

University of Siena

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Type of organisation:

SME ☐ School ☐ **University** ☒ Public Authority ☐
 Training ☐ No Profit ☐ **NGO** ☐

Other (Specify)

Fields of action :

SMEs ☐ Youth ☐ **Universities** ☒ Public Authorities ☐
Equal opportunities ☐ Schools ☐ Unemployed ☐

Other (Specify)

Description of the organisation

The University of Siena dates back to 1240, when a tradition of teaching and research was established in one of the most fluorescent free towns of Middle Age's Italy located on the path of the pilgrims' *Via Francigena*. Since then, the European culture, the attraction of international scholars and the respect of academic freedom have been cultivated within our university, which is therefore one of the oldest Higher Education Institutions in Europe. Today, USiena counts over 18.000 students, enrolled in a broad range of degree courses. 68 are the programs activated for the academic year 2018-2109. They include *Bachelor* courses (3 years), *Master* courses (2 years) and *Long Cycle* degree Courses. Moreover, 23 three-year Doctoral programs are offered, together with a number of shorter post-graduate programs.

In 2018, USiena ranked first among the medium-sized Italian Universities for study grants and services for students according to the CENSIS Research Institute classification 2018. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings considered USiena in a position between 401 and 500. These figures report the effects of a strategy of internationalization enhanced over the years. The current challenge is the consolidation of such a strategy. USiena 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 Bologna process degree courses currently taught in English are: one bachelor course (*Economics*), one Long cycle course (*Dentistry and dental Prosthodontics*) and 15 master courses (*Applied Mathematics, Biotechnologies of Human Reproduction, Chemistry, Computing and Automatic Engineering, Economics, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Engineering Management, Finance, Genetic Counsellors, Management and Governance, Medical Biotechnologies, European Studies; International Accounting and Management, Public and Culture Diplomacy, Language and Mind*). The recent establishment of a number of dual degrees, the increasing mobility of our students (both for studies and for traineeships), our staff and our teachers, and the active participation to some important international higher education networks (among them, Coimbra Group, European University Association, International Association of Universities, Magna Charta Observatory, UNIMED and Copernicus Alliance) represent further relevant actions in our strategy of internationalisation. Over the years, such a challenging strategy of internationalization has determined a remarkable transformation of the university profile and it has also positively affected the internationalisation of the city and of the surrounding countryside.

According to our current internationalisation strategy, we will not just keep increasing the proportion of non Italian students in all the courses offered by our 15 departments. Indeed, we plan to increase the links with high-level Higher education Institutions from Europe, North America and Asia. We are 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, USiena summer school abroad and other actions.

Experience of the organization in previous European projects

The initiatives, related to the current project, in which University of Siena is involved in are:

- 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
- 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

- Since 2013 the University of Siena is partner (with other 13 institutions) in the EUROPEAN IDENTITY, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL CHANGE (EuinDepth) project (PIRSSES-GA-2013-612619), coordinated by Institutul de Economie, Finante si Statistica (Moldova). The project offered a sound contribution to the mutual understanding among representatives of national political schools, in order to develop intercultural communications and comparative evaluation of similarities/differences of views on Europe.
- Between 2013 and 2016 the University of Siena coordinated the PLAYING IDENTITIES. ACTING, THE SELF AND SOCIETY project (2013-1-IT2-ERA10-52981), consisting in an intensive multidisciplinary course on the work and role of the Actor in contemporary European Societies. It involved also professors and researchers from Performing Arts, Performance and Social Studies, and Neurocognitive Sciences.
- At present the University of Siena is coordinating the SDSN Mediterranean (Sustainable Development Solution Network), in this framework UniSi has organised two training courses addressed to school teachers on Sustainable Development Goals Education (EDU4SD) in Sept 2018 and 2019. Currently the project is implementing the peer-to-peer education phase, with HE students sharing their knowledge and competences on the matter with school students.

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

- Between 2016 and 2018 the University of Siena was the scientific coordinator of the I HAVE RIGHTS project (2016-1-FR01-KA201-024133). The project promoted the adoption of innovative approaches and practices to school education that will facilitate teaching and learning in multicultural contexts. In particular UniSi hosted IHR training event for school teachers on how to respond to the challenges posed by a multicultural class and edited a monography collecting academic essays and teachers' testimonies and experiences in the field. UniSi also implemented a field research in a number of Italian schools to measure the awareness of both students and teachers on human rights, human rights education and non discrimination.
- Between 2017 and 2019 the University of Siena was the co-ordinator of a group of 9 Organisations with the E-WORDS project (Europeans Win Ostracism: From Remembrance to a Dialogue Society) (5888617-CITIZ-1-2017-IT-CITIZ-REMEM), whose aim was to spread tolerance through the intercultural dialogue and the proper usage of some key words. E-WORDS main target group was young Europeans (age group 11-18) and UniSi implemented a number of initiatives especially planned for school students on the project topics. Role play and theatrical labs were the most used educational tools in class to make students active on tolerance and human rights.
- Between 2017 and 2019 the University of Siena was partner in OFF Book (Objective: Foster theatrical performance to combat discrimination in schools & tackle early leaving), (2017-1-LT01-KA201-035235), contributing to the scientific aspects in partnership with the University of Klaipeda (LT). The project promoted the use of theatrical labs in the European school system to develop students' soft skills, combat early school leaving and discrimination. In particular, UniSi contributed to a field research on ESL and how to face it through non formal education and the development of soft skills in the school community, so to shorten the gap between teacher and students. UniSi also gave a sound contribution to explore how to make school less judgement through theatrical labs whose aim was to enhance students' self expression.
- At present the University of Siena is Associated Partner in STAR (Stand Together Against Racism), (592140-EPP-1-2017-1-ES-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN), whose aim is to counter invisible racism and other form of intolerance in the every day lives of young people, as well the ones online, through preventive measures, youth work and non formal education. UniSi is contributing to the project training events' planning and delivery.
- At present the University of Siena is partner in TOGETHER (Innovative European Learning Path to Facilitate the Access of Refugees to HE), (2019-1-PT01-KA203-060772). The project aims at developing University students' social responsibility by providing them with the necessary intercultural and transversal skills to play an active role in the social inclusion of refugees and migrants both in the University community and the third sector job market; providing HE staff with specific training in order to be better equipped in including refugees and migrants in academic activities; providing young migrants and refugees with adequate support at university level while accessing HE and integrating in the related communities.

Contributions that can be provided to the project

USiena will:

- participate in the project meetings

- contribute to the scientific contents of the IOs
- lead IO3
- disseminate the project internally and externally (in Italy and Europe)
- present periodical activity reports and financial reports on the Co-ordinator's requests

Reasons of involvement in the project

USiena has been working on EU projects, networks and partnerships for over 30 years, always giving a sound scientific contribution to all the activities it took part into.

More recently, USiena has been successful in the field of human rights, human rights education, soft skills education with many proposals financed by EACEA and National Agencies around Europe.

In particular, the partnership with RenaSup was successful and fruitful in the I HAVE RIGHTS project (Erasmus+ KA2 – Schools, running between 2016 and 2018).

Moreover, USiena has proved to be a reliable partner in all aspects of the project management.

Contact Persons' Experience and Expertise

Alessandra Viviani is an international human rights lawyer with publications on human and children rights. Professor of international law. Main publications: A. Viviani, Right to Citizenship and Personal Identity, 2015; Land Grabbing and Human Rights, 2016; Patologia dei rapporti familiari e diritti dei minori: L'Italia di fronte alla Corte europea dei diritti dell'uomo, 2014; The Right to personal identity, in R. Pisillo Mazzeschi -P. Pustorino-A. Viviani (eds), Diritti umani degli immigrati: tutela della famiglia e dei minori, Napoli, 2010; The rights to education and human rights education as a tool towards social inclusion, in A. Viviani (ed), Global citizenship education, multiculturalism and social inclusion in Europe: the findings of the I HAVE RIGHTS project, 2018. Member of the UNISICARES group of researchers. She cooperates with UNICEF Italia and in this capacity works on teachers' education on human rights within the Program of Unicef Italia and Italian Ministry of Education "Verso una scuola amica" (Towards a friendly school) which aims at creating a more inclusive school environment based on the respect of the principle of non-discrimination and children rights. She participates as Scientific expert to the European KA3 project STAR (Stand together against racism) and in this capacity she is working on the training of young facilitators for human rights education. She is the Coordinator of the USiena project EDU4SD and has organized the first training course for teachers on Sustainable Development Education in held in Siena in September 2018. Moreover A. Viviani has been coordinating many teams for EU projects for over 5 years now, most of the proposals she submitted were successful.

Marcello Sacco is a research fellow at the University of Siena DISPI Department. He obtained his PhD at the Leeds University School of Law in 2020. His fields of interest focus on human rights (with a specific expertise in disability rights) and European governance (with particular regard to multilevel forms of governance). In 2019, Marcello published the edited volume "Brexit: A Way Forward" (Vernon Press). In 2018, he authored the article "De-politicisation of Human Rights" (FSJ: European Legal Studies). Also, in 2017, Marcello submitted two personal statements to the UN CRPD Committee that impacted on the drafting process of the General Comments on Articles 19 and 5. Currently, he has a forthcoming publication on the SDGs and disability, and he is working on a paper concerning the involuntary placement of persons with mental impairments. His ongoing fellowship at the University of Siena includes the development of the Erasmus+ KA2 projects "Together" (concerning the HEIs' refugee-led initiatives). Lastly, Marcello is committed to disseminating human rights values outside academia by participating in public debates and collaborating with NGOs.