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# Shaping the futures of higher education through international academic networks

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# Outline

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2. Aims of the two Network Projects
3. Products of LECU and SINAN

Part II: The research project

1. General research aims, specific research question
2. Theoretical Framework
3. Research Method, Tools and Data
4. Insights into value created through IAN
5. Conclusions

# Introduction

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- Aims:**
- Present the context of two current international academic networks (IAN)
  - Discuss the research results of the analysis on the values created within the networks

International Projects in Education (IPE) & Center for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (ZHE) in collaboration with the University of Geneva

are researching on two IPE International Academic Network Projects



**Learning Cultures in Universities (LECU)**

Switzerland – Albania - Kosovo

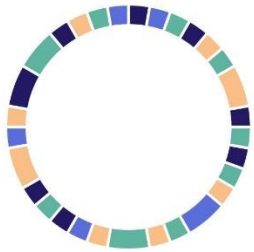
**Swiss-North African Academic Network (SINAN)**

Switzerland – Tunisia - Egypt

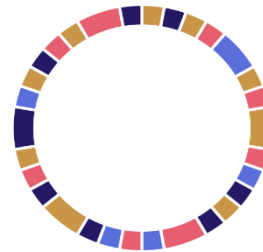
Part I

The Network Projects  
on Teacher Education  
LECU and SINAN

# 1. Key Data of the Network Projects SINAN and LECU



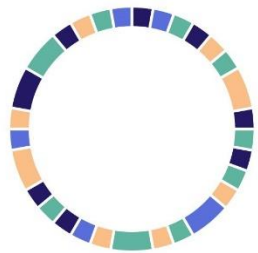
**LECU**  
SWISS – ALBANIAN – KOSOVAN  
TEACHER EDUCATION NETWORK



**SINAN**  
SWISS – NORTH AFRICAN  
ACADEMIC NETWORK

<b>Framework:</b>	International academic cooperation in teacher education
<b>Timeframe:</b>	2017 – 2021 (meetings from 2018 – 2021)
<b>Participating countries:</b>	Switzerland, Albania and Kosovo (LECU) Switzerland, Tunisia and Egypt (SINAN)
<b>Number of participants:</b>	24 scholars or educational experts (each project)
<b>Number of meetings:</b>	3 to 4 meetings (each project)
<b>Implementing Organization:</b>	Department International Project in Education (IPE) & Center for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)
<b>Financial support:</b>	

# LECU – Learning Cultures in Universities



**LECU**

SWISS – ALBANIAN – KOSOVAN  
TEACHER EDUCATION NETWORK

Albania: 3 Universities  
Institute for  
Development of  
Education (MoEdu)

Kosovo: 3 Universities  
Ministry of Education

Switzerland: 6 Universities

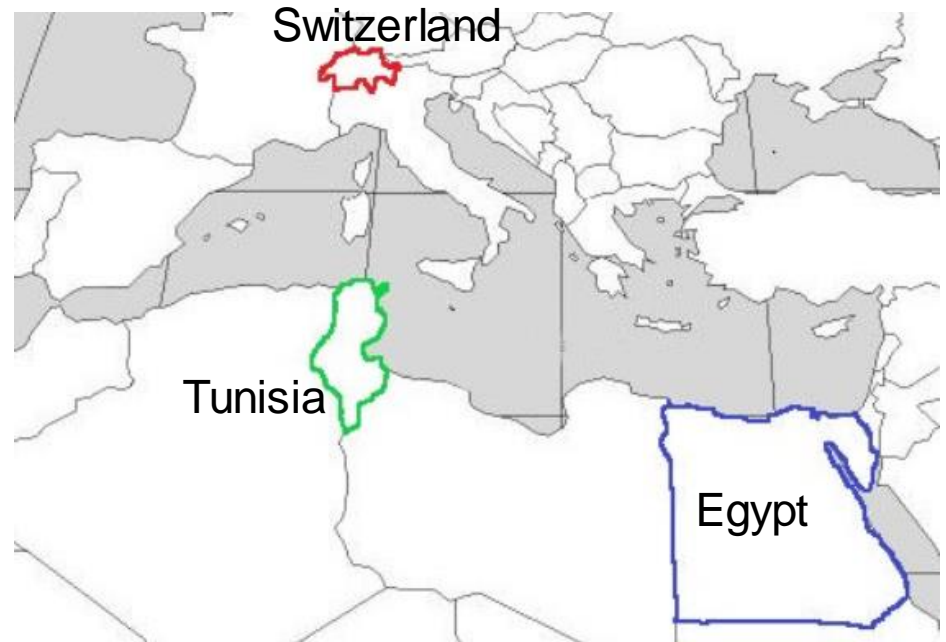


# SINAN – Swiss-North African Academic Network



**SINAN**  
SWISS – NORTH AFRICAN  
ACADEMIC NETWORK

- Egypt: 2 Universities  
(1 public, 1 private)
- Tunisia: 3 Institutions  
Ministry of Education
- Switzerland: 4 Universities



## 2. Aims of the Projects LECU and SINAN



### **Aims:**

- Promote the exchange of pedagogical experiences amongst teacher training universities in the participating countries
- Sharing competences in the field of teaching and learning in teacher education
- Promote transcultural learning
- Deepen experience of international cooperation in education



# 3. Products of LECU and SINAN

- Four LECU network meetings in Switzerland, Albania and Kosova
- Three SINAN network meetings in Switzerland, Tunisia and Egypt
- Two edited volumes (LECU and SINAN) with participants' contributions (resulting from the duos' and trios' projects)
- Concluding LECU-SINAN Symposium (1-3 November 2021, Zürich)
  
- Handbook: **Competency-based Teaching & Learning in Higher Education – Essentials**
  - Albanian translation
  - Arabic translation

# Cycle: Network Meetings and Working Periods

## Periods between meetings → *Processing and preparation phase*

### Meeting 1

- Visits to schools and university
- Presentations & contributions by participants
- Reports, insights from duos and trios
- Inputs by external experts
- Preparation of next meeting

- Reading articles on university teaching and learning
- Reflecting on own teaching (teaching philosophies)
- Duo's work (peers from same institution)
- Trio's work (3 different countries)
- Applying insights and practices
- Preparing contribution for next meeting

### Meeting 2

- Visits to schools and university
- Presentations & contributions by participants
- Reports, how insights from duos and trios
- Inputs by external experts
- Preparation of next meeting

# Exchange in international Trios

- A trio typically consists of three network participants of each country (e.g. from Switzerland, Albania and Kosovo)
- Trios work on a topic of their own choice under the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (Boyer, 1990) approach
- Trios often chose to do comparative studies

## **Some topics of trio works:**

Managing autonomous learning in higher education: Transnational experiences in comparison (LECU)

Mentoring student teachers and mentors' perceptions regarding their roles: The case of Albania, Kosovo and Switzerland (LECU)

Supporting novice teachers in different cultural settings (SINAN)

Analyzing coaching in three different international scenarios (SINAN)

# Example: « The Sea Between Us »: Creative writing project and poetry slam event



## **The Sea Between Us**

## **Das Meer zwischen uns**

## **La mer entre nous**

## **البحر بيننا**

**Oumayma Bahri**  
**Monique Honegger**  
**Selim Ben Hsan**  
**Nadja Isler**  
**Alaa Eddine Dhawedi**  
**Peter Kaiser**

# Part II

## The Research Project:

“Examining the transcultural experiences of academics of teacher education in international networks”

# 1. General aims and specific question

## **General aims of the research project:**

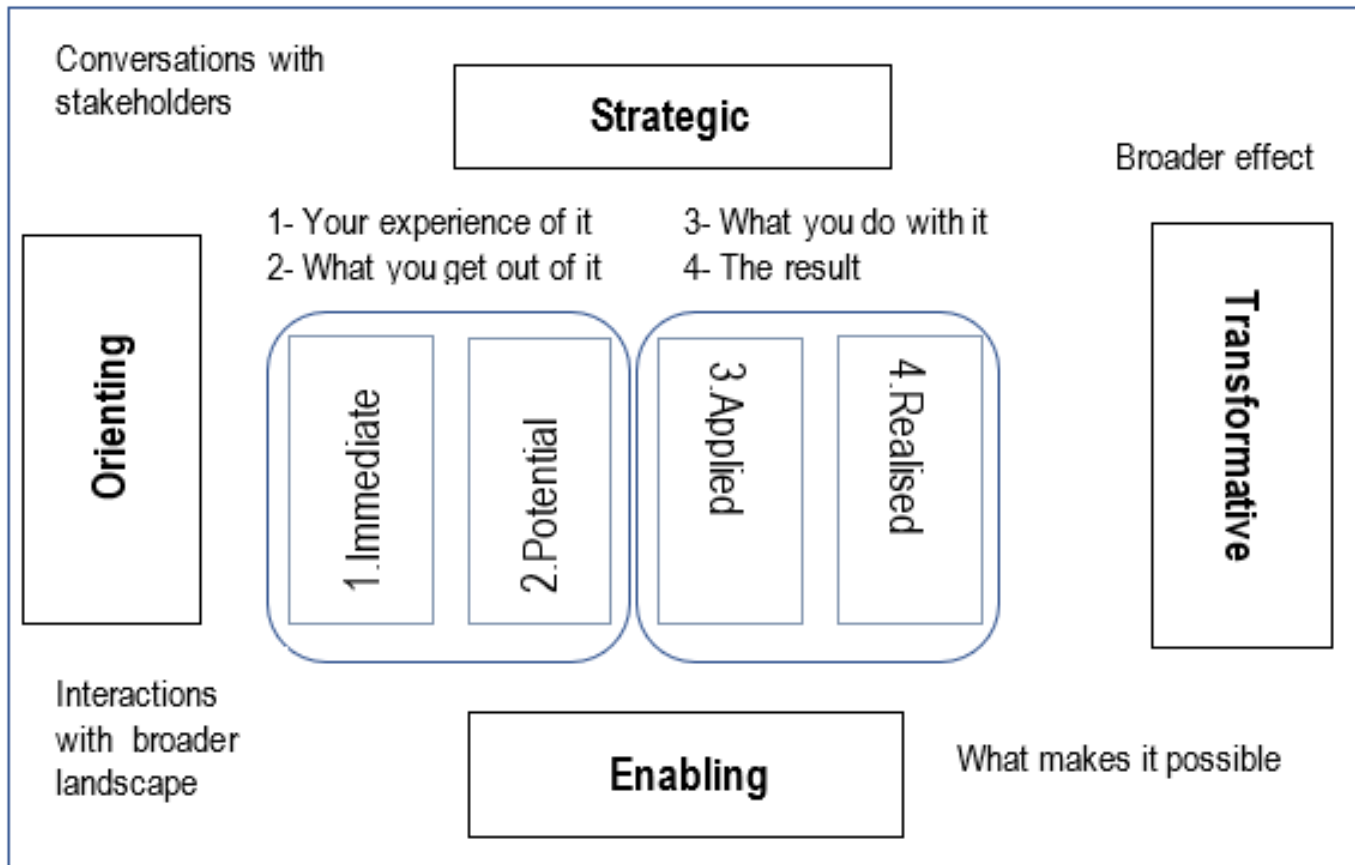
- Understand what and how knowledge and competencies are imparted, appropriated, discussed and translated in different contexts
- Theorize about educational and transcultural exchange processes and the value creation in international communities
- Explore the possibilities and limitations of international academic networks (IANs) for academics of universities of teacher education

## **Specific research question addressed in this presentation:**

How do 40 academics of various national and disciplinary backgrounds, involved in teacher education, experience the professional development within IANs in terms of **values created**?


## 2. Theoretical Framework: Which values are created within international academic networks?

### Value creation framework in Communities of Practice (CoP)



Wenger-Trayner &  
Wenger-Trayner, 2020, p.75

## 2. Theoretical Framework

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- Types of “artefacts” exchanged by participants in a CoP (Daele, 2017):
- communicating personal experiences
  - methodological contributions
  - theoretical references
  - rules and norms shared within the profession
  - logical proofs and
  - practical recommendations
- Workplace learning, as a place of reflection and peer collaboration (Evers, Kreijns, & Van der Heijden, 2016)



# 3. Data and Research Method



## **Qualitative approach and research tools:**

- Documents (Motivation and Expectations to participate in the networks)
- Observations and annotations of Discussions after School Visits and after University Classrooms' Visits
- Three semi-structured online focus groups, questions developed in partnership with the participants (inclusive research, Nind 2013)

## **Content thematic analysis (Krippendorff, 2004)**

## 4. Insights into values created through IAN (I): **immediate values**

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- School visits and university classroom visits had the strongest impact on participants among all to steer exchange and interaction
- Workshops conducted on different competency-based teaching topics
- Informal gatherings during breaks and meals and social and cultural activities outside the formal program helped understand the socio-cultural, historical, political and educational context
- Getting to know co-workers and colleagues from a different angle

## 4. Insights into values created through IAN (II): **potential values**

- ➔ Visit of the *ateliers* (textile and wood) at a Swiss university and a wood activity at a Swiss primary school
- ➔ Observing teaching university's classrooms benefits at individual level: awareness of other country's teaching experiences
- ➔ Development of soft skills such as moderation and teamwork in intercultural teams; research skills and academic writing developed in the trio works; linguistic skills promoted throughout the IANs, in the workshops and specially in the trio work
- ➔ Update of pedagogical knowledge around competence-based teaching
- ➔ Finding individual partners for further cooperation projects

## 4. Insights into values created through IAN (III): **applied values**

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- Applying the SoTL research studies and innovation projects of duos and trio projects (ex. trio on creative writing)
- Receiving funding from the World Bank to design an atelier to teach Textile Education in Tunis, inspired by the visit to the Swiss university.
- Applying the concepts of “Competence based education” to improve the formulation of learning outcomes, active learning methods (such as flipped classroom) or students’ assessment of learning
- Designing and implementing an academic development program for pedagogical training of university teachers in Albania.

# Conclusions

- Creation of value:
  - school visits, university classrooms visits (and its de-briefing sessions), workshops and publications created **immediate, potential and applied** values. Sociocultural activities and visits helped clarify the knowledge on the educational systems.
  - writing their motivations and expectations to participate in the project, reflecting on their teaching philosophies and researching on SoTL in duo and trio projects provided **immediate and potential** values.
  - difficult to look at the realised values –requires follow up data
- We share same theories and pedagogical knowledge, but IANs triggered innovations adjusted to the national contexts.

# Literature

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Thank you for your  
attention