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BEYOND THE PROJECTS

What remains when the project is over?

A special feature on international cooperation in education, knowledge sharing and lasting impact

SCAN FOR
PREVIOUS
EDITIONS



*AI generated image

BEYOND THE PROJECTS: WHY INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN EDUCATION MATTERS

Not every month brings a long list of announcements. Some months invite us to step back and look at the bigger picture.

International cooperation in higher education is much more than meetings, workshops, reports and deliverables.

The true legacy of an EU project persists in human habits changed and active networks of trust rather than official metrics or deliverables.

Behind every project there is an investment, an expectation and, ultimately, a question: what remains when the project is over?

That question matters especially when European institutions cooperate with universities in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and other partner regions.

These universities join projects to modernise education, develop new programmes, strengthen institutional capacity, implement remote laboratories and connect higher education with society. Such projects demand time, people, knowledge, funding and the will to do things right. So what should we expect in return?

From funding to impact

Public investment in international cooperation raises a legitimate question:

What does society ultimately receive?

The answer cannot simply be a completed project. A project can deliver everything it planned, with meetings held, workshops delivered, curricula developed and reports submitted. All of it matters. But it is not necessarily the final destination.

There is a difference between an activity, an output, an outcome and an impact. A workshop is an activity. The trained participants or the materials produced are outputs.

The application of new knowledge in an institution becomes an outcome. And when those changes lead to better teaching, stronger institutions and wider benefits for society, we can begin to speak of impact.

A successful project should be able to answer "What did we do?" It should also dare to ask, "What changed because we did it?" That second question is perhaps the harder one.

And then what?

This may be the most important moment in the life of a project. The final meeting is held, the last report is submitted, the website stays online and the certificates are issued.

But does the work really end there?

The real test of capacity building may begin precisely at that moment.

Is the new curriculum still in use? Do teachers keep applying new approaches, and do students notice the difference? Does the institution still use the tools, methodologies and quality processes introduced? Do the relationships between universities continue? These questions move us from project activity towards lasting knowledge.

Knowledge should travel

Universities are not isolated islands. They must actively engage with external communities and global partners.

Knowledge moves through people, institutions, classrooms, labs, digital platforms, and professional networks.

International cooperation creates opportunities for that movement to happen across borders.

The strongest partnerships are not one-way streets. European institutions bring experience and expertise, and partner institutions bring their own knowledge, context and needs. Together they can build something that neither would have developed alone.

A lecturer learns a new methodology and takes it back to the classroom. A university develops a new programme and prepares a new generation of students. A team establishes a quality-assurance process that becomes part of institutional practice. A digital resource developed for one project becomes useful to people who were never part of the original consortium.

A student may ultimately benefit from changes that began years earlier

in a meeting between universities thousands of kilometres apart. **This is where the concept of capacity building becomes more than a project term.**

Capacity is not simply something that is delivered. It is something that people and institutions acquire, develop, use and eventually pass on.

And perhaps this is one of the most valuable things international cooperation can achieve: creating the conditions for people and institutions to continue learning from one another after the formal project structure has disappeared.

From project activity to lasting knowledge

This is where dissemination becomes more than communication.

A photograph tells people that a workshop happened, and a report tells them what was produced. But making knowledge accessible, understandable and reusable extends the life of the work itself.

A project may involve dozens of institutions and hundreds of people directly, yet its potential reach can be much greater.

Teachers can share methodologies with colleagues; universities can incorporate results into future programmes; students can benefit from new learning resources; other institutions can learn from successful approaches; researchers can build on previous work; and future projects can begin from a stronger starting point.

Dissemination is therefore not simply the final step of a project. It can become part of the mechanism that allows its knowledge to continue travelling, ensuring that results and benefits reach relevant stakeholders and, where possible, continue beyond the period of project funding.

This is where EEDA finds its place

Not at the centre of the story, but as part of the larger ecosystem.

The EEDA principle focuses on the long-term sustainability of knowledge within international education projects.

While projects have fixed lifespans, the knowledge they generate should continue to provide value.

EEDA's work rests on a simple idea: knowledge has greater value when it can be shared, understood, reused and carried forward.

Learning resources, certification, digital education, communication and knowledge sharing can contribute to something larger than any single deliverable.

The aim is not to produce another document, but to build a bridge between what a project produces and the people who may benefit from it.

A question worth keeping

Perhaps the most useful question is not whether a project was completed successfully, but a more demanding one: what will still be happening because of this project five years from now?

Will a teacher still be using what was learned? Will a student still be benefiting from a new programme? Will researchers still be collaborating? Will another university have adopted an approach developed by the partners?

If the answer is yes, then something important has happened. The funding has become more than expenditure, the project more than a collection of activities, and the deliverables more than documents.

They have become part of a continuing process of learning, cooperation and institutional development.

That is the real meaning of going beyond the project.

A project has a beginning. A project has an end. Knowledge should have a much longer journey.

An opportunity to build the future

For institutions in developing regions, international cooperation can open doors that extend far beyond the lifetime of a project: access to knowledge, new technologies, international networks and different ways of teaching and learning.

But the most promising future is not one in which these institutions remain beneficiaries. It is one in which they become increasingly capable of generating knowledge, leading partnerships and sharing their own experience with others.

International cooperation can provide the opportunity.

What happens with that opportunity can shape the future.

OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

STE2027:

Co-Creating the Smart Industrial Future Through Education

The **24th International Conference on Smart Technologies & Education** will take place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 24–26 February 2027, bringing together researchers, educators and professionals working at the intersection of emerging technologies, industry and education.

Topics include artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data science, virtual and remote engineering, digital learning, workforce development, sustainable technologies and new approaches to engineering education.

For those interested in presenting, the deadline for structured abstract submissions is 12 October 2026. The conference also includes opportunities for special sessions, workshops, tutorials, posters and other forms of participation.

[Learn more about STE2027](#)

EDUNINE 2027:

XI IEEE World Engineering Education Conference

The **XI IEEE World Engineering Education Conference** (EDUNINE 2027) will take place from 28 February to 3 March 2027 at Universidad Privada Boliviana in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Held in a hybrid format, the conference brings together educators, researchers and professionals interested in the future of engineering and technology education.

The 2027 theme, “Redefining learning and research in the human-AI partnership era,” reflects the growing role of artificial intelligence in teaching, learning and research. Topics include innovative pedagogies, inclusive learning, hybrid and online education, MOOCs, immersive technologies, engineering pedagogy, curriculum development, quality assurance, responsible AI, STEM education and teacher development.

EDUNINE 2027 welcomes research papers, work-in-progress contributions, workshop proposals and doctoral symposium papers. Accepted and presented papers will be submitted for inclusion in IEEE Xplore®

[EDUNINE 2027 – Conference Website](#)



TRY THE EEDA QIP

Explore the tool

The Quality Improvement Process helps educators reflect on and improve their teaching practice.

Access to the tool: [EEDA Digital Tools](#)

The EEDA Community

EEDA is a **collaborative educator-to-educator ecosystem** that brings together Erasmus+ projects, universities, and individual educators committed to modernizing education in energy and sustainability.

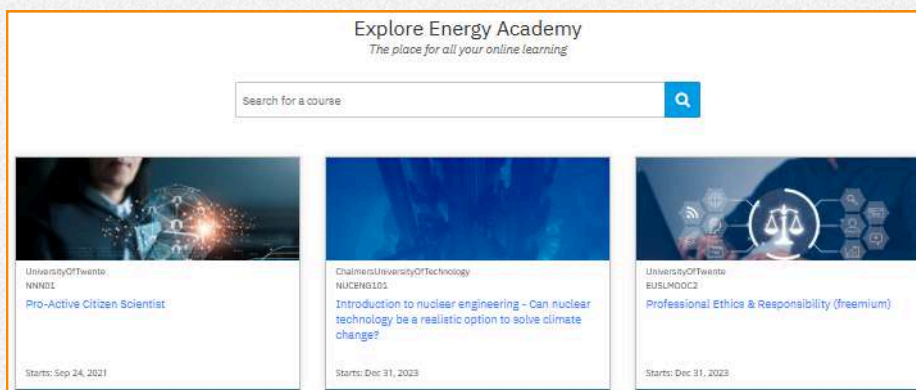
Beyond projects and institutions, EEDA is an open academic community where educators can engage, contribute, and collaborate at an individual level to generate lasting educational impact.

Supported by the European Union through Erasmus+ Capacity Building projects, which provide the foundation for collaboration and long-term impact within the EEDA community.

Interested in joining the EEDA Community?

Whether you are part of an Erasmus+ project, a university, or an individual educator, you can engage, contribute, and benefit from the **EEDA ecosystem** through collaboration, shared learning resources, and peer-to-peer exchange.

To create your free account, please visit: [EEDA Academy](#).



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Be part of a growing global community shaping the future of energy education through collaboration, learning, and shared expertise.

Learn. Share. Connect. Grow — together.

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Erasmus+ Capacity Building Projects

These projects are sponsored by the EU by the individual CBHE projects



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