


# UNIVERSITY OF SIENA

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**Type of organisation:**

SME       School       University       Public Authority  
 Training       No Profit       NGO     

**Fields of action :**

SMEs       Youth       Universities       Public Authorities  
 Equal opportunities       Schools       Unemployed     

Other (Specify)

HIGHER EDUCATION & RESEARCH

### Description of the organisation

The University of Siena is one of the oldest in Europe. The University of Siena is keeping renewing its selection of degree programmes, which are offered in the following areas: Economics, Law, Arts and Humanities, Medicine and biotechnology, Chemistry and pharmacy, Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences, Engineering and Political Science.

For the academic year 2015-2016 the academic offer includes 36 first cycle degree programmes; 30 second cycle degree programmes; 5 long single cycle EU regulated degree programmes. Moreover 6 Master courses and 12 doctoral research programmes are entirely taught in English. With over 18,000 students, in 2012 the University of Siena was classified first in the whole of Italy for its structures, quality of services, internet access, study grants and internationalization (Censis classification), and fifth out of 58 Italian Universities for its attractiveness to students from other regions and countries.

Since the early 1990s the University of Siena has signed several international cooperation agreements with universities in North America, Australia, Latin America, in the Mediterranean area and in the Far East. Since their inception, the University of Siena has participated in European mobility programmes such as the LLP/Erasmus, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Leonardo da Vinci and thematic networks. The University of Siena is member of active international networks, such as the Coimbra Group, the EUA and the IRUN. In the recent years the University of Siena has been part of 4 Consortium in the frame of the Erasmus Mundus/Action 2 managing the projects activities and the mobility with South-Africa, Russian Federation and Maghreb countries.

The University of Siena is also the Regional Solutions Network Centre for the Mediterranean Basin of the network MED- SDSN, "Mediterranean Sustainable Development Solution Network", recently commissioned by UN. In its internationalization activity the University of Siena has developed a sound capacity and knowledge about the management of international programs, including Erasmus Plus KA2 programs.

The University of Siena has a long tradition in welcoming foreign students. In particular the Institution receives every year more than 500 students through the Erasmus Plus mobility scheme, making it one of the most sought after destination in Italy. At the same time, due to the increased number of degree courses taught entirely in English the University of Siena is experiencing an increased number of foreign students who are degree seekers. In order to better include them in the academic and social life of the University, Siena is organizing specific activities such as Italian language classes, and social events aimed at enhancing the knowledge and understanding among diverse cultures (the events are named after "Nice to meet you").

The University of Siena is a member the following academic networks, whose aims are relevant to the proposal content:

-) United Nations Academic Impact, supporting and advancing the following ten basic principles: 1) Addressing Poverty - A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education; 2) Capacity Building - A commitment to building capacity in higher education systems across the world; 3) Education for All - A commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race, religion or ethnicity; 4) Global Citizenship - A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education; 5) Access to Higher Education - A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education; 6) Human Rights - A commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion, and speech; 7) Intercultural Dialogue - A commitment to promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding, and the "unlearning" of intolerance, through education; 8) Peace and Conflict Resolution - A commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution through education; 9) Sustainability - A commitment to promoting sustainability through education; 10) United Nations Charter - A commitment to the principles inherent in the United Nations Charter.

-) "Scholars at risks", aiming at the protection of research in dangerous situation through lobbying and specific activities.

-) Coimbra Group, aiming at creating special academic and cultural ties in order to promote, for the benefits of its members, internationalisation, academic collaboration, excellence in learning and research, and service to society. It is also the purpose of the Group to influence European education and research policy and to develop best practice through the mutual exchange of experience.

-) Copernicus Alliance, promoting sustainable HE in Europe

-) DABACA, aiming at the exchange of good practices and experiences among Italian HE Institutions in the field of international co-operation

-) International Association of Universities – IAU, created under the auspices of UNESCO in 1950, is a membership-based organisation serving the global higher education community through: expertise & trends analysis, publications & portals, advisory services, peer-to-peer learning, events, global advocacy.

-) TETHYS, network of Euro-Mediterranean Universities for inter university co-operation and exchange of good practice and experiences.

### **Experience of the organization in previous European projects**

Since their inception, the University of Siena has participated in European mobility programmes such as the LLP/Erasmus, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Leonardo da Vinci and thematic networks. The University of Siena is member of active international networks, such as the Coimbra Group, the EUA and the COIL Global Network. In recent years the University of Siena has been part of 4 Consortium in the frame of the Erasmus Mundus/Action 2 managing the projects activities and mobility with South-Africa, Russian Federation and Maghreb countries. The University of Siena is also the hub Regional Solutions Network Centre for the Mediterranean Basin of the network MED- SDSN, "Mediterranean Sustainable Development Solution Network", recently commissioned by UN. The International Relations Department of the University of Siena can count on ten people who have been working in the field for many years and have proper linguistic competences and a wide experience in managing activities related to international projects and collaborations.

Between 2008 and 2014, UNISI was awarded over €23 million in international research contracts. These included most of the scientific areas in which the University of Siena is committed (Engineering, Health, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Humanities etc.). Income from international research projects was generated from both EU related programs (7th Framework Program, Horizon 2020, COST, IMI etc.) and other programs. In that period UNISI has been involved in 63 research projects financed within the 7th Framework Program (of which 16 in Engineering field) and 15 research projects financed within Horizon 2020 with both roles of coordinator and partner. The University of Siena has also a Europe Direct point within its premises.

### **Experience and Expertise of the organization in the project's subject area**

In the past 3 years Alessandra Viviani coordinated the UniSi team in the following successful projects:

#### **I HAVE RIGHTS - Towards the recognition of non discrimination principles in school (Erasmus+ KA2 – Schools), 2016-2018**

The aim of the project was to improve secondary school teachers' skills to deal with multicultural classes. The project started from the assumption that the acquisition of intercultural competences is crucial and needs to be based on the understanding of human rights and non discrimination values, as tools for a change in knowledge and attitudes. The project targeted school teachers and students, school headmasters and staff, policy makers in the field of education. Under the scientific co-ordination of Prof. Viviani, the project achieved the following results:

- Survey on secondary school students' and teachers' awareness of human rights and intercultural issues
- Collection of case studies and best practices on intercultural issues, integration, non-discrimination values and human rights at school
- Teachers' guidelines on inclusive education
- IHR training for school teachers, held in Siena
- Global citizenship education, multiculturalism and inclusion in Europe, edited by A. Viviani

The project was co-ordinated by RenaSup (FR) and gathered 6 partners from 5 different countries.

Link to IHR webpage: <https://ihaverights.pixel-online.org/>

#### **E-WORDS - Europeans Win Ostracism: from Remembrance to a Dialogue Society (Europe for Citizens – Remembrance), 2017-2019**

The aim of the project was to provide young European citizens, especially students, with a sound understanding of the historical and political processes which led to the rise of totalitarianism in 20th century Europe (Nazi-Fascism in Western Europe, Communism in Eastern Europe) and the subsequent ostracism of many citizens. The project started from the assumption that only through remembrance the current resurgence of ostracism and racism can be opposed. The project achieved its results by organising 50 events in 4 European countries and an innovative analysis of 4 key words ([Identity](#), [Human Rights and Discrimination](#), [Genocide and Concentration Camps](#), [Resistance](#)) in their meaning in the past and Europe today.

Under the scientific co-ordination of Prof. Viviani, the project produced E-WORDS Educational Kit, a collection of best practices to guarantee the project sustainability & exploitation.

The project was co-ordinated by the University of Siena (IT) with the participation of 9 Partners from 4 European countries.

Link to E-WORDS web site: <http://www.e-words.unisi.it/>

#### **OFF-Book - Objective: Foster theatrical performance to combat discrimination in schools & tackle early leaving**

### **(Erasmus+ KA2 – Schools), 2017-2019**

The project addressed the challenges of multiculturalism and non discrimination in school, often leading to poor students' performances and early leaving. In fact, social exclusion often makes classroom dynamics hostile for disadvantaged students. The project started from the assumption that an inclusive school environment improves success rates and positively influences students' psychological self confidence and capabilities. Thus, removing any cause for early school leaving, the project improved secondary school teachers' intercultural competences in new educational methods, introducing theatrical laboratories as an educational tool. The project theatrical labs differ from the theatre of adults (such as role play), because they help students to show their personality knocking down the fear of being judged, or of being considered "different", which is tightly linked to discrimination and hostile social environments.

Under the co-ordination of the University of Klaipeda (LT) and the scientific inputs by Prof. Viviani and Teatro Stabile Grosseto (IT), the project produced a set of videos showing how to implement theatrical labs in school.

Link to OFF-Book website: <https://off-book.pixel-online.org/>

### **Contributions that can be provided to the project**

UniSi Team scientific contributions:

- participating in the outline of IO1 and IO2
- collecting the Italian case studies & best practices related to the project theme
- participating in the comparison & analysis of the results in all the partner countries
- providing the Italian contribution to all the project IOs
- coordinating the activities for the production of IO3

UniSi Team managerial contributions:

- taking part to the project meetings (both face to face & virtual)
- keeping constantly in touch with the Partners, ensuring the best communication on the project management & implementation
- managing the grant awarded according to the Partnership agreement
- providing the project Coordinator with a quarterly report on expenditure
- following the guidelines for national monitoring and evaluation as set by the project Coordinator and providing the related reports
- making available the ITC required for the project implementation at its premises
- following the workplan as set by the project Coordinator
- meeting the deadlines set by the project Coordinator
- ensuring its contribution in problem solving process, if required
- disseminating the project in events related to the project theme
- tackling with the project sustainability issues
- highlighting the European Commission co-financing of the project within the Erasmus+ framework in any activities related to the project itself

### **Reasons of involvement in the project**

At present the University of Siena is working on a set of new tools of internationalisation at home: a new system of international enrolment, new services for international students and a new plan of web-based strategic communication called *International Faculty* to increase the quality and the number of visiting researchers and adjunct professors. At the same time, we are working on a wide cooperation plan to increase our partnerships abroad. The inclusion of Africa, far East, Japan and Latin America is a crucial step in this new plan, which contemplates research partnership, students and staff short term mobility projects, Siena University summer school abroad and other actions.

The University of Siena aims to be not only a Europe-leading teaching and research institution, but a truly global university able to welcome a growing number of international students. We currently recruit around 10% of our students from abroad, and the recent establishment of a number of teaching programs entirely offered in English will help us to increase this trend.

The University of Siena is part to the EU4Refugees initiative (Euraxess portal) and it is a member of the international university network "Scholar at risks" with which universities around the world aim at the protection of research in dangerous situation through lobbying and specific activities. Moreover in 2015 the University of Siena has launched a new initiative UNISICARES which consists in a group of researches in various fields who offer their knowledge on migration issues and refugees protection as free consultants to migrants, citizens and public authorities.

**Contact Person's Experience and Expertise**

Alessandra Viviani, professor of Human Rights and International Law at the Dep. of Political and International Sciences, has a long standing academic experience in human rights education. In the past three years A. Viviani has co-ordinated a number of successful transnational projects under Europe for Citizens (E-WORDS) and Erasmus+ programmes (IHR, OFF-Book and TOGETHER about to start). She is also Rector's Delegate of Santa Chiara Lab of the University of Siena, that manages the PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area) project, co-funded under Horizon 2020. A. Viviani is also at present the University of Siena's coordinator for an Erasmus KA3 capacity building project with South Africa.