

## Editorial

Dear readers,

This edition of our Newsletter starts with a new series in which we want to give you an insight into what former colleagues and friends of WUS Austria have come to work today. We start the series with our former colleague Martina Handler who has left WUS Austria to support reforms at universities in Nicaragua.

Furthermore, the article below encompasses two items which currently occupy our mind: the „Gender Book Tour“, initiated by ERSTE Foundation and implemented by WUS Austria, and the project SEEPALS.

Enjoy reading!

Warm wishes from Graz,

Michaela Handke

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### From Graz to Nicaragua

Dear friends and family of WUS Austria,

After five years of working for WUS Austria, I accepted an offer from the Austrian development organization Horizont 3000 to work for two years in Nicaragua, where I am now working as a technical advisor in organizational development for two educational/ academic institutions.

One of my counterparts is the URACCAN, a communitarian, intercultural university of the two autonomous regions at the Nicaraguan Caribbean coast. My main task is to support its institutional evaluation and strategy development processes. The institution was founded in the early 1990s with the aim to support the region's recently granted status of autonomy by educating workforce for their autonomous institutions and beyond. After the initial excitement when I heard the word "Caribbean Coast" referring to my future place of work, I realized that what is called the "Autonomous region North Atlantic" and the "Autonomous Region South Atlantic" encompass together more than 50% of Nicaragua's territory - obviously a very small part of that territory is really coastal ;-).

Although the country is small, distances are a real challenge as infrastructure in this area is scarcely developed - the autonomous regions house only little more than 10% of the national population, among them the major part of the country's indigenous population. The autonomous regions also constitute the country's poorest regions.

Managing a university with four main campuses and several "extensions" in remote communities is a challenging task given the existing cultural and ethnic differences in the region, multiplied by the lack of infrastructure. I am still in my induction period, aiming to understand how things work and why others do not work so well. Evaluation is a good way to find out more.

The university is a strong player in the region. It is not only responding to, but also creating development perspectives in the region. A strong strategy and detailed plans on how to realize the strategy are crucial, and I am excited to be a part of this!

¡bienvenidos a linda Nicaragua!

Martina

## Thematic Article

### From the Gender Book Tour to SEEPALS

We started into spring with a new and exciting project - the project „Gender Book Tour“, initiated by ERSTE Foundation and implemented by WUS Austria: presentations of the book *"Gendering Post-Socialist Transition. Studies of Changing Gender Perspectives"* are/were taking place in the following four cities in Central and South-East Europe: Belgrade (28.3.), Zagreb (25.4.), Sofia (14.5.) and Budapest (11.6.). Four out of nine authors of this book come from these cities.

The book *"Gendering Post-Socialist Transition. Studies of Changing Gender Perspectives"* was developed as Volume 1 of the ERSTE Foundation Series as a result of the research which explored the social constructions of femininity and masculinity and the role of women in Central & South East Europe with focus on the transition beginning in 1989.

The aim of the "Gender Book Tour" is to raise awareness and support the discussion among the academics, researchers, students, NGOs, media and the general public regarding the issue of gender and especially the transformation of gender identities in Central and South East Europe.

These first two events already took place in Belgrade and Zagreb and gathered wide audience of different profiles (university staff and students, NGOs and other organizations). We are happy to invite you to the upcoming presentations with interesting local and international panelists followed by a reception:

Sofia, 14.5. at 18h and Budapest, 11.6. Further details are to be published on the WUS Austria website and Facebook fan-page.

In the course of this year, another project is going to end - the Tempus project **South Eastern European Project for the Advancement of Language Studies (SEEPALS)**.

The project has engaged a variety of people and subjects and project partners have worked hard for the achievements. We want to give you a short overview on the project to raise awareness on the topic and celebrate the project's success:

The education systems and institutions in Europe today are confronted with the need to be competitive and to cooperate in a globalized society. At the same time, they should contribute to building a socially cohesive knowledge society. Support of the higher education systems is essential because it helps to create the knowledge, skills and values that strengthen a civilized society, it transforms the lives of individuals, and it drives innovation and economic transformation.

The support of academia and capacity building is important for educating future generations. It is also important that investments in higher education are undertaken since they have a lasting and positive effect on economy, on the creation of new jobs and on the employability of the people.

Under this assumption also the EC funded Tempus project "SEEPALS" has been developed, with the aim not only to improve foreign language teaching in one country, but of a whole region through the creation of a unified educational space for the modernization of foreign language studies. Under the coordination of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Montenegro, universities from five South-Eastern European countries together with their EU partners strive for that objective in order to harmonize foreign language studies in the region, to promote cooperation and enable mobility of students, teachers and ideas and for the promotion of the region's international academic credibility.

This happens through the modernization of existing literature and cultural studies, the introduction and/or adaptation of new study programs and the upgrading of facilities and teaching methodologies.

For more information please visit the project's website: <http://www.seepals.net/>

## Recent News & Events

26.04.2013

### [UNIMIG: 1st Training for MCC Staff in Tbilisi](#)



Tbilisi. The 1<sup>st</sup> training within the UNIMIG project "Migration and Higher Education - Building Skills and Capacities" provided by the KFU Graz to the staff of the three Migration Competence Centers and one representative of each PCU was held 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at Tbilisi State University. [read more](#)

06.04.2013

### [Gender Book Tour - Belgrade](#)



Within the project „Gender Book Tour“, initiated by ERSTE Foundation and implemented by WUS Austria, a presentation of the book "Gendering Post-Socialist Transition. Studies of Changing Gender Perspectives" was organised on the 28th of March at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade. [read more](#)

18.03.2013

### [EQADE Training on QA in PhD and 2nd Consortium Meeting held in Palermo](#)



Palermo. Training on Quality Assurance in PhD and the Second Meeting of the Project Consortium were held in Palermo on March 18 - 20, 2013. [read more](#)

12.03.2013

### [REGENLAW Curriculum Development Workshop in Tbilisi](#)



Tbilisi. The Georgian Technical University in Tbilisi has hosted a workshop and partner meeting within the project [REGENLAW](#) - Development of Regional Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Energy and Environmental Law Studies from 4th - 8th March 2013. [read more](#)