UNITA Universitas Montium
Societal Impact Report
Phase I 2020>2023

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Preface

Within the evolving context of European higher education towards the concept of universities' social responsibilities, the efforts of the UNITA – Universitas Montium Alliance, serve as a paradigm of commitment to establishing a participatory, transparent, inclusive, and accountable European university. This societal impact report, promoted by the Rector of the University of Turin Stefano Geuna, plays a crucial role in strategic decision-making and stakeholder communication. Thus, it underscores UNITA's dedication to establishing a European University with a long-term vision.

The realization of this report is attributed to the extensive collaboration of numerous individuals across the UNITA alliance. Appreciation is extended to Vice Rectors Marcella Costa and Mario Giacobini for their pivotal roles in overseeing the editorial process. Further, the collective efforts of Maurizio De Tullio, Emanuela Barbero, Elena Forti, Nicoletta Viano, Giovanni Andriolo, Alessia Prin, and Ilaria Gallarini, along with many other faculty and staff members from the University of Turin, the UNITA offices, and the broader UNITA alliance, have been crucial in the data collection process and in the articulation of this report. Acknowledgement is also due to Stefania Stecca and her team for their contributions to the editing and graphic design, which significantly enhance the report's clarity and accessibility. This preface recognizes the collective input and expertise that have been instrumental in documenting the societal impacts of the UNITA Alliance, underscoring a shared commitment to excellence in European higher education.

Introduction

The origins and vision of the UNITA Alliance

In the dynamic landscape of European higher education, UNITA - Universitas Montium (hereinafter UNITA) emerges as a beacon of innovation and collaboration, exemplifying the transformative vision of the Erasmus+ European Universities Initiative. As one of the 50 European Universities funded by the European Commission, UNITA stands at the forefront of a pioneering effort to reshape the higher education landscape across the European Union. Initiated in October 2020, UNITA concluded its pilot phase in November 2023, marking the commencement of a new project phase. This phase welcomes six additional universities, further broadening UNITA's impact on the European higher education landscape with the ambitious goal of evolving into a fully-fledged, united European university. Coordinated by the University of Turin, UNITA endeavors to make a transformative impact on education, research, and the relationship between universities and their local communities. With a focus on providing excellent, student-centered education from a European and transnational perspective, the Alliance seeks to redefine the boundaries of academic collaboration.

Conceived within the framework of the European Universities Initiative, UNITA embodies the spirit of a visionary project that seeks to strengthen partnerships among higher education institutions, fostering the emergence of collaborative networks known as "European Universities." The roots of this initiative trace back to the Göteborg summit of 2017, where the European Council urged member states, councils, and the Commission to encourage the establishment of these bottom-up university networks. These networks, UNITA included, enable students to pursue degrees by combining studies in different EU countries, thereby contributing to the international competitiveness of European universities. In this

context, the UNITA Alliance has been active since November 2020, after winning the European University Alliance 2020 call from the European Union. This success provided the resources for three years of activities, marking the pilot phase of the Alliance (phase I). Following this initial phase, the Alliance has been awarded a budget for a second phase (UNITA II) aimed at consolidating its efforts and welcoming new members into its fold. This comprehensive report is dedicated to assessing the societal impacts generated by the UNITA Alliance during its inaugural pilot phase (November 2020- October 2023), offering a nuanced understanding of the transformative impacts made in the European higher education sector.

The impacts generated by the UNITA Alliance find their roots in the shared values and commonalities that bind its members. The Alliance, in its pilot phase, comprised six universities (12 in the second consolidation phase), each possessing three fundamental characteristics that reinforce their shared purpose. Firstly, they are strategically positioned in rural mountain regions, including Serra da Estrela (Beira Interior), Pyrenees (Pau and Zaragoza), Alps (Savoie Mont Blanc and Turin), and Banat (Timisoara). Second, these universities are situated in cross-border areas of Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe, facing analogous challenges within similar ecosystems. Third, they belong to states where neo-Latin languages are spoken, expressing a collective commitment to actively employ languages beyond English, thus championing linguistic diversity and fostering inclusion.

Moreover, the UNITA members are united in their dedication to promoting innovative teaching and research practices, particularly in the fields of Renewable Energy, Cultural Heritage, and Circular Economy. These thematic areas have been strategically chosen for their significant impact on ecosystem sustainability, rural and decentralized development, and the enhancement of employability for students and citizens alike.

The need for assessing the societal impacts of UNITA

Universities, revered as centers of knowledge creation and dissemination, are intricately woven into the fabric of their local communities. While their positive contributions are often lauded, the multifaceted nature of universities necessitates a thorough examination of their societal impacts. This scrutiny arises from a variety of compelling reasons, elucidating the complex interplay between universities and the communities they serve. The landscape of higher education and research has witnessed a significant paradigm shift in recent decades, marked by an escalating discourse on the societal impact of universities. This shift, as documented by various scholars, underscores the broader recognition of universities as pivotal contributors to innovation, knowledge transfer, improved health, policies, and societal development (Razmgir et al., 2021).

While the historical evaluation of universities is predominantly centered on scientific or academic impact, driven by bibliographic metrics and citation counts, contemporary imperatives demand a more expansive assessment encompassing societal dimensions (Bornmann & Haunschild, 2017). Crucial global challenges, including climate change, financial crises, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, have propelled universities into a leadership role in addressing profound sustainability challenges. Funding agencies, both public and private, increasingly emphasize the societal impact of research projects, with frameworks like the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF), the US National Science Foundation, and the EU Framework Programmes explicitly requiring an evaluation of societal contributions. This shift is evident in the growth of studies focused on methodologies to measure and evaluate the societal impact of universities (Ayres, 2018; Reed et al., 2021).

The identification of multiple ways in which universities contribute to societal development has accompanied the shift from purely scientific impacts to a broader perspective. Differentiating impacts into economic, environmental, health and wellbeing, policy and/or product development, professional and public services, social and cultural, internationalization,

and capacity building showcases the diverse avenues through which universities influence society (Morris et al., 2022).

In essence, the assessment of societal impacts is not merely a procedural exercise but an ethical obligation that universities owe to the communities they serve. It aligns with the UNITA values of sustainability, responsible governance, and community engagement, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between universities and their local ecosystems. As we delve into the nuances of societal impacts in the following sections, the emphasis on this assessment resonates as a cornerstone in the evolving landscape of university-community relationships.

Structure of the societal impact report

This report serves as an illuminating journey into the profound societal impacts generated by the UNITA Alliance, as it aligns its vision with eight overarching objectives. The first chapter is dedicated to the methodology adopted for identifying and assessing UNITA's societal impact. Then, the following chapters in this report are meticulously crafted to unravel the specific impacts stemming from the strategic pursuits of these eight objectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of UNITA's transformative influence. the UNITA activities were coordinated by 8 Work Packages (WPs), each aiming to achieve a specific objective:

1. Creating a Participative, Open, Inclusive, and Effective European University
Following the activities of Work Package 1 (WP1), this chapter delves into how UNITA fosters participation, openness, inclusivity, and effectiveness in its governance and managerial processes, shaping its identity as a dynamic European university.

2. Establishment of international and innovative student-centered education at the UNITA level
Following the activities of Work Package 2 (WP2), this chapter explores the impact of UNITA's commitment to excellence in research and student-centered education, shaping the academic landscape across participating universities and enriching the educational offers to students.

3. United in diversity: towards enhanced multilingual intercomprehension in romance languages within UNITA
Following the activities of Work Package 3 (WP3), this chapter uncovers the role UNITA plays in promoting multilingualism and preserving language diversity, contributing to the rich linguistic tapestry of Europe. Intercomprehension is the main process adopted to foster multilingualism across the romance-language speaking UNITA members.

4. UNITA R&I: Catalyzing change in rural and mountain regions through innovation in cultural heritage, renewable energies, and circular economy
Following the activities of Work Package 4 (WP4), this chapter investigates the societal impacts resulting from UNITA's initiatives to reduce inequalities between central and non-core regions, emphasizing sustainable development in rural and mountainous areas by focusing on UNITA's three thematic areas of Circular economy, renewable energies and Cultural heritage.

5. UNITA digital services
Following the activities of Work Package 5 (WP5), this chapter examines the innovative digital measures taken by UNITA to create an environment that stimulates learning, fostering intellectual curiosity and growth among students and faculty.

6. UNITA mobility for all
Following the activities of Work Package 6 (WP6), this chapter unveils the transformative impacts of UNITA's commitment to achieving mobility for all, breaking down barriers and expanding opportunities for diverse communities.

7. UNITA strengthening European Identity, Citizenship & Values
Following the activities of Work Package 7 (WP7), this chapter reflects on how UNITA contributes to the broader narrative of European identity, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among students, faculty, and communities.

8. UNITA sustainability and dissemination to ensure the continuity and uptake of the Alliance
Following the activities of Work Package 8 (WP8), this chapter concludes the report by exploring the long-term vision of UNITA, ensuring the continuity and uptake of its approach

for sustained societal impact and for shaping the future of the European higher education landscape.

Each chapter serves as a dedicated exploration of the specific impacts generated in pursuit of these objectives, offering insights into the dynamic initiatives undertaken by UNITA during its pilot phase. The impacts are presented according to the main activities carried out by each WP. For this reason, each chapter presents 1-4 areas according to the number of activities carried out by each WP. Through this structured approach, the report aims to provide a nuanced and comprehensive evaluation of UNITA's societal contributions across diverse dimensions.

This societal impact report is a testament to UNITA's commitment to excellence and innovation in education. It explores the profound changes the Alliance has brought about during its pilot phase, shedding light on the transformative processes and outcomes that underscore its dedication to creating a more interconnected, collaborative, and globally competitive European higher education landscape. As we delve into the details of UNITA's journey, we uncover a narrative of change, cooperation, and the pursuit of a shared vision for the future of European education. In the spirit of the European Universities Initiative and the evolving landscape of higher education, UNITA stands as a model for what collective vision and collaborative effort can achieve, setting the stage for a broader, more inclusive, and globally impactful future.

The subsequent section of this report delves into the methodologies employed to assess the societal impacts of UNITA, offering insights into the transformative journey of this European University Alliance.

Methodology

Theory of Change and the Impact Value Chain

According to the International Principles for Impact Assessment (Vanclay, 2003), impacts are expected and unexpected social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions like policies, programs, plans, and projects. They also include any social changes brought about by these interventions. Among the most relevant and versatile frameworks and techniques for understanding social impact are impact pathways and the Theory of Change.

The Impact Pathways is a logic that describes the connected steps that start from the initial activities or interventions and lead to the final impact (Douthwaite et al., 2007). Each step is linked to the next, following a cause-and-effect logic. An example of impact pathways is the 'Impact Value Chain'(Clark et al., 2004), where activities lead to outputs (results that can be directly measured), which then lead to outcomes (changes to the social system), and finally impacts (long-term societal impacts). The Theory of Change (ToC) provides a more comprehensive use of impact pathways. ToC is a theory that explains how and why social impact happens, offering not just a causal link but also a measure of the social impact realized (Barkat, 2019). Various researchers argue that ToC originated from both social evaluation studies and social change traditions (Connell & Kubisch, 1998; Stein & Valters, 2012). It serves as a framework to demonstrate the causalities of social development. ToC makes impact pathways more reliable by explaining the causal relations between the steps of the pathway and by making implicit assumptions about how change should occur explicit (Mayne, 2015). Realistic non-linear chains of causation, where various variables, outputs, and outcomes interact, can also be designed in a ToC framework, finding the right balance between oversimplified models and overly complex ones (Limata, 2017). Additionally, both ToC and impact pathways

can be used for both ex-ante and ex-post evaluations (Mayne, 2017). An example of the Impact value chain based on the Theory of Change is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Example of an impact value chain based on the Theory of Change
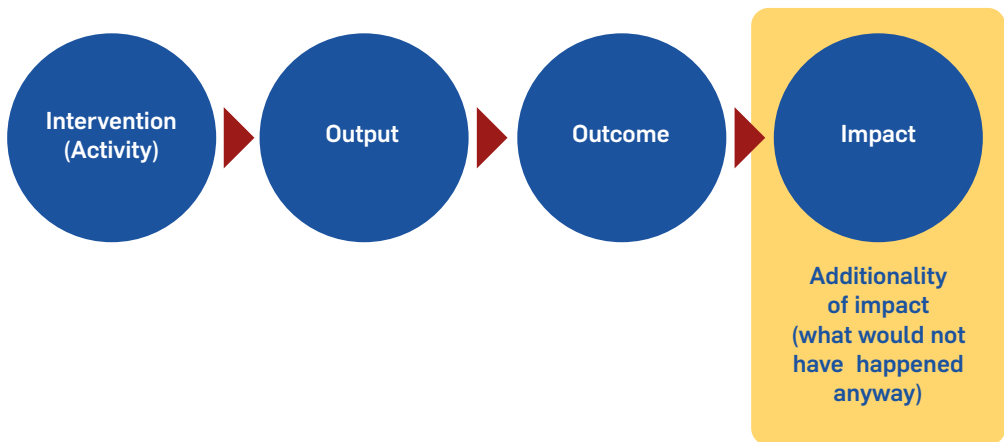
In this context, Outputs are the direct effects resulting from the intervention, Outcomes are the indirect benefits introduced by the activities, and impact represents the long-standing change introduced that would not have happened if the activities had not taken place.

Identification of indicators to assess UNITA's impact

The model for identifying impact indicators for the UNITA Alliance has been constructed based on the principles of impact pathways according to ToC. As mentioned in the introduction, the UNITA activities are coordinated by 8 Work Packages (WPs), each aiming to achieve a specific objective. Therefore, each Work Package was in charge of 3 or 4 activities from which impacts result. Starting from the WP activities, an impact value chain made up of output, outcome, and impact indicators is identified in this report. The chain of indicators represents the respective level of impact of the activities. Table 1 provides a general example of the impact value chains presented in this report. The meaning of output, outcome, and impact indicators is:

- Output indicators. They measure the direct effects produced by an activity.
- Outcome indicators. They measure the indirect effect generated by an activity.
- Impact indicators. They measure indirect, durable and transformative impacts generated by the activity(es).

Table 1.

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Name of the activity	Output indicator	Outcome indicator	Impact indicator

Considering that some activities led to multiple areas of identified impact, some value chains may include more than one indicator for the three categories (output, outcome, and impact).

Indicators selection and report scope

Indicators are selected not only following a consequentiality logic but also keeping in mind the general mission of UNITA, the general objectives of the WPs, and the specific sub-objectives associated with each activity. This guidance should be kept in mind, especially for the selection of outcome and impact indicators, considering that they should give an idea of whether the objectives in the long period have been met. The present method accepts the creation of two types of indicators: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative indicators measure numerical data. In the case of UNITA, the source of data for quantitative indicators is mainly constituted of internal archives and surveys. Qualitative indicators, on the other hand, measure non-numerical data, such as attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. In the case of UNITA, the source for qualitative indicators is mainly comprised of interviews, focus groups, open-ended surveys, and internal reports. Both types of indicators can provide valuable insights (Scerri & James, 2010). Quantitative indicators are useful to track progress toward a specific goal and make comparisons of the results and impacts achieved over time. Qualitative indicators are useful to provide a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of impact, explain the reasons behind the quantitative data, and provide insight into individual experiences and perspectives.

Regarding the scope of the present report, it should be clarified that the data collected cover the range of all UNITA's activities and impacts on the internal UNITA community and territories of the Alliance member universities. In some cases, especially concerning qualitative indicators and best practices, the indicators' scope is limited to a certain area or institution. In these cases, the limited scope is clarified in the report. In particular, some indicators of organizational and institutional transformational impact focus on the impact generated within the institution or the surrounding territories of the University of Turin (UniTo), which is the largest, and coordinator, of the Alliance.

Regarding the period covered by this social impact report, this document narrates the impacts generated during the pilot phase of the Alliance: from November 2020 to October 2023.

UNITA
societal impacts

This section of the report contains the societal impacts generated by the UNITA Alliance in its pilot phase. It is structured based on the 8 main objectives of the pilot phase. This societal impact report is a testament to UNITA's commitment to excellence and innovation in education. It explores the profound changes the Alliance has brought about during its pilot phase, shedding light on the transformative processes and outcomes that underscore its dedication to creating a more interconnected, collaborative, and globally competitive European higher education landscape. As we delve into the details of UNITA's journey, we uncover a narrative of change, cooperation, and the pursuit of a shared vision for the future of European education. In the spirit of the European Universities Initiative and the evolving landscape of higher education, UNITA stands as a model for what collective vision and collaborative effort can achieve, setting the stage for a broader, more inclusive, and globally impactful future.

1.

The Cornerstones of the UNITA community: creating a participative, open, inclusive, and effective European university

The activities related to the implementation of governance, managerial and operational processes of the Alliance were led by Work Package 1. The main objective of this Work Package was to efficiently manage and coordinate the implementation of the UNITA project. It involves a multi-level governance structure aimed at enhancing accountability within and beyond the universities of the Alliance. The focus is on establishing an effective framework for steering UNITA actions, improving UNITA Management with a long-term vision, coordinating the entire UNITA ecosystem for collective problem-solving, and ensuring the quality process of the project. The governance structure includes governance, consultative, and operational bodies promoting participation, transparency, flexibility, and reactivity for effective implementation.

Activity 1.1 / Implementing UNITA Governance and operational structure

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Building UNITA Governance Structure and Processes	Creation of the UNITA Governance and Operational Structure	Evolution of the UNITA Structure in UNITA II	Launching of UNITA II with 6 additional new member universities and the UNITA GEIE as a full partner

Output / Governance structure

The governance structure of UNITA aims to promote a participatory and democratic process. Therefore, it is organized on a multi-level, participatory model ensuring the participation of all stakeholders through a strong and agile interconnection between the governance, consultative, operational, and administrative bodies of UNITA. The governance structure is intended to foster interconnection and cooperation between the six universities beyond bilateral models.

The core decisional body, as well as the final decision maker, is the Governance Board. This body oversees the overall steering of the project, the strategic decision-making, and the decisions related to the budget. It is composed of a total of 11 members with voting rights: the rectors of the universities and representatives of the Quality and Evaluation Board, of the Advisory Council, of the authorities, and of the Student Assembly.

The Governance Board (GB) is also composed of 6 vice-rectors and the UNITA coordinator who do not have voting rights. The GB is supported by advisory and strategic bodies. These bodies are:

- The Student Assembly (SA), which aims at giving an important role to students, is regularly invited to make remarks and proposals and to send one representative to the Governance Board. The structure of the Students' Assembly is decided and implemented by the students themselves.
- The Advisory Council (AC), which can be considered the think factory of the Alliance. It is composed of different actors and stakeholders involved with UNITA, such as Associated Partners, university staff, teachers, and researchers.
- The Quality and Evaluation Board (QEB), which oversees the transparency, and the implementation of the mission statements and indicators related to quality. It is composed of 3 representatives of the Advisory Council, 1 representative of the Students' Assembly and 2 representatives of the UNITA offices in charge of Quality.
- The UNITA Management Committee, which is intended as the bridge between the decisional bodies and the operational Work Packages (WPs). It oversees the overall coordination of the project through the assurance of budget compliance and operational decision-making.

The operational activities of the Alliance were conducted by 8 Work packages (WP) task forces and coordinated by the UNITA Management Committee. The WP task forces were in charge of the implementation of the final activities. Each WP is responsible for the implementation of the activities aimed at achieving one of the 8 respective main objectives of the Alliance.

Finally, one UNITA office is present in each of the six universities. They are the local actors of the Alliance and are in charge of communication and administration of local events and activities.

Figure 2 shows a visual representation of the UNITA governance structure, with the advisory bodies at the top, and the decisional Governance Board at the center. Under the strategic guidance of the Governance Board, the WPs

implement the activities of the Alliance with the support of the UNITA offices: the administrative bodies in direct contact with the internal university community and the broader beneficiaries of the activities carried by the Alliance. In Figure 2, Work Package 1 is aligned with the other strategic and advisory bodies as it was the WP in charge of the actions for the implementation of the governance and managerial structure.

Figure 2. UNITA's governance structure
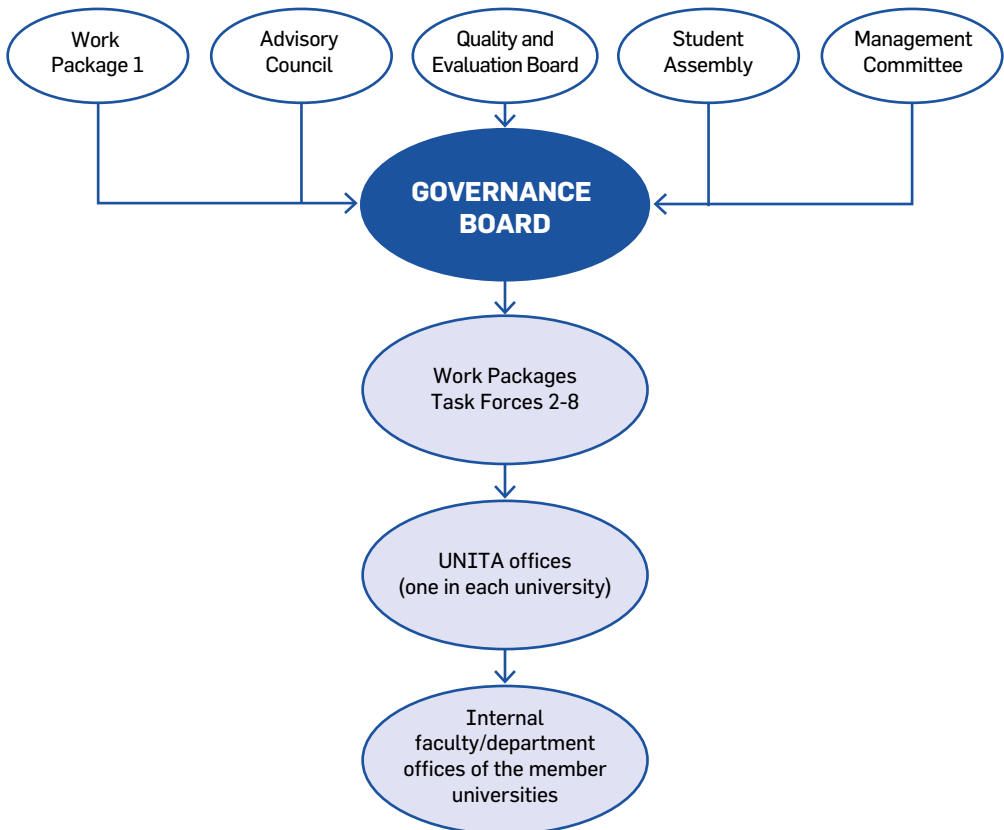
**Outcome / Evolution of the UNITA structure
in UNITA II**

While keeping its innovative and successful participatory governance and administrative structure, UNITA II revolutionizes the executive bodies (Work Packages, WPs) by reducing the number of work packages and tasks and shifting the operational groups from the WP level to the Task level. This means that instead of having a single working group in charge of all the tasks of a work package, each task has its own Task force working exclusively on it. In this way, UNITA II is able to enhance efficiency by accurately simplifying the structure while simultaneously increasing the number of active UNITA project members.

Highlights of UNITA Phase II:

- Duration: Nov. 2023 - Oct. 2027.
- 12 member universities of the Alliance and the UNITA GEIE legal entity as full partners (see activity 8.1).
- Over 30 associated partners including various entities such as companies, cultural organizations, NGOs and public institutions.
- Overall budget: ~18 M€ (14,4M€ EC contribution).
- Students: ~250.000.
- Staff: ~21.000.
- People in Task forces: ~440
- 5 Work Packages in total.

As shown in Figure 3, presenting the topics of UNITA II WPs and Tasks, there is a significant reduction in the second phase of the Alliance regarding the total number of WPs. The new tasks have a broader perspective and each one of them is implemented by a specific Task Team so that each task has the human resources to be carried out properly. Each Task Team, led by two co-leaders, is composed of at least 2 representatives per partner and may include, if needed, representatives from the Student Assembly and associated partners. The Task Teams of each WP are coordinated by Work Packages Teams, composed by the Task Teams co-leaders and vice-rectors relevant to the WP.

Figure 3. Topics of UNITA II WPs and Tasks

UNITA WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE

WP1
Governance management and quality

WP2
Developing UNITA communities

WP3
Lifelong Education

WP4
Knowledge-based growth in rural, mountain and cross-border territories

WP5
Impact and dissemination

T1.1
Improve and trasform the governance of UNITA

T2.1
Sustainable policies for students and staff

T3.1
International learning paths for a personalized education

T4.1
Inter-territorial interfaces for Innovation

T5.1
Externa dissemination and pubblic engagement

T1.2
Manage and coordinate UNITA

T2.2
Romance languages learning and intercomp-rehension

T3.2
Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning Education

T4.2
Thematic Research hubs

T5.2
Financial sustainability

T1.3
Quality Assurance

T2.3
Education, Research and Innovation community

T3.3
Innovation in teaching & learning initiative

T4.3
Sharing of infrastructures and knowledge

T5.3
Green sustainability

T2.4
Seamless mobility between Campuses and territories

T3.4
Interuniversity digital campus

T4.4
UNITA Graduate Schools in alliance focus areas

T5.4
Impact Obsevatiry

T2.5
European Citiznenship initiative

T5.5
Expanding UNITA in Europe and beyond

**Impact / 6 additional new member universities
and the GEIE as a full partner**
Thanks to its impactful activities and work, UNITA has been
able to obtain funding for 4 additional years. In its second
phase, the Alliance is able not only to continue and strengthen
its already existing process, but also to expand its members, as
shown in Figure 4.

A total of 13 full partners are present in the second phase of
UNITA. Of these 13 partners, 6 are the founding universities of
the pilot phase analyzed in this report, namely:
•   Universidade de Beira Interior (PT);
•   Universidad de Zaragoza (ES);
•   Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (FR);
•   Université Savoie Mont Blanc (FR);
•   Università di Torino (IT);
•   Universitatea de Vest din Timisoara (RO).

6 are new university partners who joined the Alliance at the
beginning of the second phase (after the end of the pilot phase),
namely:
•   Instituto Politécnico da Guarda (PT);
•   Universidad Pública de Navarra (ES);
•   Università degli Studi di Brescia (IT);
•   Universitatea Transilvania Brasov (RO);
•   Haute Ecole Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale in
    Switzerland (CH);
•   Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University in Ukraine
    (UKR).

The final new full partner is the UNITA - Universitas Montium
European Economic Interest Grouping (UNITA GEIE), the
UNITA legal entity fully recognized by European law. Its aims
and impact are explained in Activity 8.1.

Figure 4. Geographical representation
of UNITA II member universities

University Savoie
Mont Blanc - France

University of Pau et de
Pays de l'Adour - France

Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi
National University - Ukraine

Public University
of Navarra - Spain

HES-SO Haute école spécialisée
de Suisse occidentale - Switzerland

University
of Brescia - Italy

Polytechnic Institute
of Guarda - Portugal

University
of Turin - Italy

West University
of Timișoara - Romania

University
of Zaragoza- Spain

Transilvania University
of Brasov - Romania

University of
Beira Interior - Portugal

Activity 1.2 / UNITA Management and Administration

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
	Implementation of the UNITA management (and management guide)		€631.903,00 of academic staff contribution from the University of Turin to the Alliance
Implementing UNITA management	6 UNITA offices in total have been established across all partner institutions. Each UNITA office is staffed by individuals with diverse roles and responsibilities, including at least: • 1 coordinator • 1 person dedicated to communication and events • 1 person dedicated to mobility • 1 person in charge of financials and accounting	UNITA'S Workforce In total, more than 400 people have dedicated time to UNITA activities, with 34 full-time administrative job positions	UNITA institutional rooting: • 96,7% of the internal academic faculties have participated in the Alliance's activities. • The UNITA Office in Turin has frequent work relations with 9 (out of a total of 10) Administrative Divisions of UniTo

Output / UNITA Management Guide
UNITA had 103 tasks and deliverables supervised by the management committee. The Management guide also defines the description and responsibilities of each body or figure involved in the UNITA institutional structure. The Management tools provide a guide on how to access and use the open-source common Datacloud for sharing and organizing UNITA's documents, files, data, and other digital tools. Most of the software for UNITA-related activities is open source.

Output / 6 UNITA offices in total have been established across all partner institutions.
Each UNITA office is staffed by individuals with diverse roles and responsibilities, including one coordinator, one person dedicated to communication and events, one to mobility, and one in charge of financials and accounting. Over time people working with or for UNITA offices have increased. The coordinator is responsible for organizing meetings, managing cooperation and communication with other UNITA offices and UNITA boards/bodies, as well as coordinating the work of the office.

Financials and accounting involve all the aspects related to purchasing goods and services for the project and keeping track of how much has been spent (reporting). The person in charge of communication and events is responsible for disseminating project informative content, posting on social media, and occasionally promoting the activities and news of the project in local newspapers. They also have connections with the press office and external relations department. Additionally, they handle visual aspects such as promotional items, presentation layouts, UNITA newsletters, and mass emails to students. Mobility personnel of the UNITA offices oversee mobility activities from start to finish, including publishing calls for student applications, selecting students, managing learning agreements, and all stages of the mobility process. In some cases, they contribute to establishing agreements with hosting organizations.

Outcome / UNITA'S Workforce
34 full-time administrative job positions have been created and dedicated to UNITA activities. Moreover, in total, **more than 400 people** have been involved in UNITA Boards and WP task forces. To ensure that the general UNITA vision is implemented and harmonized across the different boards and WP task forces, some individuals, particularly those in higher hierarchical positions such as vice-rectors and coordinators, have served as members on multiple boards. Consequently, the total number of participants involved in UNITA's internal strategic boards (Governance Board, Management Committee, Quality and Evaluation Board, Student Assembly) amounts to 143, distributed as follows:
• 42 members of the governance board.
• 25 members of the management committee.
• 36 members of the QEB and the Quality Ecosystem.
• 62 members of the SA.
• 256 members of the WP task forces.

Impact / 631.903,00€ of academic staff contribution from the University of Turin to the Alliance
The societal impact of UNITA extends beyond the dedicated administrative staff to include the invaluable contributions of academics from member universities. While 35 full-time administrative positions are allocated to UNITA, numerous academics have also genuinely volunteered their time and expertise to advance the Alliance's initiatives. To quantify their contribution, we assessed the number of hours academics devoted to UNITA activities and their respective hourly rates, resulting in a monetary valuation of their involvement. Specifically, focusing on academics from the University of Turin, we estimated their collective contribution to be €631,903.34. However, it's essential to acknowledge that this figure only captures those officially dedicated to UNITA and excludes academics who contributed for shorter durations or from other member universities due to data limitations. Thus, the actual value of academic contributions is likely greater and underscores the broader impact of UNITA across diverse academic communities. Moving forward, improved data collection methodologies will enable a comprehensive assessment of academic contributions from all member universities, including those not formally dedicated to UNITA activities, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of its societal impact.

Impact / Intra-organizational impact: UNITA institutional rooting
96,7% of the internal academic faculties have participated in the Alliance's activities. This participation rate is indicative of a high level of engagement and involvement within the UNITA community. This statistic underscores the widespread commitment of faculty members to contribute to the goals and initiatives of the Alliance. Such a high participation rate reflects positively on the effectiveness of UNITA's outreach efforts and the significance of its activities in capturing the interest and support of faculty members across various academic disciplines. It also speaks to the inclusivity of the Alliance, as the majority of academic faculties have found avenues to contribute and actively participate in its programs and initiatives. Moreover, this high level of engagement bodes well for the sustainability and success of UNITA, as it indicates a collective commitment among internal academic faculties to drive forward the Alliance's mission and objectives.

Another focus impact indicator to testify to the transformational impact of the Alliance in transforming its member universities can be shown by a focus data collection conducted at the University of Turin, which is the largest institution, to understand how much internal administrative offices are involved with the activities of the Alliance.
The UNITA Office in Turin has frequent work relations with 9 (out of a total of 10) Administrative Divisions of UniTo and specifically with 26/90 Administrative Areas (which are part of the 11 divisions). These intra-organizational relationships arise from the internal support needed by the UNITA offices to successfully carry out their own activities. In particular, the UNITA office at UniTo synergizes with various offices of the University of Turing in charge of Budget and Financials, Data Analysis, Communication, Research promotion and impact, Doctoral programs, Human Resources, Logistics, ICT Services, Student Services, and the internal University Departments.

Activity 1.3 / Enhancing participation of students, staff, and Partners to shape an inclusive participatory community

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Enhancing the participation of students, staff, and partners	83 people contributing to the internal governance and managerial participatory processes. UNITA internal boards (GB, MC, and QEB) are participated by a total of 83 people of which: 34% Rectors and vice-rectors 32% Administrative staff 25% University professors 5% External experts 4% Students	6 Founder universities 66 Associated partners 85 Local partners (for URM)	Student democratic participation: the UNITA Governance and managerial bodies are also supported by the Student Assembly. Its constitution has been possible thanks to the voluntary work of 63 UNITA students

Output / UNITA participatory governance

UNITA's governance and managerial operations are led primarily by the Governance Board and supported by the Management Committee and the Quality Evaluations Board. The total members of these boards combined are 83 people, of which:

- **34% are rectors and vice-rectors,** the highest-ranking officials in a university's hierarchy. This value highlights the importance that each partner attributes to the success of UNITA.

- **32% are administrative staff**, at the core of university administrative and managerial operations, demonstrating the consolidation of the UNITA entity and ensuring that all the Alliance's initiatives are successfully implemented.
- **25% are professors and researchers**, representing the academic community of each partner institution.
- **5% are external experts**. Their role is to support the bodies providing external expertise.
- **4% are students**, recognizing the value of their contribution to the development of UNITA.

Other than the GB, MC, and QEB, 2 other central entities contribute to the UNITA participatory governance:
- **Advisory Council** (AC), the UNITA AC brings together representatives of academia, teachers and students, local and regional authorities, and public and private institutions, the latter having the status of associated partners of the project. The number of members participating in it varies based on the topic of discussion. In total, more than 70 people have participated in the Advisory Council sessions.
- **Student assembly**.

Outcome / UNITA stakeholder analysis.
This stakeholder analysis explores the diverse and expansive network involved in UNITA's activities. Internally, the engagement encompasses a substantial student and staff population, set to grow significantly in UNITA phase II. Externally, the collaboration extends to 66 associated partners and 85 local partners, representing a broad spectrum of entities ranging from administrative centers to private companies, emphasizing the widespread impact and collaborative nature of the initiative. A Visual representation of the stakeholder analysis is shown in Figure 5.

Internal stakeholders:
- 160 000 students (250 000 in UNITA phase II).
- 13 000 staff members including academics and administrative staff (21 000 in UNITA phase II).

External stakeholders:
- **66 associated partners** (including local policy-administrative centers, foundations, private companies, third-sector organizations, and other HE institutions).

- **85 local partners** situated in rural/mountain regions, mainly for the activation of Rural Mobilities and internships. They include cultural associations and representatives of the socio-economic local ecosystems.

Figure 5. UNITA's stakeholder analysis

6 Founder universities

66 Institutional Associated partners

85 local partners in rural and mountain regions
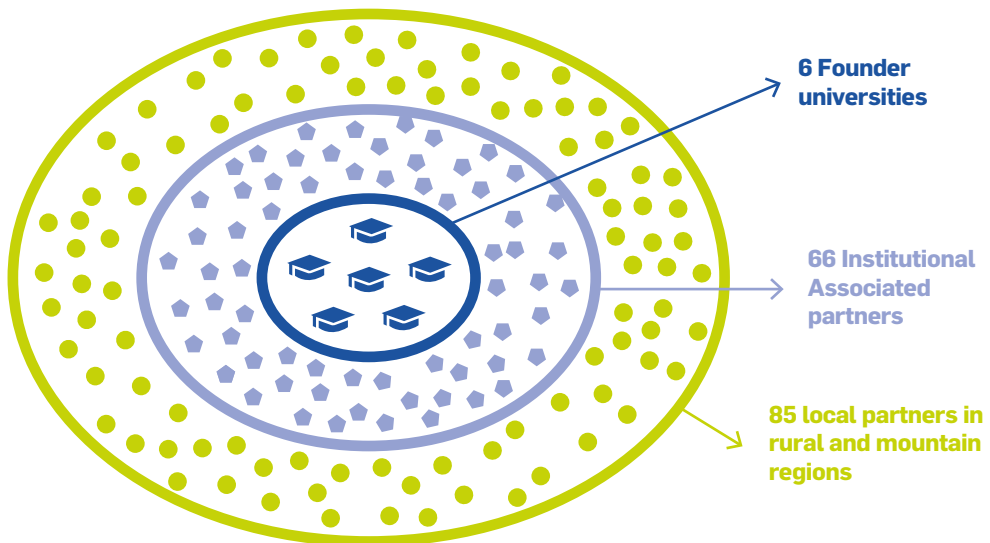
Impact / Creation of the unique and pioneer Student Assembly

The establishment of the UNITA Student Assembly (SA) arises from the aim of creating a participative, open, inclusive, and effective pan-European student community to contribute to the development of excellent research-driven and student-centered education.

The SA has been created through a bottom-up process led entirely by the UNITA students themselves. In total, more than 60 UNITA students have actively participated in the establishment of the UNITA Student Assembly. They have also acted as ambassadors to promote UNITA.

This process resulted in the formulation of an internal SA Regulation and Electoral Regulation to define the roles and individuals participating in the assembly's work democratically and inclusively. Considering that European Universities have only recently emerged in the European Higher Education landscape, having students independently contribute to building their Alliance's representative Assembly is a remarkable achievement.

The efforts of the SA have attracted the attention of many international higher education entities, leading to the participation and presentation (by one of the students) of the UNITA SA in the International Round Table on "Challenges and Progress in Quality Assurance of European Universities" held at the University of Zaragoza (2023).

Activity 1.4 / Ensuring the Quality of UNITA

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Ensuring the Quality of UNITA	Institution of UNITA Quality and Evaluation Board, with a total of 36 members from all partner universities including external experts	The overall UNITA quality evaluation score is 90,5%, reflecting the average of high scores in domains such as scope, quality, risks, issues and decisions, and client satisfaction, and medium scores in schedule, cost, communication, and project organization	€631.903,00 of academic staff contribution from the University of Turin to the Alliance Dissemination of the innovative works of the UNITA Quality assurance system to the European Higher Education landscape
	The QEB held: 8 meetings during the first year 9 meetings during the second year 4 meetings during the third year	Intra-organizational changes promoted by the QEB	

Output / Establishing an internal Quality and Evaluation process (To be updated with the last deliverable)
UNITA has established a Quality and Evaluation Board in charge of assessing UNITA's quality and developing a Quality Assurance policy. This board, supported in its mission by the Quality Ecosystem (QES) composed of representatives from each full and associate partner with expertise in Quality Assurance, met multiple times each year. In particular, the QEB held 8 meetings during the first year, 9 meetings during the second year, and 4 meetings during the third year.

The UNITA QEB and QES in total count 36 members, including 2 external experts from each member university, 1 member from the research assembly, and one representing doctoral students.

During these years the QEB has defined the **internal Quality Assurance policy**, identifying the process and roles to apply it. **The process** includes assessing compliance performance in domains like schedule, cost, quality, risk, issues & and decisions, communication, project organization, and beneficiary satisfaction. The Quality Review Checklist (QRC) is used to gather data, and the results are analyzed by the Quality & Evaluation Board, which provides recommendations for improvement.
Regarding **the roles**, different project members have specific roles in the process, from the Quality Ecosystem overseeing the evaluation to Work Package Leaders providing information, and the Project Manager and Coordinator filling in answers and implementing recommendations. In total, the QEB had 21 meetings during the 2021 - 2023 period.

Outcome / Achievements of the Innovative UNITA Quality Assurance System
The UNITA Quality Assurance (QA) System emphasizes collaboration and diversity among partner institutions. It aims to align with the Alliance QA policy and translate it into operational processes. Using a QA approach, UNITA seeks to promote innovation, improve processes, and engage stakeholders transparently. Students' involvement is a priority, with an emphasis on their representation in management and evaluation bodies.

The QA system operates in phases of planning, implementation, monitoring, self-assessment, and evaluation, involving students and external stakeholders for continuous improvement. It aims to ensure educational objectives align with cultural, scientific, and societal needs and assess resource availability. Monitoring includes indicators for sustainability, student satisfaction, and employability. Self-assessment activities help identify areas for improvement. External evaluation, involving students and stakeholders, ensures the system's effectiveness.

At the national and international levels, UNITA undergoes accreditation and audit processes to maintain high-quality standards. The QA system's core principles include integrated strategic planning, active stakeholder participation, comprehensive information sharing, and fostering a culture of quality. It promotes efficiency and effectiveness throughout the Alliance.

The results of the UNITA QA system show that the overall UNITA quality evaluation score is 90,5%, reflecting the average of high scores in domains such as scope, quality, risks, issues and decisions, and client satisfaction, and medium scores in schedule, cost, communication, and project organization. This score indicates the overall quality of the UNITA Constellation Projects.

The recommendations provided by the QEB have also aimed at promoting intra-organizational changes. In fact, among the various recommendations, the QEB has approved the guidelines for the UNITA Teaching outline form. In order to promote organizational transformative impacts, UNITA QEB has delivered these guidelines and asked for them to be approved by all the internal Quality Assurance ecosystems of the partner university. In this way, the good practices elaborated at the level of UNITA are transmitted to the internal operational processes of the partner universities.

Impact / Dissemination of the innovative works of the UNITA Quality assurance system to the European Higher Education landscape
Thanks to its outstanding results and pioneer role in University Alliances' QA, UNITA has participated in various events international events to share its experience and promote best practices regarding University Alliances Quality Assurance:
- 2022, European Quality Assurance Forum held at Timisoara.
- 2022, European workshop "Assessing European Universities Between Social Impact and Quality Assurance" held at the University Federico II in Naples.
- 2023, International Round Table on "Challenges and Progress in Quality Assurance of European Universities" held at the University of Zaragoza.

2.

Establishment of international and innovative student-centered education at the UNITA level

One of the primary objectives of the UNITA Alliance is to elevate excellence and innovation in teaching and learning. At the heart of this initiative is a dedicated focus on a student-centered and research-driven approach, strategically commencing with Bachelor (BA) and Master (MA) degrees across three pivotal areas: Cultural Heritage, Renewable Energies, and Circular Economy. The overarching goal is to cultivate vibrant learning environments within the Alliance universities, amplifying their global appeal. Beyond academia, UNITA's vision extends to a broader impact, envisioning a positive spill-over effect on rural and mountain territories. This envisaged transformation stems from the reciprocal benefits of student and staff mobility, coupled with enriching internships, fostering an interconnected synergy between educational excellence and regional development. The impacts presented in this chapter spurred from the activities led by Work Package 2, a task force of UNITA experts on educational offers and pedagogies.

Activity 2.1 / Laying the foundation for the recognition of international UNITA personalized study paths

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Supporting the personalization and recognition of study paths at the UNITA level	Establishment of the Hubs of Success (HoS) for counselling and supporting the UNITA students toward the internationalization of their curricula	6.061 students have consulted the hubs of success	36 UNITA days for student orientation
	Development of a digital cartography of courses in the three strategic thematic areas: Circular economy, Renewable energies and Cultural heritage	Support in the implementation of 10 new forms of international education opportunities implemented at the UNITA level	Implementation of matching events on education leading to the idealization of 21 new international educational offers

Output / establishment of the Hubs of Success (HoS) and development of the cartography of courses in the three thematic areas

For practical and pedagogical support for students, UNITA has established a Hub of Success in each member institution. The Hubs are intended as the first landing site for any UNITA student interested in one of the UNITA educational offers. The hubs are composed of international relations office staff members, teachers involved in international university relations, pedagogical engineers, and UNITA Office members.

HoS offer onsite and remote counseling support for the identification and implementation of UNITA educational offers. HoS offer three main types of services to students:

- The first type of service caters to all students preparing for long or short mobility, providing face-to-face or digital sessions with the Head of Services (HoS). It covers UNITA's activities, focusing on long-term mobility preparation from January to April, with a virtual gate on the UNITA virtual campus for automatic tracking.
- The second type targets students in the three thematic areas of Circular economy, Renewable energy, and Cultural heritage programs. The HoS offers personalized study paths within UNITA's programs, emphasizing long-term mobility and utilizing user-friendly cartography for visualizing subjects and degrees in strategic areas.
- The third type aids students in acquiring transversal skills for international mobility, including communication, intercultural sensitivity, adaptation, teamwork and collaboration, and learning. An expert HoS member supports students through interviews, questionnaires, and practical activities. Skills recognition is formalized through a certificate integrated into UNITA's diploma supplement and the student's Europass CVs, with support available throughout the academic year, excluding an off-peak period before physical mobility.

To support the recognition of the international study path in three thematic areas of Circular economy, Renewable energy, and Cultural heritage, the Teaching and Learning Centers of UNITA (see activity 1.2) have also developed a cartography of courses. This cartography has been composed by identifying all the master's programs offered in the member universities in relation to one of the three thematic areas and the Bachelor study programs that lead to the above Master's study programs. Table 2 presents the number of master's and bachelor's degrees in specific subjects identified in the matrix in each institution.

Table 2.

	UBI	UNIZAR	UPPA	USMB	UNITO	UVT	TOTAL
Bachelor study programmes	28	61	6	10	45	68	218
Master study programmes	42	63	3	20	68	88	314
Bachelor level - subjects	106	833	9	466	269	119	1802
Master level - subjects	71	129	11	600	244	70	1125

Outcome / 6.061 students have consulted the hubs of success

Since their inception, the hubs of success have rendered assistance to a total of 6.061 students, exerting a direct influence on their academic and professional trajectories by enhancing their international educational endeavors.

Outcome / Support in the implementation of 10 new forms of international education opportunities implemented at the UNITA level

Notably, the support provided by the Hubs of Success has guided students in facilitating the execution of 10 distinct learning experiences. These experiences are briefly outlined in Table 3, which also includes new forms of mobilities conceived by the UNITA mobility team (see activity 6.1).

Table 3.

| Name	Short description
UNITA Collaborative International Learning (UCIL)	International learning experience involving a whole classroom and its teacher from each international partner.
Virtual Mobility (VM)	International learning experience based on online mode.
Inter-comprehension course	Learning experience involving a group composed of international students.
UNITA Blended Intensive Programs (BIP)	International learning experience based on both online and face-to-face periods; the latter involves a group of international students.
UNITA Rural Mobility (URM)	Immersing experience abroad based on a contribution to the socio-economic development of a rural zone.
Tandem & Language café	Communication activity based on interculturality.
UNITA Student Assembly	Experience related to the active involvement in the management of the European University.
UNITA Microcredentials	Learning experience based on focused topics internationally co-designed, with targeted learning outcomes.
European citizenship workshops	Collaborative experience of work involving international groups, aiming to promote European values towards educational and non-academic people.
UNITA Ideathon - hackathon	International contests involving multi-cultural groups of students from various academic disciplines and levels.

Impact / Organization of the UNITA days
To promote UNITA educational offers, the Hubs of Success
have organized 36 UNITA Days, which were not initially
planned, spread across all the member universities reaching
thousands of local students and academic staff. The UNITA
days bring together representatives of the Alliance to showcase
their educational offerings, programs, and global initiatives,
leaving a profound impact on the broader university community.
The primary aim is to deliver a comprehensive overview
of courses and study programs provided by participating
universities, empowering students, faculty members, and
researchers to explore diverse study abroad opportunities and
engage with various educational initiatives. The event serves as a
catalyst for meaningful interactions between the UNITA office
staff and representatives from partner universities, effectively
addressing inquiries and fostering engagement within the wider
university community. Beyond its direct benefits for students, the
event contributes significantly to the internationalization goals
of professors and researchers, creating a dynamic and engaging
atmosphere through interactive activities such as games and
intercomprehension exercises.

**Impact / Implementation of matching events
on education leading to the idealization of 21
new international educational offers**
To foster the educational UNITA-level offers and the
continuous process of developing new forms of international
UNITA educational opportunities, the University of Turin has
independently hosted a matching event of UNITA's professors.
The matching event was titled "Internationalization of Curricula
Through UNITA (ICTU)". The event took place on the 16th
and 17th of March 2023 bringing together 156 professors
and vice-rectors from all the UNITA members and associated
partners (12 universities in total). This groundbreaking event
focused on shaping transnational education policies and
developing new curricula for UNITA Alliance students, with the
overarching aim of implementing the European degree label.
Through the ICTU format, participants formed 36 international
working groups, addressing projects across six scientific fields.
Led by Prof. Marcella Costa, the event aimed to establish
pathways for diverse degrees, promoting student mobility within
the Alliance Universities and contributing to a European inter-
university campus. The high satisfaction level of the participants
is shown in Figure 6.

A notable outcome of the ICTU matching event was the creation of the Interdisciplinary Methods in Migration Studies Summer School in September 2023, funded by the University of Turin's "Grants for Internationalization" initiative. Moreover, following this initial event, a second round of ICTU took place in Turin on the 28th and 29th of November 2023 (at the beginning of the second phase of the Alliance) to follow up on 21 educational projects, such as Blended Intensive programs, double-degrees, virtual mobilities, and Summer Schools.

Figure 6. Participants' satisfaction with the ICTU matching events
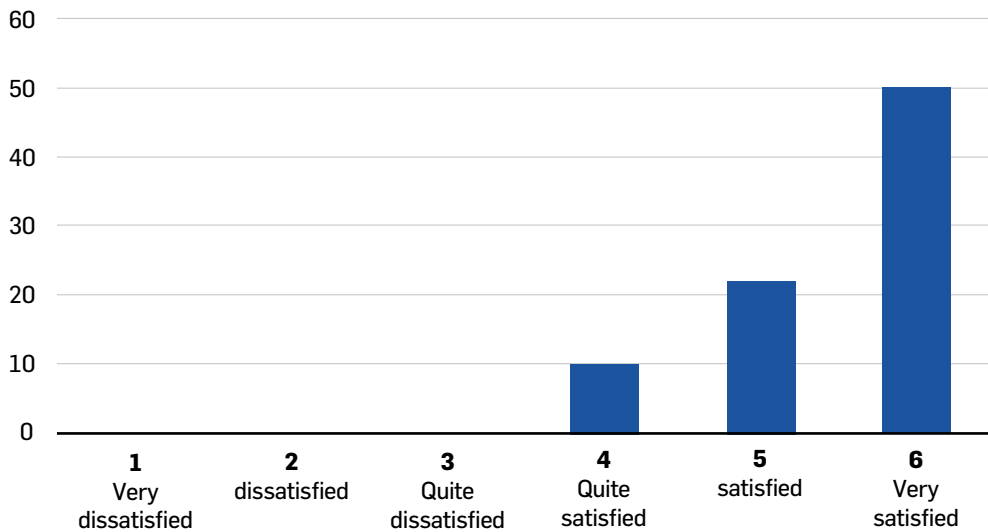
Activity 2.2 / Sharing best practices in digital learning and student-centered pedagogies to foster the quality of teaching at the UNITA Alliance

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Establishing the Teaching and Learning Centers network	Establishment of the Teaching and Learning Centers (TLC) network. The TLC network has met every month and comprises 30 participants	Organization of 9 workshop modules on innovative pedagogies for a total of 925 teachers from the UNITA universities	Ph.D. Position and Research on the topic

Output / Establishment of the teaching and Learning centers (TLC) network
UNITA's Teaching & Learning Centers Network was established as a network of UNITA experts that organizes staff development and training for teachers from the universities of the UNITA Consortium. Since its establishment at the beginning of 2021, the TLC network counts 30 participants to design and plan initiatives for the promotion of the quality of teaching in its universities. The TLC network had meetings every month and supplementary meetings in different workgroups for specific tasks of the network.

The main activities implemented by the network are:
• Promotion of teacher mobility within the Alliance for sharing good educational practices.
• Creation of a common set of tools to continuously assess the needs of teachers in the consortium in terms of knowledge and skills needed for the teaching process.
• Organization of training on current educational topics, depending on the assessed needs and the new educational and societal trends.

• Facilitation of the inter-knowledge and development of working groups between teachers with common interests within the Alliance, in order to collaborate for the development of high-quality educational content.

Outcome / Organization of 9 workshop modules on innovative pedagogies for a total of 925 teachers

Between September 2021 and April 2023, the TLC network has organized a total of 9 workshops. 926 professors attended these workshops. The specific subjects of the workshops were:
• Student-centered pedagogies.
• Digital Learning.
• TestsOverSSH - an assessment platform resulting from the orchestration of several open-source tools.
• English as a Medium of Instruction.
• The use of digital tools in health sciences.
• Serious Games.
• A French and European vision of the competency-based approach.
• Educational digital tools.
• Connected Campuses.

Impact / Assessment and research on the needs of UNITA faculty staff

To better address actual and future challenges of UNITA teaching staff, the TLC network has also implemented two assessment instruments:
• one questionnaire for the assessment of the teachers' needs in regard to teaching in an international environment.
• one questionnaire for the assessment of students' needs in regard to learning in an international environment.

Additionally, focus groups with teachers were organized to deepen the data. As a long-lasting impact of the results of these assessment exercises, the results of this assessment exercise are not only used for developing future workshops and training but also for carrying out a research project led by a UNITA team and supported by a UNITA Ph.D. student.

Activity 2.3 / Assessing UNITA quality of teaching and learning

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Assessing UNITA's quality of teaching and learning	Benchmark of UNITA's universities' practices of Quality assurance (QA) of Teaching and Learning	Development and application of templates for surveys for students' evaluation of UNITA's educational offers	Identification of necessary skills and tasks from the TLC UNITA Network to be applied in the internal UniTo Teaching and Learning Center

Output - Benchmark of UNITA's universities' practices of Quality assurance (QA) of Teaching and Learning
QA is crucial to validate and improve the quality of Teaching and Learning of the Alliance. As such, a mixed team composed of members from the TLC network and UNITA Quality assurance experts has conducted a benchmarking activity on the national practices of QA of Teaching and Learning (T&L), with a particular focus on Students' evaluation of T&L. This activity has been implemented according to the following steps:
• Collection of QA documents from partners.
• Analysis of documents.
• Formulation of ad hoc questions to be discussed with partners.
• Question time: online meeting with each partner.
• Summary of the data.

Outcome / Development of templates for surveys for students' evaluation of UNITA educational offers
The Quality Assurance (QA) of teaching and learning pertains not only to the traditional courses offered within the degrees of the member universities but also, primarily, to the new forms of educational offerings, encompassing mobility opportunities and innovative UNITA courses. Consequently, a survey has been developed for student evaluation of various learning experiences provided within the UNITA framework, including virtual mobility, Blended Intensive Programs (BIPs),

microcredentials, and rural mobility. Given the distinctiveness and innovativeness of rural mobility, 16 questions, aligned with the unique in-field training activity, have been carefully chosen to collect student opinions. Additionally, the survey form has been translated into the five languages of the UNITA partners, ensuring inclusivity and broader participation.

Impact / Identification and diffusion of the good practices related to Teaching and Learning Quality assurance
A focus indicator that shows the institutional impact of the UNITA Teaching and Learning centres can be seen in the University of Turin, the largest university of the Alliance. In 2022, UniTo established its internal Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). Participation in the UniTo TLC network has played a significant role in defining and designing internal tasks, activities, and staff competencies. The internal UniTo TLC operates according to the following guiding principles.

- Defining strategies and identifying tools that enhance educational innovations, including digital approaches, in line with the evolving teaching and learning environment. It also focuses on lifelong learning and aligning with advancements in educational research and their dissemination.
- Developing a supportive teaching and learning environment by actively involving students. This includes considering changes in the university population in terms of socio-cultural contexts, modes of interaction, learning methods, and aspects of inclusion, equality, internationalization, and sustainability.
- Organizing and promoting continuous professional development initiatives for faculty and researchers, in line with Faculty Development research, to facilitate pedagogical improvement and innovation.
- Assisting schools, departments, and study programs in the innovation process and ensuring alignment with the competencies required by the local job market and emerging improvement actions identified through quality monitoring processes, in collaboration with the Quality Office.

The UniTo TLC is led by the following groups:
- Faculty, researcher, and staff training.
- Continuous professional development (external collaborators and engagement with the local community).
- Methodologies for Pedagogical innovation.
- Technologies for Pedagogical innovation.
- Internationalization.
- Student voice.
- Inclusion.
- Sustainability.

3.

United in diversity: towards enhanced multilingual intercomprehension in romance languages within UNITA

Intercomprehension (IC) refers to the ability of speakers of closely related languages to understand each other without prior knowledge of the specific language. It involves a level of mutual intelligibility that allows individuals who speak different, yet related, languages to comprehend each other's written or spoken communication. IC is often observed among speakers of languages within the same language family or linguistic group. In the multilingual UNITA community, this concept highlights the shared linguistic features and similarities among the national Romance Languages that enable communication without the need to formally learn the other languages. IC-related activities were led by Work Package 3.

Activity 3.1 / Mapping the state of the art on IC

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Analyzing the state-of-the-art IC	Report on the current state-of-the-art IC practices and programs within and outside the UNITA community	Publication of free IC materials and training on the public UNITA website to increase access to intercomprehension resources	Organizational transformational impact: Intercomprehension as a means of communication between UNITA staff

Output / Report on the current state-of-the-art IC practices and programs within and outside the UNITA community

The integration of intercomprehension into language teaching has been a rich and reflective area of experience. While research underscores the necessity of constructing an intercomprehension curriculum, practical experiences at various educational levels, including universities, schools, and associations, have multiplied over the years. Despite finding a place in language teaching, intercomprehension often takes place in mixed and typically time-limited integration.

To implement intercomprehension (IC) within the Alliance, a UNITA IC team of experts has analyzed the state of the art on IC, specifically regarding past projects that have contributed to its development. They have also examined current IC training courses and tools. **Six crucial projects starting from the mid-1990s**, namely the Galatea and Eurom Projects, the Eurom5 Project, the EuroCom Project, the InterRom Project, the Galanet Project, and the Miriadi Project, have been identified. **Additionally**, **sixteen educational projects** ranging from internal university courses across Europe to open-source education tools on IC have been discovered. For each of these 16 courses, the UNITA experts provided a short description and identified strengths weaknesses, and potential usefulness for UNITA purposes. This state-of-the-

art analysis has been the first step toward the promotion of intercomprehension (IC) within and outside the UNITA community.

Outcome / Publication of free IC materials and training on the public UNITA website to increase access to intercomprehension resources

The dissemination of complimentary Intercomprehension (IC) materials and training resources on the publicly accessible UNITA website has emerged as a transformative initiative, markedly amplifying accessibility to intercomprehension tools. This endeavor stands as a catalyst, not only for widespread access but also for catalyzing global language learning initiatives and advancing linguistic diversity. An integral component of this impactful initiative is the incorporation of diverse video content, encompassing Intercomprehension exercises and instructional videos elucidating Linguistic strategies in intercomprehension. This comprehensive approach extends to tailored resources, such as the Intercomprehension workshop designed specifically for non-philological scientists. Additionally, the infusion of the Linguistic Café session into video format enhances accessibility, offering an engaging platform for linguistic exploration and dialogue. Through these dynamic and inclusive efforts, the public UNITA platform continues to spearhead the democratization of intercomprehension resources, transcending geographical boundaries and contributing to a globally enriched linguistic landscape within and beyond the UNITA community.

Impact / Organizational transformational impact: Intercomprehension as a means of communication between UNITA staff

The UNITA Intercomprehension (IC) initiative has not only yielded substantial impact on language learning but has also triggered an unexpected organizational transformation. The immediate and widespread adoption of IC practices within the UNITA managerial and staff community represents a remarkable shift, considering that this transformation was not initially planned. The autonomous integration of IC strategies into work-related communication, particularly in written forms like emails and work chats, stands as a testament to the unforeseen but transformative nature of this initiative. This organizational shift underscores the adaptability and inherent value of IC methodologies, turning it into an integral

aspect of daily work routines. This unplanned yet profound transformation exemplifies how the UNITA community has organically embraced IC, showcasing its significance not only in language learning but also in reshaping the dynamics of intra-organizational international communication.

Activity 3.2 / IC education activities to transform the community within the UNITA partners' community

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
IC education activities to transform the community within the UNITA partners' community	Development of an IC competence framework and 8 training models (for students, teachers, and administrative staff)	2.143 individuals, comprising students, teachers, and administrative staff, have acquired Intercomprehension (IC) skills through 44 IC courses tailored to the participants' needs	Creation of 6 different types of IC digital badges delivered to a total of 335 people

Output / Development of an IC competence framework and 8 training models (for students, teachers, and administrative staff)
Following the IC state-of-the-art analysis (activity 3.1), the UNITA IC team has developed a competence framework, identifying the usefulness of IC for students, teachers, and administrative staff, as well as the skills that each category should learn to apply IC:
Students:
•   Acquiring IC principles in oral and written contexts.
•   Developing expertise in language for specific purposes (LSP) particularly related to UNITA thematic areas of Circular economy, Renewable energy, and Cultural heritage to enhance communication for learning mobilities related to the thematic areas.
Teachers:
•   Applying IC principles in plurilingual classes.
•   Developing skills in LSP communication and ICT use.
Staff:
•   Acquiring IC principles for workplace communication.
•   Developing skills in plurilingual email, IC in agreements, and communication strategies.

Based on the results of the competence framework, the list of syllabi for IC courses developed by the UNITA IC team includes the following elements.
- Syllabus for the training of Erasmus students.
- Syllabus for the training of teachers from the UNITA partner universities.
- Syllabus for the training of administrative staff of UNITA partner universities.
- Syllabus for online IC training for intercomprehension trainers.
- Syllabus for a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project aimed at students in intercomprehension courses.
- Syllabus for a Blended Intensive Program (BIP) and other UNITA new forms of mobilities.

These syllabi reflect the comprehensive nature and specialization of intercomprehension training within the UNITA project, serving as guidelines for potential implementation by any university within the UNITA Alliance.

Outcome / 2.143 individuals, comprising students, teachers, and administrative staff, have acquired Intercomprehension (IC) skills through 44 IC courses tailored to the participants' needs

The impact of the UNITA project on intercomprehension (IC) has been profound and far-reaching. Over the last three years, the dedicated IC staff has successfully trained 2.143 individuals, including students, staff, and teachers, across a diverse range of courses. The training initiatives encompassed a variety of specialized IC courses, such as 5 IC for student mobility, 16 IC Collaborative Online International Learning (COILs), 6 IC language cafés and tandems, 2 IC trainings for staff, 4 IC trainings for teachers, 3 trainings for trainers of IC, 1 Blended Intensive Program (BIP) advanced IC for staff, and 7 BIPs IC for Language for Specific Purposes (related to UNITA's thematic areas).

To ensure the efficacy of these courses, most were concluded with a comprehensive questionnaire, designed to solicit participants' impressions and collect valuable feedback. This iterative feedback loop has not only allowed for continuous improvement of the courses but has also contributed to the refinement of best practices in intercomprehension education.

The UNITA project's impact extends beyond the sheer numbers, reflecting a commitment to enhancing multilingual communication, fostering linguistic diversity, and advancing the theoretical and practical dimensions of plural/multilingual education.

Impact / Creation of 6 different types of IC digital badges delivered to a total of 335 people
The implementation of the UNITA project has led to a significant impact on recognizing and certifying participants' achievements in intercomprehension (IC). A notable development has been the creation of six distinct typologies of IC digital badges, certifying participation and the acquisition of skills. These badges cater to various domains, including IC for teachers, IC for Blended Intensive Program (BIP) Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), trainers of IC, IC for mobility, IC for related languages (basic), and IC for related languages (advanced).

As of now, the impact is tangible, with a total of 335 badges already issued, indicating active participation and skill acquisition within the UNITA intercomprehension courses. This number continues to grow, underscoring the ongoing success and relevance of the digital badging system in acknowledging and validating the accomplishments of participants across diverse IC domains. The development and issuance of these badges not only recognize individual efforts but also contribute to the broader goals of promoting and accrediting proficiency in intercomprehension within the UNITA Alliance.

Activity 3.3 / IC research and dissemination activities to transform society beyond the UNITA partners' community

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
IC research and dissemination activities to transform society beyond the UNITA partners' community	Establishment of a UNITA Ph.D. position for advanced research in IC in the UNITA context	Engaging in the IC academic discourse: active participation in scientific conferences and organization of an international conference on the topic	Elevating Intercomprehension Research Through the publication of 9 Scientific Articles and 1 Ph.D. Thesis on IC
	Development and diffusion of guidelines for Intercomprehension courses and dissemination activities	Expanding Reach: Introducing an IC Diploma for Firefighters and Facilitating Learning Activities for Primary School Students	

Output / Establishment of a Ph.D. position for research on IC based on the UNITA's activities

The relevance of UNITA's IC educational and dissemination activities is testified by Ph.D. thesis, "L'intercompréhension pour les étudiants non spécialistes de langues à l'université: l'expérience d'UNITA", which makes a significant impact on the field of intercomprehension (IC) within the university setting. Focusing on three introductory courses offered by UNITA, the thesis employs rigorous evaluation methodologies, including REFIC for syllabus assessment and EVAL-IC for learner evaluation. The comprehensive exploration covers the theoretical framework, research questions, and methodology, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities in IC training. This research not only contributes to the theoretical

understanding of IC but also provides practical guidelines for course design and learner assessment, enhancing the effectiveness of IC programs in diverse university contexts.

Output / Development and diffusion of guidelines for Intercomprehension courses and dissemination activities
The development of IC competencies framework and IC courses guidelines (Activity 3.2) by the UNITA IC expert team has yielded substantial impact. Utilizing this material, the team has successfully formulated guidelines that serve as a foundation for constructing courses and organizing dissemination events. These initiatives are instrumental in extending the reach of intercomprehension (IC) beyond academic boundaries, effectively expanding its influence to encompass civil society. The framework and guidelines not only enrich educational endeavors but also facilitate the seamless integration of IC principles into broader societal contexts, fostering linguistic diversity and communication skills beyond traditional academic settings.

Outcome / Engaging in the IC academic discourse: active participation in scientific conferences and organization of an international conference on the topic
The UNITA IC expert team actively contributed to research activities, delivering a total of seven presentations at international scientific conferences to share their findings on intercomprehension research conducted within the UNITA framework.

Additionally, UNITA organized a significant international conference at USMB titled "Intercompréhension: Bilans et perspectives: vers de nouveaux contextes," held on the 12th and 13th of October 2023. This conference also served as the UNITA Final Dissemination Event on Intercomprehension. This conference served as a platform to address the academic community and stakeholders, fostering discussions on intercomprehension, pluralistic teaching approaches, and the outcomes of UNITA's multilingualism initiatives. The scientific committee, comprising international experts and UNITA partners, contributed to its global significance. The conference, attended by over 70 experts from around the world, explored crucial aspects such as syllabus harmonization, progression, assessment, evaluation, and emerging issues in teaching and learning intercomprehension.

This extensive engagement in conferences showcases UNITA's dedication to advancing research and fostering international collaboration in the field of intercomprehension, creating a ripple effect that reaches diverse global audiences.

Outcome / Expanding Reach: Introducing an IC Diploma for Firefighters

To extend the reach of intercomprehension (IC) beyond UNITA's partner community, targeted dissemination and educational events have been executed. A notable initiative is the Intercomprehension Diploma (DIU) tailored for transborder firemen, developed by Université Savoie Mont Blanc and Università degli Studi di Torino. The DIU equips Savoie Fire and Rescue officers with language skills for effective communication in cross-border operations, exemplifying UNITA's commitment to practical, region-specific applications of IC. This impactful endeavor not only enhances the professional capabilities of fire and rescue personnel but also showcases the adaptability and real-world utility of IC, contributing to its wider adoption and recognition.

The UNITA Alliance advocates for the innovative method of intercomprehension in Romance languages, allowing individuals to speak their language and be understood by others. This approach enhances the attractiveness of our territories by valuing languages spoken by an anticipated 2 billion people worldwide by 2050. Intercomprehension complements traditional language learning, leveraging similarities between Romance languages. The Université Savoie Mont Blanc (USMB) and the Università degli Studi di Torino (UniTo) introduced an International University Diploma (DIU) in 2021, equipping officers from the Savoie Fire and Rescue Department with intercomprehension skills in the cross-border context of the Western Alps.

The DIU aims to enhance the transfrontier Franco-Italian region by providing new professional skills to officers responsible for securing the Fréjus tunnel. Notable progress in both oral and written comprehension was observed during the training, emphasizing technical and operational vocabulary. A three-day intensive module in Turin facilitated interactions with Italian counterparts, including the Vigili del Fuoco and Protezione Civile. Participants gained language and intercultural competence, reaching A2 level in Italian oral

comprehension on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Encouraged by positive outcomes, future editions of the DIU will adapt learning modules for diverse professional contexts, building on the experience and feedback from participants. The 2022 edition is already underway, illustrating the DIU's potential to expand within our region and beyond, fostering knowledge exchange and best practices through the UNITA Alliance.

Impact / Elevating intercomprehension research through the publication of 9 scientific articles and 1 Ph.D. thesis on IC
The enduring impact of intercomprehension (IC) research and dissemination activities within UNITA has provided the IC expert team with a platform to propel advancements in the field of IC methods. This collective research effort has resulted in the publication of 9 scientific articles and one Ph.D. thesis, showcasing the contributions of 12 UNITA researchers to the ongoing discourse in intercomprehension. The references of the scientific articles are:

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comunicare-intercomprensione-contesti-interna- zionali-valorizzare

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- Mantegna Sarah (2022) The Dimensions of Intercomprehension. From Definition to Skills Assessment, RiCognizioni Vol 9 No 17 (2022), pp. 49-67
- Mantegna Sarah, Marello Carla (2022) The multilingual appendix of Le ricchezze della lingua volgare (1543) by Francesco Alunno, Klosa-Kückelhaus, Annette/Engelberg, Stefan/ Möhrs, Chris tine/Storjohann, Petra (eds.) (2022): Dictionaries and Society. Book of Abstracts of the X EURALEX International Congress. Mannheim: IDS-Verlag, pp. 205-208

4.

UNITA R&I: Catalyzing change in rural and mountain regions through innovation in cultural heritage, renewable energies, and circular economy

UNITA research and Innovation (R&I) activities were led by Work Package 4. UNITA addresses challenges in rural and mountain regions, contrasting core-periphery dynamics causing isolation and depopulation. Mountains and rural areas serve as research hubs for innovation and environmental transitions. UNITA aims to create a model by de-compartmentalizing policies, contributing to Smart Specialization Strategies aligned with the European Green Deal and Sustainable Development Goals. In the first project phase, the thematic areas in which UNITA R&I focused include Cultural heritage, Renewable energy, and Circular economy. UNITA's action plan involved launching Research and Innovation Hubs in each area, formalizing projects, integrating research into teaching, and revitalizing areas through lifelong learning and entrepreneurship.

Activity 4.1 / Guiding UNITA universities' research toward transformative solutions for rural and mountain societal challenges

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Guiding UNITA universities' research toward transformative solutions for rural and mountain societal challenges	Creation of the UNITA's research and innovation cartography including 649 research projects to foster collaborative excellence in the three thematic areas	Establishment of an R&I Hub in the thematic areas of Cultural heritage, Renewable energy, and Circular economy for long-term strategies	UNITA's integration of 157 researchers in the R&I Hubs

Output / Creation of the UNITA's research and innovation cartography including 649 research projects to foster collaborative excellence in the three thematic areas

The creation of a dynamic cartography of research and innovation in UNITA's three thematic areas (Cultural heritage, Renewable energy, and Circular economy) underscores UNITA's commitment to collaborative excellence. The UNITA Research and Innovation Cartography1 originated from a systematic process initiated with the Call of Expression of Interest (CEI) launched in January 2021. Crafted by UPPA's WP4 task force, the multilingual CEI employed Sphinx to collect over 600 responses across six universities in three thematic areas. This comprehensive dataset contains 649 research projects and covers research progress, interdisciplinary aspects, and connections to UNITA's goals. It was meticulously organized into a sortable Sphinx database. The evolving Cartography serves as a dynamic repository, offering insights

1 The cartography is available at: https://univ-UNITA.eu/Sites/UNITA/en/Pagina/researchers#research_cartography.
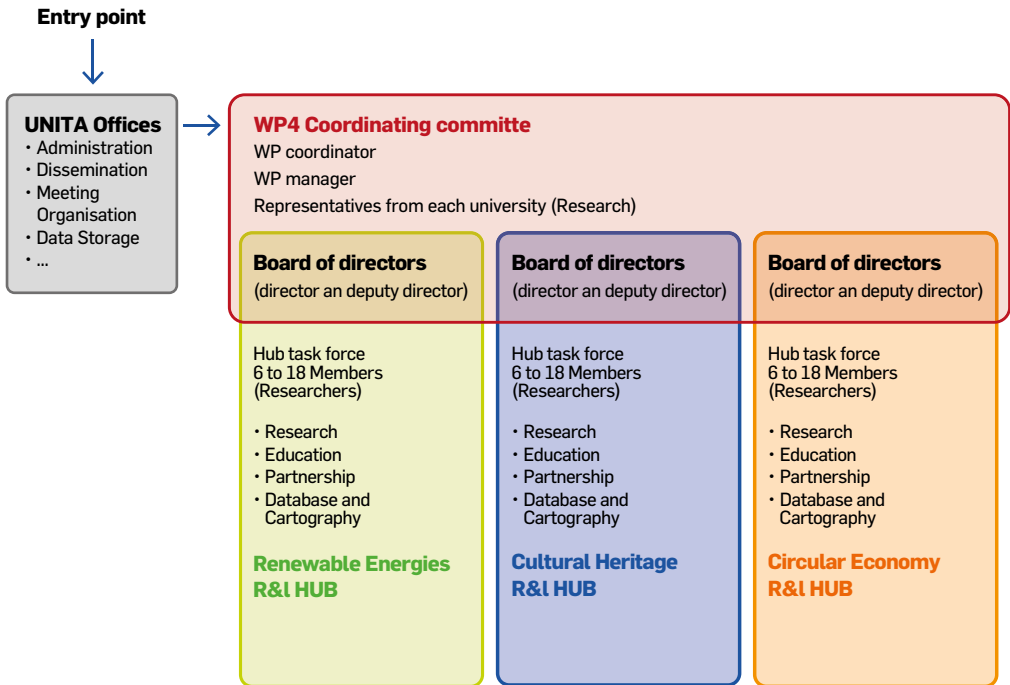
into researchers, facilities, partners, and projects within each of UNITA's member universities in the three thematic areas. More than a communication tool, this research-driven cartography emerges as a dynamic resource for students and researchers, fostering cross-disciplinary collaborations within and beyond UNITA's thematic domains.

Outcome / Establishment of an R&I Hub in the thematic areas of Cultural heritage, Renewable energy, and Circular economy for long-term strategies
The establishment of UNITA's Research and Innovation Hubs marks a strategic response to pressing societal challenges in rural and mountain regions. Focused on Cultural Heritage, Circular Economy, and Renewable Energies, these hubs emerge as dynamic platforms uniting six universities to address issues ranging from cultural identity reinforcement to environmental sustainability. Through collaborative research initiatives and innovative projects, UNITA aims to not only raise awareness but also actively contribute to reducing inequalities between core and peripheral regions.

The hubs serve as catalysts for promoting the value of natural resources, developing circular economy networks, and preserving cultural richness. In recognizing the importance of these thematic areas in today's context, UNITA positions itself as a driving force in empowering communities, combating environmental issues, and fostering responsible consumption. The development process involved meticulous steps, including identifying key researchers, connecting them through seminars, and establishing coordinating committees. The hub's operational model integrates directors, deputy directors, and task forces, ensuring a comprehensive approach to research, learning, and partnership activities. The overarching goal is to synergize the efforts of universities and local stakeholders, fostering a collaborative environment that transcends geographical boundaries. The Hubs' operational model and their relationship with UNITA's organizational structures are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. The Hubs' operational model and their relationship with UNITA's organizational structures

Entry point

UNITA Offices
· Administration
· Dissemination
· Meeting Organisation
· Data Storage
· ...

WP4 Coordinating committe

WP coordinator
WP manager
Representatives from each university (Research)

Board of directors
(director an deputy director)

Board of directors
(director an deputy director)

Board of directors
(director an deputy director)

Hub task force
6 to 18 Members
(Researchers)

· Research
· Education
· Partnership
· Database and Cartography

Renewable Energies R&l HUB

Hub task force
6 to 18 Members
(Researchers)

· Research
· Education
· Partnership
· Database and Cartography

Cultural Heritage R&l HUB

Hub task force
6 to 18 Members
(Researchers)

· Research
· Education
· Partnership
· Database and Cartography

Circular Economy R&l HUB

The accomplishments of UNITA's Research and Innovation (R&I) Hubs within the first two years underscore their effectiveness in fostering collaborative research communities and instilling a sense of belonging. Building upon this success, the Alliance envisions a bold "Strategic Five-Year R&I Plan" to position itself at the European forefront on themes intrinsic to rural and mountain territories. Through research matching events, the three core thematic areas will expand, giving rise to out-of-wall European Research and Innovation Institutes (ER2Is). These institutes, once established, will serve as reference organizations, globally recognized for their knowledge domains and interconnected with the Alliance's territories. As crucial players in addressing climatic and societal challenges, the ER2Is are poised to contribute to a common scientific identity, enhance visibility, facilitate interdisciplinary approaches, promote open innovation, and strengthen the research-training link. Their evaluation by states and the European Research Area will pave the way for sustained funding and collaborative projects. In this transformative journey, the R&I Hubs evolve into pivotal European Institutes, driving scientific excellence and societal development across UNITA's core territories.

Impact / UNITA's integration of 157 researchers in the R&I Hubs

The integration of 157 researchers into UNITA's Research and Innovation (R&I) Hubs over the past two years enhances the impact of these hubs in fostering collaborative research communities and a sense of belonging. The Alliance's forward-looking "Strategic Five-Year R&I Plan" aims to position UNITA at the forefront of European innovation, particularly in rural and mountain territories. By expanding the three core thematic areas through research matching events, UNITA anticipates the emergence of out-of-wall European Research and Innovation Institutes. These institutes are envisioned as reference organizations, globally recognized for their knowledge domains, and intricately connected with the Alliance's territories.

Activity 4.2 / Connecting research and learning

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Connecting research and learning	Development of UNITA's Transformative Micro-Credentials Shaping Expertise in Circular Economy, Renewable Energy, and Cultural Heritage	Organization of 16 summer/winter schools with 199 total participants	Activation and sponsorship of 47 Ph.D. co-tutelles within UNITA of which 35 integrated into the R&I Hubs

Output / Development of UNITA's Transformative Micro-Credentials Shaping Expertise in Circular Economy, Renewable Energy, and Cultural Heritage
UNITA pioneers an innovative approach with nine Micro-credentials, three for each thematic area, encompassing a comprehensive package: a detailed program description, pedagogical materials, and a robust question bank for effective student assessment. Delve into Circular Economy, Renewable Energy, and Cultural Heritage through courses such as:
- Recent Applied Research in Circular Economy.
- Towards the Circular Economy in the Business Context.
- Introduction to Circular Economy for Future Researchers.
- Solar Photovoltaics.
- Low-temperature Solar Thermal Applied to Domestic Hot Water Production.
- Introduction and Challenge of Renewable Energies.
- Humanities in Context.
- Games and History: Playing the Resistance.
- Approaching Visual Culture.

These Micro-credentials offer students an immersive learning experience, designed to foster expertise in cutting-edge subjects. UNITA's commitment to providing accessible, focused, and high-quality education is exemplified by these Micro-credentials, enhancing the skills and knowledge of learners in crucial thematic domains.

Outcome / Organization of 16 summer/winter schools with 199 total participants
UNITA successfully organized 16 thematic schools between 2021 and 2023, catering to the international UNITA community and engaging 199 attendees. The themes, proposed by skilled teams within hubs, covered diverse areas, from Intangible Cultural Heritage to Renewable Energies and Migration Studies. Satisfaction surveys and student reports reflect overall positivity toward the content, advocating for a more in-depth approach and suggesting potential basic/expert cycles.

The positive feedback from satisfaction surveys and student reports attests to the success of these initiatives. Attendees, while expressing overall satisfaction, demonstrated a thirst for more in-depth learning, prompting the consideration of potential basic/expert cycles in future programs.

The diverse themes, ranging from cultural heritage and language studies to renewable energies and societal challenges, showcase UNITA's commitment to interdisciplinary education. Of these 15 winter/summer schools, 15 were organized by the WP4 task force and 1 emerged from the Research Matching Event (see activity 4.3). This summer school, titled "Interdisciplinary methods in migration studies" summer school, further exemplifies UNITA's responsiveness to educational needs, drawing 53 participants. Overall, the impact statement highlights UNITA's adaptability, commitment to diverse educational experiences, and dedication to continuous improvement based on participant feedback.

Impact / Activation and sponsorship of 47 Ph.D. co-tutelles within UNITA of which 35 integrated into the R&I Hubs
UNITA's enduring impact on Research and Innovation (R&I) is notably exemplified by the sponsorship and management of 47 Ph.D. co-tutelles, internally funded by member universities

but operating within the UNITA framework. This initiative showcases a collaborative commitment to academic excellence. Out of these, 35 Ph.D. co-tutelles were intentionally designed to align with UNITA's thematic areas, highlighting the organization's dedication to focused and impactful research. Furthermore, a positive spillover effect is observable, as an additional seven Ph.D. co-tutelles were independently initiated since 2021 among UNITA's universities. Notably, these occurred without direct supervision or sponsorship from the operational or managerial bodies of the Alliance. This underscores the self-sustaining and collaborative nature of the UNITA community.

An outstanding aspect is the commitment to international collaboration, as each of the 47 Ph.D. co-tutelle students spent a minimum of 9 months abroad in another UNITA university. This not only strengthens the global network of academic expertise but also underscores UNITA's dedication to nurturing well-rounded scholars with diverse international experiences.

Activity 4.3 / Energizing the territories through research and educational activities in the three thematic areas

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Energizing the territories through research and educational activities in the three thematic areas	893 external stakeholders from the socioeconomic environment of the territories included in the R&I Hubs	Activation of 22 international innovation and research internships in companies, research centers, or institutions mainly focused on the three thematic areas	Activation of 49 self-funded UNITA joint research projects implemented by a total of 120 UNITA researchers

Output / 93 external stakeholders from the socioeconomic environment of the territories included in the R&I Hubs
By engaging 93 rural and mountain socio-economic stakeholders, UNITA has promoted impactful collaborations to foster regional development. The Alliance actively involves SMEs, cultural organizations, and local public cultural offices, contributing to the growth of areas surrounding member universities.

These collaborations are pivotal, not just for establishing internships but also for nurturing the development of local territories where socio-economic stakeholders are deeply embedded. UNITA's approach transcends conventional boundaries, forging partnerships that serve as catalysts for positive change. This initiative showcases the Alliance's commitment to facilitating hands-on experiences for students while simultaneously driving sustainable development in rural and mountain communities through active stakeholder engagement.

Outcome / Activation of 22 international innovation and research internships in companies, research centers, or institutions mainly focused on the three thematic areas
UNITA's commitment to connecting universities, students, and local stakeholders for the development of rural and mountain regions is showcased through its innovative approach to research and innovation internships. As part of the initiative, UNITA has successfully institutionalized a portfolio of 22 research and innovation internships, specifically designed for students enrolled in Bachelor's, Postgraduate, or Ph.D. programs across UNITA universities.

These internships, focusing on the thematic areas of renewable energy, circular economy, and cultural heritage, have been coordinated by UNIZAR, demonstrating effective collaboration among UNITA universities. The internships not only provide valuable hands-on experience but also contribute to knowledge transfer processes and rural development dynamics.

The establishment of Liaison Services in each UNITA Office, overseen by Local Coordinators, plays a pivotal role in connecting academia, stakeholders, and students. Despite the initial challenge of creating a shared database, the Liaison Services have successfully managed the internship offers, contributing to closer links between UNITA regions.

The launch of a dedicated web page by UNIZAR, hosting the UNITA Liaison Service and Research & Innovation Internships, further streamlines the process. The page not only serves as a centralized hub for students, academia, and stakeholders but also reflects UNITA's commitment to transparency and accessibility.

Despite the initial hurdles, the collaborative efforts of Liaison Services, UNITA Offices, and researchers have resulted in a dynamic list of 22 internship offers. This comprehensive catalogue has been instrumental in attracting a significant number of inquiries and downloads, totalling 5116 web visits throughout the project's development period (2021-2023). The impact of these internships extends beyond numbers, as students who have completed their internships express a high level of satisfaction through feedback. This not only validates the success of the initiative but also signifies the positive contribution of UNITA in energizing rural territories.

To summarize, despite the challenges faced in creating a common base of practices, UNITA has successfully institutionalized 22 impactful research and innovation internships. This achievement highlights UNITA's dedication to enhancing student experiences, fostering collaboration, and contributing to the development of rural and mountain regions through practical and meaningful initiatives.

Impact / Activation of 49 self-funded UNITA joint research projects implemented by a total of 120 UNITA researchers

The establishment of 49 new joint UNITA research projects, funded independently and involving collaboration across at least two universities within the Alliance, represents a groundbreaking achievement in reshaping the European academic landscape. Orchestrated by a total of 120 UNITA researchers, these projects exemplify a commitment to innovation and collaborative research.

38 of the 49 total research projects have been directly Integrated into the R&I Hubs across three thematic areas (i.e. Cultural heritage, Renewable energies, and Circular economy) showcasing a strategic alignment with UNITA's core focus. The distribution across thematic areas reflects a multifaceted approach to addressing pressing challenges.

It should be finally noted that of the 49 total research projects, 29 spurred from the success of the UNITA Research Matching Event hosted, organized, and funded by UniTo from the 25th to the 28th of October 2023. This event engaged 143 researchers from the Alliance and stimulated them to create joint research projects. The independent funding for both the matching event and the research projects underscores the high transformative impact of the UNITA community in driving innovation and shaping the future of European academia. This success has set the stage for a second edition of the research matching events, hosted in Turin from the 12th to the 15th of December 2023. UNITA's ability to secure external funding and foster a collaborative research environment is a testament to its pivotal role in advancing the European academic landscape, ensuring ongoing transformative contributions to research and innovation.

5.

UNITA digital services

Online platforms, particularly crucial in the era of and post the pandemic, play a pivotal role in facilitating interactions among diverse stakeholders and disseminating relevant materials. This need is even more pronounced for the UNITA Alliance, where member universities, dispersed across Southern Europe, require a common space for communication, activity management, and publication of pertinent materials. The digital services of the UNITA Alliance were overseen by Work Package 5, comprising experts in IT technology, digital education, management, and education.

WP5's primary initiatives have led to the establishment of an open-source repository for internal UNITA management practices, processes, and documents. Additionally, the creation of the UNITA public webpage and the internal digital platform has provided forums and spaces for digital educational and research activities. Notably, the impact of WP5 includes the issuance of the European student card (ESC) at the UNITA level, benefiting 156.572 students within the UNITA community.

Furthermore, UNITA's digital services have served as a facilitator for various mobilities. This includes offering a space for public communications (activity 8.2), the publication of research cartography (activity 4.1), cartography of courses (activity 2.1), and the creation of a data repository where results of satisfactory surveys are stored. Overall, these digital initiatives underscore UNITA's commitment to efficient communication, collaborative activities, and streamlined processes.

Activity 5.1 / Implementing UNITA digital services

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Implementing UNITA digital services	84 external stakeholders from the socioeconomic environment of the territories included in the R&I Hubs	Activation of 22 international innovation and research internships in companies, research centers, or institutions mainly focused on the three thematic areas	149.356 student cards issued at the UNITA level

Output / set up of the UNITA Datacloud management tool
In close collaboration with WP1, the initial step in providing digital services for the UNITA Alliance involved establishing the UNITA Data Cloud management tool. The primary management tool for the UNITA Alliance is the file-sharing and collaboration system, UNITA Datacloud, accessible at https://datacloud.univ-UNITA.eu/. This system is based on the open-source solution provided by Nextcloud. The Datacloud, initiated at the project's outset, aims to facilitate document sharing and communication flows among partners within a secure digital workspace. It incorporates useful apps such as files, calendars, video-conference rooms, chat, boards, polls, forms, and a knowledge space.

Complementary EU projects within the UNITA Constellation are also managed in the Datacloud, following the same folder structure. Access and editing rights are granted based on the boards or task forces to which individuals belong. Presently, more than 1222 registered individuals involved in the UNITA project and constellation projects utilize the Datacloud. They store and co-edit documents, schedule meetings and events in shared calendars, access permanent video-conference rooms for boards and task forces, create polls and forms, and collectively contribute to knowledge spaces. This demonstrates

the significant engagement and collaborative efforts facilitated by the UNITA Datacloud, reinforcing efficient communication and coordination within the Alliance.

Outcome / Establishment and maintenance of the UNITA public website

The establishment of the UNITA website in 2021 marks a significant milestone for the Alliance, providing a dynamic and comprehensive online hub. This platform serves as a virtual showcase, offering detailed insights into UNITA's history, its core mission, and the diverse activities undertaken by the member universities. The website is a living entity, regularly updated to ensure the latest information is accessible to internal and external stakeholders.

Structured into distinct sections, the website caters to various interests and audiences. For instance, there are dedicated sections for students, providing valuable resources and information pertinent to their engagement with UNITA. Likewise, research, mobility, and multilingualism have dedicated spaces, reflecting the Alliance's commitment to these key areas. The inclusion of constellation projects, calls, and media sections adds layers of depth to the website, allowing visitors to explore ongoing initiatives, participate in relevant calls, and engage with multimedia content. This multifaceted approach ensures that the website becomes a central point for communication, offering a wealth of information to stakeholders ranging from academia to the general civil society. In essence, the UNITA website serves as more than just a digital presence; it acts as a dynamic tool for communication, outreach, and engagement, aligning with UNITA's mission to foster collaboration and innovation in the European higher education sector.

Outcome / Establishment and maintenance of the UNITA virtual campus

The UNITA Virtual Campus, #UVC, has been conceived as an expansive educational, research, and management information system, meticulously designed to integrate federated services for a diverse and dynamic academic community. Its groundbreaking architecture prioritizes the seamless interconnection of services and infrastructures. The #UVC serves as a unified entry point, granting users access to digital services and user-generated content based on their access

levels. Remarkably, the #UVC is exclusively founded on open-source technologies.

The open-source model for #UVC represents a decentralized software development approach that actively encourages collaboration. Allowing interested individuals access to the source code, blueprints, and documentation, this approach fosters collaboration, facilitating the development of new features and solutions to overcome potential limitations. The functional prototype of #UVC places a significant emphasis on ensuring security, flexibility, and scalability, both in terms of applications and user capacity.

This approach, driven by openness and collaboration, has led to the creation of a robust and adaptable educational platform, paving the way for a more inclusive and innovative academic environment within the UNITA Alliance.

Impact / 149.356 European Student Cards (ESC) issued at the UNITA level
The European Student Card (ESC) implemented by the UNITA Alliance is a comprehensive tool that combines a physical student card and a digital account, streamlining administrative processes and providing a unified means of identity verification throughout a student's academic journey. With a total issuance of 149.356 ESCs at the UNITA level, this initiative significantly impacts the student experience.

The ESC serves as tangible proof of student status, facilitating traditional functions such as student ID verification during exams. Beyond its conventional role, the ESC seamlessly integrates with digital services, granting access to e-learning platforms, email packages, and global wireless systems. For physical access control, the student card component of the ESC is employed, ensuring secure identification for building access and examination rooms.

In addition to academic functionalities, the ESC incorporates financial features, allowing students to conduct transactions for services like accommodation, meals, printing, and general payments. The ESC extends its impact to cultural and transport benefits, offering discounts on cultural events, public transportation, and rail transport.

By unifying these services under the ESC, the UNITA Alliance aims to enhance the overall student experience, foster a sense of community, and contribute to the broader goal of minimizing administrative procedures through digital innovation. The ESC not only serves as a practical tool for daily university life but also aligns with the Alliance's commitment to a sustainable, "zero paper" approach, exemplifying the impact of digital solutions on modern higher education.

6.

UNITA mobility for all

While it is no longer necessary to prove the benefits of mobility for students and staff, it remains crucial to emphasize that mobility is a powerful means of fortifying connections between institutions. For this reason, the Alliance places a significant focus on increasing mobility, especially among UNITA institutions, making it a primary concern. In this context, the objective of this work package is to cultivate resources and tools that actively promote and support student and staff mobility, particularly within the UNITA network. To do so, a team of academic and administrative expert staff from the partner universities, consisting of UNITA Work Package 6, developed and implemented new forms of mobilities and practices to facilitate mobility.

The UNITA community of practice plays a pivotal role by providing support and facilitating the realization of this ambition. Local institutions associated with the project have not only expressed their commitment but also their eagerness to enhance support for students, with a specific emphasis on encouraging mobility for students from rural areas, incorporating social criteria into the initiative.

Activity 6.1 / Developing new forms of original UNITA mobilities for all

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Developing new forms of original UNITA mobilities for all	Internal analysis to unfold the barriers and drivers to mobility through a survey participated by 13.662 people	Development of new forms of mobilities resulting in a total of 1.755 student mobilities activated within the Alliance	Increased interest by students in the new form of mobility applications over the

Output / Internal analysis to unfold the barriers and drivers to mobility through a survey participated by 13.662 people

The transformative journey towards enhanced mobilities within the UNITA Alliance has been guided by a meticulous internal analysis. In an effort to systematically identify and address barriers to mobility, a comprehensive survey was conducted across all six universities, involving an impressive 13.662 participants. This crucial analysis was conducted by a math intern student under the supervision of a UNITA professor from UPPA who was also in charge of the activities related to UNITA's mobilities.

The survey, administered to students, Ph.D. candidates, and administrative and academic staff, aimed to pinpoint specific challenges hindering mobility. Through a nuanced examination, the analysis revealed that each institution within UNITA faces distinct obstacles. Despite common issues such as communication gaps or financial constraints, the tailored strategies necessary for overcoming these challenges must account for the unique contexts of each university.

A notable revelation from the analysis was the identification of a unique challenge for administrative staff concerning the recognition of internationalization in their careers. This

nuanced insight underscores the imperative of developing targeted interventions tailored to this specific demographic within the Alliance and the relevance of UNITA as an international actor with the potential to successfully address this issue.

The impact of this internal analysis transcends the identification of barriers; it prompts a reflection on UNITA's identity as a European University. The findings sparked a crucial discussion on how the Alliance can inspire more efficient strategies to overcome obstacles and optimize mobility experiences for all members.

As a result, this internal analysis serves as a cornerstone for the development of innovative strategies within UNITA. It provides a navigational compass for the Alliance, steering the formulation of targeted interventions, fostering collaboration through benchmarking, and tailoring strategies to specific demographics. Ultimately, it propels UNITA towards a more cohesive and effective approach to promoting mobility, reinforcing its commitment to equitable international experiences for all the Alliance's community members.

Outcome / 1.755 student mobilities activated within the Alliance.
Based on the results of the internal questionnaire distributed to all students across the six universities, the UNITA mobility team has introduced new forms of student mobilities. Two key distinctions can be made to categorize these mobilities: the first involves virtual, blended, or physical mobilities, and the second distinguishes between mobilities with ECTS and those without ECTS. ECTS stands for European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. It is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students across the European Union and other collaborating European countries.

The UNITA team has developed four new forms of mobility:
- Virtual Mobilities (VM): These correspond to fully online lessons, adapted from existing courses within UNITA, with no associated ECTS constraints.
- UNITA Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP): Involves sharing Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Program applications within the Alliance to support co-organized activities. The number of shared applications is predetermined.

- UNITA Collaborative International Learning (UCIL): Corresponds to co-built courses, mirroring the COIL model. UNITA teachers share part of their course, gathering students for collaborative international activities. Leveraging ERASMUS country advantages, teachers may use internal staff training grants for physical movement to partner institutions. The UNITA version simplifies the COIL model, removing the systematic online modality.
- UNITA Rural Mobilities (URM): also called Rural Erasmus internships, the URM entails an international experience for students spending three weeks to two months in a rural area within the UNITA territories for professional training. Rural mobilities are further detailed in activity 6.2.

The integration of UNITA activities into regular studies is crucial, especially when corresponding to ECTS. In total, these international activities have led to the implementation of 2.472 new forms of mobility. Table 4 shows the new forms of mobilities based on the two identified distinctions.

Table 4. New forms of mobility

Name	Virtual, blended, or physical	ECTS
UNITA Collaborative International Learning (UCIL)	Blended	With ECTS
Virtual Mobility (VM)	Virtual	No ECTS
UNITA rural mobility	Physical	With ECTS
UNITA Blended Intensive Programs (BIP)	Blended	With ECTS

Impact / Increased interest by students in the new form of mobility applications over the years.
The impact of UNITA's innovative mobility offerings is evident in the heightened student interest, reflected in the increased number of applications for Blended Intensive Programs (BIPs) and Rural Mobilities (those for which data was available). This surge in applications, illustrated in Figure 8, serves as a compelling indicator of the positive reception and engagement with the new mobility initiatives. The growing demand underscores the success of UNITA's strategic approach in catering to diverse student preferences and fostering enthusiasm for varied international experiences within the Alliance.

Figure 8. Number of applications to BIPS and Rural Mobilities

URM total applications

Outgoing BIP applications (from UNITO)

2021-2022 157

2022-2023 522

2023-2024* 887

■ Series 1
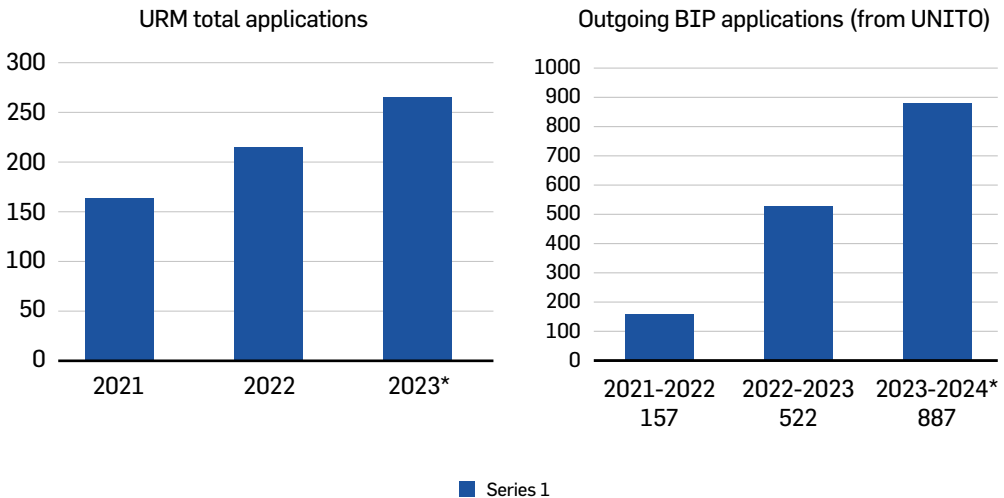
This column shows the projected growth of application in the following year

Activity 6.2 / development and implementation of Rural Erasmus internships

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Development and implementation of UNITA Rural Mobility (URM)	Development and implementation of 313 URM	85 organizations from the local socioeconomic environment engaged in the URM	Activation of an international research on URMs and dissemination activities to society

Output / Development and implementation of 313 UNITA Rural Mobilities (URM)

During the period 2021-2023, 313 rural mobilities were successfully implemented under the UNITA Alliance.

The UNITA Rural Mobility (URM) initiative facilitated international experiences for students, lasting between three weeks and two months, as they engaged in professional training within entities located in rural areas within the UNITA territories. This initiative, encompassing governmental or non-governmental, socio-economic, or cultural entities, allowed students to both work and reside in these rural regions.

The achievement of this result was made possible through dedicated efforts in promoting the UNITA Rural Mobility Initiative within the universities. Both academic and administrative staff actively contributed to the promotion, explaining the nature of the initiative and guiding students on the application process through various channels, including email, social media, individual counselling, and online/offline presentations and workshops. This comprehensive promotional activity successfully reached the entire UNITA student community, totaling 160,000 individuals. Figure 9 visually represents the distribution of URMs across each hosting institution.

Figure 9. Number of URMs activated in each hosting institution.

41 Savoie - Mont Blanc

29 Pays de l'Adour

45 Timişoara

56 Beira Interior

42 Piedmont

100 Aragon
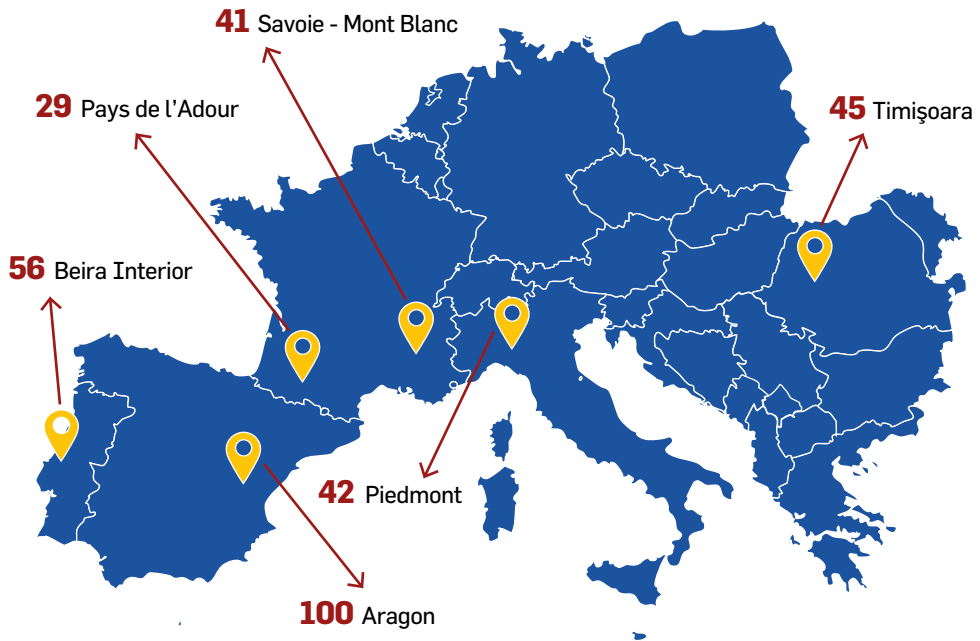
Outcome / 85 organizations from the local socioeconomic environment engaged in the URM

The UNITA Rural Mobility (URM) initiative not only serves as a valuable opportunity for the personal and professional development of students engaged in the program but also presents a mutually beneficial prospect for the host institutions and entities involved. Over the period 2021-2023, a total of 333 rural mobilities took place within the UNITA Alliance, fostering international experiences for students lasting between three weeks and two months.

The success of the URM initiative can be attributed to dedicated efforts in promoting the program within the universities. Through various communication channels, including email, social media, individual counselling, and presentations, the initiative reached the entire UNITA student

community, totaling 160,000 individuals. This widespread promotional activity facilitated engagements with 86 local organizations in rural areas, ranging from SMEs, NGOs, and public administration local offices to cultural organizations.

The unique approach of each university, considering regional variations and legislative differences, is evident in their specific strategies for contacting local partners and disseminating the URM concept. Notable examples include the University of Beira Interior (UBI), which produced a promotional video and organized a workshop on exploring biodiversity. The University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour (UPPA) emphasized continuous engagement with local partners, ensuring free accommodation and a living allowance for incoming students. Universitatea de Vest din Timisoara (UVT) focused on collaborative initiatives with specific partners aligned with UNITA's priorities.

The impact of these efforts is demonstrated in the positive outcomes and testimonials from various universities. The University of Turin (UniTo) engaged social enterprises for the sustainable development of rural areas, while the University of Zaragoza highlighted the close collaboration with local partners, resulting in a significant number of places offered.

URM students, residing for three weeks to two months in small towns with high depopulation rates, not only carried out activities in entities but also interacted with neighbors, immersed themselves in local daily life, and contributed to the community's culture. This direct engagement had a substantial impact on both inhabitants and entity users, fostering an international perspective and contributing to the entities' objectives.

Impact / Research and dissemination activities on URM
The remarkable impact on both students and local communities of the URM project is substantiated by the research activities and public dissemination events, particularly the international research project. This project engaged not only UNITA universities (specifically UNITO, UNIZAR, USMB) but also universities outside the Alliance, including Università del Piemonte Orientale (UPO) and Università degli Studi dell'Insubria. This broader collaboration demonstrates that the attractiveness of this new form of mobility has transcended the boundaries of the UNITA Alliance, indicating its expanding influence and appeal.

The culmination of this research project was the "Rural Mobilities and Changing Rural Imaginaries: The Role of Academia and Research" international workshop hosted at the University of Turin on December 15, 2023. The workshop presented outcomes focusing on the role of rural mobility initiatives in producing and promoting differentiated ruralities. It delved into questions about evolving imaginaries of rurality, changing mobilities in rural areas, the impact of temporal mobilities, and the relations between mobilities and processes of rural hybridization. The discussion also emphasized the role of academia, drawing insights from the experiences of the UNITA's URMs.

The goal was to facilitate a dynamic, multi-level discussion on the potential of temporary mobilities in supporting local development trajectories, aiming to strengthen the relationship between the university and territory by identifying rural areas as centers for higher education.

In addition to the academic workshop, URM's impact extended to society through various dissemination activities:
• Experiences on Social Networks: after URM experiences, information was shared on the social media platforms of each UNITA partner university and the UNITA Alliance. Students were encouraged to post about their experiences on their own social media, tagging the universities and UNITA. Some partners, like UVT, even had incoming URM students take over social media profiles to share their experiences.
• News on the Mass Media: the initiative benefited participating students by providing a unique rural living experience and enhancing their professional skills in an intercultural context. The universities established close ties with territories and shared knowledge. The UVT, for example, produced video materials with testimonies of students, hosts, and university representatives, showcasing the impact on local communities2. Feedback sessions indicated strong support from local communities, benefiting them directly and indirectly through contributions to sustainable regional development.

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2 The videos are publicly available on YouTube at the following links: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbSgzHtymoo and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UjRpaFyGSo.

Activity 6.3 / Digitalizing and facilitating mobility

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Digitalizing and facilitating mobility	Digitalization of administrative mobility processes and implementation of the flexibility window	Publication of a framework of skills developed during the UNITA mobilities	A total of 2.473 UNITA mobilities were activated involving students, administrative staff, and academic staff

Output / Digitalization of administrative mobility processes and implementation of the flexibility window
The UNITA Alliance has undertaken two key strategies to facilitate mobility: the digitalization of administrative processes and the development and implementation of the flexibility window. In the realm of digitalization, four major initiatives have been executed:

- Erasmus Without Paper (EWP): EWP streamlines student mobility management, offering a secure online exchange network for higher education institutions. All six UNITA universities are part of EWP, utilizing various IT infrastructures.
- Inter-institutional Agreements (IIAs): Five out of six UNITA universities have transitioned IIAs from paper to digital format through EWP. This transition supports efficient bilateral and multilateral mobility exchanges within Erasmus+.
- Digital Learning Agreement (LA): The transition from paper-based Learning Agreements to digital Online Learning Agreements aligns with the European Student Card Initiative. Five out of six universities are implementing digital OLAs for both incoming and outgoing student mobilities.
- European Student Card Initiative (ESCI): All UNITA universities issue the European Student Card, supporting the digitalization of administrative procedures and information exchange between HEIs and students.

The second strategy involves the development of flexibility windows to support personalized study paths. The Flexibility Window (FW) concept allows students to choose courses in the host curriculum that may not precisely align with their home curriculum, enhancing student-centered approaches. The FW represents courses that students can select within a defined limit, deviating up to 20% of the total number of credits for the entire mobility period. This initiative aims to provide greater adaptability, enriched student experiences, and streamlined academic paths across all member universities. The implementation varies among universities, with some focusing on the embedded version—where subjects at the home university are replaced with subjects from another field of study at the hosting university.

At the current stage, only UniTo and UVT have integrated the FW opportunity at the institutional level (embedded version), while other universities start with the extracurricular version, where the courses done under the Flexibility Window definition are included in the diploma supplement but not recognized as part of the degree. In light of these achievements and ongoing challenges, the UNITA Alliance remains ambitious about expanding the concept of the Flexibility Window in future years. This initiative aims to provide greater adaptability, enriched student experiences, and streamlined academic paths across all member universities.

Outcome / Publication of a framework of skills developed during the UNITA mobilities

The main challenge faced by UNITA's innovative mobility initiatives lies in the partial integration of these experiences into students' academic paths. Despite this, recognizing the skills developed during these international activities has prompted pragmatic efforts to enhance skill acquisition, ensuring a more effective transition into the job market and increasing the attractiveness of UNITA mobilities. The Alliance has addressed this by establishing a dedicated group of counselors who actively guide learners in aligning substantive content with skills gained from UNITA international experiences. Employing a conceptual framework for skill identification, UNITA's experts have compiled a comprehensive list validating skills associated with various types of UNITA mobility. Table 5 presents the identified skills for each original UNITA mobility, showcasing a strategic initiative to bridge the gap between experiential learning and tangible skill development.

Table 5. Framework of skills
developed during UNITA mobilities

Type of mobility	Skills	Related attitudes	UNITA mobility
International learning experience involving a whole classroom and its teacher from each international partner.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness to different points of view. Interest in languages. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas.	UNITA Collaborative International Learning.
International learning experience based on online mode.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Learning orientation.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Interest in languages. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. Curiosity. Motivation to pursue and succeed in learning throughout one's life.	Virtual Mobility.
Online learning experience involving a group composed of international students.	Intercultural skills. Adapting.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness to different points of view. Interest in languages.	Inter-comprehension courses. Tandem & Language café.

Type of mobility	Skills	Related attitudes	UNITA mobility
International learning experience based on both online and face-to-face periods; the latter involves a group of international students.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork. Learning orientation.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness to different points of view. Interest in languages. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas. Responsibility. Curiosity. Willingness to apply the effects of prior learning.	UNITA Blended Intensive Programs.
Immersing experience abroad based on a contribution to the socio-economical development of a rural zone.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork. Organization and time-management.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness to different points of view. Interest in languages. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas. Assertiveness. Responsibility. Proactiveness.	UNITA Rural Mobility.

Type of mobility	Skills	Related attitudes	UNITA mobility
Online learning experience based on focused topics internationally co-designed, with targeted learning outcomes.	Adapting. Learning orientation.	Openness to new experiences. Curiosity. Motivation to pursue and succeed in learning throughout one's life. Willingness to apply the effects of prior learning.	UNITA microcredentials.
Collaborative experience of work involving international groups, aiming to promote European values towards educational and non-academic people.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork. Organization and time-management.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness to different points of view. Openness to new experiences. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas. Responsibility. Assertiveness.	European citizenship workshops.

Type of mobility	Skills	Related attitudes	UNITA mobility
International contests involving multi-cultural groups of students from various academic disciplines and levels.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Learning orientation. Teamwork. Organisation and time-management.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness to different points of view. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. Curiosity. Willingness to apply the effects of prior learning. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas. Responsibility. Assertiveness. Proactiveness.	UNITA Ideathon and Hackathon.

Impact / 2.473 mobilities activated involving students, administrative staff, and academic staff

The impactful results of the Alliance in promoting mobility are evident through the substantial increase in mobility within UNITA universities over the past three years. This surge in mobility encompasses not only 1.755 students but also extends to various categories of university staff, namely Ph.D. students, academic staff, and administrative staff. This remarkable achievement underscores the effectiveness of UNITA initiatives in fostering diverse and inclusive mobility experiences. It is noteworthy that these figures exclusively represent individuals directly engaged in UNITA-related activities, emphasizing the significant impact on both students and staff within the Alliance.

7.

UNITA strengthening European Identity, Citizenship & Values

The promotion of European citizenship and values, as a means to fortify the ongoing development of a European identity, stands as a pivotal focus within the endeavors of UNITA. The Alliance underscores the imperative role played by individuals residing in peripheral and less densely populated regions. Acknowledging the potential disaffection these regions may experience towards the values of the European construction process, UNITA strives to address this gap and amplify the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Notably, the UNITA Alliance serves as a unique entity, uniting universities located in peripheral, sparsely populated, cross-border, and mountainous regions, all sharing a commonality in their use of Romance languages. Through this collective effort, the Alliance aims to enrich the European identity-building process by harnessing the invaluable insights and experiences of individuals from these regions, thus fostering a more comprehensive and inclusive sense of European citizenship and values.

To do so, UNITA has actively engaged in fostering European citizenship by supporting multidisciplinary research on the topic and promoting teaching and dissemination efforts both to the students and wider societal communities. This approach aims to deepen the understanding and appreciation of European citizenship across diverse contexts. The impacts presented in this chapter spurred from the activities led by Work Package 7. To support this WP, a Local Coordinator was appointed in each campus to facilitate activities, utilizing the UNITA digital platform for online engagement. These diverse efforts aim to contribute to the continual evolution of European identity, citizenship, and values, fostering inclusivity across various social groups.

Activity 7.1 / Promoting EU citizenship and values to the student community

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Promoting EU citizenship and value to the student community	Organization of 12 workshops on European Citizenship and Values with a total of 802 participants	Implementation of 2 virtual mobility courses on European Citizenship followed by a total of 800 students	127 open digital badges for the European Citizenship course issued as long-lasting certification of impact

Output / Organization of 12 workshops on European Citizenship and Values with a total of 802 participants
12 workshops on European Citizenship and Values, led by specialized instructors and focusing on European identity and citizenship, occurred in two sessions across the six UNITA Universities. The first series took place in October 2021, followed by the second from October 2022 to December 2022. Specialists and academics in various fields integral to the European construction process facilitated these activities. Different approaches were employed, with some workshops having a general orientation and others delving into specific themes to enhance engagement. In total, 12 workshops engaged 802 students.

Survey results indicated high participant satisfaction, with valuable insights for future development. Participants appreciated diverse perspectives on European action and the impact of EU principles and values on responding to phenomena like the pandemic. The specialized profile of speakers and the opportunity for questions were well-received. Information on EU research project opportunities was also positively valued.

Suggestions included incorporating diverse participant categories (teachers, students, practitioners) to enrich

discussions. This impact statement highlights the success of the workshops in fostering understanding of European identity and citizenship, along with constructive feedback for future enhancements.

Outcome / Implementation of 2 virtual mobility courses on European Citizenship followed by a total of 800 students
Following the experiences gained from deploying workshops and leveraging the advancements in Virtual Mobility (see activity 6.1), two virtual mobility courses on European Citizenship were successfully implemented, engaging a total of 800 students. The first edition occurred between February and March 2023, followed by the second edition between September and October, concluding the activity within the period of validity of the UNITA Alliance project. These courses were designed around four modules, aiming to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental elements underpinning the European Construction Process.

The modules covered 4 key areas: History, Economy, Sustainable Development, and Law. Each module was led by a professor from one of the UNITA Universities, specializing directly in the content of the respective module. Students had the chance to enroll in all the modules as well as just in those they were interested in.

Considering the substantial number of participants, primarily students from UNITA Alliance Universities, it can be concluded that the objectives of disseminating the main elements of European Identity among the university communities, especially the students, have been successfully achieved through this distance-learning course. The quality of the virtual mobility course is underscored by the remarkable increase in participants, which rose by a factor of 100%, showcasing its effectiveness in reaching and engaging a broad audience.

Impact / 127 open digital badges for the European Citizenship course issued as long-lasting certification of impact
The students who participated in the virtual mobility course on European Citizenship and successfully passed the exam for at least two modules received a digital badge certifying

their course participation and the acquisition of the respective competences and skills. Specifically, the badge validates the acquisition of the following competences in each module:

- History Module: students are able to select key milestones in the history of European integration, be familiar with major texts on the topic, and explain the main lines of historical context based on archival documents.
- Law Module: students are familiar with the rights derived from EU citizenship status. These rights are introduced to students through the evolution of the Court of Justice of the European Union jurisprudence, facilitating an updated and contextual understanding.
- Sustainable Development Module: students have the necessary knowledge to engage as responsible and informed citizens in a rapidly evolving world, focusing on the context of European citizenship.
- Economics Module: students acquired knowledge about various economic aspects of the European integration process. Students should be able to identify key stages of the European economic integration process and explain the economic implications of European citizenship.

The badge also attests to the acquisition of the following soft skills: participating in an interdisciplinary and intercultural course in English, communicating in English, and adapting to an intercultural context, in accordance with the skills framework identified for UNITA mobilities (see activity 6.3). In total, 127 digital badges have been issued.

Activity 7.2 / Promoting EU citizenship and value to society

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Promoting EU citizenship and value to society	Organization of 12 workshops in rural and mountain areas on European Citizenship and Values with a total of 802 participants	Organization of 9 courses on European Identity and Citizenship for rural communities with 248 total participants	UNITA university students acting as ambassadors for the promotion of EU Citizenship and Identity engaged over 1000 local high school students

Output / Organization of 12 workshops in rural and mountain areas on European Citizenship and Values with a total of 802 participants

The UNITA's objective of promoting EU citizenship and values extends beyond the communities of its member universities, encompassing rural communities in the regions where the universities are situated. These rural communities share common elements that characterize the UNITA Alliance, notably border regions, mountains, and the southern part of the European construction project. The Alliance seeks to achieve a dual purpose concerning these regions: firstly, deepening the understanding of the concept of European Citizenship to facilitate the progressive consolidation of a European Identity, and secondly, gathering ideas and concerns from these communities to shape the potential evolution of European Citizenship to better address the unique challenges of UNITA Alliance regions.

To fulfil this objective, one of the key activities undertaken was the development of workshops. These workshops served as a means of translating the experiences gained from online sessions within the respective universities to rural settlements in the territories of each UNITA Alliance University. As outlined in the project, each of the six member universities organized

two workshops in rural locations, resulting in a total of 12 workshops with active participation from 396 individuals. This accomplishment is particularly noteworthy given the challenges posed by factors such as low population density and the dispersal of inhabitants in these regions.

These workshops primarily targeted the populations of rural settlements, with additional consideration given to other groups, including migrants or refugees. Special attention was paid to ensuring gender balance among workshop participants. The twelve workshops, organized into two rounds, took place from October 2021 to February 2022 and from November 2022 to May 2023.

Survey results from participants indicated highly positive outcomes. Participants, both in their questionnaire responses and in the debates held during the workshops, expressed a heightened understanding of European Citizenship and its implications for the inhabitants of regions similar to those hosting UNITA Alliance universities.

Furthermore, the discussions and papers developed during the workshops provided insights into the specific concerns of the inhabitants of these territories, which could potentially shape the future evolution of European Citizenship. Therefore, the second objective of the Alliance UNITA regarding this activity has been sufficiently met. Participants' responses also highlighted issues to be considered for the future development of activities aligned with these objectives, tailored to the unique needs of the inhabitants of these territories.

Outcome / Organization of 9 courses on European Identity and Citizenship for rural communities with 248 total participants
Following the experiences gained from deploying workshops, 9 full courses on European Identity and Citizenship for rural communities have been implemented. The objective of organizing customized courses on European Identity and Citizenship was to disseminate knowledge among various demographic groups, including rural inhabitants, refugees, and migrants. These 9 courses aimed to enhance participants' understanding of European identity and citizenship values, as well as raise awareness about the benefits derived from the rights inherent in European citizenship. Additionally, the

courses sought to assess the perception of these concepts and the European Union project among the targeted groups, with the overarching goal of ensuring their interests and concerns are duly considered in the future development of the European Union.

The courses were conducted in the rural territories of multiple universities, namely the University of Zaragoza, the Western University of Timisoara, and the University of Pau et des Pays de l'Adour. Covering topics such as the European Union, European Citizenship, and EU policies, the activities were tailored to specific regions and populations. The Courses organized in each territory were:

- Aragon (University of Zaragoza): Personalized courses were organized in several towns, focusing on rural populations and migrants. The sessions included presentations on the UNITA project, fostering debates on the perception of European Citizenship and the European construction process.
- Timis (Western University of Timisoara): Two editions of a personalized course were organized in the territories, complementing university teachings with one-hour courses and seminars per week for 14 weeks. The course covered various aspects, including the European Union, European Citizenship, EU institutions, and policies.
- Aspe Valley (University of Pau et des Pays de l'Adour): A course was conducted in the Aspe Valley, targeting the inhabitants of the Pyrenean region. The focus was on highlighting opportunities arising from the European construction process and European Citizenship to address rural mountain area depopulation. Additionally, the university organized specific meetings for the migrant population.

In total, 248 participants engaged in the customized courses on European Identity and Citizenship. The success of these courses, particularly in reaching rural and mountain area populations, underscores the importance of reinforcing their sense of belonging to the European Construction Process. The substantial number of participants and their active involvement in debates highlight the initiative's effectiveness in disseminating knowledge of European identity and citizenship. This success sets the stage for future activities in the second phase of the project.

Impact / UNITA university students acting as ambassadors for the promotion of EU Citizenship and Identity engaged over 1000 local high school students

The UNITA students, initially the primary beneficiaries of EU citizenship dissemination courses and workshops, evolved into ambassadors, assuming a crucial role in instilling the values of EU citizenship among high school students. In fact, to address potential gaps in the educational systems of Member States regarding the understanding of European Citizenship, each member university initiated activities with local high school students, led by UNITA students acting as ambassadors. These Ambassadors played a pivotal role in bridging the gap and acted as conduits of information, sharing the advantages of European Citizenship with their younger counterparts. This approach yielded two positive contributions: high school students felt a greater connection due to the proximity in age of those explaining the benefits of being a European citizen, and university students deepened their commitment to Citizenship and the European idea through their dissemination work. The specific activities carried out by the ambassadors of the UNITA universities were:

- University of Zaragoza: ambassadors visited multiple high schools, engaging in debates and discussions about European Citizenship. Moreover, an exhibition at Gallicum High School was set up, featuring the Director of the UNITA Office and a Law professor.
- University of Turin: promotion of the project "Save The Date - Fragments of a Civil Calendar," focusing on "European identity" and fundamental events in a civil calendar. This project led to the collaborative creation of a calendar highlighting significant recent milestones in the process of European Integration.
- University of Beira Interior: activities were implemented at Frei Heitor Pinto Secondary School in Covilhã, addressing topics such as European Union values and identity.
- University of Pau et des Pays de l'Adour: activities at the High School of Mourenx and St John Perse High School to promote European identity and citizenship.
- University of the West of Timisoara: organization of a meeting at the High School Eftimie Murgu, where students shared insights into the benefits and challenges of participating in mobility programs.
- University of Savoie Mont Blanc: activities where students acted as Ambassadors of European Citizenship to

promote knowledge and awareness of European identity and citizenship were carried out. Moreover, the UNITA ambassadors participated in the Eco-Citizen Forum and the organization of European Citizenship afternoons at Lycée Jean Monnet, Annemasse, France.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, nearly 1,000 high school students participated in these activities. The willingness of these young students to engage in debates was a positive element, encouraging the continuation of such initiatives in the second phase of the UNITA Alliance project. Moreover, the number of students from UNITA Universities acting as Ambassadors of European citizenship has progressively increased, with positive feedback and satisfaction expressed by those involved. Overall, despite the obstacles faced, the impact of this dissemination work can be considered satisfactorily achieved.

Activity 7.3 / Promoting EU citizenship and value through research

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Digitalizing and facilitating mobility	Organization of an open conference on European Citizenship	UNITA promotes interest in EU Citizenship research to the student community through prizes for master's and bachelor's theses	Activation of a Ph.D. position on EU Citizenship

Output / Organization of an open conference on European Citizenship
To disseminate and promote research on EU Identity, citizenship, and values, a one-day conference on European citizenship was organized, marking the second installment of its kind. Scheduled for November 25, 2022, at the Presidency of the Université Savoie Mont Blanc (USMB) in Chambéry, this conference aimed to bring together scholars, specialists, and the general public. Open to everyone upon registration, the event was led by a dozen experts from UNITA member universities, covering diverse topics related to European citizenship, including its history, European law, the rule of law crisis, fundamental rights, the environment, and migrations. Noteworthy figures like Philippe Galez, President of the USMB, and Alfonso De Salas, former Head of the Division of Intergovernmental Cooperation on Human Rights and Secretary of the Steering Committee for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, inaugurated and concluded the conference.

The presentations delved into crucial aspects of European identity and citizenship, providing comprehensive insights into the current state of affairs. The event was not limited to physical attendance; it was also broadcast live, allowing a wider audience to engage in the discussions. To ensure accessibility, registration

was required for both in-person and webcast participation, with the webcast link sent to registered participants before the event. As a lasting contribution, the conference proceedings were recorded and made publicly available on YouTube, extending the impact of the event beyond its immediate audience[3].

Outcome / UNITA awards prizes for master's and bachelor's theses on European Citizenship
UNITA has taken proactive measures to bolster interest in EU citizenship research by instituting prizes for bachelor's and master's degree theses on the topic[4]. Over the course of three years, the remarkable surge in submissions attests to the transformative impact UNITA is achieving in cultivating a heightened curiosity and engagement with EU citizenship research among students.

The introduction of these prizes has not only incentivized academic exploration but has also underscored UNITA's commitment to fostering a deeper understanding of EU citizenship. The substantial increase in the number of submitted theses signals a growing interest in this vital area of study. This initiative not only recognizes and rewards outstanding academic work but also serves as a catalyst for nurturing a community of students passionate about contributing to the discourse on EU citizenship. The positive trajectory in submission numbers serves as a tangible measure of UNITA's success in instilling a sense of enthusiasm and curiosity among students, thus leaving a lasting impact on the landscape of EU citizenship research.

Impact / Activation of a Ph.D. position on EU Citizenship
To foster research on EU citizenship and values, UNITA initiated a Ph.D. position dedicated to this topic. The long-term impact of this Ph.D. position on both academic and societal communities will be continuously monitored in the coming years. This specific Ph.D. research, initiated with an interview in October 2020 and focusing on the evolution and perception of EU citizenship, aligns seamlessly with the overarching purpose of the intra-university union. Particularly catering to young

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3 The recording of the conference is available at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9yGzjX87KU.
4 A list of the winning theses is available at: https://univ-UNITA.eu/Sites/UNITA/en/Pagina/UNITA#repository.

EU citizens residing in border areas of the Union, the research delves into the interplay between cross-border mobility and EU citizenship, emphasizing rural and mountainous contexts. Operating within the geographical context of the UNITA Alliance, encompassing border and mountainous regions facing similar challenges, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of EU citizenship in specific geographical contexts. It resonates with the Alliance's mission to develop and protect linguistic and cultural diversity, mirroring UNITA institutions' advocacy for linguistic diversity using Romance languages alongside English.

By exploring legal frameworks, empirical data, and compelling case studies, the research unveils the dynamic relationship between cross-border mobility and the evolving concept of EU citizenship. Notably, it offers real-world insights into the practical implications of these dynamics within EU border areas, reflecting the impactful trajectory of this Ph.D. position.

Commencing with the selection of a Ph.D. candidate based at the Universitatea de Vest Timisoara, the research's evolution has been marked by active engagement with fellow researchers, UNITA workshops, and related events. This collaborative approach underscores the adaptability of research to meet the specific needs of regions, transitioning from a general analysis of EU citizenship to a specialized study in border areas.

As of October 2023, the Ph.D. candidate is in her fourth year of the thesis, targeting the finalization and submission of her work by October 2024. Along the way, she presented two papers at impactful research conferences, contributing valuable insights to the UNTA European Citizenship Conference and the Annual International Ph.D. Conference organized by the West University of Timisoara. A mid-term publication synthesizing the main argument of her research further reinforces the significant impact of this Ph.D. position within the broader framework of the UNITA Alliance.

8.

UNITA sustainability and dissemination to ensure the continuity and uptake of the Alliance

In its pursuit of long-term sustainability and autonomy, UNITA envisions the establishment of a fully-fledged, self-funded European university. This ambitious objective is steered by the dedicated efforts of Work Package 8, a task force instrumental in laying the groundwork for achieving this overarching goal. This Work package concentrated on critical aspects such as ensuring the financial sustainability of the project, formulating an effective dissemination and promotion strategy to enhance UNITA's visibility in society, and engaging in diverse international activities to bolster the Alliance's presence in the global higher education landscape.

The ultimate vision for UNITA as a European university is intricately linked to its financial viability. This sustainability will be realized through a multifaceted approach, including the pursuit of follow-up future projects, collaboration with private associated members, and the delivery of cutting-edge teaching, research, and innovation services to its audience. Central to this vision is UNITA's strategic alignment with a broad network of universities, both in Europe and overseas, sharing a commonality in the use of Romance languages. This expansive connection is poised to be a cornerstone in UNITA's journey towards financial autonomy, solidifying its position as a dynamic and self-sustaining force within the European higher education landscape.

Activity 8.1 / Ensuring the uptake of the Alliance

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
Ensuring the uptake of the Alliance	Winning the EU call for European Universities	€10,2 million in additional funding equal to 204% of the initial budget provided by the European Universities call	Creation of the UNITA GEIE: the Alliance's legal entity
			UNITA constellation projects

**Output / Winning the EU call for European Universities**
UNITA, established in 2020, stands as a testament to the transformative power of the European University Call under the Erasmus+ program, which allocated a substantial budget of €120 million to 24 university Alliances across the EU. UNITA, a proud beneficiary of this initiative, has harnessed its initial funding to pioneer a paradigm shift in European higher education. The overarching goal is to create a dynamic and interconnected European higher education landscape, fostering mobility, joint degrees, and innovative collaborative strategies.

UNITA's distinctiveness lies in three foundational characteristics shared among its member institutions. Firstly, these universities are strategically located in rural mountain regions, namely Serra da Estrela (Beira Interior), Pyrenees (Pau and Zaragoza), Alps (Savoie Mont Blanc and Turin), and Banat (Timisoara). Secondly, they are situated in cross-border areas of Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe, presenting shared challenges and fostering collaborative solutions. Thirdly, UNITA universities are committed to linguistic diversity, actively utilizing languages beyond English, thereby promoting inclusion, and enriching the educational experience.

Crucially, UNITA's strength emanates from its collective commitment to innovative teaching and research practices, with a particular focus on Renewable Energy, Cultural Heritage, and Circular Economy. These thematic areas have been strategically chosen for their profound impact on ecosystem sustainability, the development of rural and decentralized areas, and the enhancement of employability for both students and citizens. Through UNITA's concerted efforts, these universities not only transcend traditional cooperation models but also serve as a beacon of good practice, elevating the quality, competitiveness, and attractiveness of European higher education. The Alliance is actively contributing to the realization of the vision for European Universities, exemplifying the transformative potential of collaborative and forward-thinking educational initiatives.

Outcome / €10,2 million in additional funding equal to 204% of the initial budget provided by the European Universities call
The UNITA alliance, in its pilot phase, has demonstrated remarkable resource mobilization and ensured its financial sustainability to amplify its impact. Since its inception, UNITA has secured additional funding from various projects equal to €10.2 million, amounting to 204% of its initial budget. This impressive achievement signifies that the final total UNITA budget in its pilot phase has more than tripled compared to the initial EU budget provided by the European University Call for the establishment of the alliance, highlighting its capacity for growth and expansion. The sources of this additional funding encompass diverse avenues, including the Erasmus+ programs, other EU funding initiatives, and non-EU sources. The contribution of each source is shown in Figure 10. This robust financial backing underscores UNITA's ability to leverage partnerships and seize opportunities, allowing the Alliance to fulfil its mission and drive meaningful societal change.

Figure 10. Additional funding per source

Erasmus +
18,7%

EU
34,5%

Other non EU
46,8%
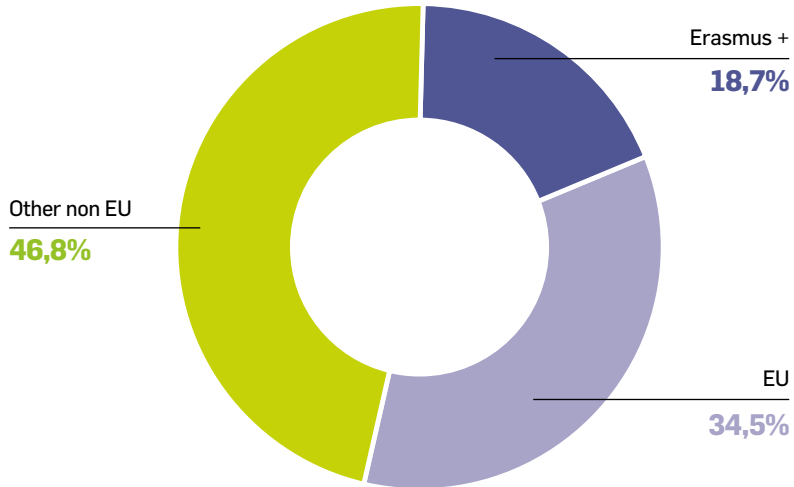
Impact / Creation of the UNITA GEIE: the Alliance's legal entity

On Friday, January 13, 2023, at the Rectorate of the University of Turin, the six universities comprising the UNITA Alliance achieved a historic milestone. They became the first University Alliance in Europe to sign the founding act of UNITA - Universitas Montium European Economic Interest Grouping (UNITA GEIE), built on the legal opportunity presented by the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) legal entity. This significant achievement solidifies UNITA as a fully-fledged and officially recognized legal entity within the European Union. The signing of the founding act at the University of Turin represents the culmination of collaborative efforts among the six member universities.

The UNITA GEIE serves as a powerful and effective tool, facilitating institutional collaboration among UNITA members and paving the way for the realization of the European University vision. This initiative aligns seamlessly with the

European Commission's higher education strategies, providing a transnational framework for academic collaboration at the European level. The primary objective of the GEIE is to enhance the operational efficiency of the Alliance in fulfilling the institutional missions of the universities. By fostering transdisciplinary partnerships and strengthening academic collaboration, the GEIE is poised to catalyze innovation not only within the territories served by the Alliance but also on a broader European scale. This legal constitution has a far-reaching impact, positioning UNITA as a transformative force in higher education, dedicated to providing excellence in training, research, and fostering a European dimension in education. The formation of the GEIE underscores UNITA's commitment to advancing the European University initiative and further solidifies its role as a pioneering force in transnational academic cooperation.

The UNITA GEIE entity is monitored and supported by EGAI, a UNITA project supported by national authorities in the field of higher education, the Alliance member universities, the Italian authority competent for the registration of the GEIE and other Alliances or entities interested. Moreover, the project intends to achieve beneficial results for the entire European Academic Community, and notably those Alliances wishing to test the GEIE.

Impact / UNITA constellation projects
Since its establishment, UNITA has successfully secured funding for additional projects (of which the financial contribution is presented in the outcome indicator of activity 8.1), known as the Constellation Projects, which complement and enhance specific aspects of the Alliance's initiatives. These projects, outlined below, showcase UNITA's commitment to innovation and comprehensive development:
- CONNECT UNITA: Focused on developing the virtual campus (UNITA WP 5), this project aims to strengthen UNITA's online presence and create a dynamic virtual environment that facilitates collaboration, learning, and engagement among students, researchers, and stakeholders.
- Re UNITA: Operating as a booster project to UNITA WP 4 (R&I), this initiative underscores UNITA's dedication to research and innovation. It seeks to amplify the impact of research activities within the Alliance, fostering a culture of innovation and knowledge dissemination.

- INNOUNITA: Centered on educational activities related to entrepreneurial mindsets in the R&I Hubs (WP 4), this project highlights UNITA's commitment to fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among its members. It aims to empower students and researchers with the skills and mindset needed for innovation and entrepreneurial success.
- U*Night: Aligned with UNITA WP 8, U*Night focuses on dissemination and impact on citizens. It represents UNITA's effort to engage with and make a positive impact on the broader community, creating awareness and understanding of European citizenship and values.
- Geminae Program: Geminae, part of UNITA's initiatives, establishes a global network of "sister" universities, fostering collaboration based on the quality of institutions. Initially focused on active cooperation between non-EU and UNITA's partners in Romance language-speaking countries, Geminae aims to grow continuously. The program facilitates student mobility, encouraging occasional settlement in UNITA's regions, addressing demographic challenges and promoting regional development in rural and mountainous areas.
- EGAI: The EGAI Project explores and facilitates the use of a European Grouping of Economic Interest (EEIG), marking a significant step in institutionalized university cooperation. This initiative showcases UNITA's forward-thinking approach and adaptability, paving the way for the creation of the UNITA- Universitas Montium European Grouping of Economic Interest (GEIE) (Activity 8.1)

In summary, these projects collectively highlight UNITA's multifaceted approach, encompassing virtual campus development, research and innovation boosters, entrepreneurial education, community engagement, and global partnerships. They underscore UNITA's dedication to shaping a dynamic and self-sustained impactful European University.

Activity 8.2 / UNITA dissemination and communication

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
UNITA dissemination and communication	UNITA visual identity	UNITA is present on 5 social media platforms with a total of 4.952 followers	Activation of the UNITA podcast
		UNITA news: 20.000 subscribers to the UNITA newsletter	12 patronages issued by UNITA to various initiatives and events

Output / UNITA Visual identity

A well-crafted visual identity is a powerful tool, capable of conveying the values of the organization it represents, establishing a connection with the audience, and leaving a memorable imprint in the minds of the people who see it. In essence, visual identity is the visual story that shapes how a brand is perceived and remembered. For these reasons, the creation of the UNITA visual identity, and specifically the creation of the logo (Figure 11) was a crucial first step for building UNITA dissemination, communication, and promotional activities.

Figure 11. The UNITA logo

The only text present in the logo is the name of the Alliance. The name UNITA, reminiscent of the Italian word "unità" symbolizes the strong bonds and shared characteristics uniting member universities in a groundbreaking Alliance dedicated to closer integration. The Latin subtitle, "Universitas Montium," emphasizes that UNITA universities, all using Romance languages, are devoted to fostering linguistic diversity and developing rural and cross-border mountain areas.

Given that all universities are European, the logo is enclosed in a four-sided polygon, referencing the square in the European Universities' logo. The polygon is interrupted at the bottom, creating a green line reminiscent of mountains. The five-pointed star signifies the unwavering connection to the European Union and its economic and political unity.

The logo's colors, blue and yellow, reflect the European Union flag, while green represents the mountains common to all universities. The red, used in the motto, is displayed because it appears in all the flags of the member universities' respective countries.

Outcome / UNITA is present on 5 social media platforms with a total of 4952 followers at the end of the pilot phase
After establishing its visual identity, UNITA launched accounts on five social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube. Over the first three years, these accounts have amassed a total of 4.952 followers. UNITA tailors its content for each platform, with Instagram being particularly active, boasting 2.000 followers, predominantly students.

The UNITA Instagram page provides engaging insights into the Alliance's activities and collaborations with other organizations. To date, the page has published 265 posts and received 255 tags, highlighting its extensive network and connections with organizations in the territories of the member universities.

Outcome / UNITA news: 20000 subscribers to the UNITA newsletter
UNITA has proactively disseminated and promoted its initiatives through a monthly newsletter named "UNITA Newsletter." This publication caters to the extensive community

of students, academic staff members, and technical and administrative staff members across the UNITA community.

With a substantial subscriber base of 20.000 individuals, the newsletter has successfully released 22 monthly editions, each featuring 6 to 12 informative articles. By subscribing to the UNITA newsletter, individuals gain access to a wealth of information, including opportunities for new forms of mobility, Blended Intensive Programs, open calls, awards, workshops, seminars, research opportunities, and more.

The impact extends beyond the digital realm, as UNITA's presence is well-documented in public press coverage. The University of Turin (UniTo) news has dedicated 70 articles to UNITA, showcasing its significance. Furthermore, local newspapers in the regions of member universities have also contributed promotional articles, underlining the Alliance's recognition and impact on both local community and university levels.

Impact / Activation of the UNITA podcast
UNITA has successfully expanded its reach and values through the establishment of the UNITA podcast published on two platforms "Podbean" and "Spreaker". Since its initiation in 2021, a total of 21 podcast episodes have been published, fostering engagement and communication within the diverse linguistic landscape of UNITA's member universities.
The podcast is called "The Universitas montium's Podcast".

These podcasts, delivered not only in English but also in the languages spoken in the countries of UNITA universities, exemplify the commitment to promoting intercomprehension among romance languages, as outlined in Activities 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. The podcast, which was not initially planned in the UNITA plan, delves into crucial aspects such as the innovative mobilities within UNITA, internationalization acceleration, opportunities for innovative solutions, and the relevance of European Alliances for constructing the European Higher Education Area 2030.

The impact of the podcast extends beyond mere dissemination, contributing significantly to the Alliance's mission. By embracing multilingual content, UNITA has facilitated a deeper connection with its audience, fostering a sense of

inclusivity and collaboration across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This initiative underscores UNITA's dedication to innovative communication strategies and its commitment to engaging a diverse and international audience in meaningful conversations.

Impact / 12 patronage issued by UNITA to various initiatives and events

As a testament to the impactful promotion and dissemination activities of UNITA, both university and non-university entities have begun to recognize the legitimacy and prestige of the Alliance. This recognition is evident in the 12 patronage requests that UNITA has received for various initiatives and events. The number of patronage requests received by UNITA, spanning events such as sustainability symposiums, online seminars, conferences on cultural transitions, and competitions like the European Law Moot Court, signifies the Alliance's broad impact across diverse academic and thematic domains.

This growing demand for UNITA's patronage underscores the Alliance's increasing influence and reputation, signifying its pivotal role in supporting and endorsing a diverse range of initiatives across different domains. It reflects the broad acknowledgement of UNITA's significance in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and societal impact within and beyond the academic realm.

Activity 8.3 / UNITA role model in shaping the EU higher education landscape

Activity	Output	Outcome	Impact
UNITA's role model in shaping the EU higher education landscape	Publication of the Manual of Best Practices	UNITA U*night	131 presentations of UNITA in external events

Output / Publication of the Manual of Bood Practices
The UNITA Alliance, reflecting on its transformative journey over the initial three years, has compiled a comprehensive manual of Best Practices encompassing nine distinctive initiatives. These best practices, ranging from Rural Mobility to the UNITA Constellation, serve as exemplars of innovation and collaboration. The manual meticulously delineates each best practice, providing concise descriptions, objectives, and specific characteristics. This valuable resource is openly accessible at the provided link, extending an invitation to fellow Alliances and stakeholders in the European higher education landscape to draw insights and inspiration from UNITA's unique qualities.
The list of Best Practices includes:
- Rural Mobility;
- Intercomprehension;
- BIPs (Blended Intensive Programs);
- Involvement of Student Representatives and Proactive Role within the Alliance;
- Research and Innovation Hubs;
- Promoting European Citizenship;
- Teaching & Learning Center Networks;
- Geminae Project;
- Legal Entity;
- Building UNITA Community: UNITA Days, Virtual Campus, Matching Events.

Outcome / Organization of the UNITA U★Night

UNITA's impactful role in shaping the European higher education landscape materialized through the organization of UNIGHT, a distinctive event held on September 29-30, 2023. Conceived as the "UNITA edition" of the European Researchers' Night, UNIGHT fostered an immersive experience involving researchers from five countries. This initiative aimed to deepen the dialogue between citizens and science, encouraging active participation in addressing contemporary social challenges.

U★NIGHT[5] provided a platform for a multifaceted exploration of the research world, featuring scientific cafés, talks, exhibitions, prototypes, experiments, concerts, and performances. The overarching objectives were to engage researchers in a meaningful dialogue with societal actors, showcase the tangible impact of research on daily life, and enhance citizens' proximity to science. The event further facilitated dialogue between citizens, policymakers, and scientists to identify solutions for specific challenges linked to the territories.

The research themes discussed at U★NIGHT encompassed critical areas with high societal impact, such as "Adaptation to Climate Change", "Research for Human Health", "Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities", "Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal, and Inland Waters", "Soil Health and Food", and "Cultural Heritage". These themes reflect the three thematic Areas of UNITA in Circular economy, Renewable energies, and Cultural heritage (see activity 4.1). The magnitude of U★NIGHT extended beyond urban centers, reaching not only the cities hosting UNITA universities but also rural and mountain villages. UNITA estimates reaching thousands of people through this event, creating a platform for meaningful European engagement, knowledge dissemination, and societal impact.

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5 A specific webpage of the event has been set up and it is available at: https://unightproject.eu/en.

Impact / 131 presentations of UNITA in external events
UNITA's profound impact is evident in its active participation, with 131 presentations in diverse international external events and conferences, encompassing both academic and non-academic activities. The wide array of engagements reflects UNITA's commitment to knowledge dissemination, collaborative partnerships, and the promotion of best practices in the European higher education landscape.

Among these presentations, UNITA showcased its experience and excellence in university Alliance Quality Assurance during various international events (activity 1.4). Additionally, the UNITA Student Assembly, with notable achievements, participated in international forums such as the European Student Union. This involvement emphasized the pivotal role of students within the European Universities Initiative, showcasing their contributions to the development of the European Higher Education Area and the overall European Union.

Furthermore, UNITA's active membership in FOREU2, the network comprising the 24 European university Alliances funded through the same Erasmus+ Pilot Call, underscores its commitment to collaborative initiatives. By participating in the "Forum of European Universities #2 – FOREU2", UNITA has contributed to fostering joint collaboration across SwafS (Science with and for Society) projects, strengthening ties with its European counterparts.

In summary, UNITA's extensive presence in external events demonstrates its leadership, collaboration, and influence on both academic and non-academic fronts, reinforcing its role as a transformative force within the European higher education landscape.

Conclusions

The UNITA Alliance has embarked on a transformative journey, embodying the vision of the Erasmus+ European Universities Initiative. As the Alliance evolved from its pilot phase to include six additional universities, its commitment to reshaping European higher education became increasingly evident. The societal impacts generated by UNITA are deeply rooted in shared values, strategic regional positioning, and a commitment to innovative teaching and research practices.

The journey of UNITA mirrors the broader paradigm shift in higher education, recognizing the multifaceted role universities play in societal development. The Alliance's dedication to sustainability, responsible governance, and community engagement aligns with the ethical obligation universities have to the communities they serve. As this report delves into the nuanced impacts across eight key objectives, it becomes clear that UNITA's influence extends beyond academic excellence to shape a more interconnected, collaborative, and globally competitive European higher education landscape.

UNITA's success is reflected in the meticulous exploration of its eight pillars, each chapter unravelling the specific impacts resulting from strategic pursuits. From fostering a participative and inclusive European university to catalyzing change in rural and mountain regions, promoting multilingualism, and strengthening European identity, each objective contributes to a comprehensive societal impact.

The Alliance's commitment to digital services, mobility for all, and sustainability, as well as its role in shaping European identity, citizenship, and values, underscores UNITA's dedication to fostering positive change. The report highlights UNITA's role as a model for collaborative efforts, setting the stage for a future where education is not only excellent but also globally impactful.

As UNITA paves the way for a united European university, this report serves as a testament to its commitment to excellence and innovation in education. The transformative processes and outcomes detailed herein underscore UNITA's contribution to creating a more interconnected, collaborative, and globally competitive European higher education landscape. In the spirit of the European Universities Initiative, UNITA stands as a beacon of collective vision and collaborative effort, shaping a future that is not only inclusive and diverse but also profoundly impactful. The journey of UNITA reflects the dynamic evolution of higher education, setting a precedent for Alliances that prioritize societal impact, sustainability, and innovation in the pursuit of a brighter future for European education.

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