

DEAR STUDENTS AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS,

Our university participates in a research project that aims developing learning modules for strengthening cultural competences in nursing students and nurses in the Western Balkans. This project runs from April 2024 until April 2027. The project is co-funded by the European Commission.

WHAT ARE CULTURAL COMPETENCES?

Cultural competences include the skills, knowledge and attitudes that help healthcare professionals understand, respect and adapt to the needs of patients from different cultures, to:

- ensure equitable and comprehensive care.
- Foster trusting relationships with patients.
- Optimise health outcomes.

WHY ARE CULTURAL COMPETENCES IMPORTANT?

The Western Balkans act as a pivotal region for immigration and transmigration. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has also contributed to a notable influx of Ukrainian refugees into the Balkans.

Insufficient cultural competence in health care professionals entails following risks:

- Misunderstandings between patients and healthcare staff.
- Unequal treatment and unconscious discrimination.
- Reduced quality of care and health outcomes.



WHO CAN ATTEND THESE LEARNING MODULES ON CULTURAL COMPETENCES?

The project targets nursing students and professional nurses, yet cultural competences are relevant and important in all health domains. At our university, cultural competences will be incorporated in the course “Fundamentals of Nursing”. We warmly invite you to follow the topics on Cultural Competencies, (registration details can be found at <https://unishk.edu.al/kerkimi-shkencor/projekte/supporting-development-of-transcultural-competence-for-healthcare-professionals-in-the-western-balkans>)

HOW CAN WE CULTIVATE CULTURAL COMPETENCES?

The learning modules will include topics like:

1. Self-awareness
2. Learning about other cultures
3. Practicing active listening
4. Developing empathy
5. Engaging in cross-cultural interactions
6. Adaptability and flexibility
7. Creating an inclusive environment
8. Reflection and continuous learning



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE:

A nurse treating an immigrant encounters language barriers. The nurse decides involving a professional interpreter and conducting a cultural sensitive health assessment. This way, the nurse is able to enhance treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction. The learning modules developed within the project will include why and how to collaborate with a professional interpreter and conducting a cultural sensitive health assessment.

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Supporting development of Trans Cultural Competence for healthcare professionals in the Western Balkans, TCCWB

Transcultural competencies for healthcare profession in the Western Balkans (TCCWB) is a capacity building project that aims to support HEIs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Albania, develop material to enable nursing students in the region to deliver culturally congruent (nursing) care to all care recipients, including those with migration backgrounds or on the migratory routes through Europe.

Main Objective:

Development and innovation of teaching methodologies to integrate transcultural competencies in (pre- and post-registration) nursing education in order to increase the skills of the health care workforce.

Specific Objectives:

- Establish the current situation and the new priorities for the integration of transcultural competence curricula in nursing schools and in practice in the Western Balkans (BiH and Albania);
 - Improve the level of competence and skills and innovative education programs;
 - Support capacity building for formal and informal education in nursing by training of trainers (nursing faculty);
 - Enhance the digital skills of students and staff;
 - Active participation of nursing faculty beyond the beneficiary researchers and technicians in the HEIs in WB and active student participation and testing of pilot training material.
 - Implement materials and methodologies for formal and informal transcultural competence education in nursing schools;
 - Strengthening the infrastructure to deliver training in partner countries;
 - Bring together a diverse range of HEIs and NGOs in the Western Balkans countries;
- Foster cooperation and the exchange of good practices.

Kick-off meeting in Zenica June 11th – 12th 2024

The first joint meeting of partners in the new project "Transcultural Competences in the Western Balkans (TCCWB)" in Zenica. The project is financed by the European Union.

During the meeting all the partners presented their Universities and Faculties as well as the staff that will contribute to the project. The project introduction was done during this kickoff meeting where all the participants could discuss about the goals, WP's & partners, meetings, deliverables, timeline etc.



Workshop in Brussels 3rd to 5th December 2024

From 3rd to 5th December 2024, the Erasmus+ TCCWB project brought together healthcare professionals, academics, and experts in Brussels for its third workshop, focused on Transcultural Competence in Healthcare, organized by ODISEE University of applied sciences (Belgium).

This workshop, held under the theme of fostering inclusive and culturally sensitive healthcare practices, was an inspiring and productive event that marked another significant step in building capacity for transcultural competence across the Western Balkans.

The workshop commenced with a Steering Committee meeting, where project partners discussed key updates, including financial progress, dissemination strategies, and upcoming events. This set the stage for dynamic collaborations and effective project management.



The TCCWB online meeting E2.2 was held on the 1st October 2024 via Teams

The meeting was focused mainly on the Instructional Design and Cultural Competence Teaching/Learning Methods. An in-depth discussion on the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) model of instructional design was done during this meeting. The conversation was enriched by a literature review focusing on cultural competence teaching and learning methodologies.

Participants engaged in a robust exchange of ideas, sharing insights on best practices and innovative strategies for effective cultural competence education.

Another important topic was the Cultural Competence Measurement Tools and Satisfaction Surveys which will be used for pre- and post-testing. Additionally, educational intervention satisfaction surveys were discussed, with a focus on designing instruments that accurately assess participants' experiences and learning outcomes. The session emphasized the importance of selecting appropriate evaluation methods to ensure data reliability and validity.

The meeting went on with group discussion on translation processes and research data management and the project matters and preparations for the next meeting. The meeting concluded successfully with a summary of key discussions and agreements.

WORKSHOP IN SARAJEVO 25RD TO 27TH MARCH 2025

The main objective of the workshop was to collaboratively plan a pilot program for transcultural competence training by emphasizing the importance of building transcultural competence among health professionals in the Western Balkans through collaborative input and teaching methods. During the workshop, the participants introduced themselves and the work done within the framework of the pilot program. Also present were representatives of healthcare organizations, NGOs and public health authorities from across the region, who gave



presentations focusing on "The role of transcultural competence in healthcare"; "Sarajevo's cultural heritage as a model for intercultural understanding", etc. This workshop ended with the Steering Committee meeting. The focus of this meeting was to review the progress of the project, discuss challenges and outline future actions.