



**VIRTUAL BRIDGE**  
BETWEEN EUROPEAN & AFRICAN STUDENTS  
FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES



# Project Website

Working package 03, Del 3.2

Report on online workshop(s) on soft skills development and digital didactics for VE learning

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UnaEuropa for Virtual Exchanges  
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This document is the 1st full version (31.Jan.2026) of the “Report on online workshop(s) on soft skills development and digital didactics for VE learning”.

The document has been written by the UnaVEx teams of Helsingin yliopisto fi coordinator (*una europa partner university*), Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna (IT) (*una europa partner university*), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE) (*una europa partner university*), University of Johannesburg (ZA), University of Nairobi (KE) and Université de Kinshasa (CD)

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## 1. DESING FOR SOFT SKILLS AND DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING

The moderator training courses for UnaVEx aimed to provide support to the moderators:

- in facilitating the group process of the sustainability action
- using digital teaching tools (such as Zoom and Miro)
- creating a safe, social environment where different perspectives can be expressed and where learning together is made possible through constructive dialogue
- dealing with the online challenges of the virtual exchange, such as internet connection, access to and diversity of devices, a quiet learning environment, etc.

In order to develop this moderator training programme, the various partners and perspectives were incorporated into the programme and the implementation of the training. The perspective of the moderators themselves was also continuously incorporated during the training and used to adjust the training. From the second training series onwards, we also gave students and moderators from the first iteration a chance to express their experiences. We systematically integrated evaluation and feedback into the subsequent training series.

In the first (November 2024-January 2025) and second training series (October-November 2025), we also had support from a consultant, Stella Saliari, who helped shape our programme and developed parts of the sessions related to soft skills. Stella Saliari has extensive expertise in inclusion and intercultural competencies within international projects. She provided us with comprehensive advice and also delivered parts of the sessions focusing on soft skills and on creating a sense of belonging.

Stella also developed a code of conduct for the moderators and students for the project. The code of conduct was also adjusted between the first and second series of training sessions, for example to further clarify the students' commitment (such as attendance during the sessions, communication with the moderators). During the second training session, concrete materials were also developed and provided to the moderators, such as standard messages that they could adapt to their own context. In this way, we wanted to increase the involvement between moderators and students.

Between the first and second sessions, we went through the various video recordings of the previous moderator training sessions and selected the most important excerpts, which we could provide to the participants as preparation. This allowed us to focus even more on training skills and conversation during the second training series, as most of the knowledge components were provided in advance.

For the third training series (February-March 2026), which is currently being prepared, we are providing more space for practising the online tools, because we noticed that the





moderators needed extra practice in using MIRO. We will also provide the materials we discussed in the moderator sessions during the virtual exchange in the form of short tips & tricks, so that the moderators receive this information again “just in time”. After all, redundancy is very important in the learning process, especially in a challenging learning context such as UnaVEx.

The following persons were involved in the preparation or implementation of the various training sessions:

- Aleksi Vauhkonen, Laura Riuttanen, Julia Karhumaa (Helsingin yliopisto FI (Una Europa partner university)
- Laure Van Hoecke, Julie Metta, Anouk Van Obergen (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven BE (Una Europa partner university)
- Francesco Maria Spampinato, Ana Beaven (Alma Mater Studiorum - Università Di Bologna IT (Una Europa partner university)
- Lee-Ann Modley, University of Johannesburg ZA
- Solomon Derese, University of Nairobi KE
- Gode Bola, Université de Kinshasa CD
- Stella Saliari, feminist researcher and social justice activist

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF SOFT SKILL AND DIGITAL SKILLS EDUCATION AS A PART MODERATORS TRAINING

Overview of the trainings November 2024 - January 2025 (Zoom sessions)

### UnaVEx Moderators' Training - November 21 2024

#### TRI 1 "UnaEuropa VE concept & practicalities"

##### AGENDA

- Welcome words and Una Europa VE concept, Hanna Lappalainen, Univ.Helsinki
- African & European perspectives - how to become a Sustainability Advocate, Solomon Derese, Univ.Nairobi
- Sustainability goals, MOOC background, week program, Laura Riuttanen Univ. Helsinki
  - e.g Role of a moderator + moderator training schedule
- Introduction to the platforms, DigiCampus, Julia Karhumaa Univ. Helsinki
- Zoom - know-hows, Mikko Kulmala Univ. Helsinki
- Introduction to each other in small groups / get-to-know (choose one as facilitator)

**Number of participants: 82**





## **UnaVEx Moderators' Training - December 5 2024** **TRI 2 "Una Europa MOOCs and Sustainability Action Task"**

### **AGENDA**

- Welcome words
- Introduction to sustainability MOOC, Laura Riuttanen, UH
- Other Una Europa MOOCs, Francesco Spampinato, UniBo
- Head, hands and heart, Lee-Ann Modley, UJ
- Sustainability Action Task, Julia Karhumaa, UH
- Discussion in small groups
- Introduction and pre-task for training 3, Stella Saliari, consultant KU Leuven

**Number of participants: 61**

## **UnaVEx Moderators' Training – January 23 2025** **TRI 3 "Soft Skills"**

### **AGENDA**

- Workshop by Stella Saliari about
  - Highlighting educational spaces as transformative locations towards society
  - Reflecting on ourselves, about positionality and learning space
  - Focusing on divesting Eurocentrism in knowledge production
  - Understanding how privilege and intersectional inequalities can influence the learning process
  - Reflecting on inclusive language
  - Discuss challenging situations (discrimination, silence, conflict, internet connection) and possible solutions

**Number of participants: 37**

## **UnaVEx Moderators' Training February 6 2025** **TR4 "UnaVEx Group exercise and other tasks"**

### **AGENDA**

- Welcome words
- Harvesting / Bruno, Caroll and Luigi (moderators)
- Ice-breaker / Sophie and Luana (moderators)
- UnaVEx group exercise / Julia Karhumaa, UH
- Example of a sustainability action / Gode Bola, UniKIN





- Break-out rooms
- Q&A
- Soft skills for VE moderators / Stella Saliari, KU Leuven
- Closing words

**Number of participants: 46**

**UnaVEx Moderators' Training February 13 2025**  
**TR5 Final Moderator Training**

**AGENDA**

- Welcome / Laura Riuttanen
- Moderator feedback + reminder!
- Q&A from the feedback form / Julia Karhumaa
  - Please confirm your attendance by filling in the form
- Revising the moderator guide + miro tool / Julia Karhumaa
- Moderator training certificate + credits / Alekski Vauhkonen
- 1st VE confirmed moderators and groups
- Q&A

**Number of participants: 29**

**Overview of the trainings October-November 2025 (Zoom sessions)**

**UnaVEx Moderators' Training October 9 2025**  
**TRI1 "UnaEuropa VE concept & practicalities"**

**AGENDA**

- Welcome to UnaVEx – Solomon Derese, University of Nairobi
- Soft skills – Stella Saliari
- How to get the credits – Alekski Vauhkonen, University of Helsinki
- Moderator experiences from VE1 & Q&A Sanjeet Kumar & Anouk Van Obergen, KU Leuven
- Una Europa MOOCs – Laura Riuttanen, University of Helsinki
- Get-to-know ice-breaker + reflection – Laure Van Hoecke, KU Leuven
- Q&A and preparation for next week – Laure Van Hoecke, KU Leuven

**Number of participants: 108**





## **UnaVEx Moderators' Training October 16 2025** **TR2 "Sustainability Action Task"**

### **AGENDA**

- Broad introduction sustainability actions - Lee-Ann Modley, University of Johannesburg
- Introduction Sustainability Action Task and Miro board - Anouk Van Obergen, KU Leuven
- How can you support a safe space for the Sustainability Action Task - Laure Van Hoecke, KU Leuven
- Sustainability tasks and projects: examples and lessons learned - Douglas Forster (Project VE1)
- 'Get Rooted') and Casper Ombetelets (Project 'Science and Sustainability')
- Discussion on sustainability actions
- Q&A and preparation for next week

**Number of participants: 75**

## **UnaVEx Moderators' Training November 6** **TR3 'Soft skills for communication and supporting the discussion'**

### **AGENDA**

- Welcome, modelling and online connection- Laure Van Hoecke (KU Leuven) and Julia Karhumaa (University of Helsinki)
- Soft skills in educational settings: a feminist and decolonial perspective (Stella Saliari, consultant KU Leuven)
- Groups: check point - Laura Rittuanen and Aleksis Vauhkonen (University of Helsinki)
- Q&A about everything

**Number of participants: 71**

### **3. DEVELOPED MATERIALS**

Hereby you can find an overview of our training materials and snapshots of slides.

**Overview training sessions and materials October 2025 on DigiCampus:**





Code of Conduct



UnaVEx Sustainability Action task instructions



UnaVEx Sustainability Action task instructions (French)



Training 1: UnaEuropa Virtual Exchange concept and practicalities



Training 2: Moderate a Sustainability Task



Training 3: Soft skills for communication and supporting the discussion



A recap: Soft skills in educational settings

## Introduction of UnaVEx and the importance of global sustainability advocates by Solomon Derese:

### UnaVEx goal

Equipping students with high-quality sustainability education.

**Interdisciplinary, international and intercultural high-quality sustainability education** across European and the Sub-Saharan Region.



**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**



Achieving these global objectives require concerted and sustained efforts from governments, businesses, and individuals.

It takes all of us - from the global North and South.

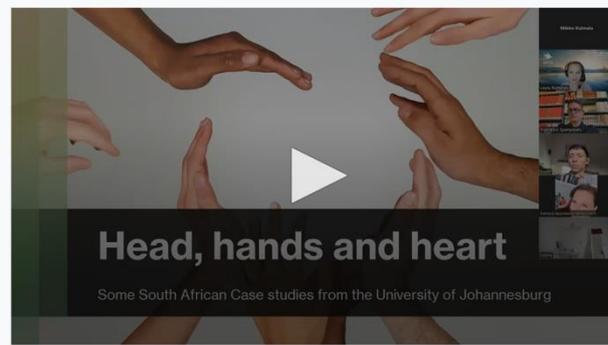
We are at cross roads - we have to change the future – change the trajectory.

An action has to be implemented now for a sustainable future.

**We need Global Advocates of Sustainability!!!**



Video of Lee-Ann Modley (University of Johannesburg) about 'Head, hands and heart'. This was a presentation during the first series of trainings. We used this recording as preparation material for the second series of trainings.



Preparation for next meeting

- ❖ [Watch the video 'Head, hands and heart'](#)
- ❖ Read the Sustainability action task document and explore the corresponding Miroboard



Emphasizing the concept of belonging, the code of conduct and methods to support group work by Stella Saliari and Laure Van Hoecke:



**SENSE OF BELONGING AS A POTENTIAL FORCE FOR**

- Reducing dropout intentions
- Promoting student achievement
- Promoting student well-being and mental health
- Promoting university engagement
- Increasing life satisfaction

(Hurtado & Carter 1997, Allen et al. 2021, Yildirim et al. 2021)

Recap Stella Saliari

Source of diagram

According to Bruce W. Tuckman

**THE FIVE STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT**

Forming	Storming	Norming	Performing	Adjourning
<p><b>Objectives:</b> Establish ground rules and project details.</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> Excitement, optimism, politeness, uncertainty.</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> Agree on roles and establish interdependence.</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> Frustration, conflict, anger, dissatisfaction.</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> Develop problem-solving and cooperative interdependence.</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> Trust, solidarity, conflict, acceptance.</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> Solve the major problems of the project.</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> Motivation, capability, development, satisfaction.</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> Celebrate team and individual results.</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> Pride, satisfaction, optimism, grief.</p>



**WELCOME**

We represent a variety of languages and dialects spoken. Being able to use languages other than English within educational settings can be an integral part towards social sustainability.





**Get to know ice breaker: Spirit animals**

**Laure Van Hoecke (KU Leuven)**



**Method 2:  
Circle of influence**

An exercise to review team priorities and make choices about what needs to be addressed individually and collectively. The exercise challenges team members to think about where they can have the most impact and influence.



Select an action task with your group - see Sustainability Action Task guide. You should now preferably choose a task in which the students want to influence their fellow students (3 min)

Everyone writes down issues concerning the task that affect the team, both internally and externally (one issue / post-it) under your Group number -> 'Issues ...' on the Padlet (2 min)

Discuss together and put the Post-its one by one on one under the circles, the **Circle of Influence** or the **Circle of Involvement**. (5 min)

**Discuss** What actions could I/we take to influence those things that I/we CAN influence? How should I/we relate to those things in our circles that we have little or no influence over? (10 min)

**Testimonials about sustainability actions by students during moderator training October 2025:**

