

ABOUT THE POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM

*Modernization of school education in Latvia
through an innovative research-based program
on 21st century competences and virtue ethics development
supported by a virtual campus (ARETE-school)*

Project summary

The research program aims at the modernization of school education in Latvia through the elaboration, piloting and implementation, with the support of an online platform, of a research-based school-wide program on 21st century transversal competences and virtuous character education (TC&CE). Planned actions: elaboration of ARETE virtual campus for pedagogical research and as a Technology Enhanced Learning Environment (TELE); benchmarking and gap analysis of TC&CE in English, Spanish and French speaking countries and in Latvia; monitoring the elaboration of the program ARETE-school, including guidelines for school leaders, the teaching/learning aids, and a training program for catalysts school teachers (ARETE-catalyst); piloting the program; and dissemination in all Latvian regions. The network of partners includes ITC companies, higher education institutions, scientific institutions, international research centre, governmental bodies, family associations. Expected outcomes: six scientific publications, three research reports, and a virtual campus. The project is a contribution to Latvian RIS3 growth priority “Modern education” and area of specialization “ICT”, and seeks to foster Latvian economic growth by enhancing transversal competencies and ethical behaviour of future economic actors.

Implementation: September 2017 - August 2020. Total cost: EUR 133 806.

Objective and justification

The project seeks to foster youngsters’ personal flourishing and Latvian economic growth by contributing to the modernization, humanization and work market orientation of the education system, and by enhancing the relations between the area of Information and communication technologies and the field of school education. The project is based on the conviction that this can be achieved by a joint, research-based effort on development of youngsters’ transversal competencies and virtuous character during school years, helping them to grow as whole persons and to show a knowledgeable and responsible ethical behaviour as future economic actors.

Overall goal

Modernization of education in Latvia to shape youngsters' knowledgeable and responsible ethical behaviour as future economic actors and citizens of EU. *Scientific objective:* to provide scientific foundations for design/implementation of a web-based program for TC&CE at school, and to popularize Internet research methods in Pedagogy.

Planned actions: summary of Work Packages – (WP)

- **WP 1:** *ARETE virtual campus.*
- **WP 2:** Benchmarking and gap analysis of TC&CE: **2.1.** Benchmarking of TC&CE theory and practices; **2.2.** Past, present and future of character education in Latvia; **2.3.** Gap analysis of TC&CE programs and practices in Latvia.
- **WP 3:** Scientific monitoring of the elaboration of *ARETE-school* program: **3.1.** Program learning outcomes; **3.2.** monitoring the guidelines for school leaders (*ARETE-leadership*); **3.3.** monitoring the materials for implementation at school. **3.4.** monitoring the elaboration of *ARETE-catalyst* (teacher training program).
- **WP 4:** testing *ARETE-school* program in pilot schools: **4.1.** piloting *ARETE leadership*; **4.2.** piloting *ARETE-research platform*. **4.3.** piloting *ARETE-catalyst*.
- **WP 5:** Finalization and dissemination of *ARETE-school* program: **5.1.** final evaluation of *ARETE-school* program; **5.2:** finalization of *ARETE-school* program. **5.3.** dissemination of *ARETE-school* in Latvian regions.

Expected results

A virtual campus for research and implementation of TC&CE; six publications submitted in scientific journals (Scopus/WoS); Three research reports; a research-based program for TC&CE in schools (including guidelines for school leaders, a teacher training program, and materials for teaching and learning and family-school partnership).

Expected impact

On the post-doctorate: improvement of *ICT and research skills* (in Internet-based research, Design-based implementation research); enhancement of skills that underpin *innovative behaviour*, e.g., self-efficacy (social confidence); energy (motivation); leadership (to mobilise commitment); improvement of working conditions (salary, additional support); improved international networking; professional maturity; increased career prospects.

On the Applicant (LU): enhanced international scientific collaboration and research networks (Horizon 2020); involvement in collaborative research with educational and social partners; improved collaboration with entrepreneurs. Research results (Scientific papers, Research reports) will be integrated in the research excellence of the LU.

On the educational field: modernization of Pedagogical research (Internet-based) in Latvia; development of individual approach to different cultural contexts and school environment; research-based enhancement of school environment propitious to TC&CE; professional development of school leaders and teachers involved; enhancement of educational synergy family-school, impact on education policy in Latvia.

On ICT field: high social economic significance for the development of ICT sector; enhance collaboration of ICT sector with educational field (researchers and practitioners); possibility of enlarging the outreach of ICT companies to new markets (possible future commercialization of *ARETE virtual campus*).

On society as a whole: sustainable economic growth build on ethical or virtuous behaviour of economic actors; improved public's understanding of Educational sciences, including non-specialists (through communication and public engagement strategy); societal wellbeing development and improved sense of belonging to democratic society (through cooperation of social partners).