



YEBO!

***Internationalization of PhD studies
in South Africa***

Background information



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

- **YEBO! stands for Yes in Zulu** (official language in South Africa)
- **Erasmus+ Capacity building project**, funded by the European Commission
- Launched in October 2017, closed in May 2021 (3,5 years)
- Budget: 721 318€
- **15 partners:** 7 from South Africa, 8 from Europe

Co-coordinated by Central University of Technology and the University of Montpellier



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Focus and objectives



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- YEBO! focuses on **internationalization of PhD studies** in South Africa universities. It aims to enable **SA universities** to bring their internationalization process to the next level, relying on the exchange of good practices between EU and SA institutions.

Objectives

- Improve access to information on how to internationalize PhD studies and build the capacity of SA universities to assess and monitor their internationalization process
- Improve the number of staff and students trained in the field of internationalization
- Promote the benefits of internationalizing PhD studies
- Develop opportunities, recognition and exposure at the international level for SA PhDs
 - More international publications from SA students and doctors*
 - More co-thesis supervision and mobility between EU and SA universities*

Activities



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1

Report on the state of internationalization of SA universities

Development of self-assessment tools and sustainable indicators to monitor the progress of the internationalization process

2

PhD Portal and Open4YEBO Funding Tool

- Development of an online portal gathering useful resources related to internationalization, content from trainings and conferences*
- Development of a Funding Tool to help students identify funding opportunities for their research projects*

Link: <https://yebo.cut.ac.za/>

Activities



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3

4 training sessions (designed based on the needs identified with the report)

- *Intercultural skills*
- *Towards institutional structures that support the complete PhD life cycle*
- *Developing a toolbox for managing international collaborative PhD programmes*
- *Research visibility and capacity*

Training sessions targeted academic and administrative staff as well as PhD students. They were delivered by experts from EU and SA universities involved in YEBO!

Activities



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4

Organization/participation in international conferences

EUA-CE Annual Meeting – workshop

IEASA Annual Conference – plenary session, poster session and workshops

EAIE Conference – poster session

SASUF online conference – 2 workshops

YEBO! Final Conference – plenary sessions, workshops, PhD competition (3MT and posters)

Conferences targeted PhD students, HEI staff and the HEI community, with the goals to raise awareness about internationalization, to transfer relevant skills and increase networking/exchange of best practices.



Poster presented during poster sessions

Outcomes



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- **175 people** from SA partner institutions trained (staff and students)
- **10 000 logins/year** on the PhD Portal/Funding Tool
- **1 000 people** attended YEBO! conferences
- Content of trainings and conferences **available on the PhD Portal**
- **Increased capacity** in the field of internationalization recognized by supervisors

Challenges and lessons learnt



- **Different level of experience** with E+ project between partners
- **Human resources** and turnover
- **Administrative burden** and workload
- **COVID-19** and switch to online collaboration and activities

Continuation and success of the project depends on:

- 1) *Strength of the partnership*
- 2) *Resilience of the partners*
- 3) *Exchange of knowledge and good practices (we all learn from each other)*

➔ *When everyone is committed to a successful collaboration, everything is possible.*

Impact and future plans



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- **Awareness raised** on the importance of internationalization among high management of universities
- **Structural changes** and creation of new units for some of the partners
- **Many new partnerships**, collaborations and projects between partners born from YEBO
- **Links reinforced** between SA partners, national institutions (IEASA, DHET, ...) and key stakeholders
- **Upcoming discussions on a possible YEBO!2** and how to broaden the impact outside of the partnership