EdEN Report Summary

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Periodic Reporting for period 1 - EdEN (Education Economics Network)

Reporting period: 2016-01-01 to 2017-03-31

Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project

EdEN marks the start of an enhanced cooperation in the field of education economics between three top ranked economics of education research groups in EU-15 countries and a promising group in the Widening Countries. The main objective of the project is to boost the publication record of the cooperating institutions in general, and the leading institution in particular. The increasing cooperation between the participants also forecasts the increase in international embeddedness and eventually international recognition of the leading institution, while also strengthening the network of education economists in the participating institutions. Besides these main objectives EdEN also explicitly aims at strengthening the weak ties between young social scientists dealing with education related questions within the economics discipline.

The specific goals of the twinning project include trainings for the leading institution, staff exchange, and joint organization of workshops and summer schools. This should ultimately result in policy relevant, empirically focused papers in peer-reviewed journals within the economics of education field. The planned collaborations promote deeper mutual understanding of the different systems and foster learning from each other.

Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far

“The first period of the EdEN project has been as planned in the proposal. Administratively, all proposed deliverables were prepared and submitted (see in detail below), but more importantly, EdEN has also generated an academic environment, where researchers from the four institutes have started to work together.

Currently, there are sixteen new scientific papers being developed by people from these institutes. Most of these are direct co-operations (co-authorships) between at least two people from two different institutes (at least one is always Hungarian) and a few are authored by Hungarian researcher(s) but mentored by at least one colleague from the partner institutions. Admittedly, EdEN has provided the resources for these collaborations. The Kick-off meeting in Budapest was essential not only for the people to meet in person but for the researchers from the partner institutions to learn the Hungarian educational environment (the subject of most of the ongoing research). The data workshop after the kick-off has provided the opportunity for all to familiarize themselves with the available datasets (and the translation of these datasets to English were also funded by the EdEN project). Initial ideas about the potential collaborations were set up during the kick-off.

The second meeting of people from the EdEN network was in Maastricht during a lengthy training in "structural models" and "discrete choice approaches" in 2016 June. Altogether fourteen Hungarian researchers and scientific assistants have participated in these pieces of training besides people from Maastricht, Leuven, and Milan. During these two training the first scientific workshop of the EdEN project was held, where the first results from the co-operations agreed during the kick-off were presented and discussed. During the meeting, new ideas were also formulated and some old ones dropped.
The team has met the third time in Milan in October during a training in efficiency in education analysis where nine researchers from Hungary have participated (along the Dutch, Belgian and Italian colleagues). The training was organized right before the international "Efficiency in Education" workshop series (this is not an EdEN event) so that people at the training can stay.

The fourth meeting of the EdEN group was in Leuven, where the second scientific meeting was organized along with a workshop on grant writing. During the scientific meeting the working versions of the papers were presented and discussed (they are to be delivered by June). The grant writing workshop was for EdEN members only and was prepared by the administration of the KUL, one of the most successful academic EU funds managers within Europe.

Besides the group meetings, there were several individual visits to and from the partner institutions. (Part B of the periodic report contains a detailed description of these visits.) These visits facilitate the joint work greatly as they offer pure research time for the participants.

"Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)

"Even before reaching the mid-term of the EdEN project it is obvious that the cooperation between the four partners is a success: more than two dozens of researchers and assistants are affiliated with the project contributing to scientific papers or receiving essential training for future research. After the 15th project month, researchers from at least two sides have been working on sixteen scientific papers, which is six more than originally proposed, improving the research performance of the coordinating institution greatly. Over a dozen researchers and assistants from Hungary have participated in training at internationally recognized partners; while the jointly organized scientific workshops have offered a critical mass of researchers pointing towards future collaborations. These "budding" collaborations are promising the enhancement of publication Impact Factor for the members of the coordinating institution as well as for Ph.D. researchers at the cooperating partners. As a direct spin-off of the EdEN network, the partners are planning to submit several additional project proposals and to establish a larger network of education economists. In the upcoming one and a half years will jointly organize a workshop in "efficiency in education" in Budapest, and two additional workshops in education-economics in the spring and autumn of 2018. We will host two summer schools for PhD students interested in education-economics. Building on the EdEN network and on the international workshops we plan to submit a COST action to create a wide network of European education economists. We also plan to submit a new Twinning proposal (EdEN+) with a new Widening Country lead-partner. From the start onwards, we aimed for a long term collaboration between the institutions. Thanks to the various initiatives organised within the network, thanks to the research visits to and from Hungary and thanks to the organisation of conferences in Hungary, we seem to be reaching this target.

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