



IHES LABS REPORT

Report on the Concept, Implementation
and Results of the Regional IHES Laboratories
in Catalonia and the Olomouc Region



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Report on the Concept, Implementation and Results of the Regional IHES Laboratories in Catalonia and the Olomouc Region

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Palacký University
Olomouc



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ROVIRA I VIRGILI



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1 INTRODUCTION

One of the key initiatives undertaken within the framework of the European Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project “Internationalization in Higher Education for Society (IHES)” (project number 2020-1-CZ01-KA203-078288) led by Palacký University Olomouc (UPOL) in the Czech Republic was the establishment of two regional IHES Labs. These Labs were intended to be set up, managed, and operated at Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic, and at Rovira i Virgili University (URV) in Tarragona, Spain.

The design and activities of the regional IHES Labs align with the concept of IHES as defined by Uwe Brandenburg, Hans de Wit, Elspeth Jones, and Betty Leask. In line with their definition, IHES explicitly aims to benefit the broader community, whether at home or abroad, through international or intercultural education, research, service, and engagement. Both institutions, Palacký University and Rovira i Virgili University, have leveraged existing platforms to connect with society and disseminate the positive values of internationalization, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more open, tolerant, well-informed, and empathetic society.

The objective of this report is to provide an overview of the IHES Labs concept, outline the process involved in establishing them in both the Czech Republic and Spain, and share the outcomes and insights garnered from the implementation of the Labs and their respective activities. The report aims to present a comprehensive understanding of the IHES Labs’ purpose, their role in fostering internationalization for societal benefit, and the valuable lessons learned through their implementation.

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE IHES LABS CONCEPT

The IHES project was designed with the objective of addressing the genuine needs of society through various activities. One of the innovative activities, which was meant to test the IHES idea of utilizing the benefits of internationalization for the benefit of society at large, was the establishment of IHES Regional Labs. The project aimed to test different approaches by establishing “regional labs” in two distinct regions, Catalonia and Olomouc, employing a quasi-experimental design. These regions were selected based on their prior experience in regional cooperation and the presence of specific societal challenges. The intention was to test, compare, and contextualize different approaches in alignment with the primary objective. The specific objective of the regional laboratories was to develop, select, and implement IHES initiatives within their respective territories, with the intention of serving as exemplary models and integrating them into the project repository for accessibility by other universities. By testing and comparing similar approaches in different regions and for diverse audiences, IHES aimed to generate knowledge that could be easily shared among the participating regions and partners, allowing other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to learn from these experiences and implement their own IHES projects.

Despite several differences in the institutional setting and organizational design, but partially also in the activities carried out, both IHES Regional Labs cooperated and engaged closely together from the very start. Only during the first year of the project, several coordination meetings have taken place to plan, design and organize the IHES Labs, the introductory IHES trainings and the Lab activities. There have also been several online meetings to develop the surveys used to measure the impact of the IHES training and Lab activities. The cooperative approach added further value to this IHES activity since the shared experience in all phases of development, establishment and implementation of the Regional Labs, as well as their activities, played a significant role in shaping the success story of both labs. The activity profited greatly from the mutual inspiration, as well as from the idea of the project that the two

Labs would test the activities in two different regions but also cooperate closely, especially by developing and mirroring their activities. The organizational setting at both universities was different, however, which was finally an added value, since it provided additional lessons learned on how to establish such Labs and implement their activities in different organizational settings.

2.2 IHES LAB OLOMOUC

2.2.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The project leadership at Palacký University decided to establish the regional IHES Lab at the Faculty of Law. The decision on the institutional setting took into account two main factors: the strong emphasis on internationalization, the commitment to international activities within the Law Faculty, and the pre-existing involvement of the Faculty in activities that benefit broader society, particularly through legal clinics. These factors not only facilitated the establishment and implementation of the IHES Lab, but also continue to play a crucial role in ensuring its sustainability and success. In addition, the IHES Lab concept presented an opportunity to further develop and enhance the existing activities.

The other starting point is that the idea of building strong ties, with the wider society and training law students in the spirit of social justice and public service, has been an integral part of the Faculty of Law's mission at Palacký University Olomouc since its renewal in 1991. The Faculty of Law has developed an extensive system of legal clinics where students provide pro bono legal support and advice to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in different areas of law under the thorough supervision of academic supervisors. The legal clinics contribute to the betterment of under-privileged areas in society by striving for improved lives, securing justice, and the advancement of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

The connection with legal clinics, a concept widely adopted by law schools worldwide, has resulted in positive synergies and broader societal impact, encouraged public interests, but also improved education. The IHES Lab activities, such as "Street law" and "EU into school," serve as valuable tools for transferring the benefits of internationalization

through international or intercultural education, research, service, and engagement, which align with the objectives of the IHES Lab.

Regarding the organizational structure, the Vice-Dean for International Affairs of the Law Faculty was appointed as the IHES Lab Manager. Activities coordinators were selected from among the faculty members who were already involved in existing activities targeting the broader community. The head of the department of clinical legal education and professional skills development, as well as the head of the department of political sciences and sociology, were appointed as activities coordinators.

The involvement of individuals with prior experience in internationalization and community-oriented activities greatly facilitated the initial development of the Lab. In order, however, to achieve the objectives of the IHES Lab, it was necessary to provide initial training to all the individuals involved, not only at the managerial level, but also to those who would be participating in specific Lab activities.

2.2.2 TRAINING

Palacký University Olomouc made the decision to conduct a one-day training session for the Olomouc IHES Lab. On 15 October 2021, the workshop took place, bringing together various participants, including academics from Palacký University, representatives from the Olomouc County, and members of the European Students Network. The training was conducted in English and served as a valuable platform for the participants to gain a deeper understanding of the project's rationale and engage in discussions regarding the planned activities of the IHES Lab.

The introductory segment of the workshop focused on establishing a comprehensive understanding of the broader context of internationalization within which the project operates. Participants had the opportunity to explore the underlying principles and motivations driving the project's internationalization efforts. The main emphasis of the training centred, however, on the Olomouc IHES Lab itself, delving into its specific activities and objectives.

The workshop proved to be highly beneficial for the attendees as it provided them with a platform to discuss and refine their ideas regarding the activities for which they were responsible, whether as active participants or administrators. The workshop also facilitated the opportunity

for participants to engage in constructive dialogues with the other stakeholders involved in the project. This allowed for a comprehensive review of the planned activities, enabling participants to fine-tune their strategies before the implementation phase.

The participants greatly appreciated the collaborative environment created by the workshop, which fostered open discussions and the exchange of valuable insights. The ability to engage in dialogue with other project actors and administrators served as a means to strengthen their understanding of the planned activities and refine their approaches. This interactive and inclusive training session played a crucial role in enhancing the participants' involvement and preparedness for the successful implementation of the IHES Lab activities.

2.3 IHES LAB CATALONIA

2.3.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

IHES project objectives, as well as the definition of the new IHES concept established by Uwe Brandenburg, Hans de Wit, Elspeth Jones, and Betty Leask, according to which „Internationalization in Higher Education for Society (IHES) explicitly aims to benefit the wider community, at home or abroad, through international or intercultural education, research, service and engagement“, provided coordinates for adapting the idea of IHES to the reality of the URV and helped to develop the project through an initial exploration and detection of the services and activities at URV that could successfully participate in the laboratory. This was done by identifying services and activities that were linked to the community and had internationalization capabilities. The URV government team was also informed and surveyed to obtain their commitment and support.

In the project adaptation phase, three relevant URV services to incorporate into IHES Lab were consequently considered: the Office of Social Engagement (OCS), which is the structure that brings together all the university units that interact with society with the aim of being a driver of social improvement in the region, the Student Office (OFES), which links the university with the most important actor in higher education, the student, and also acts as a bridge with secondary education, and

the International Center (I-C), which provides the internationalization knowledge and tools for this project.

In parallel, during this phase, external institutions were explored and involved, and alliances were created with institutions that had connections to the activities, including the Department of Education responsible for primary and secondary education in the region.

Organizational-wise, the director of the Centre Internacional led the IO3 of the project, along with the project manager of URV, both of whom have extensive experience in Erasmus projects and training. The director proposed the co-coordination of the Catalan laboratory, consisting of two people with a long professional career, to facilitate good communication between the services involved in the project. One of them belongs to the Office of Social Engagement and the other to the International Centre. Both participated in adapting, developing, implementing, executing, and analysing the project. They also participated in internal training and their tasks have included organizing meetings, creating protocols, distributing tasks, disseminating information, recruiting, selecting, training, and recognizing actors in many of the activities, creating didactic and external promotion materials, attending meetings with the IHES lab in Olomouc, monitoring activities through personalized meetings with promoters, and finally participating in the analysis and presentation of results of the IHES lab Catalonia (surveys, guidelines, roadmaps, repository, and reports).

For the initiation and development of the IHES Lab Catalonia project, a proposal was made for an internal training program. The objective was to raise awareness among university leaders and URV personnel who had the potential to promote activities within the laboratory regarding the new IHES concept and the scope that can be achieved through the combination of its three axes - Internationalization, Higher Education, and Society.

2.3.2 TRAINING

February 2021 marked the start of the planning of the 'Introduction to IHES' training course, the first part of this output. It was meant to align the chosen pilot activities and lay the foundation for efficient impact assessment and future replicability. The URV team opted for a three day

(morning) training, which was delivered in a blended format on 13, 14 and 15 July 2021, with 12 participants attending in person and 3 online.

The majority of the attendants were members of URV's Social Engagement Office and the Students Office, mostly staff that would later be responsible for the IHES Lab activities in Tarragona. There were also participants from the other Catalan project partner, Generalitat, and associated partner ACUP. The topics on the first day were "Introduction to the IHES project & Objectives and expectations of the course", "Introduction to internationalization: basic concepts", "Global Trends and a link to what we do in our institution" and "What is IHES? Examples and good practices". The second day was dedicated to "Intercultural Communication" and "Good practices in IHES (part 2)". Worth mentioning here is the design and use of an "IHES puzzle", an interactive activity where participants were asked to organize and rank a list of IHES examples from the IO2 report according to the 3 IHES-factors: I = Internationalization, HE = Higher Education and S = Society. Finally, the third day included "Evaluation tool of activities" and, last but not least, the presentation of the participant's own projects, that is, how they planned to integrate IHES in the Lab activities. The participants indicated they had highly appreciated the training. An evaluation meeting took place to brief UP who had planned their training for the autumn. Although the training at URV was delivered in Catalan, all the presentations were translated into English to facilitate the training in UP.

After the initial phase, which was dedicated to the Lab idea creation, consisting of developing the core concept, defining the objective and milestones, sounding institution government, stakeholders and actors for commitment, involving external institutions and creating alliances, both regional labs became fully operational.

During the subsequent phase, the teams of both regional IHES Labs engaged in the preparation and design of their respective activities. These endeavours were carried out in coordination between the two Labs. This stage involved a series of structured steps, including planning the execution and implementation of the project, adapting the available resources, project branding, formal project presentation, creation, and design of dissemination materials and conducting training and design and development of materials for the internalization of the project concept for stakeholders and promoters.

The third phase focused on the implementation of the planned and developed activities. Both Regional Labs achieved their implementation goals almost completely, with the exception of one activity planned in Catalonia and also in Olomouc - "Service Learning". The activity could not be implemented yet due to complications caused by lack of resources.

An essential part of both Labs' activities was collecting data from actors and from social target groups with the aim of producing an accurate lab activities analysis and its internationalization impact. The Labs monitored specific surveys, which were developed and used for and within the activities. Collected data were utilized for analysis and presentation of results, assessing the scope of the objectives, the quality of the activities and measuring the impact of internationalization activities in higher education on local communities.

3.1 ACTIVITIES OF THE OLOMOUC IHES LAB

The activities undertaken by the Olomouc IHES Lab were derived from two primary sources. First, they drew upon the foundation of previous activities carried out by the Law Faculty, which were aimed at serving

the wider society (especially legal clinics). These pre-existing initiatives provided a valuable starting point for the IHES Laboratory's endeavours. Second, the activities were aligned with the objectives and suggested categories outlined within the IHES project itself. By combining these two sources, the Olomouc IHES Laboratory ensured a comprehensive and purposeful approach to its activities.

The process of developing these activities involved several stages of deliberation and collaboration. Initially, ideas for activities were suggested, developed, and discussed within the context of Palacký University. Subsequently, these ideas were further examined and refined through discussions and agreements with the Catalonia IHES Lab. The activities were consequently reviewed within the project consortium, comprising all the participating institutions.

This collaborative approach allowed for the pooling of expertise and perspectives from multiple stakeholders, ensuring that the activities were well-informed, aligned with the project's goals, and supported by the broader consortium. By leveraging the experiences and input of different partners, the Olomouc IHES Laboratory maximized the effectiveness and impact of its activities.

The subsequent passage provides an overview of the activities executed by the Olomouc IHES Lab and presents a concise summary of the acquired insights and experiences.

3.1.1 STREET LAW FOR FRENCH STUDENTS

This activity was specifically designed for French university students participating in the Erasmus+ Programme and studying at Palacký University Olomouc. The course was tailored to provide an introduction to fundamental pedagogical aspects, including teaching methodologies. Additionally, it included an experiential component in which students visited local secondary schools, particularly those with bilingual programs that offered French as a second language. During their visits, the students taught various topics in French, such as the legal system and politics in France.

The implementation of the course aimed to achieve objectives both for the Erasmus students and the secondary school students involved. One of the primary goals was to facilitate a connection between Erasmus

students and the authentic Czech environment, ensuring that their experience in the Czech Republic extended beyond the confines of their Erasmus group. Moreover, the course aimed to benefit from the perspective gained by individuals living within certain circumstances. The evaluation and understanding of problems often differ between external observers and those directly affected. By encouraging students to view problems from a different perspective, a more comprehensive understanding could be attained. Similarly, the course aimed to provide secondary school students with the opportunity to interact with native French speakers, improve their communication skills, and enhance their self-confidence. One of the main obstacles preventing secondary school students from travelling abroad is their fear of inadequate communication abilities.

The specific implementation of the course involved several stages. In the beginning, the first seminar of each semester was dedicated to introducing street law methods. Subsequently, the enrolled francophone students proposed themes for their preparation of secondary school students' lessons during the second seminar. They received feedback from seminar tutors and other students regarding the extent and suitability of the chosen topics. The topics could cover various areas, such as human rights, European law, international law, or the fundamentals of the French State system, based on the interests of Czech secondary school students. Student pairs prepared handouts for the secondary school students to guide them through the course, as well as methodological booklets for the teachers. These booklets assisted in planning the duration of each activity and ensured thorough consideration of each step in the lesson. The booklets also provided secondary school teachers with the option to use the lesson in other classes if desired. The following three seminars were designed as training lessons, where one or two teams presented their course in a manner consistent with how it would be conducted in a secondary school setting. Peers and tutors assumed the roles of future students, providing the presenters with the opportunity to assess the effectiveness and comprehensibility of their activities and make any necessary adjustments to time management. In the final weeks of the semester, students were accompanied to secondary schools, where they had the opportunity to present their courses to secondary school students. This cooperation proved mutually beneficial, as law courses

taught by (future) lawyers were made available to secondary schools, while university students gained experience in explaining legal concepts to non-lawyers. The course was conducted in collaboration with secondary schools that offered extended French language instruction, and students from different academic years participated.

To ensure the success of this activity, motivation was crucial. Personal motivation was found to be the most effective form. Certain obstacles needed, however, to be overcome. One significant challenge was that some of the francophone Erasmus+ students were not law students and therefore lacked even a basic knowledge of French law, let alone a deep understanding of it. To address this, students were allowed to teach political science or social science topics in addition to law-related subjects. Another challenge involved motivating these students, as they often struggled to envision the course content based solely on its title. This issue was resolved by renaming the course to provide a more accurate description of its content. Despite these efforts, the number of French students enrolled in the course did not reach the desired level. To tackle this challenge, personal motivation was emphasized at the beginning of each semester.

3.1.2 EU INTO SCHOOLS

The EU into Schools activity engaged university students in delivering educational sessions at secondary schools, with a focus on various aspects of the European Union (EU). Recognizing the prevalence of misconceptions about the EU in the Czech Republic, the objective of this activity was to enhance students' capacity to form well-informed opinions about the EU, Czech membership, and to develop better discernment between factual information and misinformation.

The implementation of this initiative drew upon prior collaboration between the Faculty of Law and secondary schools within the faculty's secondary school network. Specifically, the sessions were conducted at Slezské gymnázium in Opava as part of the civic education curriculum for students in the second, third, and fourth school years. The Department of Political Science and Social Sciences spearheaded this activity, which took place during the summer semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. By addressing various Sustainable Development Goals, such as

enhancing the quality of education and promoting awareness about the significance of robust and accountable institutions, this activity made a valuable contribution.

University students who had previously studied abroad, were responsible for delivering the sessions, under the supervision of an academic with international experience. This activity provided an opportunity for university students to gain teaching experience and improve their own communication skills.

Close collaboration between academics and secondary school teachers played a pivotal role in the successful implementation of this activity. The willingness of teachers to accommodate these activities, considering the already demanding secondary school curriculum, was crucial. Certain topics were already covered, however, in the secondary school curriculum, allowing us to build upon existing content. The response from secondary school students was positive, as the activities enhanced their understanding of the EU and developed critical thinking and argumentation skills. Motivating university students to actively pursue this teaching experience was also of paramount importance. In a broader societal context, this activity facilitated the integration of internationalization into secondary education and fostered a greater awareness of the interrelationship between the Czech Republic and the EU.

By directly impacting secondary education, this activity exemplified the “third role” of the university, demonstrating its capacity to make a tangible social contribution. The faculty effectively disseminated its specialized knowledge about the Czech Republic and the EU to the realm of secondary education.

3.1.3 CLASSES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS: TALKS ON GLOBAL ISSUES

The “Talks on Global Issues” activity consisted of a series of lectures addressing current social and international topics, including the Czech Republic’s position in the EU, sustainability and conflict, democracy and the rule of law, and multiculturalism. The objective of this activity was to facilitate the integration of elderly persons into higher education, combat misinformation regarding international issues among senior citizens, and reinforce the internationalization aspect of education for seniors. This initiative aligned with several Sustainable Development

Goals, such as improving the quality of education, raising awareness of social inequalities, promoting the importance of establishing strong and accountable institutions, and advocating for human rights.

The lectures for senior participants were integrated into an existing university program called the Third Age University (U3V), which caters to personal development and social integration for seniors aged 60 and above. The project was conducted during the summer semester of the 2021/2022 academic year and the winter semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The lectures were incorporated into the regular program and offered as an additional benefit to first and second-year students. Faculty members from the Department of Political and Social Sciences undertook the implementation of this activity, which took place at the Faculty of Law. The coordination of U3V within the faculty facilitated the successful execution of the initiative.

It is important to acknowledge that seniors represent a distinct target group. In the case of the Czech Republic, this demographic generally exhibits lower digital and media literacy compared to younger individuals, who are typically the focus of our activities. Additionally, seniors are vulnerable to misinformation campaigns, often transmitted through chain emails. The aim of this activity was to extend internationalization values to this specific group by selecting topics of international relevance that also impact seniors and the society in which they are active. It is worth noting that the impact of the activity was limited to seniors participating in the university program. There is potential, however, for future expansion of activities catering to seniors, aligning with the needs of the wider community.

The activity posed challenges for academics as they were required to engage with a diverse audience. Seniors have distinct learning needs compared to regular students, necessitating teachers to adapt their teaching methods accordingly. The academics delivered lectures based on interaction and the exchange of experiences between themselves and the senior participants. The goal was to actively involve seniors and identify instances of misinformation pertaining to the topics discussed. All classes featured debates in which seniors actively participated, fostering a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

3.1.4 GLOBAL WITNESSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Global Witnesses of Climate Change organized lectures on sustainable development, focusing on prominent environmental issues and energy security. The primary objective was to promote the concept of sustainable development and its connection to human rights, equality, and justice, while also increasing students' environmental awareness. On a broader scale, the project aimed to foster critical thinking regarding global issues and changes. The anticipated impact for the students was heightened awareness of significant global concerns and the cultivation of active citizenship. The project aligned with various Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to the environment, climate action, education, responsible consumption, and peace and justice.

Academics delivered the talks to students at secondary schools, specifically Gymnázium Čajkovského and Gymnázium Hejčín in Olomouc. This activity was a novel addition to the IHES project, intended to disseminate internationalization values. The project was implemented with the assistance of Palacký University alumni who currently work at the designated secondary schools. They secured the approval of school management and organized the talks within relevant subjects. Additionally, the network of faculty secondary schools partially facilitated the execution of the project. The Department of Political and Social Sciences at the Faculty of Law, Palacký University, organized the activity, which took place during the Winter semester of the 2022-2023 academic year.

The activity enriched the curriculum of the secondary schools by expanding beyond environmental education and placing the topics within the broader context of subjects such as civic education, geography, and history. The lectures were delivered by academics specializing in the respective fields, enabling them to deepen students' knowledge and develop their competencies, particularly in argumentation and critical thinking.

Teaching secondary school students posed challenges for the academics, as the class duration at secondary schools is typically limited to 45 minutes. Consequently, the pace of the lectures was accelerated, necessitating increased interactivity to sustain the students' attention. Overall, the feedback from the students was positive, with their expressed interest in the presented environmental issues, some of which were entirely new to them.

During the implementation of this activity, difficulties were encountered related to the organization of secondary school education in the Czech Republic. Notably, the curriculum is heavily burdened, with limited hours allocated to social sciences. As a result, social science teachers face pressure to adhere to the curriculum and may decline participation in offered lessons despite their interest. In addition, each secondary school may have varying management approaches that may not necessarily support university-led activities. It is possible to rely, however, on the support of the regional administration of Olomoucký kraj, which can assist in disseminating information about such activities to secondary schools.

3.1.5 STUDENTS' LEGAL AID OFFICE FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES (UKRAINIAN REFUGEE LAW CLINIC)

The establishment of the Students' Legal Aid Office for Ukrainian Refugees was driven by the IHES Lab's recognition of the dire circumstances faced by Ukrainian refugees residing in the Czech Republic. The objective was to provide much-needed legal assistance by creating a platform through which these individuals could seek help. Given that many Ukrainian refugees may lack knowledge of the Czech legal system, a refugee counselling centre was developed as an email-based service. This platform allowed Ukrainians to articulate their predicaments and receive the necessary legal guidance and support.

The responsibility of providing assistance was entrusted to law students who possessed the expertise to navigate the complexities of the legal system. They played a crucial role in offering the necessary guidance and support to Ukrainian refugees seeking legal aid.

As the project unfolded, it became apparent that the Students' Legal Aid Office could extend its services beyond Ukrainian refugees. It was expanded to cater to clients from various foreign backgrounds, ensuring that they received legal help on the same basis as Czech clients. Situated within the Faculty of Law, the Students' Legal Aid Office, also known as the Student Counselling Centre, served as a reliable resource for foreign clients seeking legal assistance.

The impact of the Students' Legal Aid Office extended beyond the individual cases. Foreign clients, including Ukrainian refugees, became ambassadors of integration and intercultural understanding. By address-

ing the legal needs of these individuals, the office played a significant role in raising awareness of social and cultural realities, enhancing local knowledge of Czech law among refugees, facilitating their integration into Czech society, breaking down barriers, and fostering self-confidence.

The project encountered both advantages and challenges. One of the notable benefits was the establishment of the Students' Legal Aid Office as a reputable institution for clients seeking legal assistance. This included not only Ukrainian refugees but also clients from Russia and Poland. One of the challenges faced, however, was the dissemination of information about the counselling centre to the Ukrainian community. Efforts were made to utilize the Regional Assistance Centre for Help to Ukraine (KACPU) as the first step in spreading the news, but unfortunately, only one client sought help.

Another challenge related to language barriers. While many clients were able to communicate in Czech, the Students' Legal Aid Office had the resources to involve colleagues and students who were proficient in Russian, Ukrainian, and English, ensuring effective communication and understanding.

In conclusion, the Students' Legal Aid Office for Ukrainian Refugees successfully provided much-needed legal assistance to individuals facing challenging circumstances. The project's impact extended beyond individual cases, contributing to integration, intercultural understanding, and the empowerment of foreign clients. Although there were challenges to overcome, the Students' Legal Aid Office established itself as a valuable resource in the pursuit of justice and support for Ukrainian refugees and other foreign clients in need.

3.1.6 SPORTS ACTIVITY – BOWLING

The primary objective of this activity was to foster engagement and interaction between academics, students, both from Czechia and abroad, and the local population. Recognizing that sports events provide an excellent platform for achieving this goal, the Olomouc IHES Lab collaborated with the European Students Network to organize a bowling competition. The competition specifically aimed to encourage the active involvement of foreign academics and students. By organizing this event, the intention was to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that promotes

cultural exchange and strengthens the bonds between the university community and the local population.

3.2 ACTIVITIES OF CATALONIA IHES LAB

After the initial training of the Catalonia IHES Lab, attendees of the training were asked to propose activities for the laboratory, and eight actions emerged whose common denominator was their involvement with the local community.

Some of these activities already existed and had strong international components and were closely linked to the territory, while in other cases, small adaptations were required to incorporate internationalization. New actions were also proposed that required involvement between the university, the territory, and internationalization.

After evaluation, eight actions were selected to be implemented in the initial phase of the project during the academic year 2021-2022:

1. Erasmus experience in secondary schools (IES)
2. International Service-Learning: social market and international projects
3. SustainComp Project (LABDOO hub)
4. Sports: URV Canoeing and University Autumn Excursion
5. Global witnesses of climate change
6. International activities at the locations of the Extensive Campus Project
7. International activities at the Classes for Senior Citizens
8. The SMiLE Program (Student Mobility & Learning English)

Out of the eight initial activities of the IHES lab Catalonia, seven activities were executed despite being affected by the post-pandemic situation. The training was, in fact, one of the first in-person activities in the URV. These seven actions have had a varying degree of success in terms of surveys and project outcomes, but have shown to be sustainable actions with possibilities for growth if certain adaptations are made and minimal resources are allocated to allow them to develop. Another positive aspect is that this experience has brought university services closer and united them in a project, creating many synergies that will favour future collaborations.

3.2.1 THE ERASMUS EXPERIENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (IES):

*I CONFESS, I HAVE BEEN ON AN ERASMUS EXPERIENCE
(AND I WOULD DO IT AGAIN).*

Within this activity, presentations about the Erasmus experience and other university student mobility programs are delivered to secondary school pupils by university students. Classrooms in secondary schools, specifically those attended by the Erasmus students participating in the activity, are visited. Each session lasts for one hour, and the project was conducted during the academic year 2021-2022. The activity is organized by the OFES-URV Student Office, specifically the section of promotion, students, and admission, as well as the I-Center Section for Mobility Out / Mentors. Participation certificates for the Erasmus students are distributed by the project team.

3.2.2 THE SMILE PROGRAMME - STUDENT MOBILITY & LEARNING ENGLISH

SMiLE is a joint coordination program between Rovira i Virgili University (URV) and the Department of Education in Tarragona. The program is specially designed for incoming international students at the URV and Erasmus+ Internships. The aim of the program is to promote the learning of foreign languages (mainly English, French and German but also the international students and trainees' mother tongue and culture). We offer work placement exercises especially to those who might wish to specialize in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Those working as language assistants will obtain six ECTS credits after completing 40 hours of work placement.

3.2.3 GLOBAL WITNESSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Within the activity "Global witnesses of climate change", the URV Office of Social Commitment - Environment and Sustainability Area of the URV proposes to incoming international mobility students to act as international witnesses of the reality of Climate Change, making presentations through posters and/or videos. These testimonies are based on the student's information in collaboration with their older relatives who, sharing their experiences, give us real first-hand information.

The plan was to publish real and local climate breakdowns, explained by the directly affected people, and establish a closeness bridge between

communities. In fact, the activity could provide visibility about how climate change is impacting all the territories and developing global-nearness environmental consciousness.

3.2.4 SUSTAINCOMP PROJECT

This IHES activity focuses on the collection of obsolete computers and laptops that are then restored, equipped with educational software, and delivered where needed.

By restoring the computers and equipping them with educational software, they can be turned into a powerful tool for breaking down the educational digital divide the world over. The project is put into practice with the good will of people who are prepared to spend their time collecting, restoring and transporting computers, and with unused resources such as laptops or luggage space for travellers. There is consequently no need for economic investment to achieve the objective. The project also does not generate any emissions or contaminants because it takes advantage of journeys scheduled for other functions.

The URV SustainComp project is a hub of the Labdoo network: (<https://www.labdoo.org/en/>).

3.2.5 SPORTS URV-LEISURE AND HEALTHY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

This activity includes two separate activities: Canoeing and University Autumn Excursion (hiking), both aimed at both the university community and the wider public. A local specialized company is hired to lead each of the activities.

Canoeing takes place on the Ebro River, each year from and to different locations along the river and at the time of the year when the river flow is optimal, that is usually the first weeks of October.

As for the University Autumn Excursion, it is planned to have a low level of difficulty to encourage people to participate and takes place in some of the beautiful surroundings of the university campus in November.

3.2.6 INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING

This IHES project comprises two key elements: firstly, the two IHES labs exchange students for a local service learning experience. URV students are sent, for example, to an NGO in the Olomouc region and/or UPOL

students come to an NGO in Catalonia. The second element is the Social Projects annual fair organized as a virtual marketplace, where the entities have a booth, which facilitates direct contact between entities, university students and faculty, in order to promote Bachelor's Theses, Master's Theses and Doctoral Theses, that meet real needs.

The project is coordinated by the Office of Social Engagement-Service Learning Program. It was planned for the academic year 2021-2022. Students receive curricular activity-recognition with credits.

3.2.7 INTERNATIONAL LECTURES AT THE CLASSES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

University seniors is an implemented program at URV and includes presentations and talks on different aspects of multi-culturalism, led by our international community, to complement the lectures already scheduled throughout the academic year in several regions.

Tentatively, this project previews two separate activities:

1. Talks on international topics (other cultures, Brexit, etc.)
2. Talks by outgoing Erasmus students to share their international mobility experience.

The project is run by the Office of Social Engagement-Classes for Senior Citizens. The activities took place throughout the year 2022 with a talk lasting approximately one hour. The activities take place at municipal premises for the elderly in 23 locations.

3.2.8 PROJECT TITLE: INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT THE LOCATIONS OF THE EXTENSIVE CAMPUS PROJECT

The URV's Extensive Campus project aimed to listen to and understand the needs of each territory and respond to them by approaching university knowledge to society and thus contributing to the progress of the counties of southern Catalonia. To this end, the project built a network of municipalities-nodes, in close collaboration with local entities which are familiar with the cultural, social, and economic reality of the area. This project involves the collaboration of the town councils, which make municipal spaces available to the University, and with the financial support of the Tarragona Provincial Council. During the IHES project life, the network consists of fifteen locations.

The project contributed to the IHES Lab Catalunya with the following

activities:

1. Participation in the Big-Draw International Festival from the location of Amposta.
2. Book clubs about foreign writers at the location of Mora d'Ebre.
3. Talk, listen, practice English/Parle, écoute, pratique le Français at the location of Santa Coloma de Queralt.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF THE IHES TRAINING

As a first preparatory activity, a Train-The-Trainers module was conducted in IO3. All 25 participants were asked to answer a survey before and after the training. The results are quite positive.

Table 1 | Results TTT IHES

		Openness	Attitude Internationalization	ILOs
Overall	pre-training	3.86	3.56	3.33
	post-training	4.16	3.76	4.00
	significance	yes	no	yes
	Cohen's d	0.64 medium	0.31 small	1.50 large
URV	pre-training	3.87	3.97	3.27
	post-training	4.32	4.25	4.08
	significance	yes	no	yes
	Cohen's d	0.93 large	0.59 medium	1.52 large
UPOL	pre-training	3.86	3.04	3.42
	post-training	3.94	3.08	3.90
	significance	no	no	yes
	Cohen's d	0.197 none	0.28 small	1.63 large

As we will see below, there are basic differences between the Catalan and the Czech participants among the participants. The Spanish TTT participants started off on a much higher level of openness and internationalization than the Czech counterparts and also finish on substantially higher levels. But for both sides, the training was effective. We see an increase in absolute values for all indicators and across both labs. The effects on the three indicators are different.

Opinions on internationalization change the least overall with no significance and a small effect size. This was the weakest indicator in the

Spanish group with also no significance, but a medium size effect. It is stronger at UPOL than the factor openness, but still does not show significance and only a small effect size.

Openness is very strong at URV with a significant result and a large effect size. This compensated for the low results at UPOL where neither significance or, the only case, an effect size can be measured. The strong results in Spain, however, lift the entire group to a significant gain and a medium effect size.

The by far strongest effects can be observed on the international learning outcomes (ILOs). Both labs show significance and extremely large effect sizes, with here UPOL even outperforming URV. Not surprisingly, this leads to a significant result for the overall TTT and an extremely strong effect size.

Since the ILOs are the aspects that most directly reflect the work of the training, one can conclude that the training was very effective.

It also already indicates that we might expect culturally bound differences with regard to the predispositions in Spain and the Czech Republic in relation to openness and internationalization.

4.2 IMPACT ANALYSIS OF THE IHES LAB ACTIVITIES

This chapter explores in brief the results of the two IHES laboratories in Tarragona and Olomouc.

In order to analyse the effects of the different activities in the laboratories, we decided to use a simple ex-post analysis, since all activities were of a short nature and therefore would not really justify a pre-to-post assessment.

We defined five criteria to assess the effects of the IHES labs:

1. Increased awareness that the participant is part of a globalized world;
2. Increased openness to other realities;
3. Better ease to travel abroad and have experience in other countries;
4. More confidence in relating to other cultures;
5. A feeling of sharing an experience.

To allow these criteria to be measured, we turned them into statements to which the participants were asked to react on a 10-point scale (1 = do not agree at all, 10 = completely agree):

1. Through my participation in this activity, I have become more aware that I am part of a globalized world.
2. This activity has opened my mind to other realities.
3. Because of this activity, I feel much more comfortable with the idea of travelling or even having experiences in other countries.
4. The activity has given me more confidence to relate to people from other cultures.
5. I like the thought that somewhere in this world other people may be participating in an activity like this.

We then collected data from all the participants who were willing to share their opinions, either via an online survey or paper versions. The data from paper versions were then transcribed into an Excel document. All data was collected completely anonymously.

We also collected filter data that would allow us to compare results across certain groups. These were:

1. Gender: male, female, other
2. Age: 20 years or younger, 21 - 49 years, 50 or older
3. Migration background (themselves or their parents): yes, no
4. Education level: 9 years of school, University entry qualification (secondary school diploma), university degree, PhD
5. Experience abroad of more than one month: yes, no

In the analysis, we will now first compare the general results of all the participants that responded for each IHES lab at URV and UPOL. At a later stage, we will then analyse the individual activities per IHES lab.

DEMOGRAPHICS

First, we may have a look at the distribution of all respondents from both IHES labs across the filter criteria:

Table 2 | Gender

	UPOL		URV		Overall	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
female	67	56.8%	312	63.0%	379	61.8%
male	48	40.7%	176	35.6%	224	36.5%
other	3	2.5%	7	1.4%	10	1.6%
total with answer	118	100.0%	495	99.6%	613	100.0%
no answer	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	2	0.3%

In both institutions, female respondents are far more represented than male respondents (with an overall ration of nearly 1.7:1). Also in both universities, a small but relevant group that identifies as “others” participated. The group of respondents at UPOL is slightly more balanced than the one at URV.

Table 3 | Age

	UPOL		URV		Overall	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
20 years or younger	96	81%	228	46%	324	52.9%
21 - 49 years	20	17%	47	9%	67	10.9%
50 or older	2	2%	221	45%	223	36.4%
total with answer	118	100.0%	496	99.8%	614	100%
no answer	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	1	0.2%

Regarding age, we see interesting differences. While the youngest group is the largest in both universities, it is much more dominant at UPOL than URV. The middle group is the least represented in both, but double as present in UPOL than URV. The oldest group is practically not relevant in UPOL, but forms nearly half of the population of respondents at URV. This might be a major factor to explain differences when later analysing results.

Table 4 | Migration background

	UPOL		URV		Overall	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
yes	13	11%	66	13%	79	12.9%
no	104	88%	430	87%	534	87.1%
total with answer	117	99.2%	496	99.8%	613	100%
no answer	1	0.8%	1	0.2%	2	0.3%

Migration background, in contrast, is very similarly distributed in both universities. Most respondents have no migration background, neither themselves nor among their parents. This is an excellent setting since the aim of IHES in these laboratories was to widen the perspective of traditionally not internationally oriented people.

Table 5 | Level of education

	UPOL		URV		Overall	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
nine years of school	91	78%	135	27%	226	36.9%
university entry qualification (secondary school diploma)	12	10%	266	54%	278	45.4%
university degree	12	10%	90	18%	102	16.7%
PhD	2	2%	1	0%	3	0.5%
total with answer	117	99.2%	491	98.8%	608	99.3%
no answer	1	0.9%	6	1.2%	7	1.1%

If we consider primary education and secondary school education as vastly different levels, then we observe differences between the two populations. Most of the respondents at UPOL (78%) have the minimal education level, while the group at URV is more evenly distributed with about

half of the group holding a university entry qualification. Respondents with a university degree are slightly more represented as well at URV (18%) than at UPOL (12%). This could be another explanatory factor for any differences we find later. If we combine, however, primary and secondary education, we cover 88% of the Czech and 81% of the Catalan respondents. Thus, the difference between both groups might not be as drastic as one would expect. We will check for this further on in the analysis.

Table 6 / Experience abroad

	UPOL		URV		Overall	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
yes	41	35%	118	24%	159	25.9%
no	77	65%	375	76%	452	73.7%
total	118	100.0%	493	99.2%	611	100%
no answer	0	0.0%	4	0.8%	4	0.7%

While there are small differences, most respondents in both institutions have no previous experience of a month or more abroad.

In summary, the typical survey respondents are female rather than male, in the Czech Republic rather young and in Catalonia more mature, they have usually no migration background, no international experience, and a rather low level of education (in the Czech Republic even lower than in Spain).

The lower education level in particular is an excellent basis for an IHES project, since the entire idea is to educate the wider public which on average does not have a university degree.

4.3 OVERALL RESULTS

4.3.1. GENERAL FILTER ASPECTS

First, we look at the overall results across all respondents in both IHES laboratories regarding three general filter aspects:

We start with comparisons of gender.

Table 7 | Average over all 5 aspects by gender

female	7.5
male	7.0
other	7.2

We see a difference between male and female respondents (the group of "other" is fairly small). This difference is also significant (p-value 0.000727287) with a small effect size (Cohen's d 0.29). In other words, female respondents feel a stronger positive effect from the activities than their male counterparts. The group of others shows a result more or less in the middle between these two groups.

Next, we look at the effect of migration background.

Table 8 | Average over all aspects by migration background

yes	7.56
no	7.26

We observe a difference between the two groups of 0.3 but the tests show neither significance (p-value 0.15) nor effect size (Cohen's d 0.17). Therefore, this difference in the absolute value is arbitrary.

Migration background was not relevant for the experience in the activities of the IHES labs.

Lastly, on the general level, we analyse the effect of prior international experience.

Table 9 | Average over all aspects by experience abroad

yes	7.49
no	7.18

We see a difference in absolute values of 0.31. When running the t-tests, we obtain two different results. If we assume that international experience can only have a positive effect, we can apply a one-tailed test

and then have a significance (p-value just under 0.05 with 0.046). If we assume that an experience abroad can have a positive or negative influence, then we have to apply a two-tailed test and do not obtain a significance at a two-tailed test (p-value at 0.092). There is also no effect size (Cohen’s d 0.16).

Since we know, e.g., from the Erasmus Impact Study, that an experience abroad can also have negative effects, we have to conclude that the international experience is not relevant for the results of the activities in the IHES labs.

As we identified the other two aspects (age and education level) as possible explanatory factors for any differences between the IHES labs, we analyse these in the next section where we compare the two laboratories.

4.3.2 COMPARISON BETWEEN UPOL AND URV

We next compare the results between the two IHES labs.

Table 10 | Overall results

	UPOL		URV		Overall	
Through my participation in this activity, I have become more aware that I am part of a globalized world.	64.8%	good	75.2%	very good	73.2%	good
This activity has opened my mind to other realities.	57.7%	good	74.7%	good	71.4%	good
Because of this activity, I feel much more comfortable with the idea of travelling or even having experiences in other countries.	53.1%	good	75.9%	very good	71.5%	good
The activity has given me more confidence to relate to people from other cultures.	49.7%	fair	74.5%	good	69.8%	good
I like the thought that somewhere in this world other people may be participating in an activity like this.	71.6%	good	80.5%	very good	78.7%	very good
Overall	59.4%	good	76.1%	very good	72.9%	good

The overall result for all participants is good, however this is mainly due to the much larger URV group which outbalances the results for the UPOL group. These results are nevertheless good.

The most important finding seems to be that we can indeed observe substantial differences between the two groups of respondents. The URV respondents always show substantially higher values on all five aspects than the UPOL respondents.

This is confirmed by the significance and Cohen's d tests that we conducted: We see very high significance and a strong medium-sized effect, in some aspects of enormous proportions:

Table 11 | Statistical findings on difference

	Significance	p value	Cohen's d
Through my participation in this activity, I have become more aware that I am part of a globalized world.	yes	4.901E-05	0.48
This activity has opened my mind to other realities.	yes	6.107E-12	0.78
Because of this activity, I feel much more comfortable with the idea of travelling or even having experiences in other countries.	yes	2.220E-16	0.98
The activity has given me more confidence to relate to people from other cultures.	yes	1.226E-23	1.07
I like the thought that somewhere in this world other people may be participating in an activity like this.	yes	0.002	0.32

Every aspect shows a measurable effect size, ranging from small (first and last) over medium (second) to very large effect sizes (third and fourth). The p-values are also remarkable.

This indicates that there are essential differences between the two audiences in Olomouc and Tarragona.

We consequently checked whether we can see a relevance for age and education background, since those were the two most striking differences.

Table 12 | Differences by age

	UPOL	URV	Overall
20 years or younger	5.7	7.3	6.8
21 - 49 years	7.3	7.5	7.5
50 or older	5.4	8.0	8.0

An interesting observation here is that the middle age group at UPOL shows substantially better results than the youngest and the oldest. Since the oldest group only contained two individuals, we cannot really consider it a relevant result, so we only checked the difference between the larger groups. Indeed, the difference proves to be highly significant (p-value 2.07025E-05) and with a very large effect (Cohen's d 1.1). This means that the young participants at UPOL are substantially less convinced that the training improved their international orientation than the group of 21-49 year olds.

The differences between the age groups at URV are not as large but the one between the two groups with the largest number of respondents (20 years or younger vs. 50 years or older) looked relevant. Indeed, the difference between the youngest and the oldest group is significant (p-value 1.05308E-07) and with a medium-sized effect (Cohen's d 0.51).

In both cases, the results are somewhat counter-intuitive, since the younger age group showed lower results than the older one, probably contradicting the assumption that a younger age makes people more open towards change and internationalization.

We then needed to check the influence of education

Table 13 | Differences by level of education

	UPOL	URV	Overall
nine years of school	5.6	7.7	6.9
university entry qualification (secondary school degree)	7.0	7.5	7.5
university degree	7.4	7.7	7.7
PhD	6.8	8.6	7.4

Not including the PhD level (since that is based on only two cases for UPOL and one for URV) a clear connection is evident between level of education and the effects of the training at UPOL, while is this is not the case for URV, where the results are rather closer together across all three groups.

This also means, however, that the large difference in results, that we see between the UPOL and URV respondents, seems to be explained by the over-representation of the least educated group at UPOL. If we check the significance between the least educated group and the two next groups at UPOL combined, who also have very similar results, we can confirm this assumption by finding a strong significance (p-value 1.53808E-05) and a large effect size (Cohen's d 1.0).

In the Czech setting, a very low level of education coincides with a low perception of change towards a more international perspective due to the respective activity in which the respondents participated.

Since the group with the same level of education at URV manifests, however, even the strongest result among all three sub-groups of a reasonable sample size, this difference seems to be very much related to cultural differences between both countries/regions.

4.3.3 COMPARISON OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE IHES LABS

As a last analytical step, we look at the results for different activities in the two IHES labs separately.

IHES LAB URV

Five of the seven activity areas could be covered by surveys (except for "SustainComp Project (Hub of LABDOO)" and "Visions of the World: Global witnesses of climate change?").

Table 14 | Average over all aspects by IHES lab activity at URV

Classes for Senior Citizens	8.1
The Erasmus experience in secondary schools (IES)	7.9
SMILE programme	7.3
Extended Campus	7.1
URV Canoeing/Autumn Excursion	5.6

The by far best result was achieved in the “Classes for Senior Citizens” – this being particularly interesting since the stereotype is usually that older people do not change any longer -, followed closely by “The Erasmus experience in secondary schools (IES). The “SMILE programme” and the “Extended Campus” also show strong results, but already substantially lower than the first two. The “URV Canoeing/Autumn Excursion” has the by far lowest result.

A planned pre-to-post survey for the SMILE programme did not produce enough cases to justify an analysis.

IHES LAB UPOL

The classes for senior citizens were covered by pre-to-post surveys. We analysed the general average across all five aspects for the pre and post group.

Table 15 | Classes for senior citizens pre to post

pre	8.0
post	8.0

This shows three major results. First, that the group of seniors already started with a very high value and thus, second, it could not be expected that this would change during the activities, especially since these were short activities. Third, the seniors at UPOL show extremely comparable results to the seniors at URV and in both cases this group has the highest values. In the case of UPOL, this is counter-intuitive since in the post-only surveys across different activities, the age group 50+ did not show very good results. These were specific activities, however, directed towards senior citizens (so most likely 65+) and that might be an explanation.

The five other activity areas could be covered by post-only surveys.

Table 16 | Average over all aspects by IHES lab activity at UPOL

Bowling	6.7
EU into the schools	6.0
Students’ legal aid office for Ukrainian refugees	5.6
Global witnesses of climate change	5.5
Street law for French	3.7

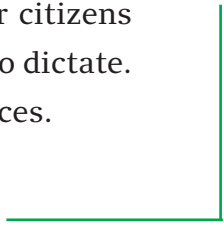
The activity with the best result was the international bowling (6.7), followed by “EU into schools”. The “Legal aid office” (but just one respondent) and “The global witnesses” performed third and fourth, and the least successful project was “Street law for French” with the only result across all projects in both laboratories below five. It should be noted, however, that only two participants provided an answer.

COMPARING ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE TWO IHES LABS

Different types of activities seem to work differently in different cultural contexts. Not all activities were comparable in type, so we here focus on those of a similar kind.

While a sports event was the most successful at UPOL, it was the least successful at URV. On the other hand, the initiative to bring Erasmus into the schools achieved excellent results in Tarragona and good results in Olomouc.

The truly surprising result is that in both regions the activities that were specifically designed for senior citizens drew the best results. This seems to indicate that internationalization activities for senior citizens might be much more useful than the current stereotype seems to dictate. Senior people are interested and open to international experiences.



5 CONCLUSION

The IHES Labs were conceived as experimental spaces within the larger IHES project, specifically designed to explore and test the potential benefits of internationalization for society at large. Two distinct regions, Catalonia and Olomouc, were selected for the establishment of these Labs based on their prior experiences in regional cooperation and the presence of specific societal challenges. The intention was to compare and contextualize different approaches within these regions, allowing for a deeper understanding of the impact of IHES initiatives and the potential for their replication in other universities.

Despite the differences in institutional settings and organizational structures between Palacký University and Rovira i Virgili University, both IHES Regional Labs collaborated closely from the inception of the project. The cooperative approach proved to be immensely valuable, as the shared experiences and collaborative efforts shaped the success story of both Labs. Furthermore, the diversity in organizational settings between the two universities provided additional insights into the establishment and implementation of Labs in different contexts.

The impact of the IHES Labs extended beyond the university campuses, reaching the local and regional levels. Collaboration was established with primary and secondary level education, revealing a significant interest in cooperation and internationalization activities among schools. This discovery opens up possibilities for expanding the scope and typology of activities to support the internationalization efforts of educational institutions. Moreover, the Labs' activities, focusing on engaging with the elderly, highlighted their eagerness to participate in internationalization initiatives. In this context, internationalization encompassed more than language skills, as it fostered a broader understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives.

The IHES Labs project employed a robust research methodology to measure the impact of their activities. The results not only demonstrated the effectiveness of the Labs in achieving their objectives but also emphasized the crucial role played by the attitudes and commitment of the individuals involved. Tangible recognition systems were identified as vi-

tal in sustaining the motivation and engagement of participants. The involvement of students, particularly those with international experience, proved to be a valuable asset in raising awareness of international social commitment among new generations. By involving students and implementing an appropriate recognition system, the Labs could unlock the potential for successful and impactful activities.

Importantly, the experiences and outcomes derived from the IHES Labs are not limited to the two participating universities. They have the potential to be replicated and adapted in other higher education environments, albeit with careful consideration of each institution's unique context and circumstances. Dissemination of the IHES Labs' results has already taken place through conferences, international staff weeks, and publications. The Labs' experiences have been shared with a wide audience, contributing to a knowledge and understanding of internationalization in higher education. The IHES Labs concept entails a significant step towards evaluating the quality of teaching, research, innovation, and other activities in higher education institutions, using internationalization as a key indicator.

In conclusion, the establishment of the regional IHES Labs at Palacký University and Rovira i Virgili University has exemplified the positive impact of internationalization in higher education for societal benefit. These Labs serve as beacons of innovative approaches and successful collaborations, demonstrating how universities can effectively engage with society and disseminate the values of internationalization. The Labs' activities are intended to continue beyond the project's lifetime, ensuring a lasting legacy and contributing to the ongoing internationalization efforts of higher education institutions.



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