

## **INVITE Project Highlights 2021**

In 2021 the INVITE Project (International Networking for Virtually Improved Teacher Education) has begun at the Ludwigsburg University of Education (LUE). This project aims at internationalising studies and teaching in teacher training with the long-term goal of building up an international network. To achieve this, several international partners from English speaking and the Nordic countries have already been acquired to enrich the project. The INVITE project is funded by the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Two major events where students, staff and teachers from several international institutions came together, could already be realised in the first project year. The first hybrid Teaching Week as well as a virtual Winter School, both of which took place in the week from 11th to 15th of October at the Ludwigsburg University of Education.

Both events started on Monday with a joint greeting from Vice Rector for Research and Internationalisation Prof. Dr. Jörg-U. Keßler at the Ludwigsburg University of Education. Ms. Almut Lemke from the DAAD joined virtually to give a greeting on behalf of the funding party.

The Teaching Week was an opportunity for members from the Ludwigsburg University of Education as well as five international partner universities to get together. Members of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the University of Limerick in Ireland, the Oslo MET University in Norway, the HAN University in the Netherlands, and the University College Copenhagen joined. From Monday to Thursday the training staff and employees exchanged ideas on upcoming projects - virtually and in person. Two of the international partners also visited the Ludwigsburg University of Education during this period. The exchange took mainly place virtually via online meetings with diverse topics such as concepts for the teacher training of the future and other projects like Erasmus Without Papers. One aim of the INVITE project is to foster collaborations between the participating universities. To achieve this, tandems consisting of one member of the LUE and one international partner each have been formed in order to prepare COIL seminars in near future. The teaching week gave the participating staff and lecturers a chance to get to know each other and was a great opportunity for exchange of ideas and best practice.

At the same time, the international partners also gave guest lectures as part of the Virtual Winter School. Students from all six universities could participate in this event, at the LUE, national and international students were chosen in a two-phase-process. The goal was for students to become better acquainted with the school systems of other countries. A special focus during the lectures was the topic of diversity within the classroom. Over the course of the week, students worked together in internationally mixed teams to prepare presentations on a topic of their choice. This enabled them to bring in their own prior knowledge or deepen their understanding on topics they were interested. For example, one group presented on the school system of Madagascar while another took a general look at the advantages of spending a semester abroad, and yet another group focused on social injustices in the school system in general. Thanks to the input of the students a wide area of subjects was covered. The students also got the opportunity to develop a community of practice as they will all be teachers in near future. In a follow up evaluation as well as an interview conducted by an American participant, the students approved having learned a lot in the short time span. They especially praised the material that

was provided online to accompany the lectures. Overall, the students agreed that internationalisation is an important aspect of their studies and that they have great interest in joining further events like this one.

Both events were the first of their kind, over the timespan of the project, further comparable events are set to take place. Since the INVITE project specifically aims at building up intercultural and digital competencies it is planned that all future events will enable participants from all over the world to join virtually. For the year 2022 a second Teaching Week is planned, as well as school visits abroad and meetings with all international partners.