

Application Form Comenius Senior Fellow

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Teaching experience and vision of the applicant(s)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Budget estimate	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Declaration of the immediate supervisor regarding the tasks and budget management	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Declaration and signature of the main applicant	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Administrative details of the applicant(s)

Main applicant	
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Institution	Utrecht University
Faculty / institute / domain	Faculty of Geosciences
Department/education programme	Human Geography & Spatial Planning
Co-applicant (max 3)	
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Co-applicant (max 3)	
Name, title	Inititals, first name and last name + academic titles
Institution	Institution
Faculty / institute / domain	Faculty
Department/education programme	Department/programme
Co-applicant (max 3)	
Name, title	Inititals, first name and last name + academic titles
Institution	Institution
Faculty / institute / domain	Faculty
Department/education programme	Department/programme

The main applicant is the project leader. It is not compulsory to list co-applicants. If co-applicants are listed on this form, the co-applicants should be registered as such in ISAAC as well.

About the project

Administrative details

About the project	
Title	Encounters in the field: a playful approach to the development of intercultural competences.
Theme	International classroom
Department / programme (context of the project)	Graduate School of Geosciences
Course / track / trajectory, etc.	Fieldwork preparation modules in multiple Master's degree programmes
Level	master
Academic discipline	Social Sciences incl Teacher training
Duration of the project	1-5-2019 until 31-10-2021 (min 24 months, max 30. Start date not before 1 May 2019, end date not after 31 October 2021)
Requested budget (min. €95.000, max. €100.000)	€ 98,644

Summary

Students in multiple Master's degree programmes at the Graduate School of Geosciences leave their international classroom to do fieldwork in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Well-developed intercultural competences are vital to successfully carry out such fieldwork and, later on in their professional careers, to work in an international environment. However, immersion in a different cultural setting does not itself assure intercultural learning: an active learning environment is needed to achieve this. The problem is that intercultural competences are not effectively addressed in the curricula: students do not know what to expect regarding intercultural differences in the field and, consequently, the learning of fieldwork is not optimized. Previous projects and literature call for an approach that confronts students before actually going on fieldwork with real-life situations that stimulate reflection and provoke discussion. The aim of this project is to enhance the intercultural competences of students through the use of a student-fed interactive app with cases that represent fieldwork situations, and the development of assignments that relate to these cases, to guide student reflection and discussion in the international classroom, before, during and after fieldwork. The novelty of this project is that it will be student-fed, viz. based on real-life cases provided by students who did fieldwork in previous years, representing situations that students will encounter in the field. Project outcomes will be enhanced intercultural competences and improved reflection skills of students, and insight into the value of a student-fed interactive learning app for the development of intercultural competences.

Word count summary: 247

Project proposal

Please describe your project under the headings *formulation of the problem, innovation and objected results*. Use a maximum of **1000** words.

Formulation of the problem

The 'international classroom' is already a reality for the Master's degree programmes at the Graduate School of Geosciences, through the inflow of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. A distinguishing feature of multiple Master's programmes at our Graduate School is that students leave this international classroom for a few months to learn by exploring the world outside. Doing fieldwork in the global South, in Africa, Asia or Latin America, is a compulsory element of two specific Master's degree programmes and optional in three others. This means internationalization in these programmes is multi-layered, as students in an international classroom also do fieldwork in an international setting.

Fieldwork is defined here as data collection in the global South, in the form of interactions with people from different backgrounds or collecting geographical data with the aim of performing hard

measurements. Examples of fieldwork are conducting interviews with local chiefs in Ghana, organizing workshops with professionals in the irrigation sector in Bangladesh, or surveying the impact of land degradation among the Maasai in Kenya. Through fieldwork, students learn to gather and analyse data in an unfamiliar context, and to interpret these data with a critical eye¹. Fieldwork also enables students to acquire and develop 'soft skills' such as intercultural competences (the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions⁶) and ethical awareness², especially in geographically and culturally distant parts of the world. These intercultural competences are needed to collaborate with peers and with stakeholders at the community level, and, over time, to become competent professionals in an international and diverse working environment. However, the development of intercultural competences is not a natural process: immersion in an international classroom or different cultural setting, through fieldwork, does not assure intercultural learning^{3 4 5 6}. On the contrary, it requires guidance and an active learning environment⁷.

The problem is that these soft skills are not effectively addressed in the curricula: students do not know what to expect regarding intercultural differences in the field, and the learning of fieldwork is not optimized. In recent years, the applicants have implemented initiatives to improve the development of intercultural competences. Outcomes of these implementations indicate that:

- i) Students value the contribution of frontal lecturing and reading texts on interculturality before their fieldwork as 'limited', as the concept remains rather abstract⁸;
- ii) Students' learning increases through discussing experiences abroad with peers and staff directly after fieldwork⁸;
- iii) Students have difficulty reflecting on their intercultural experiences and lack the skills to do so⁸;
- iv) Despite all efforts, students still indicate they could be better prepared for doing fieldwork, in the sense of 'what to expect' and 'how to act'⁹.

Innovation and objected results

These observations call for another approach to the development of intercultural competences in an international classroom. We need to prepare a diverse group of students for fieldwork and improve their employability for a professional career. Students should be confronted with cases of intercultural encounters and actively reflect upon, compare and discuss their own and other persons' attitudes and behaviours, in a guided way^{10, 11, 12, 7}. Moreover, to build intercultural competences, critical reflection and discussion on underlying values and attitudes is crucial. This requires adaptations in the learning environment of our programmes.

The aim of this project is to enhance the intercultural competences of students through 1) the use of real-life cases that represent fieldwork situations in an interactive learning app; and 2) the development of assignments that are linked to these real-life cases. These will guide student reflection and discussion, both as preparation – by making use of the diversity of the international classroom – and during and after fieldwork.

To stimulate active learning, a new web-based app that explicitly targets fieldwork-related intercultural competences will be designed. Such an app is not available and existing tools that address intercultural competences are often rather general, in the sense that they ask how users value their own competences vis-à-vis intercultural encounters^{13, 14}. As such, they give little guidance for reflection.

The novelty of this project is that it will be student-fed, viz. based on intercultural encounters provided by students. The app will draw upon cases provided by students in previous years and represent real-life experiences in fieldwork in the Global South. Examples might be a male student interviewing female entrepreneurs, or a student who needs to take soil samples in a place that holds religious meaning for the local community. The use of cases based on the experiences of students has two specific advantages. First, the cases reflect real fieldwork situations and thus match the experiences of students. Second, using cases of other students creates a safe classroom environment, as students are invited to share their attitudes and opinions in a more indirect way, via the playful exchange of experiences of their peers. Moreover, by discussing these with students from different cultural backgrounds, we can optimally benefit from the international classroom.

Before fieldwork, students will examine the cases on the app and choose one to reflect on, guided by the assignments. Then, in the classroom, student groups will discuss their thoughts and potential course of action for a fieldwork situation. After fieldwork, they will provide their anonymized and reflective case for the app's database, so the app will continuously be updated. To evaluate whether this project improves the learning effects of teaching on intercultural competences, student evaluations will be conducted in a longitudinal research setting, following students' skill development over time.

The expected direct outcomes of the project are:

1. Improved intercultural competences of students, regarding skills, attitude and knowledge, and deeper learning regarding the significance of intercultural differences for fieldwork activities, so students are better prepared for fieldwork.
2. Improved reflection skills of students, related to their skills, values, attitudes and behaviour.
3. More insight into the opportunities and limitations of a student-fed learning app in developing intercultural competences.

The expected indirect outcomes are:

4. Concrete recommendations for using this approach (real-life cases and related assignments) in other educational settings.
5. The indirect enhancement of intercultural competences of the staff involved, as they will participate in classroom assignments and discussions.

Word count problem formulation, innovation and objected results: 999

Project plan

Describe how your innovation project under the headings *overview of the project plan, composition of the project team, and plan for dissemination*. Use a maximum of 2000 words.

Overview of the project plan

The project will enhance the intercultural competences of Master's students at the Graduate School of Geosciences who do fieldwork in the Global South. Two Master's degree programmes include compulsory fieldwork; in three others, fieldwork is optional (Table 1). Phase 1 of the project will address the programmes with compulsory fieldwork, phase 2 the programmes with optional fieldwork.

Master's programme	Number of students who do fieldwork in the Global South	Status of fieldwork in Global South	Length of fieldwork	Period
Phase 1				
International Development Studies (one year)	45	Compulsory	3 months	Feb–May
Sustainable Development – ID track (two years)	25 (1 st year)	Compulsory (twice)	2 months (1 st year)	May–June (1 st year)
	25 (2 nd year)		3 months (2 nd year)	Feb–May (2 nd year)
Phase 2				
Urban and Economic Geography (two years)	2	Optional	3 months	Nov–April
Water, Science and Management (two years)	2	Optional	3 months	Nov - April
Earth, Surface and Water (two years)	5	Optional	3 months	Nov-April

Table 1. Master's degree programmes involved in the project

Intercultural competences of students will be trained before, during and after fieldwork according to the PEER model: prepare, engage, evaluate and reflect⁷.

- **Prepare:** before fieldwork, in a diverse and international classroom setting, students will explore their assumptions regarding intercultural differences, through a confrontation with real-life cases, and individually prepare an assignment on these cases. They will discuss and reflect upon these cases with their peers and the teacher.
- **Engage:** during fieldwork, they will engage in different intercultural encounters, through data collection for their research and also in day-to-day life. There will be an interactive discussion board to exchange and reflect with peers upon experiences.
- **Evaluate:** in the final phase of fieldwork, students will evaluate their 'critical incidents' – intercultural experiences that have significance for them – by elaborating on their case in a playful manner (written, vlog or comic style), which will feed the app.
- **Reflect:** upon return, students will discuss and reflect upon their case individually and in a classroom setting.

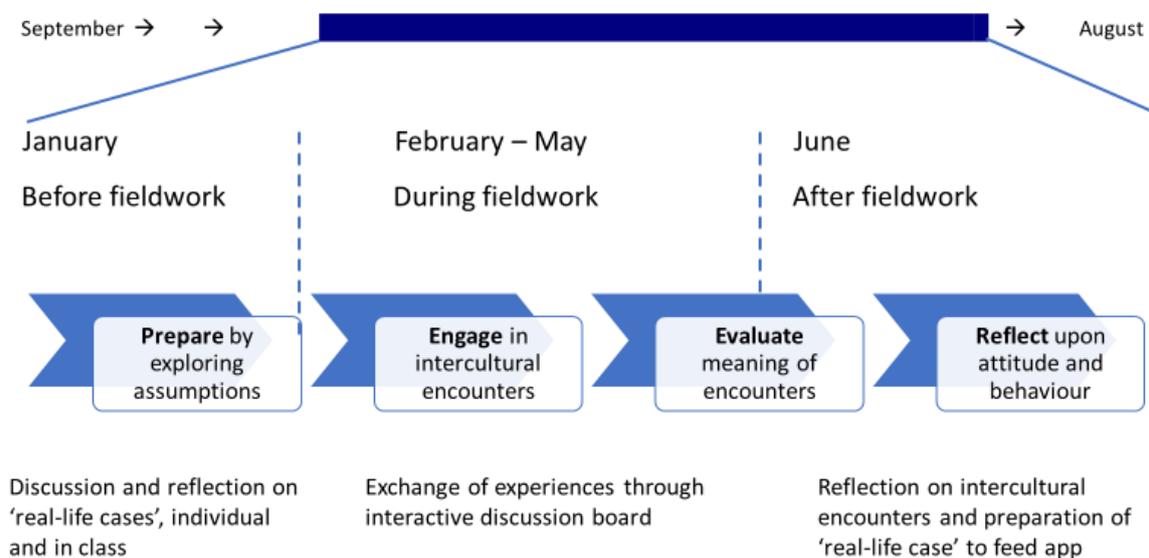


Figure 1: Timeline of training of students’ intercultural competences structured through the PEER model in the IDS and SD-ID programme

During the project, the full PEER-cycle will run twice, to guarantee the proper implementation of the approach and to generate sufficient input to evaluate the results. Three cohorts of Master’s students will be involved:

Cohort	Involvement in project
2018/19	Only R element of PEER cycle (after fieldwork: reflection + adding case to database), June 2019
2019/20	Full PEER cycle, January–June 2020
2020/21	Full PEER cycle, January–June 2021

Table 2. Cohorts of Master’s students

Structure of project

The proposed project is structured into seven work packages (WPs). Each WP has specific aims, methods and activities, and output. Note that many WPs run parallel, as shown below.

WP-1 Collection of student-fed cases	
Aim	Collect cases and descriptions of 'critical incidents' that students experienced in the field.
Method and activities	1.1 Develop a format to guide students in collecting cases. The presentation of the real-life cases is free – written, vlog or comic style – though contents should include a fixed set of elements. 1.2 Draft instructions for students how to identify and collect critical incidents. 1.3 After pilot: review of approach to collecting cases; adjustment, if necessary.
Output	Student-fed real-life cases.

WP-2 Development of learning app	
Aim	Develop the web-based learning app using the output of WP-1. This will be integrated into Blackboard, the electronic learning environment of UU.
Method and activities	2.1 Design of structure to categorize real-life cases according to theme (e.g. situations that address gender or hierarchy). For this, the results of WP-1 need to be analysed and classified into different situations, e.g. 'gender', 'hierarchy', 'dealing with poverty'. 2.2 Creating the database to store the cases. 2.3 Building the app: Xerte, an open-source tool to design an interactive e-learning environment, will be used. The app will also be available for offline use, to ensure access in areas without secure internet access, using a laptop, tablet or phone; the app will also have a discussion board, to be used during fieldwork. 2.4 Testing the app by students and staff involved in the relevant programmes. 2.5 Adjusting the app according to the test results. 2.5 Update the application with new cases.
Output	The application with real-life cases provided by students.

WP-3 Design of tutorials and workshops	
Aim	To actual implement training by designing the assignments and organize tutorials and workshops, involving structured self-reflection, collective reflection and classroom discussion on cases presented in the app to prepare for fieldwork.
Method and activities	3.1 Design of individual assignments to be integrated in the app. 3.2 Design of interactive classroom assignments to stimulate discussion and reflection. 3.3 Testing of assignments with key users, students and teachers; if necessary, adjustment. 3.4 Organization of a 3-hour workshop for teachers to familiarize them with the app and the assignments, and to provide feedback on the interactive in-class assignments. 3.5 Organization of a tutorial for students in the compulsory course Advanced Methods & Techniques, using the assignments. 3.6 Organization of a tutorial on the Return Day, using the assignments (upon return from fieldwork).
Output	Tutorials for students with assignments for students, included in the application and for use in tutorials, and a workshop to train teachers.

WP-4 Implementation of approach in Master's degree programmes with an optional fieldwork component	
Aim	To adjust the app – with real-life cases and assignments - for students of <i>Earth, Surface and Water</i> and <i>Water Science and Management</i> , and <i>Urban and Economic Geography</i> who do fieldwork in the Global South.
Method and activities	4.1 Review of existing cases regarding suitability for students of other Master's degree programmes at the Faculty of Geosciences. 4.2 Collection of additional cases. 4.3 Review of assignments. 4.4 Testing of app with cases and assignments. 4.5 Design of tutorial for students.
Output	'Real-life cases' and assignments are tailor-made for students doing optional fieldwork and organization of tutorial for students.

WP-5 Project evaluation	
Aim	Continuous monitoring by reviewing the process and products of the different WPs, and adjusting the methods, if necessary (see the individual WPs). The project will also evaluate the results of project implementation and the use of the PEER-approach for intercultural learning, using a mixed methods approach and triangulation of data.
Method and activities	5.1 Ethical clearance of research by Ethics Review Board of the faculties of Science and Geosciences. 5.2 Design of survey that assesses the skills, attitude, knowledge and behaviour of students. 5.3 Testing of survey among students with fieldwork experience. 5.4 Drafting topic list for focus group discussions with students and teachers to assess the development of intercultural competences and the PEER approach for intercultural learning. 5.5 Conduct the baseline survey (see 5.2) among students on two moments during their programme: before start of training and upon finalization of training. 5.6 Focus group discussions with students using the topic list (see 5.4) on using the PEER-approach. 5.7 Interviews with staff to review their experiences with the PEER-approach. 5.8 Data analysis.
Output	Progress reports; academic publication on results.

WP- 6 Dissemination	
Aim	To inform the wider educational community (UU/national/international) about the project, the approach and the results.
Method and activities	See section on dissemination.
Output	Seminars/workshop and academic and professional publications.

WP-7 Project management	
Aim	To ensure a successful project, with different WPs running parallel to each other, efficient programme management is necessary.
Method and activities	7.1 Clear description of roles, and explanation thereof, at start of project. 7.2 Organization of functional, frequent and timely meetings of Project Team and Advisory Board. 7.3 Transparent and relevant flow of information on progress of WPs among project team.
Output	Progress reports and final reflection report on process and project outcome.

Time planning

WP	May-June 2019	July-Dec 2019	Jan-June 2020	July-Dec 2020	Jan-June 2021	July-Oct 2021
WP-1 Collection of cases	■	■	■	■	■	■
WP-2 Development learning app		■	■	■	■	■
WP-3 Design of tutorials and workshops		■	■	■	■	■
WP-4 Implementation other Master's programmes				■	■	■
WP-5 Project evaluation		■	■	■	■	■
WP-6 Dissemination	■			■	■	■
WP-7 Project management	■	■	■	■	■	■

Composition of the project team

Name	Affiliation	Expertise	WP	# Days
Dr Gery Nijenhuis	Assistant Professor Human Geography & Planning/GEO/UU	Fieldwork in Global South, training intercultural competences	1-7	60
Dr Veronique Schutjens	Associate Professor Human Geography & Planning/UEG Master/GEO/UU & Senior Fellow, Centre for Academic Teaching	Reflection and interactive education linked to stay abroad; quantitative research on intercultural competences	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	28
Dr Nathalie Veenendaal	Educational Consultancy & Professional Development/UU	Training of intercultural competences students and staff; educational design	1, 3, 4, 6	15
Ir. Huub Zonjee	Educational ICT expert GEO/UU	Development of apps for interactive learning	2	15
Dr Maggi Leung	Associate Professor and coordinator MA programme International Development Studies/GEO/UU	Fieldwork in Global South; expert on skills and mobility	1, 5	5

Dr Ajay Bailey	Assistant Professor IDS & coordinator Advanced M&T courses MA programmes IDS and SD-ID/GEO/UU	Fieldwork in Global South; intercultural competences and ethics in research	1, 3, 5	4
Dr Paul Schot	Associate Professor Water Science Management & coordinator Master Sustainable Development/GEO/UU	Fieldwork in Global South from a Water Science Management perspective	4,5	3
Dr Geert Sterk	Associate Professor Earth, Surface and Water/GEO/UU	Fieldwork in Global South from an Earth, Surface and Water perspective	4,5	3
To be appointed	Students assistants participating in the respective programmes	Student perspective on cases; dissemination of experiences	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	28

Advisory Board

An advisory board will advise the project team on the implementation of the project, its evaluation and dissemination to other Master's programmes at UU and beyond. The board will represent staff of the programmes involved, experts at UU, students and alumni. It will meet three times with the project team during the project: for the kick-off, early June 2019, to discuss the first outcomes of Phase 1 (June 2020), and to discuss the outcomes of Phase 2 (June 2021).

Name	Position	Expertise
Drs Tatiana Bruni	Assistant Professor University College Utrecht	Intercultural competences in the international classroom
Dr Jan ten Thije	Associate Professor Intercultural Communication/UU	Intercultural communication and competences
Drs Maggy Ovaa	Policy Advisor International Affairs and Strategic Collaborations UMC/UU	Management and implementation of wide variety of internationalization programmes
Drs Femke van der Geest	Policy advisor education and internationalization UU	Internationalization of education; dissemination of project and results to wider UU community and beyond
Dr Kei Otsuki	Coordinator SD-ID track/GEO/UU	In-depth knowledge of SD-ID programme and students
To be appointed	Students and alumni of respective programmes	Key users and potential employers

Plan for dissemination

The approach and outcomes of the project will be shared with the broader academic and professional community, both within and outside UU, via the following channels:

- TAUU: three-monthly blogs on the website of the UU Teaching Academy (<https://tauu.uu.nl/>), an open access outlet, to share the implementation of the project and experiences thereof.

- Workshop at Faculty of Geosciences (March 2020) to share project approach and first experiences.
- Workshop at Onderwijsparade (UU's annual Education Day) in March 2020.
- Workshop for programmes in the Netherlands with a fieldwork component.
- Presentation of paper at two international conferences on education, for example the annual conference of the International Society of Scholarship on Teaching and Learning, or the conference of the American Educational Research Association.
- Publication of an article in a professional journal, aimed at geoscientists working in education in the Netherlands (e.g. *Geografie*).
- Publication of an article on the results of project implementation in an academic journal focusing on higher education (e.g. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* or *Studies in Higher Education*, or the open access *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* or the *International Journal of Educational Development*).
- An international seminar on the training of intercultural competences for fieldwork, at the end of the project (summer 2021).

Word count project plan: 1933

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