


Università degli Studi di Siena

Name of the organisation :	Università degli Studi di Siena	 <p style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">UNIVERSITÀ DI SIENA</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;">1240</p>
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Type of organisation:

SME School University Public Authority
 Training No Profit NGO

Other (Specify)

Fields of action :

SMEs Youth Universities Public Authorities
 Equal opportunities Schools Unemployed

Other (Specify)

Description of the organisation

The University of Siena dates back to 1240, when a tradition of teaching and research was established in one of the most fluorescent free towns of Middle Age's Italy, located on the path of the pilgrims' Via Francigena. Since then, the European culture, the attraction of international scholars and the respect of academic freedom have been cultivated within the university, which is therefore one of the oldest Higher Education Institutions in Europe.

Today, UniSi counts over 16.000 students, enrolled in a broad range of degree courses, including Bachelor courses (3 years), Master courses (2 years) and Long Cycle degree Courses. Moreover, 26 three-year Doctoral programs are offered, together with a number of shorter post-graduate programs. In 2022, UniSi ranked first among the medium-sized Italian Universities for study and services for students according to the CENSIS Research Institute classification.

These figures report the effects of a strategy of internationalization enhanced over the years. The current challenge is the consolidation of such a strategy. UniSi aims to be not only a European leading teaching and research institution, but a truly global university able to welcome a growing number of international students. The University currently recruits around 10% of its students from abroad; moreover the University has established a system of scholarships to support refugee students coming from Afghanistan, Syria and other areas at risk.

According to its current internationalisation strategy, the University will not just keep increasing the proportion of non-Italian students in all its courses but is also working on a wide cooperation plan to increase its partnerships abroad. The inclusion of African countries, Japan and Latin American countries is a crucial step in this new plan, which contemplates research partnerships, students and staff short term mobility projects, UniSi summer school abroad and other actions.

The long experience of the University in internationalization processes is also demonstrated by the large number of Erasmus+ projects managed during the years in KA2 and KA3 applications. The presence within the University premises of the Europe Direct desk reinforces the possibility of the University to better disseminate the results of the Erasmus projects to which it is partner.

Experience of the organization in previous European projects

The University of Siena is part of important international higher education networks: among them, Coimbra Group, European University Association, International Association of Universities, Magna Charta Observatory, UNIMED and Copernicus Alliance.

Since 2013 it is also a partner (with other 13 institutions) in the EUROPEAN IDENTITY, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL CHANGE (EuinDepth) project, which offered a sound contribution to the mutual understanding among representatives of national political schools, in order to develop intercultural communications and comparative evaluation of similarities/differences of views on Europe.

The University of Siena was a partner in the SKILLED4Food (2020-1-IT02-KA201-079705) project which addressed the complexity of food systems and their challenges with teachers and students, developing their competences on ESD to stimulate a sense of active citizenship (<https://www.skilled4food.net/>)

The University's Department of International and Political Sciences (DISPI) is at the core of many of these activities. Moreover the latter has gained a specific expertise in the field of global citizenship competencies and education:

- Between 2016 and 2018 it was the scientific coordinator of the I HAVE RIGHTS project (2016-1-FR01-KA201-024133) which promoted the adoption of innovative approaches and practices to school education that will facilitate teaching and learning in multicultural contexts;
- Between 2017 and 2019 it was the coordinator of a group of 9 Organisations with the EWORDS project (Europeans Win Ostracism: From Remembrance to a Dialogue Society), whose aim was to spread tolerance through the intercultural dialogue and the proper usage of some key words;
- Between 2017 and 2019 it acted as scientific coordinator of the Erasmus + KA2 Strategic Partnership, "Off-Book", which was then selected as Best Practice by the European Commission among Erasmus projects on Inclusion
- Between 2019 and 2021 it was partner in TOGETHER (Innovative European Learning Path to Facilitate the Access of Refugees to HE, project n° 2019-1-PT01-KA203-060772). The project aims at developing University students' social responsibility by providing them with the necessary intercultural and transversal skills to play an active role in the social inclusion of refugees and migrants;

Finally, between 2020 and 2022 it was the scientific coordinator of the Erasmus KA2 School project KeyCode: Key Competences for Young Europeans: Education to Empathy and Interculturality (2020-1-FR01-KA201-080108) (www.keycode.pixel-online.org)

Currently the University of Siena is coordinator and promoter of the project PrEclIOUS – Promoting pluralistic education in European universities to combat invisible discrimination related to LGBTQ+ which aims to promote an unbiased Higher Education community capable of counteracting invisible homophobia and transphobia, as well as promoting a culture of differences (2022-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000088686, www.preciousproject.eu) and partner of ATTUNE – Activate the University for Climate Change: an innovative learning programme that directly addresses Climate Change on the university campus and promotes as well as encourages action by all members of the university community (2022-1-ES01-KA220-HED-000086351, www.attuneproject.eu)

Experience and Expertise of the organization in the project's subject area

The University of Siena has a long tradition in managing and creating courses for teachers' training (both within and outside the Department of Sciences of Education) as well as a long-standing experience in organizing educational activities directly at school level. In this field, the University of Siena has a special expertise in the field of human rights and democracy education, education to sustainable development, inclusive educational practices, collaborative online international learning practices as well as development of students' soft skills.

The University has also carried out important research projects in the field of education and inclusion such as FORwARD (<https://www.forwardproject.unisi.it/en/>) focused on training, research and development of "Community Based" strategies to facilitate and support coexistence practices in multi-ethnic contexts. In 2022 the University started a training project addressed to school teachers PEACE, in cooperation with the Province of Siena with the aim of training teachers to on gender mainstreaming.

At present the University of Siena is coordinating the SDSN Mediterranean (UN Sustainable Development Solution Network) and organized two training courses addressed to school teachers on Sustainable Development Goals Education (EDU4SD). Since 2020 EDU4SD continues by implementing peer-to-peer education activities in cooperation with several high schools of the territory, within which HE students share their knowledge and competences on sustainability and social inclusion with school students.

Contributions that can be provided to the project

- Consolidated experience in international projects and direct experience of KA2 projects
- Special expertise in the field of human rights and democracy education, education to sustainable development, inclusive educational practices, collaborative online international learning practices as well as development of students' soft skills.
- Know-how of the Santa Chiara Lab, a multidisciplinary excellence developing strategic projects aimed at disseminating knowledge of the 2030 Agenda and good practices on Sustainable Development, as well as training and education in a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Specific knowledge and experience in fostering and developing emotional intelligence and relational effectiveness among students through the implementation of workshops, training courses and seminars in which participants are involved in dialectical discussions, role-playing and projects. Throughout the years, these opportunities have given students the competences to transform such knowledge into metacognitive skills and behavioral strategies for adaptation and engagement, as well as strengthening and enhancing student-teacher relationships.

Reasons of involvement in the project

During the latest years, UniSi has been particularly sensitive to inclusion and social responsibility issues and several projects and policies have been designed and developed: Between 2016 and 2018 it was the scientific coordinator of the "I have rights" project, promoting the adoption of innovative approaches and practices to school education to facilitate learning in multicultural contexts, as well as being partner in the "TOGETHER" project – which aims to develop University students' social responsibility by providing them

with the necessary intercultural and transversal skills to play an active role in the social inclusion of refugees and immigrants. We strongly believe that fostering and developing emotional intelligence is the key to impact educational environments, from school to Higher Education, in terms of solidarity and inclusion of all members of the community.

Contact Person's Experience and Expertise

Alessandra Viviani is full professor of International Law, Economic Law and Gender Discrimination at the Department of Political and International Sciences at the University of Siena. She coordinates several Erasmus exchange agreements and Erasmus KA2 Strategic Partnership projects on human rights education and social inclusion. Among these, the Off Book project was selected by EACEA in 2021 as a "best practice" on inclusion and the Together project, which focuses on welcoming refugee students to the university, was awarded as the best project on inclusion in 2020 by the Portuguese National Agency.