Universities of Malta, Maryland enhance students' transcultural competence through joint degree program



The importance of developing culturally competent counselors has never been of the world becomes increasingly interconnected because of technology, econom business initiatives, pop culture and professional opportunities, cultures are less segregated. The likelihood of daily encounters with individuals from other counts different ethnic backgrounds is high, meaning counselors no longer can depend shared cultural experiences with their clients.

A joint Masters of Arts degree program in transcultural counseling between the of Malta and the University of Maryland is aiming to prepare the next generation ow to work successfully in a variety of contexts, free from cultural biases.

## **ORGANIZATION\***

University of Malta in collaboration with a US University (three different universities have been collaborating over the past 10 years)

## **COUNTRY AND CITY/IES**

Malta/USA (the MA is run in Malta but involved teaching staff from Malta and the USA).

## **FIELD OF WORK**

Social inclusion, transculturalism, counselling

## THE ACTION IS ADDRESSED TO (BENEFICIARIES)

The MA is targeting international students. Former students came from different countries (Finland, China, India, Australia, USA, Canada, Germany, UK, Algeria, etc) and brought different outlooks.

# **DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY**

- The MA is a 2-year full time course based in the University of Malta and taught by professors from Malta and from the USA.
- The curriculum is fully oriented towards transculturalism, which means that every module has a transcultural focus.
- Besides counselling, modules include ethics across cultures, competences across cultures, mental health related issues, and development across the lifespan (across cultures).
- The programme includes practicum. In the first years of the programme, students had to build (from zero) services for migrants.
- The international background of students strongly contributes to creating intercultural dialogue. This is also one of the aims of the practicum.

#### **MAIN GOALS**

Give an international/transcultural outlook to counselling and prepare the next generation of counsellors by teaching students how to work successfully in a variety of contexts, free from cultural biases.

#### **IMPACTS OF THE ACTIVITY**

- Enhancing transcultural understanding and listening skills.
- Students working in the field of transcultural counselling around the world

# **COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

The MA is delivered by the University of Malta in collaboration with a U.S. University.

# SUSTAINABILITY (ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY)

**Social:** The University of Malta is committed to social inclusion.

**Transcultural focus** (transcending differences) rather than intercultural or multicultural (bringing together different cultures), which encompasses not only ethnicity but other cultural elements within a same context/nation.

**Institutional:** although the collaboration with US universities has evolved, the MA has been running for 10 years.

#### **TRANSFERABILITY**

Not mentioned BUT the MA has been run by the University of Malta with several <u>different</u> US universities.