

2017

**Report on SUP4PCL/ ERASMUS+
Forth Local Management Meeting
21st of November 2017 at Moataz
Al-Alfi, The American University in
Cairo, Egypt**

Project name:

School and University Partnership for Peer Communities of learners

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations:

Partners Acronyms	
AUC	American University in Cairo
ANSU	Ain Shams University
AU	Alexandria University
HU	Helwan University
ULEIC	University of Leicester
UON	University of Northampton
UL	University of Limerick
MLU	Martin-Luther University
Other acronyms and abbreviations	
SUP4PCL	School University Partnership for Peer Communities of Learners (Title of this ERASMUS+ Project)
MEIHE	Middle East Institute for Higher Education
FOE	Faculties of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
AR	Action Research
WP	Work package
PCL	Peer Communities of Learners
PD	Professional Development
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
QA	Quality Assurance
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SEN	Special Education Needs
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

SUP4PCL/ERASMUS+ Forth Local Management Meeting Report

November 21st, 2017

The American University in Cairo

Egypt

Tuesday 21st November 2017

Introduction and Welcome note:

Prof. Malak Zaalouk, Founding Director, Middle East Institute for Higher Education (MEIHE), AUC:

Prof. Zaalouk greeted the participants from the three Egyptian partner institutions (ANSU, AU, HU) and expressed her pleasure in hosting some members of the three teams. An overview of the meeting agenda was given by Prof. Zaalouk. The first session started by clarifying some management issues as well as a reflection on the significance of the project “School-University Partnership for Peer- communities of Learners” (SUP4PCL). This was followed by presentations by the three Egyptian partners (ANSU, AU and HU) reporting on their progress concerning the needs assessment, baseline reports, selection of mentors and quality assurance units. The third and fourth sessions covered brief reflections on the coaching visits (WP 1.3) to European partners as well as feedback on the M&E tools. Reaching consensus concerning the development of materials and the topics to be addressed during December visit as part of WP 2.1 was the final session of the day.

I. Session One: Management Issues and significance of the project.

Prof. Malak Zaalouk, Founding Director, Middle East Institute for Higher Education (MEIHE), AUC:

Prof. Zaalouk started her presentation highlighting the significance of the SUP4PCL's project. The project aims to create a new culture and build a wide societal movement towards educational reform. It will contribute to pushing forward a dual reform movement that affects both Faculties of education and schools at the same time. Prof. Zaalouk added that the project also aims to focus on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as well as on qualifying teachers.

Prof. Zaalouk elaborated that there are usually two scenarios to make a change happen. The first one is based on a core strong societal and cultural movement. It will result in profound transformations in concepts, values and human relations and on institutional structures. The second is a narrower one and will have an effect on the quantitative data such as the increase in school numbers but it lacks sustainability.

Prof. Zaalouk explained that our project adopts the first scenario; it provides strategic solutions for educational reform through Professional Development Schools (PDS). The project also focuses on developing the FOEs in a way that serves the schools connected to them. In addition, the project works on acknowledging that the main role of FOEs is to improve the teachers' performance and competency and help them gain more values, knowledge and skills that maximizes their contributions in the Egyptian and Arab societies.

The project is based on unlimited conceptual, institutional, individual and behavioral transformations as described by Prof. Zaalouk. The following are some examples of these transformations:

- Scientific educational research: The project focuses on the importance of the qualitative research particularly the ethnography that reveals important aspects such as values, relationships, traditions, institutional cultures, types of leadership. In addition, the project includes Action Research (AR), which involves taking action and finding solutions to specific problems. In this project, we focus on this type of research rather than the quantitative research, questionnaires and statistics.
- Teamwork: The project is based on building teams and creating an environment of collaboration and trust that leads to create PCLs and encourages exchanging experiences among practitioners and academics. Prof. Zaalouk said that we have already

started working in teams and this is a start for creating our own PCLs and a good step to lead schools by example.

- The school based CPD through the Quality Assurance and training Units is another area of focus. The project aims to activate the role of the Quality Assurance units in schools to reflect decentralization as a new approach in educational leadership. In years 2005 and 2007, this issue was raised but did not practically take place.
- Coaching and mentorship: Putting the concepts of mentorship and coaching in practice is another aim for this project. Understanding the difference between the two terms is important. The mentor in the educational context should have educational knowledge and expertise while the coach can help in building general skills.
- Dealing with the resistance to change and including more people who are willing to experiment and be part of the change, of new experiences and development paths. This is an important aspect. UL suggested including this topic in the December visit program. Prof. Zaalouk added that the change in groups is easier, faster and deeper than the individual change. This is the reason why in the SUP4PCL project we focus on creating communities of learners to support the transformation.
- Internal motivation and building connection with goals that are relevant to human values and the public good. When people feel that they are part of the vision, part of the change and part of goals that are relevant to human values and the public good they get motivated. This is what the SUP4PCL project aims for.
- Enhancing the concept of lifelong learning and the reflection on experiences and learning from them. In addition, the ability to lead the schools and teachers by example is another aspect the project focuses on since it raises our credibility.
- Enhancing the positive emotions during the learning process to create a ripple effect.
- Enhancing self-efficacy and empowerment for all learners from both institutions (FOEs and schools) whether faculty or teachers. This needs a high level of reflection. Prof. Zaalouk gave an example of one of the faculty members who presented during the UL visit when he mentioned that he thought for a long time that his way of teaching was empowering students and helping their transformations. Yet, after he reflected deeply on his ways of teaching, he found out that he applied didactic methods and imposes the ideas on them.

Prof. Zaalouk elaborated that we also need to reflect deeply on our ways of teaching and as faculty we need to do that before we ask teachers in schools to adopt this practice.

As a reflection on the Egyptian FOEs practices, and to enhance the idea of sharing and building communities of learners among the Egyptian FOEs, Prof. Zaalouk clarified that we need to add what we all learned from the visits to the European partners on the blog created by ANSU until we manage to move to the project's website. However, we need to respect the copyrights. For example, we can use the concepts we learnt from the European partners for our classes with reference to the source, yet we should not use the same PPT presented and created by other partners to present in class.

Prof. Zaalouk added that the travel in this project was planned for short periods while rotating large numbers of participants. The participants need to share and exchange what they have seen and learned with others.

The floor was open for participants for more reflections on the significance of the project.

Dr. ElHawwary from AU, said that we are at an important stage of the project, the amount of learning that happened during the past period was overwhelming, not only from the EU partners visits but from the overall experience, as Dr. ElHawwary described. Dr. ElHawwary added that during the past period, they had tensions as a team but they learned how to deal with such tensions and managed to overcome them. A great mentorship process took place inside the team and from all the team members according to Dr. ElHawwary. Dr. ElHawwary added that she herself learned a lot from the different and deep views and experiences of her team. In addition, going to schools and the discussions that took place among the team allowed more space to see schools from different perspectives. The experience is challenging yet very enriching.

Dr. Kamal from ANSU agreed with Dr. ElHawwary. Dr. Kamal focused on her reflection on the need for the three FOEs to build an active effective PCL. She explained that ANSU tried to create WhatsApp group and a google drive to share the material and experiences but the responsiveness and sharing is very limited. Dr. Kamal welcomed any suggestions to move for more practical solutions.

Prof. Zaalouk clarified that the website will solve many of these issues when it is ready. She agreed that creating the PCL among the Egyptian partners is very important but additional mechanisms can be created as well for this purpose. The management meetings is one tool to build such connections. However, we can also start having seminars at the universities and FOEs to promote the project's culture, experiences and learning.

Concerning the seminars, Prof. ELNaggar from ANSU said that they have already conducted seminars at their FOE and they will conduct other seminars to share their experiences during the visits to Europe, the best practices, the lessons learned, and to focus on the importance of the qualitative research. Prof. ELNaggar added referring to the Egyptian partners including ANSU that they have taken small steps to create their PCL, yet the change takes time and creating PCLs among the partner FOEs also needs time to happen and goes through stages of learning and dealing with our differences and the different views.

Commenting on the challenge of changing values and resistance, Dr. Lamia from HU said that building trust with schools and teachers is a challenge they touched when they visited the schools. She added that changing values and culture is the real challenge more than the change related to more specific material such as STEM for example.

Concerning the internal motivation, the point that was mentioned earlier in Prof. Zaalouk's presentation, Dr. Shehab from HU assured that this is a main aspect that lacks in schools more than any other aspect. The teachers according to Dr. Shehab need to be given space and time to spend with the FOEs but so far and beyond the signed MOU there are no steps taken to facilitate that. Dr. Shehab asked Prof. Zaalouk for suggestions to solve this issue.

Prof. Zaalouk thanked Dr. Shehab for clarifying this point and based on this new information a letter should be directed to the MOE to alert them of the urgency of informing the schools directorates to put the protocol in action.

Back to the point that was raised earlier by Dr. Kamal concerning creating a PCL among the Egyptian FOEs, Dr. ELShamy from AU mentioned that in the previous meetings, Prof. ElKharashi and the AU team suggested that the three FOEs work together to create common needs assessment tools. He added that the suggested step could still be done if the three FOEs work together in the coming two weeks timespan. He added that the schools are very ambitious and

they ask for needs that differ from the focus of the SUP4PCL project. Hence, we need to be fully aware of the aspects we need to work on and commit to them.

Concerning the WhatsApp group and the google drive, Dr. ELShamy explained that not all participants can follow up on them and that they turned to be a social instrument. Starting with creating common tools for needs assessment and then working together on the material can be a good step for creating the PCL among FOEs, according to Dr. ELShamy

The bureaucracy was another point mentioned by Dr. ELShamy; he highlighted it by giving some examples. Dr. ELShamy said that if the faculty needs to change the date of the school visit for any reason, she/he would need to inform the ministry again with the new dates, which hinders the process and the flexibility of going to schools.

Prof. Zaalouk thanked the participants for their vital interventions and supported Dr. ELShamy's suggestion of having common tools for needs assessment as well as guidelines that explains how to enter schools. Prof. Zaalouk suggested having a committee that represents the Egyptian FOEs and meeting for this purpose. Furthermore, it was agreed in earlier meetings to create two manuals: one for ethics (by Dr. ELHawwary from AU) and the other is a guideline that explains how to enter schools. Prof. Zaalouk added that Dr. ELNaggar has the experience in this area and should take the lead for the second manual, which can start with the idea of Action Research. Prof. Zaalouk stressed on the importance of working on the manuals and finalizing them.

Concerning the obstacles, the FOEs face with the MOE and the dates of school visits, Prof. Zaalouk clarified that this needs a policy dialogue from her end. This dialogue needs to introduce the MOE to the concepts of PCL so they can provide appropriate flexibility and space that is needed in the project. Furthermore, people from MOE as well as schools can be invited to attend the seminars including the coming event taking place in December, as suggested by Prof. Zaalouk. Including them in the project's events is important as explained.

Concerning the needs assessment, Prof. Zaalouk stressed that we need to conduct focus groups and interviews more than depending on questionnaires. In addition, it is important to make the teachers feel that they are also experts and that FOEs and schools work together with no hierarchy.

Dr. ELNaggar said that they at ANSU have already invited the school leaders, and they also need to invite the supervisors.

Concerning sharing experiences and creating PCLs among Egyptian FOEs, Prof. Heggi from HU stressed on the importance of working on this aspect as it is a culture we miss. He added that a good example of that is the seating arrangement in this meeting as each FOE gathered on a separate table without mixing with other FOEs. A suggestion to start with the next meetings. Prof. Heggi added that we also need to strengthen the connection between the members of the one team so that the team goes to schools with this spirit.

A third suggestion made by Prof. Heggi is about conducting seminars among the Egyptian FOEs to strengthen the communication and to exchange knowledge and experiences. The last comment he made was concerning the need to have an MOU or protocol between each FOE and the directorate to overcome the bureaucratic systems and obstacles in addition to the MOU already signed on the level of the ministries.

Prof. Heggi's contribution was an excellent one as described by Prof. Zaalouk. Prof. Zaalouk also added that Dr. Ashraf Hatem the AUC counsellor has suggested having a kick off meeting for the project during December in which we invite the heads of the universities, ministers, heads of directorates and schools to this meeting. This will help create a better understanding for the project and the different roles of each and will improve communication.

II. Session Two: Progress Reporting -Presentations by the three Egyptian FOEs (ANSU, AU and HU)

Dr. Rasha Kamal, AinShams University (ANSU)

Dr. Kamal started her presentation by explaining how challenging this project is in different ways, and how challenging it is to create PCL among the three FOEs. Another challenge was mentioned by Dr. Kamal was finding the balance between the project's needs, other work needs and personal commitments. The last point is one of the biggest challenges for the ANSU team according to Dr. Kamal.

Dr. Kamal started by the last points mentioned in her presentation during the third local meeting and what ANSU team have achieved since that time.

A meeting in October 3rd 2017 was held. The meeting agenda focused on two aspects. First, the travel arrangements. Second, the planning for the school visits, the division of the teams and selection of the leader for each school.

Concerning the planning for school visits, an orientation day and a launching ceremony for the project took place on October 30th, 2017. The principals of schools in the Ministry of Education were invited. Furthermore, Action Research workshops for all project participants were conducted on October 31st and November 1st 2017. Additional action research workshops will be planned by two trainers who have earlier experience in AR, Dr. Dina Saber and Mr. Mahmoud Haggag.

Other outcomes of the meeting relevant to the school visits were:

- School profile and a training needs assessment tool were prepared.
- A suggestion to design a new tool for the school leaders was agreed upon. Dr. Kamal explained that from their visits to UK and Ireland, the ANSU team learned that focusing on the school leaders is a key a factor and that the professional leadership leads to successful PD for teachers. Hence, ANSU agreed to focus on two areas, the skills of the school leader and the support the school leader gives to teachers PD.
- A blog for the purposes of documentation and effective communication between the teams is created.
- Five team leaders for the five participant schools were selected. The team leaders are Dr.Mohamed Abdo, Dr.Yasser, Dr.Dina, Dr.Hanan and Dr.Sally.

In addition to the above points, ANSU created the training needs questionnaires for both teachers and the quality assurance and training units. ANSU consulted with HU and were given recommendations to make the questionnaire shorter. According to this recommendation, ANSU team modified the questionnaire to a shorter version.

Dr. Kamal added that all the mentioned documents are available. This availability allows the interested people to refer to it and use it even after the project ends.

The criteria for selecting school leaders from the SUP4PCL project was another point presented by Dr. Kamal. The criteria are summarized in the following: High commitment, Personal communication skills, and having strong connection with schools through either AR or practicum. In addition, having good knowledge of ethnographic studies and documentation as well as having the skills to work in team are other important criteria considered.

Elaborating on what has been accomplished by ANSU team during the past interval, Dr. Kamal highlighted the following:

- An Arabic manual about how to introduce the project to schools is produced. Yet, it still needs to be translated.
- An information day event was organized to introduce the schools to the project.
- Plans were put by the school leaders. Each school leader met with the school head and agreed on a plan on how to start working with the school.
- The five school heads, heads of directorates and the heads of the quality assurance and training units were invited to ANSU. The goal of this event was to introduce them to the project, its significance and the different roles of the stakeholders and schools. The presentation was in Arabic and had a simple style. In this meeting, the invitees explained some of their needs. In addition, ANSU team presented the lessons learned from their visit to EU partners and how their FOE in ANSU themselves would benefit from this learning experience. The meeting also aimed to make the different stakeholders feel as equal partners in this project not only recipients.
- A workshop for the five school teams was another activity that took place. In the workshop, each school team identified the points of strength and weaknesses in their schools and how to deal with them.

Applying the tools is a step that still needs to be implemented. On the day of the local meeting, some of ANSU teams managed to go to schools, according to Dr. Kamal.

Concerning the selection of teams, Dr. Kamal clarified that the ANSU team was selected to cover the different areas of specializations needed in the project such as STEM, SEN, training, quality assurance and IT. Yet, one of the challenges the ANSU team have is the lack of English language skills for some team members. Hence, reporting in English is an issue; they instead present their detailed reports in Arabic.

The last aspect presented by Dr. Kamal was the challenges the ANSU team are facing. The challenges are summarized as follows:

- The very tight time line of the project activities.
- The Language barrier as explained above.
- The exam times at universities and schools.
- The EU partners' December Visit, its objectives and framework (A point that was discussed on the last session of this event).

Prof. Zaalouk thanked Dr. Kamal for her excellent presentation and clarified one point concerning creating the PCLs. Prof. Zaalouk clarified that during the lifetime of the SUP4PCL project, we do not have to reach very advanced stages of PCLs. The most important point to reach is to start the PCLs and constantly work on developing them on profound bases.

Dr. Dalia ELHawwary, Alexandria University (AU)

Dr. ELHawwary thanked Dr. Kamal for the presentation and a reflection, Dr. ELHawwary said that listening to the steps taken by ANSU is very useful and shows a different vision.

Briefly, Dr. ELHawwary explained that their team consists of twelve members, five of them are core and these were selected because they had earlier experience in similar projects. The other seven team members are assistants. Unlike ANSU team, their team do not have the English language barrier. The five core members are given the responsibility for the five schools; each member is leading the work in one of the five schools. Concerning the communication among the team, unlike ANSU, they have a high flow of information; therefore, they prefer to conduct face-to-face meetings rather than using the WhatsApp groups or other virtual tools.

AU approach to schools and needs assessment is a qualitative one as it would be difficult to separate between the needs assessment and ethnography. Dr. ELHawwary elaborated that they have big challenges in creating a new culture such as the PCL. The challenge is not only relevant to creating this culture in schools but also among the AU team and the Egyptian FOEs themselves.

In the previous AU team meetings, (the meetings were no less than six so far), the team agreed to start with the qualitative approaches. Afterwards some quantitative tools might be used if needed.

In these meetings, the AU team does not merely discuss the next steps but they also discuss the different views on how to create PCL, how to share information.

Dr. ELHawwary in her presentation, elaborated on several aspects. The first one was about gaining access to schools. The context and the challenges.

On the same week of the forth-local meeting event, the AU had their third visit to schools. Dr. ELHawwary also clarified that the AU team have some informal connection with the schools. Some of the teachers they met were their students at the university. Yet the relationship with

the directorate is very formal. A brief summary as follows was given by Dr. ElHawwary on the steps taken to visit schools:

- First round of correspondences between FOE & MOE Directorate: January- September 2017
- Attempt failed to have a Protocol signed between AU & the MOE Directorate in Alexandria
- Memorandum of understanding between: MOHE & MOE & AUC Middle East Studies institute was signed.
- New round of correspondences between FOE & MOE Directorate: September- October 2017
- Visit from AU team representatives to the MOE Directorate, Community Participation manager: Monday 2nd October, 2017
- Gaining Verbal consent to access schools.
- AU team first INFORMAL Visits to schools: 23-26 October, 2017
- More challenges (official documents in schools, more documents required by the MOE Directorate, processing official letters at the FOE, etc.) some schools did not even know who the AU team are and the reason they are in schools.
- Using all possible formal & informal channels of communications with the MOE Directorate (formal letters, phone calls, WhatsApp)

Dr. ELHawwary then elaborated on the schools visit progress. She said that there is a comprehensive and shared plan for schools' visits until the end of December 2017 (mid-term exams).

The plan outlines:

- Aims & objectives of visits
- Teams assigned to each school (One core AU team member and two assistants for each of the five schools)

- Schedule for schools weekly visits. Dr. ELHawwary added that the fact that the faculty will be visiting schools not vis-versa has a strong positive effect on schools. It is a very important step to build the trust.
- Tools used (Qualitative)
- Expected outcomes. Concerning this point, Dr. ELHawwary said that the teachers are eager to feel that their voice is heard and will reach the decision makers levels.
- Sharing outcomes & next steps

As a continuation of the plan, the AU team will assure achieving the following:

- Schools have a comprehensive understanding of the project (meetings with school heads, Quality assurance teams & subject head teachers)
- Building trust (formal & informal dialogue)
- Planning meetings with different stakeholders (e.g. students & parents)
- Planning classroom observations
- Weekly individual school visit report
- Schools' profiles and context is very important and almost done.
- Phase one of identifying schools' needs (Open questions- development of questionnaire)
- Identifying possible areas to be the focus for the ethnographic study

Dr. ELHawwary clarified that they created a WhatsApp group with the teachers involved to send the questionnaires through it for the teachers to fill in. This is a way to accelerate the process.

Regarding the expected outputs before EU partners' visit in December 2017, Dr. ELHawwary that they will have: First, a specific list of shared needs among the five schools. Second, a clear identification and clustering of needs in the project key areas such as Mentorship & coaching, PCL and STEM. Finally, and identification of target audience for different training programs.

The next steps to be taken according to Dr. ELHawwary:

- Resolution of training-related key issues:
 - Time

- Mode
- Use of available resources (e.g. websites)
- Identifying mentors & mentees in each school (AU team is expecting to start introducing them in December). Concerning this point Prof. Zaalouk clarified that the mentors inside the FOE should also be identified and need to attend the December event when the EU partners come.
- Developing mentorship plans in coordination with quality assurance teams in schools.
- Producing five schools' baseline studies (Expected to be finalized by end Dec 2017)
- Identifying the focus and scope of schools' ethnographic studies
- Selecting AU mentors teams
- Developing training materials

The final aspect presented by AU is the challenges. The challenges were summarized as follows:

- Time is very pressing
- EU visit (time – clearances)
- End-of-term exams (Schools & University)
- Flow of information
- Coordination with other universities
- Building a strong & sustainable co-operative relationship with MOE

Concerning the flow of information, Prof. Zaalouk clarified that the flow of information in the ERASMUS + project has a different style than it was in the TEMPUS project. In the TEMPUS project, it was more centralized while in the current ERASMUS+ project it is more decentralized which might be better but more challenging and creating more chaos. Prof. Zaalouk elaborated that this is clear from the flow of threads and emails. In many cases, partners choose to contact the EU partners directly. This creates chaos and loss of follow up.

Prof. Zaalouk clarified that she as the project coordinator does not mind both ways the centralized way through AUC or the decentralized. Yet, if the partners prefer to go for the less centralized form the process needs to be very well organized. For example, the titles of the emails need to reflect the content, and the related matters should go under the same thread.

Dr. Lubna Shehab, Helwan University (HU)

Dr. Shehab started her presentation by thanking the HU team for their efforts and Prof. Heggi for his continuous guidance. Briefing the participants on the progress in the needs assessment, Dr. Shehab clarified that based on the recommendations of Prof. Zaalouk, the HU team has started to focus on the qualitative methods. Concerning the school teams, there is a coordinator for each school, and there is one person in each of the five teams who has a good level of English. Hence, reporting in English is not a problem for them.

The HU team conducted different meetings to develop the baseline reports for the five schools. The baseline report will include: The School Profile, the Needs Assessment and the start of the ethnographic Study.

Dr. Shehab proceeded that the steps taken for developing the school baseline reports are the following:

1- School Visits:

- Meetings with schools took place: Introduction of the project through an info session between HU team and the school principal.
- Applying the needs, assessment tools (questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups).Interviews with school heads and teachers were conducted.
- The School Profiles completed.

2- Designing an Electronic Tool for Data Entry

3- Statistical analysis used and the data is transferred to excel. The team involved in this section is Prof. Mohamed Abdel Salam and Dr. Hassan Makhlof.

4- The data entry process for 125 questionnaires is done.

5- A Facebook page is created to communicate with schools; the goal of this page is clarified.

The presenter then moved to briefing the participants on the final report.

The main aspects covered in the report are the following: the training needs and the training Methods. Peer communities management is another aspect covered. From the school visits, the HU team noticed that there are informal PCLs among teachers and peer learning taking place, yet, the teachers are not aware that it is happening). Another aspect included in the report is the resources and equipment. A final issue explored and included in the report is the

Professional activities and students learning. A summary of the findings in the five schools is clarified below:

1- The Training Experience:

96% of teachers participated in training courses. The courses are focused on the following:

- Academic specialization.
- ICDL
- Educational Technology.
- Curricula & Teaching methods.

2- Equipment:

- 54% of teachers expressed the need for facilities and equipment for developing PLCs.

3- Teachers' Needs:

- Educational Technologies.
- Modern Learning Theories.
- How to deal with student behaviors.
- Class Management.
- Strategic Planning.
- Quality Assurance.
- Assessment and Evaluation.
- Mentorship.

Some other findings:

- 53% of the teachers prefer peer-learning, workshops, school visits.
- 86% of teachers believe in the need for developing PLCs.
- 47% of teachers are not satisfied with the school management

- 16% only of teachers participate in decision-making.
- 51% of teachers are not satisfied with the process of decision making in schools.
- 36% of teachers have no individualized activities.
- The need of social justice, especially in reinforcement and accountability system.

4- Professional activities and students learning:

- 53% of teachers expressed that the school cares about their professional development through training, workshops, academic guidance, psychological support and recognition.
- 61% of teachers participate in supporting their colleagues through professional activities, developing printed materials, competitions and forums.(mostly this peer learning happens within each specialization separately , e.g. Arabic department, science department,...etc.)
- - 54% of teachers confirmed that exchange experiences through peer learning had a great positive influence on student learning.
- The main need is Developing PLCs in Schools

Dr. Shehab then elaborated on the profiles, needs and the start of ethnographies for each of the five schools.

1- Zamalek Girls' School (primary, preparatory and secondary levels)

The school profile and the school resources were presented. This was followed by presenting the training needs in this school. The training needs are summarized as follows: Curricula, Learning and Teaching skills, Using modern educational technology, Self- improvement, Class Management, Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning.

Other needs that emerged in the qualitative analysis:

Training Methods.

- Most teachers prefer training inside schools and not more than 3 days.

- Visits/ workshops.

- There is a need for assessment and follow up of the impact of the training sessions.
- The training needs to be optional not obligatory.

Concerning the Peer communities' management, the teachers would like to exchange visits and experiences between schools not merely limiting it to their own school. They believe in the importance of peer learning. Furthermore, the teachers were not satisfied with the leadership due to different reasons such as the lack of human resources management skills. They need social justice in professional decision making (e.g. some people get more training opportunities than others)

Professional activities and students learning:

Concerning this aspect, there is a need for regular meetings between teachers to exchange experience. The teachers confirmed the great influence of regular and institutional meetings on students learning.

The start of Ethnographic Study:

The following emerged in the start of the ethnographic study:

Professional Development

- The school is interested in helping teachers become more effective via training workshops inside and outside the school. Teachers' needs are identified and analyzed by the training unit of the school.

Peer Learning Communities:

- Teachers exchange the experiences of their teaching through exchanging the materials, building trust and respect.
- The burdens of work and school schedule affect their readiness to exchange experiences.

2-Om Elabtal Girls' preparatory School

Helwan E.A.

The school profile and resources were presented. This was followed by presenting the needs assessment.

The Training needs emerging were the following:

Focusing on the Students` behavior management. Concerning the training methods, the teachers need applicable training material not only theoretical.

As for the Peer communities' management, the teachers need to be involved in decision-making. The teachers also prefer the joint training between different schools to exchange experiences.

They also prefer E- communication and online meetings between teachers in school.

Ethnography Study

The start of the ethnographic study revealed the following:

- The teachers are ready to develop PLCs that they share the teaching materials
- The school provide teachers with all facilities to develop their performance.
- Teachers used to exchange the teaching materials which helped in developing their teaching methods.

The Quality Assurance Unit

- The quality assurance unit is not activated
- According to discussions with those responsible for the Quality Assurance units, HU suggested collaborating with QA team to introduce some sessions for teachers to help them improve their knowledge, skills and attitudes in addition to ways for implementing that in teaching.
- CPD can be held weekly or monthly, one meeting with the teachers. The focus of the meetings should aim at increasing their background about the quality and how to reflect that in the classroom.

3-Helwan Preparatory school for boys Helwan E.A

The school profile as well as the resources were presented and followed by a presentation on the training needs.

The training needs emerged were the following: Conflict Management, Learning and Teaching skills, Using modern educational technology, Modern Learning Theories, and Self-improvement, in addition to conducting Visits, trips and workshops.

Concerning the Peer communities' management, the teachers need to have free time during the schedule for weekly meetings. As for the resources and equipment, the teachers need technological facilities to exchange experiences, materials....etc.

-The training themes emerged concerning the professional activities and students learning were more related to the classroom activities and need to be applicable in large classes.

Ethnographic Study.

The start of the ethnographic study revealed the following:

- It was noticeable that there is active involvement of parents in any activities related to the school community, for example special occasions: musical concerts, exhibits or sports competitions.
- The school is open to the idea of inclusive education. SEN students are welcomed in the school. The school is also providing care and attention to those who are gifted via academic competitions.

Concerning Professional Development

- The school is interested in helping teachers to become more effective via training workshops inside and outside the school. Teachers' needs are identified and analyzed by the training unit of the school.
- It was also evident that the school is not aware of the concept of peer communities. Nevertheless, the teachers displayed a positive attitude towards the idea.

The plan to activate the Quality Assurance Unit is the following:

- Dissemination of QA culture in the school
- Setting QA framework

- Assigning roles and responsibilities
- Time Measures
- Monitoring & Supervision

According to Dr. Lamia Kamel, the lead person for this school, the team will work on three aspects through conducting focus groups. Posing the following questions:

A-How good is our school.

b- How do we know?

c-What are we going to do next?

Dr. Lamia added that the self- evaluation is very important and that there are some principles that they need to be aware of while self- evaluating. These principles are:

- Quality improvement is a journey of many small steps.
- Success is achieved through meeting the needs of those we serve.
- Most problems are found in processes and systems not in people.
- Actions are based upon accurate and measured data.

Quoting Dr. Lamia, the team tries to embrace the following slogan in the school: *“together everyone achieves more”*

4-Helwan Primary School

Helwan E.A.

Following the presentation on the school profile and resources, the presenters elaborated on the school needs and ethnographic study.

The Training needs emerged were Curricula, Using Technology in Teaching and the Quality Assurance

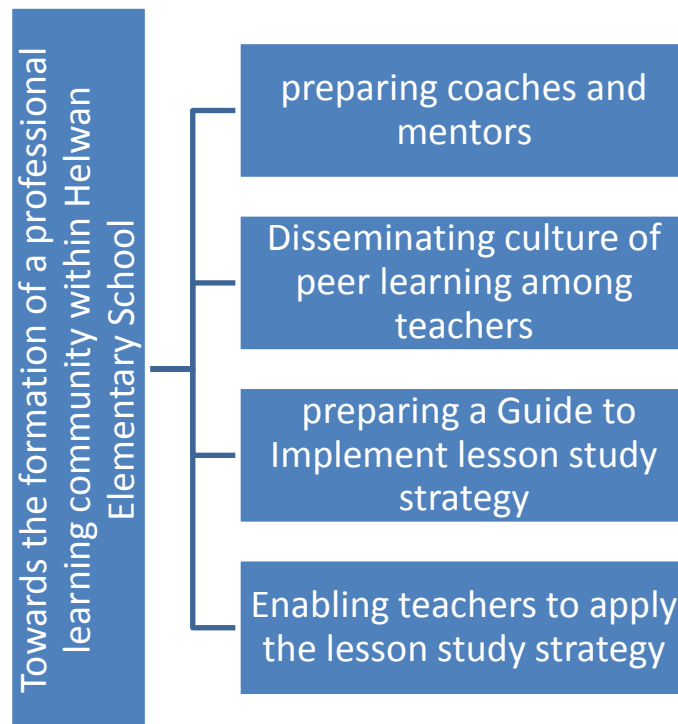
Training Methods needed Workshops, interactive training and school visits.

-Concerning the Peer communities management: the teachers need more time and space for that purpose.

The Resources needed are the following: Teachers need handouts, training material, incentives for sharing experiences and attending training.

Concerning the Professional activities& students learning. The teachers need assessment and monitoring of the impact of training inside classrooms. In addition, the themes need to be more related to the students` problems.

The proposed plan for Helwan old primary school as presented by Dr. Shehab:



**5-Kaser Eldobara Formal School
(Kindergarten, primary, preparatory levels)
West Cairo E.A.**

After presenting the school profile, Dr. Shehab presented the training needs emerged.

Dr. Alyaa one of the team members responsible for this school said that the teachers were suspicious about the possibility of having a real training as all the previous trainings were not very successful in their views.

The Training needs according to the HU team are: Class Management, Educational Mentorship and Quality Assurance. Workshops are the preferred training method.

Concerning the Peer communities' management, the teachers need to have opportunities of participation in decision-making, they also need enough time to share experiences as there is a lack of communication between the teachers and the school management

The technological infrastructure is a missing element in the school and is an important one to have to facilitate the exchange of information, concept maps, and journals....etc.

Concerning the Professional activities& students learning, decentralization is highly needed in professional activities.

Ethnography Study

Some of the remarks made and observed were:

-Training is better conducted during vacations | (better Midyear vacation).

-The school team was very cooperative and has a positive attitude towards training and its impact on teaching.

-Activating the roles of training and evaluation units at school is important.

After presenting the status in the five schools, Dr. Shehab briefed the participants on the progress of the selection of mentors:

The seven mentors at HU were selected based on the following criteria:

1- TOT

2- Experience in mentoring.

3- Good relations with schools.

4- Leadership skills.

5- Experience in adult learning.

6- Communication skills.

7- Enthusiasm to change.

The seven mentors are: Dr. Khaled Malek, Dr. Doaa Abdel Karim, Dr. Dina Maher, Dr. Ahmed Youssef, Dr. Lamiaa Kamel, Mohamed Adel and Ahmed Yasser. An eighth person will still be selected.

Prof. Zaalouk thanked the presenter for the rich presentation and thanked all the participants for the efforts and for starting the actual steps in the field. She also reminded the participants that planting the seeds is the important thing during the project but not necessarily to reach very advanced mature stages during the project lifetime. She added that for this reason taking sustainable steps is important.

III. Session Three: Taking Stock of the visits to Europe.

Prof. Malak Zaalouk, Founding Director, Middle East Institute for Higher Education (MEIHE), AUC:

In this session, Prof. Zaalouk started by conveying a reflection that was mentioned to her by Prof. Linder from MLU. As a reflection on the Egyptian partners visit to MLU, Prof. Martin said that the questions and discussions raised by the Egyptian partners while they were in Germany opened doors for MLU to pause and reflect more on their own work, an aspect that was not there before. He added that they started currently to conduct meetings to discuss and reflect on their own practices.

Prof. Zaalouk also highlighted the cultural experience as one of the most important learning aspects. She invited the participants to attend an event on 18th and 19th December 2017 in which experts from Finland will be speaking.

This introduction was followed by a reflection from ANSU presented by Dr. Kamal.

Highlights of the lessons learned from UON visit as Dr. Kamal explained were the following:

On PCLs the following concepts were clarified: Learning communities through active blended Learning, What active blended learning is, the Benefits of active blended learning. In addition to the following concepts: What learning communities through active blended learning looks like in practice and the student responses to the active blended learning.

Concerning mentoring, mentoring is a structured process for supporting professional learners through significant career transition. In addition, all trainee teachers have a mentor (classroom teacher) who is trained by university staff to be a mentor. The mentor gives advice and help for novice teachers. The outcome of this process is to improve the students' performance inside schools.

In the fields of inclusion, special needs and learning disabilities, the following themes were addressed: First, Using technology in providing the educational services to the Special Needs and secondly, one to one learning through communicative tools advanced with technology.

Some important themes learned from ULEIC visit:

On PCLs:

-Classroom based Lesson Study, a collaborative mode of professional learning.

-The lesson study cycle involves small groups of teachers collaboratively planning a 'research lesson' in which one teaches while other members of the team observe.

Furthermore, the Schools collaborate to help each other as a kind of forming PCL. Schools also collaborate with universities as the latter helps in the PD for teachers and solving students' problems. Furthermore, the teachers hold regular meetings (once a week) outside the school to develop their performance and solve their problems.

In the areas of Inclusion, special needs and learning disabilities. The schools have sections for inclusion that contains a resource room for special educational needs and disability (SEND) students. This section helps Low achievers, students with ADHD, physically handicapped, dyslexics, and autism spectrum disorders.

Some important themes learned from UL visit as Dr. Kamal explained:

The Online courses and the use of technology in teacher education. In addition, employing student podcast to support the University of Limerick's graduate attributes. It shed the light on the definition of embedded podcasts and its benefits for university students. The training the participants had on the computer program classed "Corel Video studio x8" was also helpful.

Concerning the School placement in UL, it takes place as follows:

- The 2nd year placement takes place in the Spring semester of Year 2 when student teachers participate in a School Placement of eight weeks.
- The 4th year placement takes place in the Autumn semester of Year 4 when student teachers participate in a School Placement of ten weeks.

The school placement is organised by the School Placement Office.

The Undergraduate student teachers normally fill out school placement school option forms at least 6 months before school placements

Lastly, the important aspects that were learned from MLU as Dr. Kamal explained were the following:

Regarding the PCL theme, Forming PLC in schools is officially decreed by the Ministry of Education

An interesting background and observation was given during the visit on STEM:

In MLU, it is named as MINTegration (MINT stands for STEM in German). Since Germany hosts many refugees (800,000 in 2015), learning German is essential. The project observed was a Mobile Science Lab that moves from school to school, offers one-week courses and focuses on human health (Hygiene, Healthy nutrition, Drug prevention and Sexual education). In addition, Non-German students learn and practice the German language in these classes.

Concerning Mentoring, Mentoring is an indirect way that takes place through school placement process, while the School placement takes place in three stages:

- The Orientation School Placement: This is done during the first semester for 2 weeks in which student teachers are placed in schools to observe teaching. When they come to the university, they reflect on what they observed with their instructors.
- Teaching Practice Placements at School I: From the fourth semester and for four weeks pre-service teachers teach ten lessons and observe another 10 for each of the two specializations
- Teaching Practice Placements at School II: For 4 weeks during the fifth semester, student teachers observe 15 lessons and observe an equal number in each of the two specializations

Dr. Kamal then elaborated on some projects and aspects that were of specific interest and benefit to ANSU. Example of the projects are:

Projects applied in Martin Luther University and can be useful in the Egyptian context. The Higher Education Pact of the government to improve the education of teacher trainees finances the projects. The projects end on year 2020.

These three projects are:

- Project "Working against Doubts": This project deals with doubts or concerns that student teachers might have concerning their studies or while working as teachers.
- Project "Digitization of Teacher Training": The purpose of this project is two-fold: To develop courses for students and teachers at the university to enhance digital competence of current and future teachers and create awareness for students' ability to learn with the help of digital media
- PLC and lesson study.

In the Egyptian context, it will be useful if

- The MoE adopts PLCs as a viable strategy for CPD in Egyptian schools. If there is support from decision makers, leaders and middle leaders for this strategy, it will be effective in improving teachers' performance and consequently student learning.
- The Egyptian schools use Pre-lesson planning and post-lesson evaluation meetings. This can provide discursive opportunities for detailed planning and in-depth reflection about the quality of teaching and learning. The collaboration in lesson study can help teachers to develop a sense of collective efficacy.
- Case- based studies and reflections is applied.

Some of the useful aspects in mentoring will be:

- Training cooperating teachers to mentor student teachers as well as other newly qualified teachers in their schools.
- Having close cooperation between university and schools.
- Connecting the role of mentorship and reflection to TPD.

Concerning the FOE context , some beneficial aspects would be:

- Developing intercultural communication training courses.
- Developing Lab Schools
- A close cooperation between university and schools.
- Connecting the role of mentorship and reflection in TPD.
- Having deep reflection through case studies
- Developing Teacher Practicum
- Applying Project based learning approaches in teaching

Dr. Kamal stated that these were general aspects learned from the visits to Europe. Yet, focusing on the context of the SUP4PCL project, the following themes are highlighted:

- Developing PCL between Students and teachers (strategies).
- Developing class management skills in TPD.
- Creating a learning culture at schools.
- Developing PD for the school leaders, middle leaders and seniors.
- Deep reflection through case studies at schools.
- Developing online courses for SPNE
- Project based learning approach in developing the TPD material.

IV. Session Four: M&E tools.

On this brief session, Prof. Zaalouk reminded the participants to send their M&E questionnaires related to MLU visit the soonest possible.

Prof. Zaalouk then clarified that ULEIC is the lead for this WP and MLU is the sub-lead. Prof. Zaalouk clarified that MLU has developed a separate tool for PCLs that was presented earlier in

the kick off meeting. At the same time, ULEIC have developed other M&E tools related to the project.

All the participants agreed that merging the tools would be useful.

V. Session Five: Build consensus of development of materials and December visits:

In the last session, Prof. Zaalouk presented the topics suggested by the EU partners to be included in their visit to the Egyptian partners in December 2017 (WP 2.1). She discussed the topics with the Egyptian partners and an agreement was reached on the topics to be addressed with some modification on the themes suggested earlier by the EU partners.

The topics suggested by the EU partners were:

- A presentation by Egyptian universities - emerging themes, needs and developments.
- Developing materials within STEM and ICT (Martin Luther)
- Supporting teachers through change processes (Limerick)
- Reflective Practice (Limerick / Martin Luther)
- Approaches to enabling teacher leadership (Limerick)
- Mentoring (Northampton)
- Evaluating in partnership with teachers (Northampton)

After discussing the topics with the teams, the outcome of the discussion was the desire of all teams to have identical sessions in all three universities. In addition, it will be very helpful if EU partners can bring any materials or references deemed useful.

As for the topics, the partners agreed to the following topics:

- 1- Presentations by Egyptian Universities
- 2- Developing STEM materials (they would like to include the British experience in addition to MLU)
- 3- Supporting teachers through change processes
- 4- How to initiate reflective practice

5- Mentoring

Topics they added and would like the EU partners to address:

- How to create educational leadership in schools (as opposed to just enhancing teacher leadership)
- How to prepare a full mentorship plan based on the school context.
- How to mentor student teachers in practicum.
- How to create PCL for practicum students.
- Developing blended material for PCLs
- Global Citizenship

At the end of the meeting, Prof. Zaalouk stressed on the importance of receiving the fifteen baseline reports by the end of December 2017. She explained that the reports need to assess the current situation in the schools. Prof. Zaalouk continued that towards the end of the project, an assessment will be made to reflect the progress and development occurring during the project's lifetime. Prof. Zaalouk clarified that the baseline report needs to consist of three aspects:

- 1- School profile
- 2- Needs assessment
- 3- A start of ethnography.

The baseline study needs to focus and highlight the areas relevant to the project such as CPD, PCLs and mentoring.

The baseline study also needs to include some literature. Prof. Zaalouk promised the participants to send them some bibliography concerning organizational culture well as leadership patterns.

Concerning the case studies, Prof. Zaalouk also clarified that the EU partners will be involved in the case studies relevant to the FOEs only while Egyptian partners will be involved in the ones relevant to the schools.

On few organizational matters for the December visit, Prof. Heggi explained that it might be difficult for all the team to attend the three days. Therefore, they might need to divide the teams on the three days.

As for the collective meeting on 14 Dec 2017 hosted by ANSU, Prof. Zaalouk and the participants agreed to have five participants from each Egyptian FOE to attend the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Prof. Zaalouk thanked all the participants for the very fruitful meeting and expressed her enthusiasm to see the progress happening in the coming project activities.