

ARQUS GLOBAL CONNECT

International Collaborative Learning Initiative

Iniciativa de Aprendizaje Colaborativo Internacional



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Abstract

ARQUS Global Connect is an international collaborative learning initiative based on the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) methodology. It aims to promote curriculum internationalisation and intercultural academic collaboration. Four European universities are involved: Wroclaw (Poland), Vilnius (Lithuania), Minho (Portugal), and Granada (Spain). The project runs from 30 November to 30 July.

The first phase focused on planning and training, including 20 interviews with academic and administrative staff to assess previous internationalisation experiences. Training on COIL was delivered through six synchronous sessions and one month of asynchronous activities, with contributions from international experts such as Eva Haug, Jon Rubin, and Marcela Maldonado. As a result, five international teams were formed.

In the second phase, five COIL proposals were developed, with two being implemented. The active groups were Group A (Vilnius + Minho) and Group B (Wroclaw + Granada). Implementation challenges included academic calendar mismatches and low student enrolment.

The most notable case was Group A's project, *Climate Diplomacy & Sustainability Policy*, led by academics from Minho and Vilnius. A total of 24 students took part, researching climate policies, analysing data, and presenting their findings through videos such as *Green House*, *Active Diplomats*, and *No Planet B*.

The final phase will take place in June with a reflection meeting and roadmap development. The initiative will also be presented at the XVIII National and XI Ibero-American Congress on Pedagogy in Seville. The expected impact includes strengthening academic cooperation within the ARQUS alliance, sharing best practices in curriculum internationalisation, and reinforcing academic and administrative networks across European higher education institutions.

Participating universities:

- University of Wroclaw
- University of Vilnius
- University of Minho
- University of Granada

Project Dates:

- Start: November 30
- End: July 30

General Objective

To develop a training program focused on a teaching methodology favoring internationalization for learning and aimed at both teachers and administrative staff in charge of managing internationalization in the universities that make up the consortium.

PHASE 1: DIAGNOSIS AND PRE-PLANNING PHASE

Objective: to establish the bases and general guidelines of the project.

Activities

- Interviews with members of the Arqus Alliance: Interviews were conducted with **20 members** of Arqus universities (professors and administrative staff) with experience in curriculum internationalization and virtual exchange initiatives.
- Characterization: The previous achievements of the alliance in terms of internationalization of the curriculum were identified and characterized, as well as the existing virtual exchange programs.
- Call for participation: Professors and international relations staff from each university were summoned. The final participating team was made up of:
 - **11 teachers** from various fields, including education, economics, philology, engineering, languages, and international relations.
 - **3 PhD students** in Education Sciences.
 - **Three staff members** are involved in internationalization processes.

PHASE 2: CONTEXTUALIZATION AND TRAINING

Objective: To adapt the training proposal in COIL methodology to the characteristics of the university context in which it will be carried out and to implement the training program for teachers and administrative staff.

Activities

- Training program: a training program in COIL methodology **was designed and implemented**, aimed at both teachers and administrative staff. The plan combined:
 - **6 synchronous sessions**
 - **1 month of asynchronous activities** and supplemental materials on Google Sites
 - Participation of an international team of COIL experts:
 - *Eva Haug* (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Erasmus+ iKUDU)
 - *Jon Rubin* (Creator of COIL, SUNY COIL Center)
 - *Marcela Maldonado* (COIL Connect, University of Granada)

5 international teams **were formed**, each with at least two professors from different universities in the alliance.

PHASE 3. IMPLEMENTATION

Objective: Execution of the COIL experiences designed in the training program.

Actions:

- The 5 teams designed COIL experiences adapted to their subjects.
- Despite the logistical challenges (synchronization of academic calendars, low student enrollment), **2 teams managed to implement their COIL projects** with the participation of the four universities.

Groups that implemented:

- **Group A:** Vilnius University and Minho University
- **Group B:** University of Wroclaw and University of Granada

Featured Experience: Group A

Title: *Climate Diplomacy & Sustainability Policy Collaboration*

Participants:

- *Rita Sousa* (Professor, University of Minho)
- *Estela Vieiria* (International Relations Office, University of Minho)

- *Liudmila Arcimavičienė* (Professor, Vilnius University)

Participating students: 24 students of Public Administration, International Relations and Political Science.

Project objectives:

- Encourage teamwork, critical thinking and intercultural dialogue.
- Develop practical skills for international climate diplomacy.
- Specific activities:
 - Delimitation of topics and formulation of research questions.
 - Collection and analysis of data on climate policies.
 - Presentation of findings in audiovisual format.

Project results:

- Production of video presentations by students:
 - [Team 1 – Green House](#)
 - [Team 2 – Active Diplomats](#)
 - [Team 3 – No Planet B](#)

PHASE 4: EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Objective: Evaluate the progress, effectiveness, and impact of the implementation of the COIL experiences and identify areas for program improvement

During June, a survey was carried out to evaluate the experience with all the participants of the initiative, and a meeting will soon be held to:

- Share learning and accumulated experiences.
- To reflect on the value of academic collaborations within the ARQUS alliance.
- To analyze the potential of COIL as a sustainable strategy for the internationalization of the curriculum.

In addition, this experience will be presented at the **XVIII National Congress and XI Ibero-American Congress of Pedagogy**, at the University of Seville, with the purpose of:

- Disseminate results and learning.
- Strengthen academic collaboration networks.
- To promote innovation in educational internationalization.

Resources & Content

- [Project website \(Google Sites\)](#)
- [COIL Vilnius Project - Minho](#)

ARQUS GLOBAL CONNECT:
A COIL INITIATIVE FOR CURRICULUM INTERNATIONALISATION

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