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Report of the 2nd Capacity Building Activity

University of Rouen, France

The capacity building activity to France was organized on March 4-6, 2020.

On day 1, all participants gathered in the university. During the registration, the per diem, bus tickets, and the necessary material (handbook, etc.) were distributed and the program of the entire week was also given. The program started by a team building activity. The activity involved ice breaking games. After lunch, the first communication workshop took place. The participants were divided into four groups. Participants were given a presentation on how to write an article; certain guidelines have been provided throughout a training to equip students with the needed resources and tools to be able to write an article. The groups were, then, asked to write an article of any topic related to student representation, empowerment, and engagement. The time for articles was followed by a session on the history of student movement in France given by M. Antoine Megie, an instructor at the University of Rouen. The lecturer mentioned the murder of the student Malik Oussekiné along with the events related to student movement that took place in 1960s (May 1968), 1980s, 2006 and recent events. The lecturer shared how these events changed France and formed it to become what it is today, how students gained more power over time and how students impact France today.

On day 2, a session was given in which every university shared the measures their universities have taken during crisis where France is facing current student strikes and Lebanon passed through grand-scale manifestations in October 2019 of which students were an important element voicing their concerns and demands. Lebanese universities shared, in particular, what their universities did

in light of the events of October 2019 in Lebanon. The debate was interactive between students and every participant shared their own thoughts. Students realized that they have an important role to play in these events. They also expressed gratitude to the support of their universities. Then, the debate was followed by a presentation given by a student in the StEER-Leb project, Ms. Valerie Rasolojaona, entitled “How to take advantage of the news to create student events?”. The lecturer shared that it is important to organize student events relevant to what is going on in the country and general tips on how to organize events. After lunch, another presentation of the association “Les Jeunes Européens” was given including the actions, the objectives, and the usefulness of the association. It is a youth organization, active in most European countries. It aims to bring together young people wishing to act in favor of European construction in a federal sense.

Then, a second communication workshop was given. The participants were also divided into four groups. Each group was given a different good practice chosen from Good Practices Handbook done throughout the previous visits. The teams had to brainstorm and fill a given canvas according to the given good practice in order to come up with practical ways to implement these practices in their universities along with brainstorming on what resources and challenges they have.

On day 3, the program started by a presentation given by two students of the StEER-Leb project from the University of Rouen on the role of youth engagement in Europe. The session was interactive and participants asked them numerous questions. The debate included analysis on the types of student engagement recognition present in universities. The students showed an example of the European recognition of engagement (European STEP). They shared ideas on various ways of student recognition and the kinds of recognition all over Europe.

Then, parallel sessions were given to the staff and the students. Students were given a session on “Skills and Volunteering” on the course two sessions. During the sessions, they were encouraged to write down their volunteering experience and extract their acquired skills accordingly. The staff were, in parallel as aforementioned, given a session entitled “Can student services support student associations during strikes? If yes, how?” The session turned into a debate on how the Lebanese universities acted throughout the recent events in Lebanon in October 2019 in which they shared the challenges and threats faced. Some universities shared how their administration along was threatened due to supporting student engagement in the manifestations specifically in an official way such as a letter presented to the government or disseminated on social media platforms. Other

universities voiced their thoughts about the importance of making sure they do not take a clear side during manifestations and this is out of respect to all parties including those who are with or against the government. These universities kept the choice for their students to take and made sure to show support for whichever side the student takes. The universities also shared how they ensured that courses are not hindered and how students were able to continue their education and not lose the credits taken. Ideas in this matter included online courses, presentations and extra assignments instead of exams. Throughout the second session where students were given the second part of the “Skills and Volunteering”, the staff were given a session entitled “Creation of solidarity engagement platforms within universities”.

In the end, an evaluation session was held in order to assess all that has been done throughout the week. Remarks, comments, suggestions, and wishes were given by the participants along with evaluation forms.







