CIVIS HUBS

COMMIT TO CREATE | FUTURE-PROOF EDUCATION | NURTURE SUPPLE MINDS

WHAT IS A CIVIS HUB? Hubs are where academics from across the CIVIS Alliance meet to develop collaborative, challenge-based educational opportunities – everything from standalone courses to full programs. The CIVIS Hubs are governed by representative councils of academics from all member universities, but their activities are bottom-up and open to participation from teachers and researchers across the Alliance.

Each hub has its own thematic focus linked to one vital challenge facing our societies and our world.

HUB 1
Climate, Environment, Energy

Coordination:
University of Glasgow — Stockholm University

HUB 5
Digital and Technological Transformation

Coordination:
UAM Universidad Autónoma de Madrid — UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

CIVIS HUBS

HUB 2
Society, Culture, Heritage

Coordination:
EBERHARD KARLS UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN — HELLENIC REPUBLIC National and Kapodistrian University of Athens EST. 1837

HUB 4
Cities, Territories, Mobility

Coordination:
ULB UNIVERSITÉ LIBRE DE BRUXELLES — PARIS LODRON UNIVERSITÄT SALZBURG

HUB 3
Health

Coordination:
SAPIENZA Università di Roma — UNIL | Université de Lausanne

All five hubs were part of the initial CIVIS proposal, but we only committed to setting up three in our first phase. Three years later, all five hubs are already established and working! This shows the enthusiasm and momentum across the CIVIS Alliance and empowers us to deliver relevant educational opportunities across all five CIVIS challenges.

141 educational opportunities developed within the Hubs so far

Open to students at all **10** CIVIS member universities.

Academics from at least **3** member universities are involved in creating every course

Range from webinars and seminars to **Full degree programmes**

Often involve partners **outside the university**

Growing collaboration with our **African partner universities**

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Building collaborative educational programs across so many universities is a hugely complex task. It requires a process of exploration, discovery and innovation which is as much about attitude as it is about process. Building the CIVIS Hubs took the courage to experiment, to recognise that some experiments will fail, and to learn from both failures and successes.

Innovation requires time. It can be fostered but not forced and it cannot be put on a fixed schedule. True innovation which leads to meaningful change requires that existing structures and processes are open to modification and improvement – and sometimes even elimination.

Taking risks, learning to fail and changing established systems. These are all approaches that will face hurdles, barriers and setbacks. But these challenges can reveal the positive potential that was always there or bring forth inspiring new solutions. This is what we have leant from establishing our CIVIS Hubs.

Lack of a "matchmaking" function that allows academics and administrators from the alliance universities to meet and interact

The lack of incentives (other than personal interest) for academics to participate in CIVIS courses

Having courses or other educational offerings accredited across all universities

A lack of general understanding among academics and administrators in the alliance universities as to what CIVIS is and wants to do, and why they should get involved

Aligning courses across universities with different academic calendars

Differences in interpreting terminology and definitions: What exactly is an ECTS? What does an "educational program" mean?

Different course administration software and systems used among the alliance universities

CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

A lack of central support to academics at each university in terms of helping academics developing and delivering educational offerings in reporting about them

STRENGTHS AND SOLUTIONS

Innovation requires creativity and the willingness to try something new, fail at that experiment, learn from our failures and try again. This willingness has been very clearly evident in all the hubs, and is a key element of their success.

The central CIVIS administrative team has developed a suite of excellent tools without which the work in the hubs would not have been successful. These include:

A database of courses across all alliance universities

Regular newsletters for the CIVIS community that report on activities and flag upcoming opportunities

The "digital campus" web site

An information flow about funding and other support for educational offerings

A central facility for storing and sharing information about courses and other educational offerings

This central support has been absolutely essential in the success of not only the hubs, but CIVIS as a whole.

The extraordinary level of goodwill that has been exhibited among both academics and administrators is a huge enabler. Still, it must be recognized that relying on goodwill is not a viable strategic plan for continued success. A clear incentive structure for participation is needed.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

As CIVIS enters a new phase of its development, we can be proud that the CIVIS Hubs have already come a long way in a short time. Still, there are some things that we would have liked to accomplish but did not yet manage. And there are some things we have learned along our journey that we want to note and share.

HERE ARE OUR TOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CIVIS HUBS:

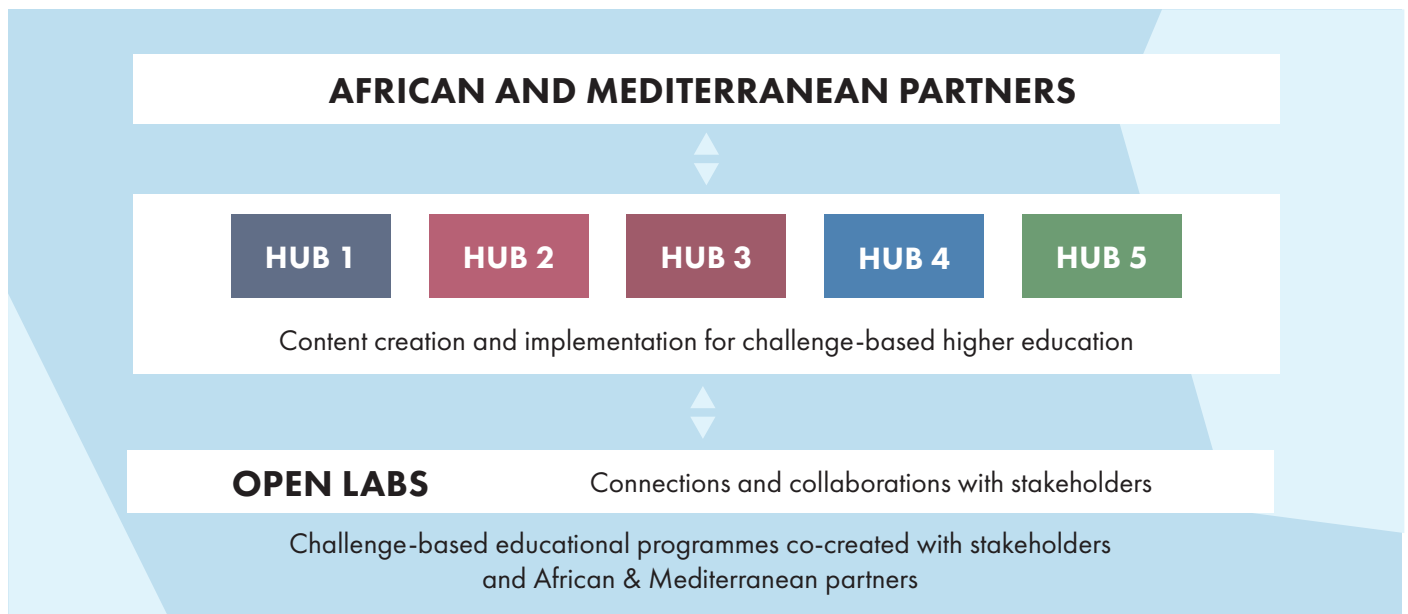**Hub councils should have more opportunities to exchange experiences and best practices.**
All of the hubs encounter similar hurdles as they develop their educational programs, and we should build in ways to share best practice and solutions to these among the hubs

Push ahead with our ambition to combine courses into full CIVIS educational programmes.
Recognise that this will require both time and resources. Commit for the long-term.

Give local community stakeholders and African partner universities a great role in the development of our educational programs.
We are already working towards this goal, but we should embed the African partners in the Hub and mobilise the potential of connections with the CIVIS Open Labs.

AFRICAN AND MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS

| HUB 1 | HUB 2 | HUB 3 | HUB 4 | HUB 5 |

Content creation and implementation for challenge-based higher education

OPEN LABS
Connections and collaborations with stakeholders

Challenge-based educational programmes co-created with stakeholders
and African & Mediterranean partners

Keep a clear focus on the "soul" of CIVIS.
Our fundamental values must shape the educational programmes we develop. We are here:

- To train people to have the capacity for critical thinking;
- To educate individuals to have clear ethical and democratic values;
- To prepare our students to find and critically examine information and to base their decisions on evidence and not only on ideology;
- To create an educational environment where mutual respect is normal and where we help build a fair and flourishing society within the limits of our only planet.

CIVIS
A European Civic University