessment, *learning outcomes assessment*, attempts to measure what college students learn because of their participation in various formal, non-formal and informal activities and to distinguish the unique characteristics of the education given in halls of residence. Some halls of residence have opted for the use of more holistic, qualitative, customized forms of assessment such as learning portfolios and theses. Such autonomously designed forms of evaluation may provide a viable alternative to standardized assessment, yielding more meaningful data and allowing faculty members to rethink and reformulate their teaching approach. By integrating and examining multiple forms of evidence, as in a learning portfolio, we provide a more robust picture of higher forms of learning. From a behavioural science standpoint, multiple measures of learning (especially across time, disciplines and observers)

greatly increase reliability and allows for a more complete and potentially more accurate prediction of learning.

Even customized assessment techniques, which admirably attempt to collect more direct evidence of learning, not only fail to capture the essence of learning in some fields, but they also render them no better - if not worse - than traditional grading practices. Objective assessment rubrics that define student deliverables may work very well in some situations or disciplines, but whether they are better than traditional techniques is highly questionable.

Some halls of residence in Italy are providing a university coaching services for their students. With the help of a coach, each student is required to set personal goals for continuous improvement. Through this process the student is able to explore his/her own areas of development, set SMART (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals as well as identifying the best tools to achieve these goals. At regular intervals students - together with their coaches - monitor their progress through assessments. Group meetings take place twice a month where students alternate between different matters for discussion.

When coaching is provided, the result is an individual soft skills mapping (self-assessment at the beginning, during and at the end of the course).

During each session each student is encouraged to:

- make his/her own goals achievable;
- focus on concrete targets for developing one or more skills;
- increase awareness of his own abilities;
- develop a sense of responsibility for achieving desired goals.

At the end of the individual coaching process, the coach could issue a coaching report, which is composed of the following parts:

- analytical description of the skills that the coachee (student) has chosen to develop;
- analytical description of set goals and intended outcomes;
- synthetic assessment of the results, comparing the initial and the final self-assessment of soft skills mapping.

In Table 12, the various forms of assessment in halls of residence are illustrated.

**Table 12:** *Assessment methods used in halls of residence*

Formal	Non formal	Informal
Written test	Teachers or tutor observation	Self-assessment
Oral colloquim	of individual working in group or on their own	Peer assessment
	Grid or checklist	Audio/video recordings
	Coaching reports	Journals/diaris
	Student portfolio	

Human learning is a complex set of intertwined neural processes; it is a vast, adaptive, higher order cognitive mechanism that consists of numerous levels of serial and parallel information encoding, processing, consolidation, retention, manipulation, and recall. Consequently, the reductionist assessment approach is a

trade-off, providing greater internal validity but less generalizability.

In other words, while single scientific measures of learning are useful and interesting, by definition they provide a limited and potentially inaccurate view of overall learning.

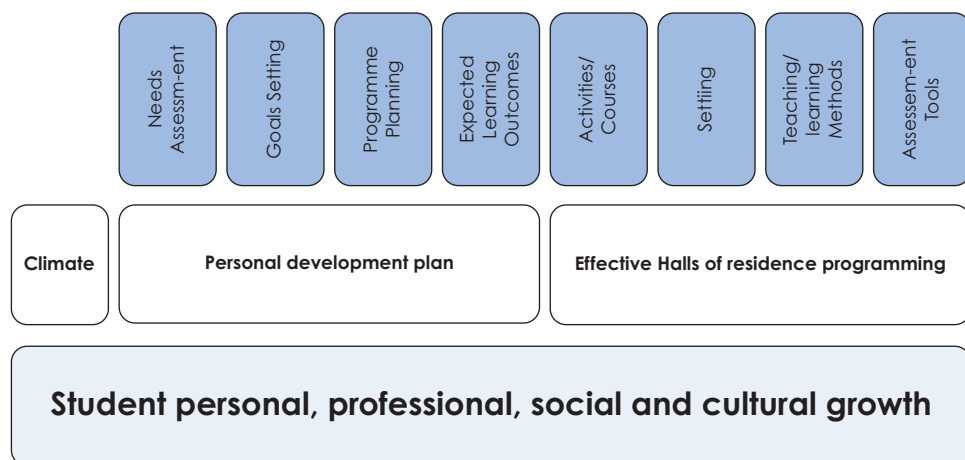
Higher forms of learning yield less overtly and immediately to demonstration and are thus assessed less frequently or accurately.

This is truer for soft skills since they are (Knight and Page, 2007, p. 11):

- [...] a mix of dispositions, understandings, attributes and practices...;
- typically non-determinate;
- they take time to form, being the product of years;
- descriptions of performance have to include descriptions of the context;
- we have to understand criteria and the conditions under which the performance was achieved.

Soft skill development in halls of residence is a complex phenomenon, which includes multiple factors, as the environment or 'climate' factor, the specific, personal goals, attitudes, dispositions of each student, the effective programming of course and activities aimed at student personal, professional, social and cultural growth, as illustrated in Fig. 8.

**Figure 8:** Soft skills development in halls of residence



### 3.5 E-QUA: ERASMUS QUALITY HOSTING FRAMEWORK

by Caterina Avezzù and Simona Miano

The soft skills model designed in the ModES project is the starting point of another project funded with support from the European Commission (Lifelong Learning Programme), E-QUA (Erasmus QUALity hosting framework). This three year project aims to improve the quality of students' mobility through the definition, validation and transfer of the criteria of quality mobility related to hosting and learning programmes offered by structures that host Erasmus students. This framework could be granted to Halls of Residence or other hosting structures that meet certain quality

criteria. **E-QUA involves 6 Partners** (University of Pavia, EucA, Instituto Andaluz de Tecnologia, Warsaw University of Technology; Consejo de Colegios Mayores Universitario de España, Conferenza dei Collegi di Merito Italiani).

Learning mobility is an important way in which young people can strengthen their future employability and acquire new professional competences, while enhancing their development as active citizens. However, a satisfactory attention to the issue of quality has not yet been developed in mobility programmes for students, and a thorough reflection on the **good practices of students' quality mobility** has not yet emerged.

### General objective of E-Qua

To improve the quality of students' mobility programmes through the definition, validation and transfer of quality criteria related to the residential services and the learning activities offered by the structures that host Erasmus students.

### Specific objectives

- Setting up a common standard for quality indicators for measuring the services offered to Erasmus students.
- Setting up common quality criteria for students' mobility.
- Improving mobility in structures with an educational programme for the hosted students.
- Providing students with a more competitive curriculum in the job market.
- Improving the recognition of the courses held in hosting structures within the student's curriculum or diploma supplement.
- Improving the recognition of soft skills acquired in non-formal and informal learning environments.

The project is divided into four main phases:

- mapping the various models of mobility in Europe; defining the criteria for a European quality mobility; validating the criteria through consultations with enterprises, universities, and international associations of students;
- developing the main outcome of the project: the 'Erasmus Quality Hosting Framework' containing the criteria for a European quality hosting of Erasmus students and a path to integrate the mobility programme proposed by the framework within the "Diploma Supplement";
- testing the criteria within some university colleges, providing the students with a sort of patent of quality hosting to be incorporated into the curriculum or diploma supplement;
- dissemination and capitalisation of the results.

E-QUA started in November 2012, and now the following outputs are available:

1. results of the survey that mapped the various models of mobility in Europe and the different types of accommodation services, educational programmes and non-formal and informal learning environments that institutions offer to students involved in mobility programmes (<http://www.equa-project.eu/en/report-of-the-survey.aspx>);



- 2. results of the focus groups with mobility students (both living in Halls of Residence or in other accommodation) and university staff to collect feedbacks, criticisms and suggestions (<http://www.equa-project.eu/en/focus-group.aspx>)

Figure 1 and 2: Involvement of mobility students in college activities

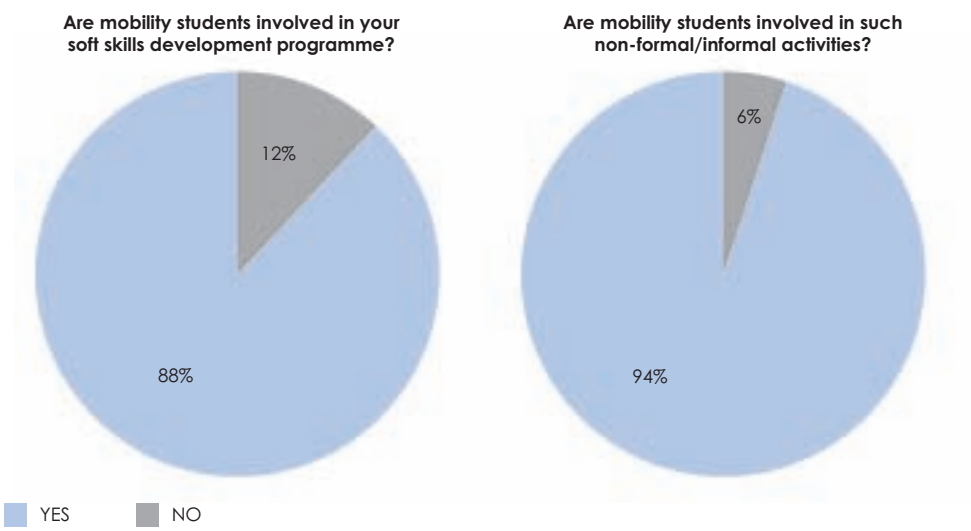
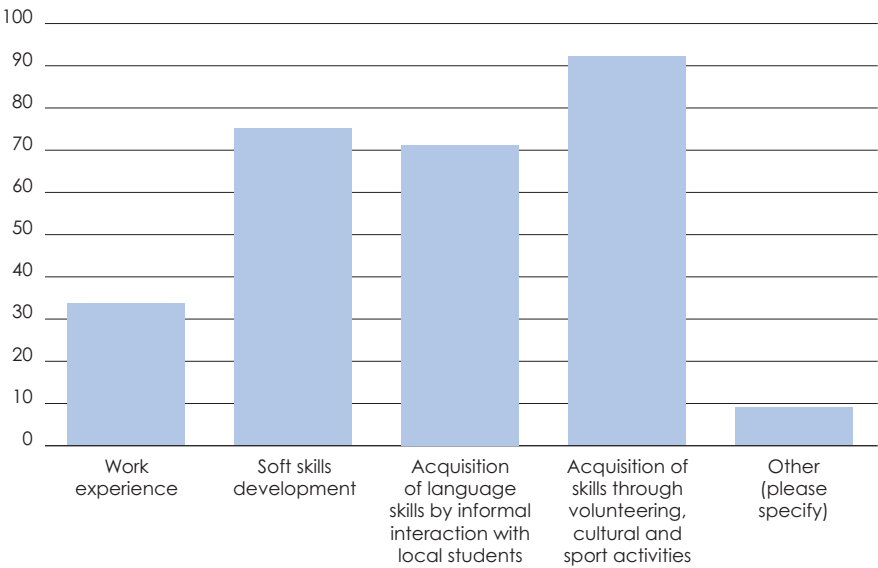
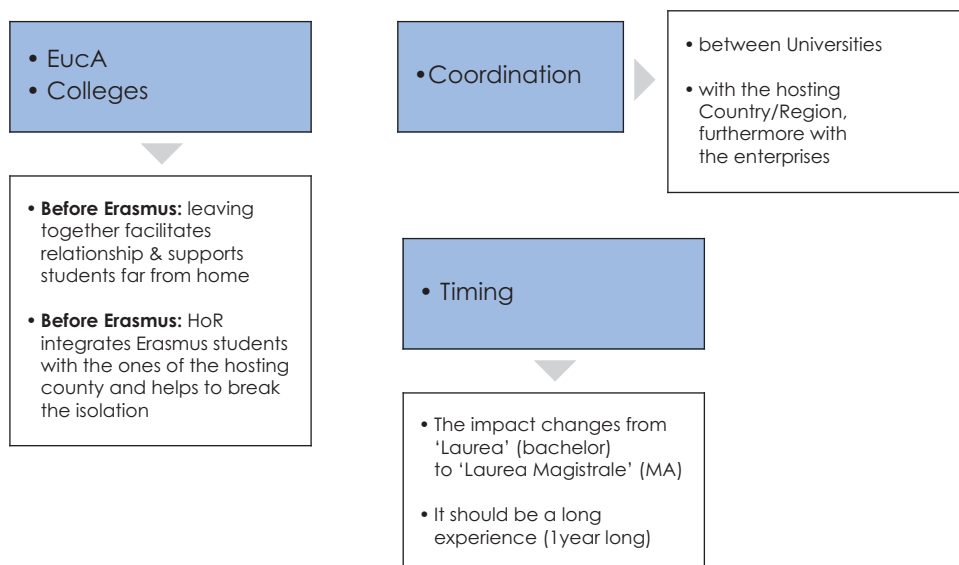


Figure 3 and 4: Colleges' activities in which mobility students are involved - advantages of living the mobility experience in a college

Please specify what kind of informal learning activities you have in your institution



**National focus group with students Plus**

3. The needs of the labour market and the soft skills requested in students' curriculum (<http://www.equa-project.eu/en/company-survey--report.aspx>). The companies were asked to select which soft skills defined by ModES project are more requested in a CV and the connection between soft skills development and international mobility in order to give the mobility offer a labour market approach.

The survey involved 17 business associations and 109 companies (28 micro, with the range of employees between 1 and 9; 23 small companies, with the range of employees between 10 and 49; 26 medium companies with the range of employees between 50 and 250; 32 big companies with more than 250 employees).

All the respondents rated in a positive way a mobility programme during the recruiting process, stressing the following aspects:

- Even if the organisations do not highlight one opportunity over the other, "additional foreign languages skills for the company and staff" seems to be the most important.
- Business associations find the "new opportunity of collaboration with university" really appealing, while few consider important the "knowledge of foreign societies and markets".
- Both companies and business associations find as most important the "bureaucratic problems" and the "resources allocated for design the working plan and training of the student".

Concerning soft skills development, the companies identified the most relevant competences, the medium importance competences and the less important competences they look for in a student's CV that included an international mobility programme during the university studies.

Most relevant competences	Medium Importance competences	Less Importance competences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Customer/User orientation</li> <li>• Learning Skills</li> <li>• Results orientation</li> <li>• Continuous improvement</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity/Innovation</li> <li>• Adaptability to Changes</li> <li>• Contact Network</li> <li>• Tolerance to stress</li> <li>• Analysis Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Skills</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Commitment/Identification with the organisation</li> <li>• Decision Making</li> <li>• Work-life balance</li> <li>• Self awareness</li> <li>• Conflict Management</li> </ul>

The first conclusions of E-QUA project (the project will end in 2015) are:

- the colleges offer the same residential and educative services both to national and to mobility students; all the welcoming and educative programmes involve mobility students;
- there is a complementarity between colleges and university regarding non formal/informal learning;
- mobility students are completely involved in the college life, they don't stay on their own, they are not isolated. The colleges are 'communities of life and learning': colleges are an answer to the students' needs;
- the learning path proposed by colleges, focused on soft skills development, answers to the labour market needs and improves youth employability.

For more information: <http://www.equa-project.eu>

## CHAPTER 4

### SOFT SKILLS IN ACTION

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#### 4.1 DIFFERENT MODELS IN EUROPEAN HALLS OF RESIDENCE\*

In this chapter, the different models of soft skill development in halls of residence are presented. As described before, in the Italian halls of residence courses are often mandatory: when students agree to live in a college, they commit themselves to play an active role in the life of the college and to participate in the projects offered. Colleges place great importance in the transmission of study methods and learning capabilities alongside intellectual and cultural goals, represented by the transmission of general contents and information. In Spanish colleges (and in a very high percentage of the Italian ones) ethical, spiritual and human growth, as well as the diffusion of social values, is considered the main goal to pursue.

Halls of residence seem to have a vague idea of what soft skills are: except for the concept of teamwork and of relational soft skills. In the data collected through the survey some soft skills are not mentioned and the answers are very vague (sometimes they are called 'transversal' or 'complementary' skills, but their contents are not specified).

In the British and Irish halls of residence, soft skill training is performed mainly through practical and outdoor activities.

The scenario is different in Polish and Hungarian colleges: none of them offer internal courses, but there are special soft skills training sessions during the week-end, organised by students' committees.

Connections with the labour market are quite poor, except for the Italian colleges. The different types of connections have been analysed in the previous chapter.

With the exception of Italy and Spain, where skills mapping is provided in 51.9% and 40% of the colleges, none of the English and Polish institutions provides it. At a global level, soft skills mapping or development is an underestimated subject and it represents just a little part of the managerial experience of colleges.

The attitude towards a programme for the development of soft skills is globally

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\* The best practices presented in this chapter were collected by Maria Cinque and Simona Miano and were reviewed by the people in charge of the educational activities in the different institutions.

positive, except for Poland. The majority of halls of residence thinks that this kind of programme is a good idea, even if some colleges (in particular, some of the British ones) see its implementation as a difficult or complicated task.

In the following paragraphs, different models of soft skill development are presented:

- the Italian model, which can vary from one institution to another;
- the Spanish soft skill courses, which represent a more homogenous model;
- the British and Irish models;
- the training sessions organised directly by students in Polish and Hungarian halls of residence;
- EucA initiatives for soft skill development.

## 4.2 ITALIAN SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT MODELS

Within the framework of higher education, in Italy the legally recognised university colleges - grouped together under the permanent Conference of colleges (CCU, Conferenza dei Collegi universitari di merito legalmente riconosciuti) - are committed to the pursuit of quality teaching and the personal development of students. Through special agreements with the Italian Conference of Rectors (CRUI, Conferenza dei rettori universitari italiani), the colleges stipulate conventions with universities, which award credits for the validated teaching programmes and scientific projects offered by the colleges. Furthermore, the colleges offer students interdisciplinary cultural activities, study guidance and tutoring services. Such activities help to guarantee that the students achieve their academic qualifications within the expected time and support their training and development as 'wellrounded', responsible human beings, ready to take up their place in society. In total 14 institutions manage the 47 residential colleges in 14 Italian cities (from Milan to Catania) where over 3,000 students are selected for training on the basis of academic excellence and personal skills. Some examples will be presented of the main activities that each institution organises in order to develop or enhance students' soft skills.

### ***Interdisciplinary activities at the Almo Collegio Borromeo (Pavia)***

The Collegio Borromeo, founded by Saint Charles in 1561, is among the most ancient institutions for the hosting of university students in Italy. Originally it hosted only male students; in 2009 the Women's Section was opened, so that equal study rights could be granted to 50 female students. The majority of the University of Pavia Faculty (around 250 teachers, researchers and doctorate students) graduated from Almo Collegio Borromeo.

Today the college hosts approximately 150 students, who are admitted on the basis of merit and retain their places by maintaining standards of academic excellence. Students can develop their full potential here thanks to internal, in-depth, complementary courses, foreign language courses, the School of Ethics and also by means of an outstanding cultural and musical programme. Some of these teaching initiatives are accredited by the University of Pavia.

Post-graduate courses include the European School of advanced Studies in Materials Science, the Centre for Study and Research into Ancient Law, and a Master in International Finance. These courses are held at the college and are jointly promoted by the School of advanced Studies of the University of Pavia.

Post-graduate students and researchers from the 'C. Ferrini' graduate residence act

as student tutors. The alumni association also offers helpful guidance regarding external job opportunities for students.

Among the interdisciplinary activities, a recent initiative includes the following courses, open to students of any discipline:

- **Dynamic Programming, Optimal Control and Applications (2012):** the course provides an introduction to the basic concepts of the economic theory and optimization and an overview on the general equilibrium theory and the game theory. Dynamic programming is a method for solving complex problems by breaking them down into simpler sub-problems. Consequently, the course is aimed at enhancing students' analytical and problem solving skills, besides testing their teamwork and negotiation capabilities, while involving them in project works, exercises and simulations.
- **Fundamentals of Ethics (2013):** the course deals with the basics of ethical human behaviour, with an introduction to theological and deontological ethical theories, and different lectures on important issues such as: the concepts of freedom, truth and wellbeing; good and evil in human action; law and moral good; happiness and pleasure; the structure of human desire; passions and virtues; personal responsibility in pursuing the common good; solidarity and subsidiarity. The course is aimed at enhancing students' analytical thinking and their capacity of decision making. Furthermore it also focuses on professional ethics, self-awareness, commitment and life balance.
- **Law and Literature (2014):** a very innovative cycle of conferences that tries to put together law and literature or, more broadly, law and the Humanities, in the conviction that Law and Literature offer an educational method serving a useful purpose in a variety of disciplinary areas. Among the lectures offered in this course: Law and freedom. Stories of men; Civil death and real death; The transfiguration of punishment in the bourgeois world of *The Merchant of Venice*; Charles Dickens as a legal historian; Equity in Victorian Great Britain; Good, fair and useful in the *Promessi Sposi* by A. Manzoni.

### **ARCES's value chain (Palermo, Catania)**

ARCES is a non-profit organisation, founded in 1976 and promoting activities aimed at the development of students' full potential, contributing to their cultural development and their professional and human growth. All this happens in structures of high quality, which guarantee excellent living conditions for young student people and functional spaces dedicated to the study, leisure and personal interests. ARCES university residences are designed to provide outstanding training, with a special focus on soft skills, functional to entering the world of work, and to success in it.

ARCES has elaborated a student development project aimed at taking care of young people during their whole academic life: from the access to university until their graduation and the entrance to the job market. This training proposal becomes reality in many initiatives promoted by the individual ARCES structures within the common framework of its *Value Chain Initiative*.

**ARCES's Value Chain** consists of 5 steps.

The first step (inbound orientation) includes orientation activities aimed at guiding young people in the choice of university and their future profession, in line with their personal attitudes, motivations and aspirations. It consists of individual and group interviews, as well as tests and labs in schools, universities and vocational training centres. The second element of the value chain is education, which is composed of

two main types of activities: training and professional development courses in line with the needs of the labour market whereby the courses award credits to support the integration of school and university study; training initiatives to stimulate cultural and intellectual growth and strategies to be competitive in the global society.

The third step (*in itinere* student guidance) is mainly based on a personalised tutoring service to help young people build their own curriculum and to consciously achieve academic and professional qualifications on time and with satisfactory results.

The fourth step (*Post-graduate student guidance*) consists of self-assessment activities aimed at raising student awareness of the skills they have acquired and of the opportunities of the labour market. The fifth step (*Job Placement*) is aimed at finding an internship in order to facilitate students' entrance into the job market and putting into practice the skills acquired during their studies.

Furthermore, a programme devoted to soft skill development is **GIFT (*Giovani Imprenditori del proprio Futuro nel loro Territorio*)**, which is active in the majority of ARCES halls of residence. The lack of job opportunities, together with the want of entrepreneurial initiatives, is a crucial problem in Sicily. To help solve these issues, a network of companies was set up, in order to help young people prepare for their future work. The network is composed mainly of young entrepreneurs with foresight and interest in the development of social capital, that act as 'mentors' and 'role models' for young students.

In order to participate to the programme, students must have a good CV (in terms of university curriculum), be committed to the development of their managerial and relational skills and be open to receive mentoring and coaching. The programme includes both collective meetings (one evening a week from October to May) and personal development plans (career guidance, mentoring, training, and coaching).

#### **Tools to support the student growth:**

##### **Associazione CUIR (*Collegio Universitario Internazionale di Roma*)**

The Associazione CUIR (*Collegio Universitario Internazionale di Roma*) is a non-profit association established in Rome on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1990.

CUIR offers students a wide range of courses and opportunities to develop key skills on a professional and personal level, thus supplementing the academic skills taught at university.

Since its foundation, and thanks to its international vocation, the CUIR promotes receptivity of young students and supports their education through cultural activities and laboratories aimed at the development of soft skills, facilitating the interchange of teachers, providing scholarships, supporting cooperation for the research.

Currently, the Association CUIR promotes and manages two centres that carry out activities for university students in Rome: the college of Via dei Genovesi, with more than 80 students coming from 29 different countries, that offers an ideal learning environment; the University Centre of Via Emilio de' Cavalieri, that has facilities specifically devoted to the hundreds of students who attend universities in Rome.

Initiatives organised in the International University Centre Collalto - directed by young professionals and graduate students who commit their time, energy and ideas to take this project forward of excellence - have a university open character, which is fostered by the involvement in them of people with a great diversity of academic preparation.

In addition to study and orientation/guidance, as well as sports activities, different 'tools' are offered for the development of soft skills

**Volunteering:** Students are encouraged to spend a few hours of their time in social



activities. During the year they make visits to the elderly, sick and marginalized.

**Film club:** different films are proposed in order to foster group discussions, leaded by a moderator who introduces the debate. Among the films discussed last year: "The Hurt Locker" and "Company Men".

**Peer dating:** Collalto promotes debates and exchange of ideas even among students themselves. Among the topics of the presentations and discussions carried out by students: Formula 1, Champions League, apps (with some specific examples: the Kiwi Local Net, a mobile social application to scan the surrounding area and to get in touch with people who use the same application; a similar app designed by some students of LUISS University: ULocal), Electronic banking.

**Conferences and lectures:** through conferences and lectures by university teachers the Collalto Centre tries to help students better understand cultural key issues in society concerning philosophy, anthropology, ethics, communication, law, politics, etc. Among last year lectures, one, very successful among students, was devoted to the International Sacred Architecture (prof. Ralf van Bühren).

**Collalto Business Cases:** This activity provides students with the tools needed to analyse and solve specific problems in the world of business, with the help of experienced professionals and university teachers. Among the testimonials that were invited last year: Fabio Lancellotti (Aster Capital), Andrea Ciani (Ernst & Young) and Gianfranco Giuliani (Angelini Pharmaceuticals).

### ***A vibrant international community:***

#### ***Collegio di Milano - Fondazione Collegio delle Università milanesi***

The Collegio di Milano is an interuniversity campus for the education of outstanding Italian and foreign students enrolled at the seven universities in Milan.

The students are admitted after a careful selection process, which considers, in addition to academic potential, the desire and motivation for cultural and personal growth. The campus, designed by Marco Zanuso and located on a 23,000 square-meter park, is home to a vibrant international community and provides a wealth of cultural, sporting and artistic activities.

The Collegio di Milano is an initiative of the **Fondazione Collegio delle Università milanesi**, whose activities are aimed at disseminating and promoting the life of the Collegio, as well as enhancing a culture of merit and the internationalization of the university system. It also proposes to be a lever to encourage social mobility and active citizenship.

The main objective of the Collegio di Milano is to strengthen and enhance the potential of its student body.

The Collegio offers a **residential campus** based on an historical model still present in the United States and the United Kingdom. Students at the Collegio have the opportunity to challenge themselves in various contexts and situations, to experiment with their skills, to define their aspirations, and to reach their highest potential as individuals: academically, personally, and professionally.

On campus, students create an important network of relationships, while participating actively in a multi-cultural and interdisciplinary Cultural Programme, which complements their main university course of studies.

**The Cultural Programme** is composed of:

- **Seminars:** educational courses aimed at combining the presentation of knowledge with the opportunity to develop critical and constructive thinking on five different areas: Business and economics; Humanities; Science; Languages and Cultures from the world; Social and Civic Ethics. A portion of the seminar is

held in English language.

- **Laboratories:** these are opportunities for creativity, the acquisition of knowledge, experimentation, discovery and self-teaching, as well as an occasion for practical, creative and intellectual activities to take place. Laboratories (e.g. Public Speaking; Business Game; Team Building) are mainly tailored to enhance and to develop soft skills.
- **Project Work:** it is an active application of contents and skills learned during university courses and educational experiences at the Collegio. The collaboration with firms and companies with whom the Collegio has formed solid connections over the years allows the creation of projects within which students have two opportunities, they can practice what they have learned in theory at the university, and can experiment their own creativity bringing their own ideas to real-world projects.
- **Courses of English Language:** with the aim of achieving the objective of internationalization and to enhance the speaking skills.
- **Series of 'Snapshots':** these are integral part of the Cultural Programme and consist of meetings with prominent personalities from the professional community who offer an insight not only into their personal and professional experience, but also an in-depth understanding of the field in which they work.

As shown by the variety of the Cultural Programme, the participation both in specific activities, and in more global activities (e.g. Project work is an occasion to work on the team work and project management skills) is tailored to develop the soft skills. The Collegio also offers services in tutoring, international exchanges and professional placement, in order to guide students as they choose the best course of study and look to enter the world of work.

### **An institute of outstanding cultural qualification: Collegio Ghislieri (Pavia)**

The Collegio Ghislieri was founded in 1567 by pope S. Pius V and falls under the patronage of the Italian President. The Italian Ministry of Education recognizes it as an 'institute of outstanding cultural qualification'.

The college is a founder member of the University School of Advanced Studies and is the seat of the School for the Integrated Management of the Environment, the School in Nuclear Technologies and Ionizing Radiation and the School in Methods for Complex Systems Management.

Admission is through national public examination (minimum school leaving mark: 80/100) with one written and two oral tests. Enrolled students must take the university exams on time with an annual average mark of at least 27/30 and no marks lower than 24/30.

Among the activities aimed at the development of soft skills feature foreign language courses (beginners and advanced); in-depth subject talks; conferences and seminars on various issues including current affairs; tutoring services; international exchange schemes with Europe (St. John's College-Cambridge, St. Hugh's College-Oxford, Ecole Normale Supérieure-Paris, Maximilianeum College-Munich, Universities of Geneva, Zurich, Mainz and Strasbourg,) and the United States (University of Oregon-Eugene); study grants to facilitate further studies in Italy and abroad; opportunities for work placements in companies; modern and classical music concerts.

In 2003, within the Ghislieri College, was founded the **Center for Communication and Research**, to coordinate the activities of the College relating to advanced scientific research and training excellence in various disciplines.

Collegio Ghislieri organises, funds and coordinates several university courses (Courses on the Principles of Logic, Clinical Bioinformatics, Psychological Sciences and Techniques, Law and Juridical Sciences, Musicology, History of Modern Architecture, Archaeology of Pre-Roman Italy, and other courses from the School of Medicine), which are accredited by the University of Pavia.

Since 2010, the alumni association of the college has created a prize with the goal to recognise the scientific and professional merits of their graduates and to promote institutional identity, knowledge and prestige of the college in Italy and abroad. The prize is awarded annually to a young 'ghisleriano' (under 40 years of age) who has achieved distinction for outstanding scientific and / or professional results.

The Collegio Ghislieri, as a part of its century-old cultural activity, is also a European reference in the field of early music.

The ensemble in residence, Ghislieri Choir & Consort, is one of the most appreciated ensembles of its generation, performing all across Europe and recording for Sony International.

The college encourages the development of the best emerging **European early music ensembles and musicians through a large scale cooperation project (EEEMERGING)**, in partnership with an excellent and wide European network of musical structures and universities. The scholars of the college and the students of Pavia University have the chance to participate actively through the choral amateur programme (Coro Universitario del Collegio Ghislieri), which offers also classes of vocal technique and musical theory. The college gives the possibility to be involved in the organisation through a student-work programme.

All those activities are presented to the public through Pavia Barocca, the college's early music concert series, recognized as a member of the European Early Music Network.

### ***Women in leadership, role models and self-empowerment:***

#### ***Collegio Nuovo – Fondazione Sandra e Enea Mattei (Pavia)***

The Collegio Nuovo was established in 1978 thanks to the generosity of Sandra Bruni Mattei, an industrial entrepreneur who wished to privilege the social and cultural development of talented and motivated female undergraduates, also by supporting them financially.

Aware of the growing position of women in society, the Founder laid the basis for the creation of a rich and stimulating international environment, in which dedication, diversity, creativity, and cross-disciplinary expertise allow the students to develop all-round skills aimed at standards of quality and excellence. Development is a key word for Collegio Nuovo, highlighting a gradual approach, a tendency to improve students' capabilities within society. Students are selected on their 'distinct aptitude for study', i.e. *merit*.

The college's cultural programme complements the academic activities carried out at the University of Pavia and also attracts outside students and members of the public.

Collegio Nuovo organises many interdisciplinary courses accredited by the University of Pavia, including Digital and Multimedia Communications, Scientific Journalism, Journalistic Methods and Techniques, Semiotics of the Arts, Middle East History, and short in-depth courses for Medicine students (starting from the very first established in 2003, Ethics of Medical Communication).

Furthermore, the college holds conferences with leading figures from the worlds of culture, the arts, science, research, politics, business and industry. Collegio Nuovo

regularly publishes volumes regarding its most important cultural activities, among them the series of books *Incontri al Collegio Nuovo* and the college review *Nuovità*. *Collegio Nuovo Goes International* (2008) celebrates the college's cosmopolitan outlook.

Among the initiatives undertaken to enhance soft skills the *Women in Leadership Programme* stands out as one of the major events since the inception of the college. As a matter of fact, many prominent women, who contributed to various fields of knowledge and areas of society, have been invited throughout more than 30 years, and especially in the last decade, to tell their stories and share their experiences. "Key women" such as Nobel Prize Rita Levi Montalcini and Penn Vet Leadership Award Ilaria Capua act as role model for college's students who also have the opportunity to meet them in an informal way and develop soft skills.

This open-minded and far-sighted model of education focused on young women laid the basis for the invitation of the Collegio Nuovo to participate as executive member in the international network of women's colleges WEW (*Women's Education Worldwide*). Inspired also by such a global network, the college increased its offer of specific initiatives focusing on international exchanges and training courses (intercultural soft skills; public speaking), some in connection with the business world and in close cooperation with the Alumnae Association.

Collegio Nuovo students have the opportunity every year to participate in global meetings and courses hosted by the college's institutional partners, in Europe (recently also thanks to the active participation in EucA), US, Dubai and Tokyo. Furthermore, a leadership conference was promoted in 2011, with more than 40 students coming from all continents and interacting also with their Collegio Nuovo peers.

WEW's mission is to share best practices, to collect and disseminate data about women playing leadership roles in various fields, to foster exchange among various institutions engaged in women's education (at university level): in a word, to promote women's education worldwide.

In 2013 the Collegio Nuovo became an active collaborating institution of the Women in Public Service Project (WPSP), a programme launched by Hillary Clinton which empowers the next generation of women around the world and mobilizes them on issues of critical importance in public service. The planning of the next WEW Student Conference (June 2015) at the Collegio Nuovo testifies the continuous commitment to women's education of a college even more involved in a global community.

### ***Entrepreneurship initiative at the Collegio Universitario 'Don Nicola Mazza' (Roma, Padova, Verona)***

The Collegio Universitario "Don Nicola Mazza" is a non-profit association legally recognized by the MIUR in 1954. It delivers services and facilities so as to create a proper study and living environment. The college endeavours to promote cultural, social initiatives designed to develop a responsible commitment to societal issues and to enrich students' personal and cultural skills development.

When a student accepts a place at the college, he/she undertakes to play an active role in the college's everyday life and to participate in the projects on offer. The college becomes a place where the student can get the best out of university life, and where the prestige of a degree is enhanced by the goodwill of each student and by interdisciplinary skills, which are essential for a rapid entry into the professional field. Collegio Don Nicola Mazza provides a challenging atmosphere

for the students, which is also essential for a rapid entry into the professional field. In this respect, a very important initiative is the *Mimprendo Project*, which began in 2009 offering students of the University of Padua the chance to have work experience during their academic career.

The selected students can carry out a project with local companies that are seeking innovative and fresh solutions and are looking to develop their services and products.

The major benefits for businesses are the following:

- multiplication of time and intellectual resources devoted to innovation;
- contribution from academic multi-subject knowledge to entrepreneurial culture;
- minimal impact on business organisation;
- maximum simplification of formalities and bureaucracy;
- specialist supervision of the project by innovation managers;
- intellectual property of the solutions in the project;
- minimum investment required while pursuing a social aim.

The major benefits for university students are the following:

- acquisition of practical experience which can be used in a CV;
- introduction to an exclusive network of professional relationships;
- acquisition of competences in the management of innovative projects;
- promotion of self-entrepreneurship;
- possible start of a professional cooperation;
- from learning to adapt to learning to create;
- possibility to compete for prize money on the basis of merit and excellence.

A tutor or a mentor supervises the students in every stage of the project; the final projects are assessed by a board formed by Confindustria, Collegio Don Nicola Mazza and members of the academic staff of the University of Padua.

At the end of the project students are able to: identify and analyse problems (analytical skills); find ideas and look for alternative solutions (problem solving); apply new methods for completing required tasks, eventually finding a 'better way' (creative skills); use tools and techniques to ensure projects remain on target (results orientation); maintain team work and team building particularly on work involving interdependencies (team work).

In 2013 Mimprendo was extended to all the Italian halls of residences of CCUM - Conferenza dei Collegi Universitari di Merito (Italian Conference of University Colleges of Merit) in cooperation with Confindustria Young Entrepreneurs<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Soft skills project and intergenerational dialogue at the Collegio Universitario 'Renato Einaudi' (Torino)***

The Collegio universitario di Torino 'Renato Einaudi' is a non-profit association founded in 1935. It offers a broad array of opportunities for cultural, leisure and sporting activities in which students are encouraged to take part; all guests take turns in benefiting from subscriptions to the main theatrical and musical events held in Turin.

For a few years now, the college has undertaken a specific initiative for soft skills development.

The project does not involve all the soft skills identified by the ModEs project, but

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<sup>1</sup> For more information: [www.mimprendoitalia.it](http://www.mimprendoitalia.it)





F. SINI

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[www.euca.eu](http://www.euca.eu)



focuses on specific areas, such as self-management, personal branding and communication.

Recently the college has offered students different topics such as leadership, team building, business communication, social recruiting, and business dress code. These courses, carried out by psychologists as well as by human resources managers, provide students with methods, skills, and strategies aimed at helping them to achieve their own goals and objectives and to improve their effectiveness.

Furthermore, communication and public speaking skills are enhanced through **Theatrical improvisation**, a course guided by an actor coach - a course in fact which is useful for many other soft skills (teamwork, negotiation, creativity etc.). The underlying idea is that effective soft skills training must be coupled with practical experiences. This implies that participants are invited to experience and enact the newly developed skills.

Another interesting initiative - not directly aimed at soft skill development - which can bring learning outcomes, is the **Seniores on-line project**. This project is focused on young people using their technology expertise to help people over 60 to use the Internet and social networking sites. While bridging gaps between generations, the project is also designed to be mutually beneficial for both age groups (young people will acquire leadership skills, communication customer/user orientation and culture adaptability skills).

Finally, even leisure and sports activities are important for the development of soft skills: the card game bridge, playing in an orchestra, singing in a choir, taking part in a football tournament, and parachuting from an aeroplane are pleasant and original methods which improve strategic skills, team building and enlarge students' 'comfort' zone.

### ***Human progress and sustainable development at the Collegio Universitario 'S. Caterina da Siena' (Pavia)***

The proposal for a female university college to match Pavia's illustrious 'historical' colleges was put forward in the 1950s by the 'future' Pope Paul VI, then archbishop of Milan, and was accepted in 1973 on the initiative of the Diocese of Pavia. From the outset, the college has worked towards promoting social understanding and cultural skills, offering students the opportunity to train and develop academic and personal skills both within and outside their university curriculums, in an atmosphere of cooperation and participation.

The college is one of the founder members of Pavia's University School of Advanced Studies (IUSS) together with the University of Pavia, other university colleges in Pavia, and the Ministry of Education. College students may choose to apply for advanced courses at the Senior University School organised by the IUSS.

The college also cooperates with the University and the IUSS in organising new, experimental postgraduate programmes.

It holds courses from the advanced School of Integrated Formation (SAFI) for postgraduates at the University of Pavia as well as lectures in the international Masters in 'Cooperation and Development'. In addition to interdisciplinary cultural and academic initiatives, which are also open to the public, since 2002/2003, the college has launched a university course in *Human Progress and Sustainable Development*, recognised by all departments of the University of Pavia and open to all students (8 editions so far).

The course aims at presenting the problems of the sustainable development from a

multidisciplinary point of view. Real cases are analysed from a perspective of integrated management of resources and human resources.

Furthermore many courses were carried out, aimed at inspiring reflection and soft skill development for medical students: *Medicine Nobel prize winners* (2013-14), *The death: biomedical, psychological, ethical and legal perspectives* (2011-12), *Women and medicine* (2009-10).

### **Contributing to the cultural growth of students:**

#### **Fondazione CEUR (Bologna, Milano, Torino, Catania)**

CEUR Foundation (Centro Europeo per l'università e la ricerca; European Centre for University and Research) was established in 1990 by the initiative of university professors, entrepreneurs, and professionals.

It aims at offering young university students the best conditions to actively create their future.

As art. 2 of the charter states, the main purpose of the Foundation is that of contributing to the cultural growth of the young university students by creating and managing University Residences of Merit, as well as fostering the research among students and teachers thus developing a scientific cooperation between them.

In order to promote this cooperation, the Foundation acts following four main principles: cooperating with scientific institutions and subjects; incubating and starting up initiatives; promoting higher education courses; granting scholarships.

Among the initiatives aimed at the development of soft skills:

- The course ***Arsmédica – The art of caring*** (2013) which explores the interface between the arts and healing, and examines what makes medicine an art, based on the representation of experiences of the body, health, and wellness. Content includes: art, science and knowledge (narratives from patients and health care workers), medical history (the foundation of hospitals), science and clinical methodology, fiction, poetry, and visual art. There are also sections on children and on the educational responsibility of healthcare professionals.
- The ***Summer School of Higher Education***, which focuses on social, economic, legal and political issues, and is targeted at young students or workers who want to learn more about the cultural trends and dynamics of our times. In 2013 the discussion culminated in the event *Conversazioni a Milano: Quale crescita per l'Europa*, organised by Fondazione CEUR and Fondazione Sussidiarietà, under the direction of Prof. Giulio Sapelli and Prof. Giorgio Vittadini.
- The book ***Democracy and subsidiarity in the EU*** that contains the output of a higher education summer school organised in July 2012 by the CEUR Foundation together with Rome University LUISS Guido Carli. Its topic – indeed a compelling one for Europe – was the impact of the democracy and subsidiarity principles on the decision-making processes of the European Community and the Parliaments of its individual Member States.

As part of that approach, this book, whilst reiterating that the introduction of the subsidiarity principle into the Maastricht Treaty was a historical breakthrough, provides a contribution that we deem to be very important, insofar as it stresses the need – and that is going to be the challenge of the next few decades – to build relationships between States, to build Europe on the rock-solid foundations of a strong and cohesive social coexistence, on the awareness of the unavoidable relational nature of human beings; a relational nature which alone can guarantee a proper development of decision-making flows and foster subsidiarity and democracy.

### **Professional ethics: Fondazione Collegio San Carlo di Modena**

The origins of the institution dates back to the 17th century. In November 1626, Paolo Boschetti, count of Modena and priest, established a place for the education of knights and gentlemen. The instruction/training focused on the study of the arts and sciences (including foreign languages) and in physical activities. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the college opened its doors to students who did not come from noble families, whilst preserving its original vocation and continuing to focus on the education of those who were destined to play key roles in the society.

As outlined in its Statute, the personal development of students is still today amongst the priorities of the Fondazione alongside its research activity on social and religious sciences. To this end, it hosts the international School of Advanced Studies in Science and Culture for Italian and foreign postgraduates, the Cultural Centre and the Religious Studies Centre which promotes public research and study programmes, and the Library and Archives.

For many years the Fondazione has been organising a cross-disciplinary course in Professional Ethics, in order to include in the educational process, the responsibility for interpreting human activity in the light of an ethical vision of life. This is possible by adding to technical rationality the ability to assess and evaluate the impact of choices and the consequences such choices could bring. Professional ethics is aimed at helping people decide and choose what to do when faced with a problem at work that raises a moral issue. Furthermore, the course focuses not only on ethics, commitment and self-awareness, but also on skills such as decision making and problem solving. It is addressed to university and PhD students of medicine, biosciences and biotechnologies, pharmacy and other health-related disciplines. The Cultural Center promotes a critical reflection on the dynamics of cultural, social and political issues that characterize the contemporary world. Starting from political or social issues, some themes are analysed in a long term - historical and theoretical - perspective, through multiple disciplinary contributions.

The initiatives of the Cultural Centre include different kind of activities, which are integrated in order to provide a scientifically sound perspective: lectures, seminars on European culture, the annual thematic projects (consisting of workshops, video-art installations and theatrical productions), and philosophy with children. The activities of the Cultural Centre also include reviewing new books and discussing books online.

### **Developing Talents in a European Perspective:**

#### **Fondazione Comunità Domenico Tardini Onlus (Roma)**

The Fondazione Comunità Domenico Tardini university college was founded in 1946 by Monsignor Domenico Tardini, the future Secretary of State to Pope John XXIII. The college welcomes and supports in their studies talented children and young adults, as well as orphans and students from a poor background. Inspired by the parable of talents in the Gospel of St. Matthew (Matthew 25, 14-30), the college helps young adults to develop responsibly their natural gifts. The Foundation operates along three principles: the Christian meaning of existence; respect for individual freedom; the importance of knowledge.

The college offers various cultural and educational activities.

Among the most recent initiatives:

- ***L'Europa non cade dal cielo*** (2012), a cycle of seminars on the European political identity, economy and citizenship;
- ***Il capitale umano asset fondamentale per il rilancio del Paese*** (2013), a seminar

aimed at focusing on human capital as an asset for the new development of Italy and Europe;

- **Project management in the financial sector** (2014), a training programme for a group of students aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills, with a final certification issued by the Italian Association of Managers and Experts of Project Management (ASSIREP);
- **The power of sport** (2014) a cycle of seminars on different issues connected with sport, such as the ethical, social and psychological dimensions of sport.

### ***JUMP Job-University Matching Project: Fondazione Rui (Milano, Roma, Bologna, Genova, Trieste, Verona)***

The university halls of residence of the Fondazione Rui provide an environment where students can develop their potential on a personal, cultural and academic level. The halls of residence are committed to enriching the development of students' personal skills by organising different activities that integrate the programmes taught at university.

One of them is JUMP (Job-University Matching Project), a three-year integrative programme targeted at university students. The programme started in the academic year 2003/04 and since then more than 1,200 students have taken part (150 students per year).

It is organised in partnership with ESCP Europe Business school and with Consel and its partners, i.e. Accenture, Enel, Eni, IBM, Sky, Telecom, Hp, etc. It has the patronage of Politecnico di Milano and Università Cattolica.

JUMP is a modular programme that includes three kinds of activities: interdisciplinary courses, specific activities, and coaching. Each semester students take two courses: an interdisciplinary one and one based on specific activities. Furthermore, each student is assigned to a coach and follows a personal development plan.

#### ***Interdisciplinary courses***

They focus on anthropology, ethics, global mindset, study strategies, multimedia communication and languages, social history etc.

#### ***Specific activities***

They have a professional aim, i.e. business cases, legal cases, supplementary courses in law for engineers, supplementary courses for medical students. The Directors of the hall of residence, depending on the circumstances of the local student population, have the flexibility to draw up their own initiatives.

#### ***Coaching***

Helped by a coach, each student is required to set a series of personal goals for continuous improvement. Through this process students are able to explore their own areas of development, set 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals as well as identify the best tools to achieve these goals. Students, under the supervision of their coaches, monitor their progress by means of regular assessments.

Thanks to JUMP, university students develop the soft skills required in the professional environment, as well as put into practice the most useful aspects of what each one has learned using a combination of individual and team work. The programme also includes meetings with guests: students are given the opportunity to meet with well-known managers, entrepreneurs and professionals who offer advice on possible paths for their personal growth.

From the point of view of the students, participating in JUMP means to attend every year to 3 courses of minimum 20 hours each, having the opportunity to get

coaching sessions for personal development. At the end of the programme, students who have followed at least 9 courses (i.e. 180 hours of lesson) get a certification of attendance.

The Faculty is composed of: university teachers; managers, businessmen, lawyers, entrepreneurs; professionals and experts in training, psychology, education. JUMP aims at 'matching' the world of university with that of job through the cooperation with companies: Accenture, Eni, Vodafone etc.

For students of second level degree, a further programme is provided: JUMP 2.0. It is a two year programme that includes 6 modules:

- Career report: self assessment; identification of individual profile and career report; three individual talks of professional guidance.
- CV and self presentation: analysis of the labour market reference; writing one's cv and the cover letter; the job interview; the assessment center; analysis of self motivation.
- Advanced anthropology I and II (two different modules): conflict management; life project and work-life balance; family life; diversity management and globalization; self-management.
- Project management: organization; time management and project costs; quality management and risk.
- Entrepreneurship: from the idea to the company; business plan; funding; start up.

### ***Job Placement Service and Interdisciplinary courses at IPE (Napoli and Bari)***

The IPE (Istituto per ricerche ed attività educative) was founded in Naples in 1979 on the initiative of a group of university lecturers, entrepreneurs and professionals dedicated to 'helping young students gain access to education, culture and jobs' (art. 1 of its Statute).

The Job Placement Service of the Higher Training School of IPE helps students acquire the skills required in professional work and which are often lacking in graduates. These soft skills are acquired through a well-planned programme focused on developing:

- *Self-evaluation*: understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses.
- *Team work* and project work: there are several projects running throughout the year for students to improve and/or acquire new skills relating to problem solving, leadership, teambuilding, etc.
- *Assessment*: this takes the form of periodical job interviews and examines how to present oneself, a case interview, motivational interviews etc. In addition to this, seminars are offered on how to write a CV and the use of social networks (Linkedin), email, etc.
- *The value of work*: why and how to work, job quality, interpersonal relations in the work environment, the social value of work, balance between private and work life, etc.
- *Seminars on Dress Code*: knowing how to use the right style of dress for every occasion.
- *Humanistic training*: seminars on philosophy and society and maintaining an effective work ethic.

Furthermore, the Job placement office draws up annual CV books that include students' professional profiles and are addressed to partner companies. The office also organises internal seminars about editing and updating CVs and cover letters; it plans recruitment meetings and company-presentations; carries out recruiting

activities for organisations and companies that require experts (up to 8 years of experience); provides enrolment information about summer schools in London and Barcelona; provides information about opportunities of job-placements on the market; provides advice to companies to identify a shortlist of candidates with a professional profile matching the companies' needs; takes part in national Career Days (in particular at Borsa internazionale - International Bourse - of placement in Cernobbio-Como).

Among the interdisciplinary activities for students from all faculties, is the course Justice and Economic Thinking (2013), which was inspired in large part by the lessons of the homonymous course "Justice" held at Harvard University by the American philosopher Michael J. Sandel, and was aimed at helping students reflect on moral issues in everyday life.

A specific programme for soft skill development, **CroSS (corsi sulle soft skills)**, was designed at the Residenza del Levante - Bari (2014-15), with the aim of helping students shape their curricula in accordance with companies' requirements. The programme includes modules addressing communication, team-work, problem solving, decision making, customer satisfaction, and stakeholder management and satisfaction.

### 4.3 SOFT SKILLS COURSES IN SPAIN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

#### **Best practices at Colegios Mayores**

Different kinds of activities for the development of soft skills are offered at the Spanish Colegios Mayores. These include courses, workshops, conferences, competitions etc. These activities are open to the whole university community and the public at large.

Among the best practices of soft skill training in Colegios Mayores, we can mention the following activities.

The **International Undergraduate Skills Programme**: a four-week course with 4 classes per week and a three-month follow-up programme with the possibility of spending a period of time working in a company. The main goal of the course is to provide students with the professional skills requested by companies, such as leadership, teamwork, professional growth, and management. The first 4 weeks of the programme are divided into seminars focusing on professional experiences held by well-known economists, seminars on work related competences and practical resolution of cases of IESE Business School. The follow-up programme foresees a final project and the possibility of an internship in a company. At the end of the course students earn a certificate issued by IESE Business School.

The **Oratory for University Students**: a two-month course providing techniques for using voice and body language while speaking, discourse structures and how to construct a message. It includes theoretical and practical classes as well as conferences. The course is recognised by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid with 3 ECTS credits.

**CET - Cualificación, Estudio, Trabajo** (Qualification, Studying, Working), lasts for the whole academic year and has the goal of promoting skills for the academic and professional development of students so that, throughout the project, they will gradually acquire the seven habits of highly effective professionals: initiative, time management, teamwork, communication, flexibility, identification with the mission, and desire to excel. The course is developed through study modules and practical classes held in the Colegio Mayor. At the end of the course students get a certificate

from the Universidad de Navarra.

The **Inter-collegiate Literary Competition** is a contest aimed at improving writing skills, expression, vocabulary, and grammar for students. Throughout the year, there are meetings and discussions with journalists, writers, and poets. After the completion of the course, awards are given for best writing in each category. The external collaborators are local, while national professionals and writers come from press agencies, newspapers or television.

The **League of University Debate** is a programme that includes several journeys during the academic course. The main objective is to encourage the use of the spoken word among students. The students are grouped in teams (maximum five people) to try to defend their topics on current issues during different meetings of the course. At the end of the course, winners are rewarded a cultural trip all around Europe.

The **Entrepreneurs Forum** includes a three-day conference and 2 workshops. The main goal is to help students develop the basic skills needed to face a job interview, to become a good professional, or to create one's own business. The course, organized in collaboration with IESE Business School, the Universidad de Navarra, and the Cámara de Comercio de Zaragoza (Chamber of Commerce of Zaragoza), is recognised with 2 ECTS credits.

### **Soft skills development model in Central Europe**

The Halls of residence in Central Europe (for example Studentenzentrum Schweidt of Cologne, the CAMPUS association in Belgium and the CREEF - Coordination des Résidences d'Étudiants et d'Étudiants de France) offer students a unique environment that fosters academic, cultural, professional and human growth, which goes beyond simple accommodation. The distinctive elements are given by the intangible contribution of collegiality, seen as sharing of spaces and experiences, and also by the opportunities that living in a university college represents in terms of growth. From dining rooms to common kitchens, from study rooms to libraries and sports structures, each university college was created to provide an optimal atmosphere for study. The different backgrounds of residents, the activities proposed and the multidisciplinary allow a constant exchange of opinions that contributes to build talented personalities oriented to serve their families, friends, and communities. The Halls of Residence offer additional education that aims to complement the academic one, thus enabling students to fully develop their potential: guidance services, tutoring, cultural and sports activities, courses or meetings with figures from the professional, political and cultural fields. Each university college becomes therefore a "facilitator" for the development and enhancement of soft skills, interpersonal transversal skills that can be improved through different activities. Each student then has access to the fundamental skills which enable him or her to integrate effectively in the professional world, to face the complexity of reality and the ever-changing international background.

## **4.4 SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

### **Practical, informal activities in British halls of residence**

There has hitherto existed in England and Wales no formal or certified recognition of activities undertaken by students in 'colleges', collegiate halls of residence, common student societies, or student unions - even those actually administered by universities themselves.



Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged by employers, that active participation in the lives of such societies does on the one hand 'socialise' students in a manner that might well indicate good teamwork skills, and on the other fosters some of the other 'soft-skills' scheduled in the ModEs Handbook.

Employers will take very seriously a candidate's active involvement and office-holding in, for example, the Oxford Union debating society or the Cambridge Footlights satirical and comedy club. Many leading politicians and advocates have come through the former, and many distinguished writers and performers through the latter. Employers will often welcome also candidates who have had the dedication and perseverance to win honours in a university rowing team - especially the famous Oxford versus Cambridge competition.

It is fervently believed that abilities and qualities fostered in such activities will contribute significantly to later professional life, even if not undertaken with any vocational aim in view.

A general if rather intangible and immeasurable 'credit' may be given to those who participate, but not 'credits' in the (American) academic sense. It must be said that affording such activities (and the skills they foster) formal academic recognition in the manner of academic subjects is in many ways inimical to the established mentality of both English universities and the collegiate halls of residence that operate in or beside some of them. In surveying and investigating a number of collegiate halls of residence in England, we found that the wardens and other authorities of many of them, were insistent that they simply did not have the resources (human or financial) to support implementation of a formally constituted 'soft-skills' curriculum even if the assumption could be made that the local universities would give formal credit to such.

These dedicated people would by no means deny the value of what they were offering to students, and might be very ready to write it up in references sent to potential employers (although there is some evidence that these are less and less required), or to offer advice about how students might write up their extra-curricular activities for CVs presented to likely employers.

At the same time, however, they were doubtful about the viability and validity of formal academic accreditation of the same. The implementation of an accredited curriculum for soft skills in collegiate halls of residence, as opposed to particular academic departments of universities, is unlikely to become straightforward in England and Wales. Structures and perceived competences are deeply entrenched.

The notion of 'extra-curricular' activities is established and respected. One respondent to the survey carried out in 2010 about the existence, and potential for, 'soft-skills' training in collegiate halls of residence, declared that such a curriculum 'sounds alien...un-British'. In such an environment, it would seem that implementation of such an accredited curriculum in a collegiate hall of residence would either have to be undertaken in direct and close collaboration with some academic department of recognised university (which would depend on considerable enthusiasm and determination in both parties to the arrangement), or have to depend, at least until its success has been proven, on some system wholly external to academic university structures.

The latter might perhaps be achieved by a number of English and Welsh halls of residence coming together for the organisation of the same, perhaps with the involvement of representatives of potential employers, or by direct linkage to a respectable Europe-wide scheme. In either event, it would seem unlikely that

university diplomas will take account of 'soft-skills' developed outside their own academic departments in the near future.

Nevertheless, some good practices of soft skill development through practical, informal activities can be identified.

***Netherhall Educational Association: helping students to develop their talents and use them in the service of society***

Netherhall Education Association carries out different activities aimed at student development. Some of them concern volunteering, summer work camps, projects and even entertaining activities that can enhance student soft skills.

Netherhall House conducts an activity called Desert Island Discs once a week during term time. In this activity, one resident interviews another one. The format of this activity is based on a popular BBC Radio 4 programme of the same name, in which celebrities are interviewed. The interview is personalised and also allows the interviewee to share three pieces of music of their choice. The interview then finishes with two standard 'Desert Island questions' which enquire about the book and object that the person being interviewed would want to have if they were stranded on a desert island (the object cannot be a boat!). This is a wonderful opportunity and an informal way to develop the following soft skills: communication skills, as the interview takes place in front of an audience of other residents, teamwork skills and creativity and innovation as both the students interviewing and the interviewee meet before hand to prepare the interview and make it attractive and informative. Finally there is an element of cultural adaptability as with residents from more than 20 different nationalities; this sharing of personal experiences becomes culturally very enriching.

The Guest speaker series is part of the fabric of Netherhall House and is an essential part of the life of the house. The residence invites in a variety of influential and well-known speakers, from academics to politicians, who speak to residents about a specific topic and then take part in a question and answer session. The guest speaker shares a table at dinner with some residents and afterwards delivers a 30 to 40 minute presentation leaving another 20 minutes for questions and discussions. This activity adds to the cultural aspect of the house, enabling resident students to grow intellectually as well as socially.

Netherhall House also organise *Idiot talks* which are given by different residents on their area of interest, which can range from chicken farming to mathematical physics! The format of the activity is the same as the Guest speaker series but shorter. A resident would give a 20 minute presentation about a topic of interest and leave 10 more minutes for questions and discussions. It is a wonderful event where residents learn from each other about a variety of topics and gain an appreciation of the interests of others, however obscure they may be!

Among the activities carried out abroad for the residents of Netherhall House, one was aimed at *Building a kindergarten in Mae Sot*, near the Thai-Myanmar border in Thailand. The objective of the project was to provide a nursery classroom and two toilets for 80 children. All the participants undertook manual labour in the building of a school, which required knowledge of building in tropical conditions - knowledge provided by local building engineers.

The primary goal was to build a school and the project was not designed for learning; nevertheless learning was an inevitable part of the process of carrying out the project. Consequently 'unexpected' outcomes may refer to various areas of

soft skill development: team work (learning to interact and work effectively with others; using a wide range of team processes effectively); negotiation (establishing a positive and constructive atmosphere at the level of negotiation); conflict management (applying existing and newly acquired skills such as active listening, advanced empathic reflection, confrontation and summarising conflict management and resolution); cultural adaptability (drawing on knowledge of different cultures to enhance cooperation and resolve any cultural conflicts).

Furthermore, the work camp offered a unique opportunity to: make a real difference in the lives of people in need; gain an understanding of the impact of poverty; learn about the Burmese refugees in Thailand and their culture; be involved in the organisation of a humanitarian project.

### ***'Making connections' and helping people: a challenge for Irish university students***

Making Connections funded by the Dormant Accounts fund is a befriending project between older and young people in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown area which supports independent living for the third generation. This project operates from Glenard University Residence. Student and young adult volunteers visit an older neighbour for an hour a week and have a chat or go for a walk, as friends do, relieving the elderly person of some of their loneliness and isolation. Bringing these generations together breaks down barriers and fosters mutual appreciation and friendship.

Some other activities aimed at soft skill development are carried out Ros Geal University Residence, that aims to inspire women to be leaders in their fields of study and in society, motivating them to make a positive difference in the world.

† Ros Geal, students have every opportunity to learn from students from other courses and years. Traditions at Ros Geal include study weekends, international student conferences and guest speakers.

Guest speakers are invited to speak on a variety of topics, giving students the opportunity to explore alternative career paths and broaden their knowledge of different global issues.

Past speakers include Mary Davis, former CEO of Special Olympics Ireland and Dr. Angelina Kakooza, commentator on the AIDS crisis in Africa.

Ros Geal also organises activities to help residents give back to the community. One of these activities was the Romania Social Project 2013 during which university students from all over Ireland volunteered for two weeks in an orphanage for disabled adults in Bucharest. Volunteering in Romania gave each student the opportunity to challenge herself and expand her vision of her place in the world.

## **4.5 SOFT SKILL TRAINING SESSIONS IN POLAND AND HUNGARY**

### ***Activities organised by the students' committees***

Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) organises several training sessions for members of the Students' Union. The Career's office at WUT provides a wide range of soft skills development programmes based on formal courses which include face-to-face courses on 'how to give a good presentation', 'how to design and apply for international projects', 'how to mediate in intercultural conflicts' as well as outdoor training activities. Many of these training activities are conducted by alumni and focus on topics such as 'how to be a good leader in your organisation', 'how to integrate people,' 'how to communicate within your organisation.'

Expected outcomes vary according to the type of training. Many areas of soft skill

development are involved including leadership, communication, cultural adaptability, analytical skills, and management skills.

The training sessions are organised by the students' committees, i.e. foreign affairs, information and promotion etc.... These training courses take the form of retreats organised in the countryside and usually held on weekends. On the first day of training, orienteering games are played in small groups. Students split in groups of 20 and take part in a number of training sessions.

The nature of these sessions depends on the issues and problems detected by the committee. For instance, if a major communication problem emerges within the halls of residence, or between the committee and the administration, students bring it up and the exercises and simulations proposed during the training sessions help to resolve it by finding alternatives, and reflecting upon the problem and on the attitudes people should have to resolve it.

The training is usually very interactive. There is a constant process of integration. For instance, one of the initial integration games aims at making students work together to build a landing ship for an egg so that the egg does not break. During the time that is allowed to build the ship, students cannot talk. They therefore need to find alternative ways of communication such as hand gestures or writing.

Although this is more challenging, they usually discover that the task is possible. Often, during these kinds of activities a group leader will emerge. In this way, students are encouraged to think about the leadership process, and the qualities and skills of a good leader.

Another one of these games consists in building a bridge between two chairs or two tables strong enough to bear the weight of a toy car or a small ball. Students have only five minutes to decide the best way to build the bridge. After completing the exercise, they have the opportunity to analyse the problems they had during the process including the decisions that were and were not made. A third type of a popular game involves several students: one student is given some small objects such as a piece of stationery, and instructed to give a description of it to the rest of the group. The other members must draw a picture of the object based on the student's description, without being able to see the object in question.

As the short description shows, these integration games involve multiple skills. For example, negotiation is put into practice by dividing the students into two groups that simulate matters addressed by the students' union such as a request for funds to sponsor a specific concert during the Juvenalia to the Cabinet of the university. Ultimately, the training sessions help students to be patient in communication, to reflect on the strategies used for making descriptions, and to argue for one's point of view.

Formal training courses are offered as well. Students are taught how to give a good presentation, how to design and apply for international projects, as well as to mediate intercultural conflicts that may arise among international students. These last sessions tend to teach that what is normal in one country or culture may be perceived as strange or impolite in another.

However, the awareness of such cultural differences can help to overcome such conflicts.

The Career services office usually gives support to the students organising the training sessions. Brainstorming and analysis sessions are central to the courses as students need to interact to develop ideas for projects and activities, and to be able to analyse their decision-making processes. Delegation and teamwork are taken into consideration as well as they are fundamental to the everyday activity of the

Students' Union.

In conclusion, the main object of these training sessions is to communicate the soft skills necessary for the everyday life of the student organisation. They enable students to be more mature, and able to face the challenges and responsibilities of their work and to build a relaxed and cooperative learning environment within the university.

### ***Training activities and soft skills development in Rajk László College***

The management model of Rajk László College is based on self-governance and volunteer activity of the members. The direct, democratic involvement of the students is an important tool for the development of their soft skills. Students are involved in debates, assemblies, and committees.

They improve their competences in public speaking and negotiation because they have to present their projects, opinions and proposals in a convincing manner to obtain votes and approvals from other students. The different activities are organised by small groups of students. This enhances the skills of time management and team building.

Often, during these kinds of activities, a group leader will emerge. In this way, students are encouraged to think about the leadership process, and the qualities and skills of a good leader. As said by the visiting professor Robert M. Grant from Bocconi University, 'what it offers educationally is an ideal complement to more formalized "explicit knowledge delivery" of the university. Even more important is the opportunity to live and work within a peer-governed self-managed community'.

One of the 'best practice' cultural events organised by Rajk is the Central European Conference (CEC). The Central European Conference has always served as a platform or crossroads for university students, specializing in the fields of economics and social sciences.

During the 5 day conference, the students participate in different lectures, workshops, and debates on relevant Central and Eastern European issues connected with social entrepreneurship, innovation, monetary and fiscal policies, energy sustainability, education and regional political economy. The goal of the conference is to create an atmosphere which generates a fruitful debate among the participants in order to get to know each other and exchange experiences. Participants have to demonstrate their analytical, communication, negotiation and presentation skills as members of an international team for a week.

In the beginning, the topic of CEC was to examine the social and economic situation of the Central and Eastern European region. This has also been a core subject of the academic life in Rajk László College for Advanced Studies. Since Hungary has long since been integrated into the Western world and the European Union– just think about the Hungarian EU Presidency – it seeks to consider issues from a broader European and Global perspective.

The catch-phrase "knowledge-based society" is a popular idea and a rotund phrase of many politicians today – and Rajk believes it is very important to channel well-educated students' creativity and ideas towards making Europe a better place. Every country has smart and well-educated students – forming some kind of "intellectual infrastructure". Rajk wishes to put this infrastructure in motion making it possible for these people to meet.

If they do, and if they evaluate "European characteristics" of certain issues during their workshops and think about further possible forms of collaboration, it could not only strengthen civil society in each European country, but create cross-border cooperation.

#### 4.6 EUCA'S INITIATIVES FOR SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

EucA has undertaken different initiatives - linked or not to the ModEs project - in order to promote the development of student soft skills and their employability. We would like to name a few of them: European projects, international competitions, summer schools, international conferences and seminars, participation in festivals, etc.

##### **Cambridge Summer School**

The Cambridge Summer School is a two week seminar series for university students from across Europe for the exploration of topics of interest in the future development of the European Union and its foreign policy. These topics include the analysis of the political challenges of the Union, the evolution of the European legal system, the future of the euro and the European economic governance for example. Faculty and professionals, among whom are specialists in political theory, European affairs and history, law, moral philosophy and economics, give three seminars per day, lasting an hour and a half each. Students and the faculty are housed at Newnham College in Cambridge, where the seminars are given and meals are taken in common.

Exchanging ideas and concerns about several hot issues required students to put into practice intercultural communication skills: students had to show maturity and awareness of cultural and national peculiarities, while presenting their points to the other participants to make sure not to fall into stereotypes and prejudices and to keep up a constructive dialogue with their peers.

In addition to the seminars, other academic, cultural and social activities are organised: classical music concerts, debates on transversal topics discussed in the seminars; a 'European night' with presentations on participants' colleges, traditions, customs, dishes of their home Country, as well as a week-end trip to London. Fostering the intercultural interaction of students is one of the main objectives of the School. Students are challenged to enlarge their horizons, perspectives and understanding through peer-to-peer interaction and through discussing their ideas with the lecturers. The Summer School is a unique opportunity to put into practice intercultural and communication skills. The programme of the summer school also included recreational activities such as ice-breaking and team-building games.

**The first Cambridge Summer School** was organised in 2010. The seminars, focusing on 'Past and present of European political identity', brought together students from eight different European countries.

A lecture on 'Business skills 101' was organised to make students more aware of the importance of soft skills in their education and to integrate soft skills teaching in the academic curriculum of the summer school. The lecture, as well as the general presentation of EucA's activities, gave the opportunity to talk in detail about the ModEs project. Students' initiative to present a topic to their fellows was also actively encouraged by the staff and tutors to make the programme more interactive and enable students to put into practice the skills learned during the Business skills 101, as well as those developed in their daily interaction with the other participants.

**The second edition (2011)** was devoted to European Political Identity and Its New Challenges. Active engagement in the seminar discussions meant that students had to put into practice communication as well as cultural understanding skills. In particular, one of the seminars focused on Islamic culture and the institution of marriage and the family in the Muslim world. Students' multicultural skills were greatly trained as they were led by the instructor to take up the current Islamic perspective

following a long historical process that led to the current setting. A presentation given by a fellow student coming from Afghanistan was a great opportunity that challenged students on their ability to understand cultural differences and helped them to get a more critical approach towards news and cultural constructions.

The topic of **the third edition of the Cambridge Summer School** was 'European Political Identity at Crossroads: Advancing European Integration'. The School had a strong multidisciplinary approach, with topics widening from the basic principles of a democratic constitutional state that allow the participation of all citizens in public life to the common roots of the European people, from scientific topics such as evolution and environmental protection to the social items of immigration and integration in Europe.

**The fourth edition (2013)** was inspired by the annual speech on the State of the Union of the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso who made a case for the European Union to be turned into a "federation of nation states", in a sweeping demand for countries to surrender more sovereignty and move towards full integration. The School explored the history of the European Union, the evolution of the European legal system to present, the future of the euro and European economic governance, the relevance of the Arab spring for Europe.

### **Soft skills short training programmes**

Twice a year, EucA organises short programmes of soft skills training for the students of the colleges: 2 or 3 days of intensive training activities, which could include workshop, lectures, and team work, all alongside international speakers, HR recruiters from companies, testimonials and facilitators experts in innovative teaching methodologies and soft skills development.

#### *Example 1 - Volunteering builds citizenship, Madrid*

This international seminar held in Madrid, Spain, on the 7th October 2011, was part of the youth in action 'Eu-funded project El voluntariado en la construcción ciudadana de Europa'.

It aimed at bringing together and strengthening the concept of volunteering and creativity as a tool and source of European citizenship. Selected students, divided into six national teams, had to draft beforehand a document that was going to reflect specific proposals to promote citizens' participation in the field of volunteering. These documents and proposals worked as the starting point for the round tables between some members of the European Parliament and the students. Teamwork as well as communication skills were the core skills implemented during the actual seminar and, together with leadership skills, were also required in the follow up part.

In fact, participating students were expected to draw the interest of their fellow collegiate students and make them involved in the proposed activity. Further, this means that they had to effectively manage tasks, eventual funds, and time to successfully carry out the activity.

#### *Example 2 - Languages mean business - Essay competition, Warsaw*

Students had to explain how languages have been and are important for their educational and personal life. Effective written communication skills were crucial for students to win the competition. Their writing, in fact, demonstrated clarity, a passionate attitude, and a willingness to fully be 'selfmade' men and women. Even though small, the EucA group was extremely multinational as the four students came



from four different countries: Hungary, Italy, Spain and Venezuela. The Warsaw meeting gave them the possibility to interact among each other and with the Polish representatives in a very international environment. Their language competencies emerged as the bridge towards cultural understanding and effective relational skills in a multinational context. EucA students who won the contest were awarded a prize by the EU Commission during the conference 'Language competences for professional and social success in Europe', which was held in Warsaw on 28-29 of September 2011.

*Example 3 - Upgrading Europe, Bilbao*

On 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2012, EucA participated in the launch of Upgrading Europe, a project promoted together with the Consejo de Colegios Mayores de España and Dr. Susana Del Río Villar, author and academic Director of the project.

Upgrading Europe offered greater insight into the value of Europe and promoted a European union with a transnational democracy of high quality and ready to face the challenges of the XXI Century. The goals were the participation of civil society, the interaction between European citizens and European institutions, civic collaboration in transnational networks, education as a key element of an active European citizenship, solidarity, and renewed European politics.

Upgrading Europe drew on the participation of university students from all over Europe, those within academia, representatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission, think tanks and other stakeholders from civil society.

*Example 4 - Youth Mobility and Employment, Rome*

EucA together with the Italian CCUM (the Conference of Italian University Colleges of Merit) organised on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 a conference about the contribution of international mobility in increasing youth employability. The event was structured in two different sessions: the morning session, at the Italian Chambers of Deputies, saw the participation of representatives of the institutions Marco Scurria, Member of the European Parliament; Raffaele Liberali, Head of the University, AFAM and Research Department at the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research; Stefano Blanco, President of CCU - the Conference of Italian University Colleges of Merit, and Gian Luca Giovannucci, President of EucA. In the afternoon, a workshop took place on the themes of European citizenship, mobility and employability, chaired by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. In this workshop, more than 50 students from EucA colleges were involved in simulation games, interviews and round table discussions, which led to a chance to practise communication skills, team work, negotiation, and culture adaptability.

*Example 5 - Rethinking Education For The Erasmus Generation, Brussels*

The Erasmus generation is undoubtedly mobile, but is it employable? It has never been easier for young students to go to another country for travelling, volunteering or studying; however, today's main challenge for young people is entering the job market either at home or abroad.

For this reason EucA proposed to students from its colleges a 2 day full immersion course in Brussels, in May 2013, on intensive soft skills training about: creativity, team work and digital communication. The highlight of this event was the presentation of Maria Cinque's book, *Soft Skills in Action – Halls of Residence as Centres for Life and Learning*, a study on the contribution of university colleges to young people's non formal and informal education at the European Parliament. After the presentation,

the following interactive workshops were held:

- creativeteams: thinking outside the box alone & together;
- careers In Brussels: working in the heart of the european union;
- doing social media better than medians: good practices for employability.

*Example - 6: Soft skills 2.0: employability in a digital world, Dublin*

What competences do we need in a global world? Is the Erasmus generation really employable? What skills do we need for the 'social network' job market? EucA proposed to students from its colleges a 2 day full immersion course in Dublin on intensive soft skills training, with special attention to the new jobs in the ICT sector. The event took place in March 2013, organised in cooperation with Irish EucA's member, Brosna.

Students were involved in lectures and workshops about:

- Technical competence versus performance & delivery. The importance of effective relationship management.
- Why and How to Implement Democratic Leadership – The way to enforce innovation.
- Leadership – Are leaders born or bred? Can anyone be a leader? Where does integrity fit in?
- The importance of Good Communication.

The panel was composed of international speakers, HR recruiters from companies, and alumni from the colleges who were able to give testimonials. During the event, a special visit to Google European headquarters was organised. Students were involved in interactive activities under the supervision of Google's experts:

- for the development of the soft skills requested by the ICT labour market;
- about writing a CV and coping with a job interview;
- about creativity and innovative approach to job.

### **Intercollegiate study exchange programme**

The 'EucA - Rajk László College study exchange' is the first common programme of collaboration among the colleges of EucA and the Hungarian one. It aimed at strengthening international relations, giving students the possibility to meet peers and share activities in a collegiate environment.

From 3 to 9 November 2011 a delegation of EucA students were hosted in Budapest and from 25 to 28 October 2012 a delegation of Hungarian students were hosted in Rome's colleges.

Before each meeting, the participating students were expected to read approximately 70 pages of articles and other materials relating to the topic, in order to prepare for the seminars and debates. The exchanges consisted of professional and cultural activities. Among the first ones: block seminars (4 seminars, 2-3 hour-long); and Oxford style debates. Among the cultural activities: describe your college; present your country with traditional drinks and dishes, sightseeing tours. Building on the language of differentiation and integration, the project was aimed at developing in students a 'global mindset'. We could define a global mindset as one that combines an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesise across this diversity. The simultaneous focus was on developing a deep understanding of diversity and an ability to synthesise across diversity.

The next intercollegiate exchange will take place in October 2014: a delegation of Romanian students from Mikò Imre College will come in Rome.

**Message in a bottle - Video contest**

In 2009, EucA launched the first international and intercollegiate video contest, 'Message in a bottle', to celebrate the European year of creativity. Collegiate students had to team up to make a video on the European project. Students had to brainstorm for ideas with one or two other collegiate fellows and communicate their project to their peers to involve them in the shooting of the videos. Making the videos required students to put into action creativity, communication and teamwork skills.

Working on a challenging project such as 'Message in a bottle' required students to manage their time effectively to meet the deadline and develop the creative, as well as explanatory, part of the project.

The second edition of the contest was devoted to the theme of volunteering and youth, to celebrate the European year of volunteering and the United Nations' international year of youth (2011). The third edition of the contest (2012) was focused on Multilingualism, so all the university colleges from the network were invited to present this item through an essay, a video or a photograph.

**Participation to international conferences, seminars, festivals**

EucA participated in the TNT, Festival of young talents, held in Rome from 17 to 21 November 2010. Organised by the National Youth Agency and the Ministry of youth of the Italian government, the initiative brought EucA's Italian collegiate students on the forefront to promote the collegiate model of residential life. Students acted as ambassadors of the association promoting the activities of their home colleges with more than 200 fellow students. Students were briefly trained to communicate their experience and to be able to interact with other young people coming from different backgrounds.

A delegation of EucA collegiate students joined the two-day Berlin conference 'Looking for a European Citizenship' (17- 20 November 2010) organised by the NGO 'Citizens for Europe'. EucA students were invited to present the Charter of the responsible European Citizenship to members of other NGOs of the European civic society. They acted as young ambassadors of the organisation and were responsible for communicating the content and the objectives of the Citizens project as well as describing other projects EucA is taking part in. In this respect, the ModEs objectives were also presented, as soft skills can contribute to the education of responsible citizens tremendously.

EucA students joined the 21<sup>st</sup> IYLC (International Leadership Conference), in Prague (January 2011). The five-day-long course sought to strengthen leadership skills through dedicated non-formal learning sessions in an international environment.

The conference aimed at facilitating the exchange of ideas across ethnically diverse and socially responsible young leaders. Participants were involved in discussions, visits, meetings and activities lead by the six facilitators. The programme included a simulation of the United Nations Security Council, one of the international Criminal Court pre-trial, and a Model European Parliament.

EucA participated in the seminar 'European Citizenship and promotion of creative volunteering' (May 2011).

The seminar was aimed at bringing together and strengthening the concept of volunteerism and creativity as a tool and source of European citizenship. These were promoted as non-formal methods of apprenticeship, through the vision shared by personalities who work in the field and by scanning the concept by the participants themselves.

**EucA Ambassadors' Project**

This project has developed since 2012 with the aim of involving a small group of students in each college who, in coordination with the college director and the EucA staff, bring students closer to EucA, improve communication flow, promote EucA activities to residents inside his College, and collect students' feedback.

The ambassadors develop professional skills, such as communication, team building, project management and customer orientation; they receive specific training and have the chance to work in an international environment.

On April 2013, EucA organised the first national 'Ambassadors' day' in Italy, "Don't tell my director I'm on Facebook... he thinks I'm studying", focused on the following three questions: How do social networks work? What are the benefits of being connected online with people and companies from all over the world? What are the risks of being totally exposed on Internet? In the first part of the event Mr. Lucio Bragagnolo, journalist and social media expert, explained to the ambassadors the best way to communicate by social networks. In the second part, the ambassadors gave their input to promote and to encourage their fellow students to participate in EucA activities, such as Facebook groups in each college containing links to EucA's profile, live tweeting during events, or viral videos. The aim was to meaningfully engage the Italian ambassadors, while at the same time provide training in an important topic like digital skills.

**Promoting a responsible European citizenship - European project**

The year-long project (2009/2010) involved four national teams of young EucA collegiate students working on the Charter of the responsible European Citizenship. Team members had to coordinate with their peers to carry out the survey among their fellow university students at a national level. The preparatory sessions involved a lot of brainstorming and forward planning regarding future steps of the work. The analysis of the survey results was divided into four parts each focusing on a different topic: immigration, media, democracy and voluntarism.

During the actual workshops, students had to present a power point presentation analysing and discussing the results of their research. This kind of work required students to put into practice communication as well as public speaking skills to communicate their topic effectively and professionally to the audience. EucA students benefited from the intercultural dialogue that the project fostered. Furthermore, they were asked to reflect upon and conceptualize the notion of responsible European Citizenship that was defined as civic participation, awareness of traditions and of other cultures and respect of the environment and of equal opportunities. Responsible Citizenship also involves intergenerational dialogue and civic solidarity.

The four workshops held in London, Rome, San Sebastian, and Warsaw gave the opportunity to meet experts from different fields of study and work. Students also had the chance to interact with peers from other European countries and to deepen their understanding of certain social and cultural dynamics all over Europe. The workshops and the final event in Brussels were a unique occasion to promote and disseminate the results of EucA's participation in the European project.

**Abstracts from EucA's testimonials**

*Elena Manca, Collegio Nuovo, Italy*

EucA Summer School is one of the most exciting experiences I've ever done both for its academic value and for the human and cultural aspects. The multidisciplinary

approach allowed us to study the topics from different points of view, but the added value of the Cambridge Summer School, in my opinion, is the international background of the participants. The Summer School allowed me to create links with people that will go on beyond Cambridge and I hope one day to meet them in Budapest, Barcelona or Munich. It is an experience I would recommend to everyone: to open your mind, to question your opinions and to have a critical approach to reality.

*Diana Szakál - Rajk László College for Advanced Studies, Hungary*

The Dublin Seminar was very similar to other events of EucA considering the high quality of the organisation and professional content. However, what I considered the biggest advantage was the fact that we could engage in thoughtful and interesting discussions with those present – plenty of opportunities to learn about soft skills and communication in practice.

Moreover, the network also encourages its members to be proactive and step up for their communities – like via the EucA Ambassador programme, which we heard more about during the two days, or through the opportunity for students to organise events in the network by themselves.

*Shane O'Grady, Gort Ard University Residence, Ireland*

Through my involvement with EucA, both at Gort Ard university residence in Ireland and at the recent event in Brussels, I have learned the importance of multilingualism and communication and the vital role which language plays in cultural interchange. My involvement with EucA has taught me a number of key lessons; the key stone lesson which I have taken away from this event in Brussels is that through partaking in team work with different groups of people from other cultures, you as an individual develop new skills which are not necessarily academic but instead soft skills or life skills which play a vital role in how an individual contributes to society.

## CONCLUSIONS

Gian Luca Giovannucci

*There are two Ripenings - one - of sight  
Whose forces Spheric wind  
Untill the Velvet product  
Drop spicy to the ground  
A homelier maturing  
A process in the Bur  
That teeth of Frosts alone disclose  
In far October Air.*

*Emily Dickinson*

In the two quatrains of Emily Dickinson poem *There Are Two Ripenings*, the poet describes two ripenings: that of a fruit - probably a peach - and that of a nut - probably a chestnut. The two ripenings are variously contrasted. The early ripening of the fruit is contrasted to the late ('in far October') ripening of the nut. The velvet skin of the peach is contrasted to the prickly bur of the nut. The sweet spice that the ripe fruit yields to the air is contrasted to the sharp frosts that open the nut to the air. Most important, the visible ripening of the peach is contrasted with the invisible ripening of the nut, which is concealed within its bur. The transitional adjective 'homelier' serves two purposes: it tells us that the nut is plainer than the peach, and it tells us that the nut's ripening is less visible because inner, more concealed than that of the peach.

The juxtaposition and contrast of the two ripenings suggest that this is more than a merely descriptive poem.

There are different ways of ripening also for students.

In their huge volume, *How college affects students* (2005), which complements a previous research published in 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini affirm that post-secondary education has a broad range of long-term impacts. The completion of an academic programme influences not only occupation and earnings, but also cognitive, moral and psychosocial characteristics, as well as values and attitudes and various indices of the quality of life' (p. 582).

Although they were obliged to analyse eight aspects of student development separately, they make clear that:

*[...] a student does not develop in discrete, unrelated pieces but rather grows as an integrated whole ... student growth along any one dimension is often highly related to, and perhaps even dependent on, growth along other dimensions (p. 7)*

*[...] change in any given area [of student change] appears to be the product of a holistic set of multiple influences, each making a distinct, if small, contribution to the change. (p. 629)*

This position has important consequences when we come to consider implications of their findings for educational practice: at the very least, it invites us to think more broadly about the undergraduate years as a set of experiences that favour both intentional and non-intentional learning.

They stress this aspect in saying that:

*Perhaps the important question to ask about the impact of post-secondary education is not which experiences are the most influential but which experiences are the most influential for which kinds of students (p. 636).*

This is what residence halls provide: personal experiences for different students in order to allow them to develop to develop their talents to the utmost and to make full use of the differing kinds of skills they have or they can enhance.

Education in halls of residence focuses on some core values and selected challenges, sometimes only apparently opposite, such as: access and excellence; broad-based merit and socioeconomic diversity. University colleges are 'talent-powered organisations' that offer breakthrough insights at the intersection of fields, disciplines and cultures.

Some Typical features are the following:

- **Multidisciplinary and multi-cultural environment**

- Halls of residence create an environment in which diversity is celebrated by bringing students together in a community where differences are respected, but where there is a common goal to promote good interpersonal and communication skills, culture adaptability, work and life balance, negotiation.

- **Creative human ecologies**

- Halls of residence are 'places where a mixture of conditions - such as diversity, change, learning, and adaptation - provides a model for anyone who wants to think independently, develop new ideas, help maintain and develop society at large, and work for a 'greater' good.



- **Competitive/collaborative environment**
  - Halls of residence help produce competent broad-based graduates who not only are academically prepared, but can be good citizens and assume leadership roles. For this reason they emphasise skills such as: flexibility, teamwork, decision making; self-confidence and commitment, ability to plan and organise activities.
- **Shared goals and shared management**
  - Halls of residence are environments in which 'prizing, acceptance and trust' are the core conditions for talent development and management. Ferrucci & Stanzani (2007) have studied 'social capital' in halls of residence. 'In this context different relational structures are built, expanding the previous ones (family, friends, schoolmates ...), and a network is built that lasts far beyond the university period'.

Collegiate halls of residence are not only high quality hospitality structures, but also free intellectual communities, where student socialisation and conviviality is promoted as well as the capability of working together. Sports activities, concerts, parties, discussion between engineers and doctors or philosophers, are not only occasions of aggregation but also occasions of solid friendships. In this sense, halls of residence can be considered 'caring organisations'. An 'organisation that cares' is one that seeks to create a positive working environment. An organisation that cares embraces social responsibility as a duty, but is also quick to acknowledge that the care they demonstrate is returned to them many times over in the form of greater people commitment and better results.



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