



NEWSLETTER #1

Culture Couture - Merging Fashion and Tradition for Sustainable Style



About the Project:

The Culture Couture (COUTURE) project merges traditional arts like weaving, embroidery, and knitting with modern fashion design to promote sustainable style and job creation.

Partnering with universities in the West Balkans, Greece, and North Macedonia, it develops innovative fashion education modules.

Aligned with the EU's priorities for sustainable growth, COUTURE enhances student employability through training in traditional techniques. A dedicated web platform will share knowledge and resources, fostering education, collaboration, and cultural preservation in fashion.

This project aim to:

-  Enhance higher education quality and relevance for the labour market in third countries outside the programme.
-  Develop innovative education programmes to boost student skills, competence, and employability.
-  Promote inclusive education, equality, and civic competences.
-  Improve teacher training and professional development for long-term education system quality.

Target Groups



HEI Student

VCL Course encourages virtual exchange between Western Balkan and EU student teams solving case scenarios.



HEI Academic Staff

The trainings and short-term exchange visits planned during the project implementation will support academic staff from Western Balkan HEIs.



HEIs

VCL Course encourages virtual exchange between Western Balkan and EU student teams solving case scenario.

Project Activities



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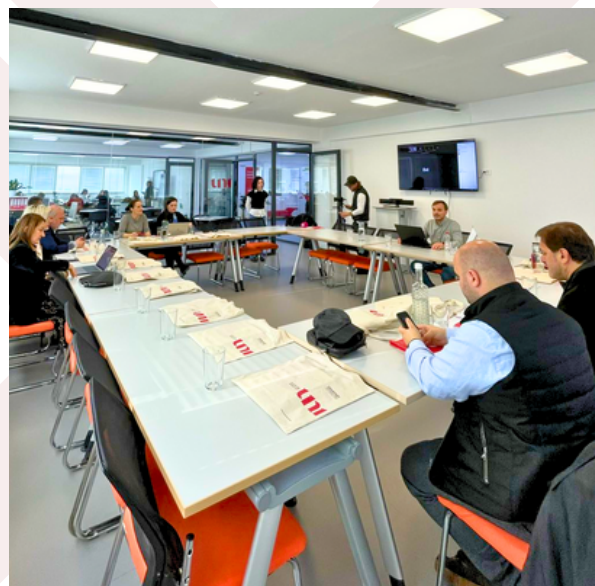
First Kick-off meeting of the COUTURE Project



The COUTURE project kick-off meeting was a resounding success, setting an inspiring tone for the journey ahead. Held on December 21-22, 2023 at Universum International College in Lipjan (with online participation via Zoom), the meeting brought together all project partners under Erasmus+ (Project Ref. 101129271) to align key objectives and work plans.

On Day 1, participants were warmly welcomed by distinguished speakers, including Ms. Qamile Sinani, Head of International Cooperation Division in Higher Education and Science, and Ms. Mimika Dobroshi, Head of Kosovo Erasmus+ Office.

Following a registration session, each partner delivered a brief presentation, providing an overview of their roles and expertise. The project's objectives, milestones, budget, and management structure were then comprehensively presented by Armend Berisha from Universum International College, setting a clear direction for the project. The agenda continued with detailed sessions on WP1 (Project Management and Coordination) and WP2 (Creation of the Modules), ensuring that every aspect of the project was well-structured from the start.

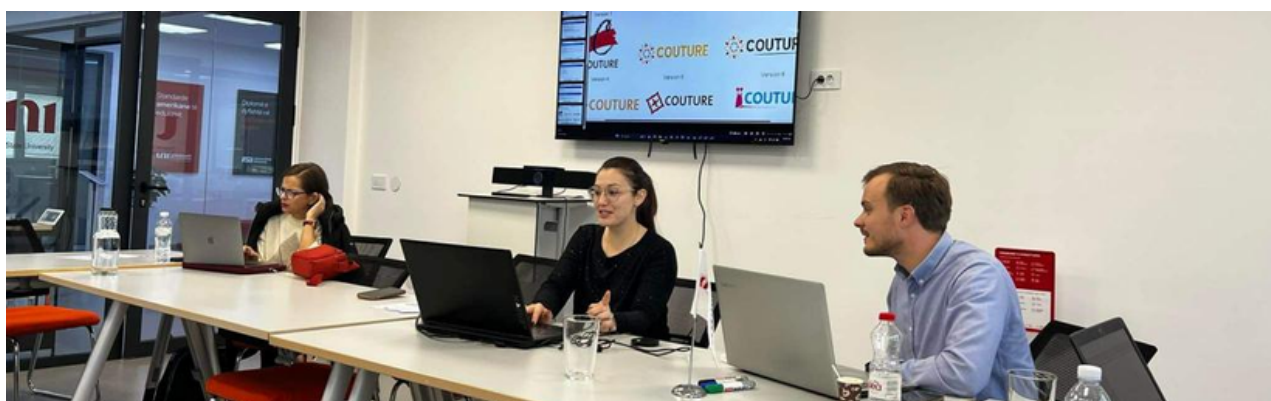


1st day



2nd day

Day 2 was equally engaging, with a focus on operational aspects. Discussions on WP3 (Piloting and Evaluation), WP4 (Quality Plan), and WP5 (Dissemination & Sustainability) provided deep insights into the strategies for implementation and long-term impact. A dedicated session on Base Camp Training further highlighted the commitment to hands-on learning and capacity building, while the Steering and Quality Committee meeting ensured that all partners contributed their expertise toward effective governance. The meeting concluded with plans for the next consortium meeting and final comments, solidifying the collaborative spirit among the partners.



Overall, the kick-off meeting not only clarified the project's roadmap but also fostered a strong sense of unity and purpose, promising a bright and sustainable future for the COUTURE project.



On Thursday, June 13, 2024, Harokopio University in Athens set the stage for a dynamic 2nd Technical Project Meeting (TPM) for the Couture Project. The event kicked off with a warm welcome and registration, as participants gathered in the Ceremony Hall to reconnect and set a collaborative tone for the coming days. Early sessions focused on reviewing the project's goals, work packages, and current progress, with each partner sharing their latest updates and insights on how we are advancing towards our milestones.



Following a refreshing coffee break, the Need Analysis session took center stage. Representatives from KAMA and the UET Center presented their findings, sparking engaging discussions that explored the critical challenges and opportunities within the project. This dialogue laid a solid foundation for the subsequent presentation of the prepared modules by HUA and MTU, where constructive feedback helped refine our approach.



Friday continued the momentum with a shift towards practical implementation. The morning began with a thorough discussion on the purchase of essential equipment, ensuring that our technical resources align with the project's ambitious objectives. After a brief pause, UET led an insightful session on enhancing the project website, inviting ideas to boost our digital presence and outreach. The meeting concluded with a forward-looking session on next steps and scheduling, where partners collectively mapped out the immediate future of the project.

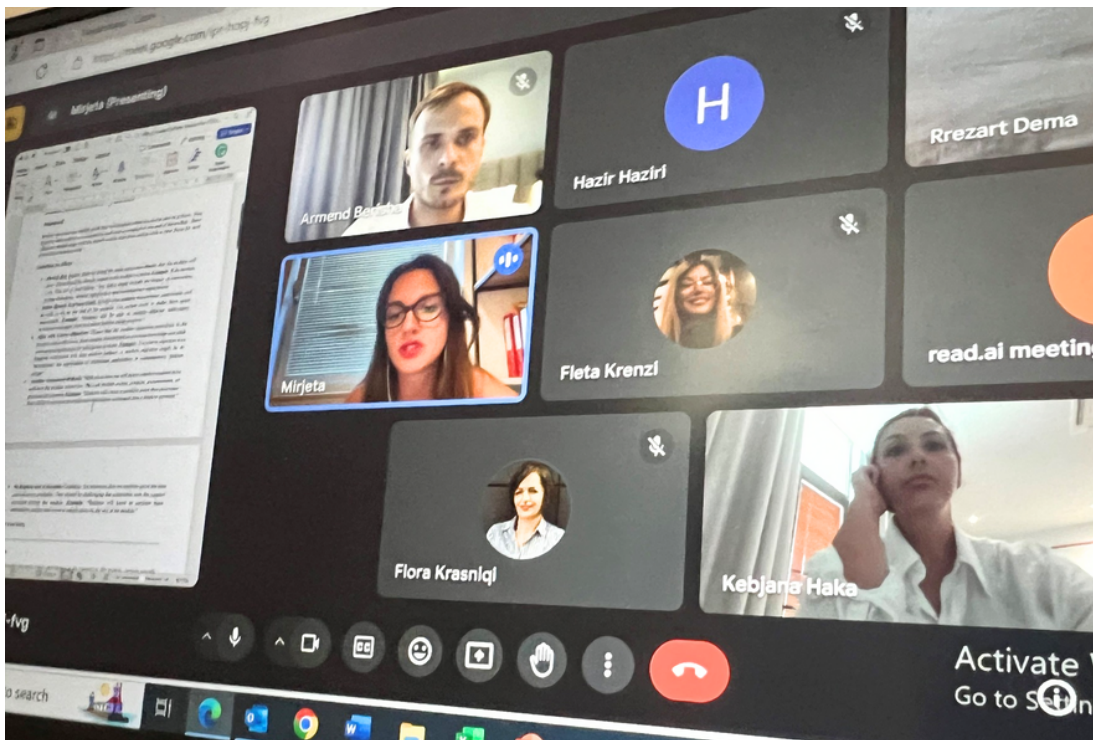


To cap off the event, an optional tour of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center provided a refreshing interlude, allowing participants to experience a slice of Athens' rich cultural heritage.

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Couture Partner meeting: Advancing Module Development for Sustainable Fashion

The COUTURE Project made significant strides in its mission to promote sustainable fashion through education. On Wednesday, August 7, 2024 the project consortium gathered for a crucial meeting that shaped the future of module development. Partners came together for an in-depth presentation and discussion focused on the new course guideline—a roadmap designed to ensure all project members were aligned and fully prepared to advance into the module development phase.



During the meeting, key strategies and innovative approaches were highlighted to drive the creation of educational modules that seamlessly integrate cultural heritage with modern sustainable practices in the fashion industry. This essential step not only solidified the consortium's collective vision but also set a clear, cohesive path forward.

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Welcome to the new Fashion Design Laboratory at European University of Tirana!



Fashion Design Laboratory at
European University of Tirana!

Thanks to the support of the Couture Project, co-funded by the European Union, our students are now taking their creative skills to new heights in this state-of-the-art lab. Equipped with professional-grade sewing machines and tools—including the advanced MAUSER Spezial machines—our future fashion designers and seamstresses are mastering everything from patternmaking to final stitching with exceptional precision.



In this dynamic environment, you can see our students in action as they create their very first designs, refine their techniques, and prepare for exciting careers in the fashion industry. Every stitch perfected and every garment brought to life reflects our commitment to excellence and innovation in sustainable fashion education.



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Couture Student Training: Bridging Tradition and Modernity in Fashion

The Couture 3TMP (Traditional Methods and Practices) training in Skopje is a unique educational initiative designed to explore and preserve the rich cultural heritage of traditional arts in fashion while embracing sustainable and innovative design practices.

Over the course of two days, participants engaged in an immersive learning experience that blended theory, practical skills, and cultural exploration.





1st day

On the first day, the focus was on cultural exploration and hands-on workshops. Participants immersed themselves in the historical significance of traditional techniques—such as weaving, embroidery, and knitting—that have shaped the cultural identity of the Balkans and Greece. Interactive lectures provided fascinating insights into how these age-old practices evolved over centuries, and subsequent workshops allowed students to get their hands on the tools and materials, connecting deeply with their artistic roots.

The second day elevated the experience by shifting the focus to advanced techniques and sustainable fashion. Here, students honed their craftsmanship by learning complex design and textile methods, exploring how traditional techniques can be seamlessly integrated into modern, eco-conscious fashion design. The day culminated in a showcase where innovative student-created designs beautifully merged heritage with contemporary trends, demonstrating a bold vision for the future of sustainable fashion.



2nd day



A memorable highlight of the training was a visit to Skopje's Old Bazaar—one of the oldest marketplaces in the Balkans. This cultural immersion provided a firsthand look at authentic craftsmanship, as participants engaged with local artisans and absorbed the vibrant atmosphere of the historic market.

The Couture 3TMP training not only equipped participants with essential technical skills but also deepened their appreciation for the cultural dimensions of fashion. As they depart with renewed inspiration, they are now better prepared to preserve, adapt, and innovate traditional practices to create sustainable fashion that bridges the gap between heritage and modern design.

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Empowering Fashion and Education: STAFF Training in Skopje



The STAFF Training in Skopje was a two-day intensive program aimed at equipping the staff of partner organizations with essential skills in both traditional arts and modern educational methodologies. The training took place as part of the broader effort to enhance the capabilities of participants involved in the third TMP (Traditional Methods and Practices) initiative, focusing on the intersection of fashion, sustainability, and effective teaching.



Day 1: Traditional Arts, Fashion Design, and Sustainability

The first day revolved around deepening the staff's understanding of Traditional Arts and their application in Fashion Design. Participants explored the cultural significance of these traditional methods, learning how they could be preserved and innovated upon in contemporary fashion. Sustainability was a key theme throughout the day, with sessions dedicated to ethical fashion practices and eco-conscious design principles.

Workshops encouraged active participation, ensuring that all attendees could engage with the material, ask questions, and apply their insights to their roles within the project.

Day 2: Teaching Approaches and Practical Applications

The second day shifted focus towards educational strategies. Participants explored different Teaching Approaches and Learning Styles, learning how to effectively deliver content and foster an engaging learning environment. This theoretical groundwork was followed by practical workshops, where staff members engaged in simulations and teaching examples, applying the methods discussed earlier. This hands-on approach ensured that the participants were not only learning new concepts but also practicing them in real-world scenarios.



To close the training, a Quality and Steering Committee Meeting was held, bringing together key stakeholders to assess the project's progress. During the meeting, the group evaluated achievements, discussed challenges, and set future goals for continuing to empower both staff and students across partner organizations.

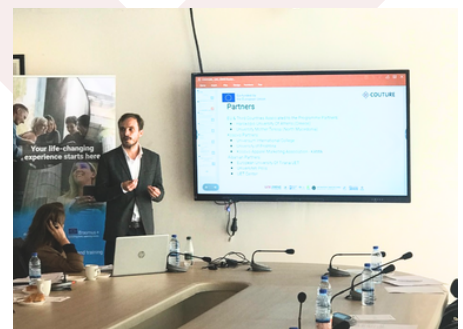


This training strengthened the partnership network and provided a solid foundation for future collaboration, ensuring that all participants left with a clearer vision of their roles in promoting traditional arts, sustainability, and effective education.



Project COUTURE, presented by Universum International College

On the 18th October, the Kosovo Erasmus Office in Prishtina gathered together all partners at the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation to share some amazing Erasmus+ CBHE projects focused on digitalization.



Project COUTURE, presented by Universum International College is all about transforming fashion education by blending creativity with technology. COUTURE empowers students not just to design but to thrive in the digital world of fashion, equipping them with the skills they need for future success.

Strengthening Industry-Academia Collaboration in Fashion Education



Kolegji Nderkombetar Universum has taken a significant step in strengthening the link between education and the fashion industry by formalizing partnerships with two renowned fashion companies, Albina Dyla and Blini Fashion House, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This collaboration, established within the framework of the COUTURE Project, aims to provide students with practical training opportunities that will enhance their professional skills and industry readiness.

Through these partnerships, students will gain first-hand experience working alongside industry professionals in fashion design, innovation, and sustainable practices. The collaboration ensures that students not only develop technical expertise but also gain insights into the operational and creative aspects of the fashion industry. By engaging with real-world challenges, they will be better equipped to transition from academic learning to professional careers in the field.

This initiative represents a commitment to fostering a stronger connection between academia and industry, ensuring that fashion education remains relevant, practical, and aligned with evolving market trends. Such partnerships are essential for promoting innovation, sustainability, and excellence in the fashion sector, preparing the next generation of designers to contribute meaningfully to the industry.



As the COUTURE Project progresses, Kolegji Universum, together with its industry partners, will continue to expand opportunities for students, ensuring that they receive comprehensive, hands-on training that aligns with contemporary industry demands. Stay tuned for further updates on this collaborative effort towards transforming fashion education.



Project management Online Meeting

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a presentation slide titled "PILOTING" with the COUTURE logo and the text "Co-funded by the European Union". The slide content includes:

- UNI (modernized, mandatory)**
 - Fashion collection (The art of Knitting),
 - Sewing techniques (The art of Embroidery)
- University of Prishtina (new, elective)**
 - Fashion and traditional arts,
 - Sustainable and Ethical fashion,
 - The art of weaving,
 - The art of Knitting and Embroidery
- POJIS University (2 new, 3 modernized, mandatory)**
 - Fashion Design (Fashion and traditional arts), Sustainable and Ethical fashion,
 - The art of weaving,
 - The art of Knitting and Embroidery,
 - History of Design (Fashion Design)
- UET (new, elective)**
 - Fashion and traditional arts,
 - Sustainable and Ethical fashion,
 - The art of weaving,
 - The art of Knitting and Embroidery

Key points on the slide:

- Piloting started Winter Semester 24/25 Total 200 hours per course per semester. UNI has developed a template for partners to allocate the practical and theoretical hours.
- Full implementation planned for Spring Semester 25/26

At the bottom of the slide, it says "PARTNERS progress on Piloting?".

The Zoom meeting grid shows several participants:

- Armenid Berisha
- Kebjana Haka
- Sofoklis Skoultos
- Merita Toska Boka
- Alkaterini Antonopoulou
- Albiona Sopli
- Evangella Georgitsoglanni
- 3 others
- Anita Kusari



On December 17th, we convened our next online meeting with all the COUTURE project partners. During the session, we thoroughly reviewed the progress achieved to date and mapped out the remaining tasks to ensure we continue moving steadily toward our project goals. We expressed our sincere gratitude to every partner for their active participation and invaluable contributions, which have been pivotal in driving our success so far. The meeting not only reinforced our commitment to excellence but also energized the team to maintain this collaborative spirit as we move forward together.

Contact us:

Universum International College



Rr. Hasan Prishtina 1,1, Konjuh,
Lipjan, 14000, Kosovë



+383 44 144 062



projects@universum-ks.org



universum-ks.org



Facebook page:
Couture Project



Website:
www.coutureproject-eu.com

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Project Partners



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HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY

