E.MAlumni Association General Assembly
(Saturday, 26 January 2013) – Meeting Notes

<u>Attendees:</u> E.MAlumni Board 2.0, E.MAlumni members, E.MA students

<u>Minutes taker:</u> Andrea Petkovic

E.MAlumni General Assembly was kicked off with welcoming speeches by Cristiano Gianolla and Lydia Malmedie (E.MAlumni Board 2.0), Professor Florence Benoit-Rohmer (EIUC Secretary General – video message) and Doctor Angela Melchiorre (E.MA Programme Director).

<u>Welcome Speeches:</u> Cristiano and Lydia introduced the work of the E.MAlumni Board 2.0 and the Association. Furthermore, both of them stressed the importance of working with EIUC and thanked EIUC for all its support. Finally, both Cristiano and Lydia made brief introductions on the Global Campus Alumni Associations initiative.
Both Professor Florence Benoit-Rohmer and Doctor Angela Melchiorre called alumni to propose new ideas for the improvement of the work of EIUC.

<u>Report on Selected Ongoing Activities:</u> Following the welcome speeches, the GA continued with the presentations of the E.MA Alumni Association since July 2012. Members of the Board first presented the nature and goals of the Association which include community building, institutional strengthening and enhanced cooperation between EIUC, E.MA and the Global Campus. After presenting the nature and goals, each member of the Board 2.0 presented one or two selected ongoing activities. The presentation of these activities started with the briefing on the E.MAlumni Association career services, which include mentoring programme, access to job postings and alumni profiles. The recently employed E.MAlumni Executive Officer will use the existing resource list, update it and put it on the website.

Furthermore, the current mentoring programme will also undergo certain changes. The new Executive Officer will use the feedback received from this 1st pilot year and in accordance with the feedback introduce changes. The call of applications for the next mentoring programme will be posted soon. Sofia presented programmes E.MAlumnInTheField and Monika E.MAhubs and E.MAmbassador, while Cristiano briefed on E.MActivism and E.MArrivals. Furthermore, Corinna briefed on E.MA Day as a new activity to support advertising of the E.MA call for applications with the joint efforts of E.MA Directors, Masteroni and Masterini. This pilot project

will be tested in some universities-to be selected with Angela. Corinna also informed about E.MAg, newsletter which was initiated by previous Board and which 2ʳᵈ issue will be published soon on the E.MAlumni website. Alumni interested in publishing an article on the E.MAg were also encouraged to contact Corinna and Alba from the Board. Finally, Lynn briefed on fundraising. She stressed that it was important to determine the main target group of the Association's fundraising and the prevalence of raising money from the E.MAlumni Community at the moment. Lynn also added that it is necessary to find new ways to expand membership and retain members and she explained the benefits from membership fees. Currently, the main E.MAlumni donor is EIUC, but E.MAlumni needs more sponsors.

In addition, former alumna Emilia Venetsanou also warned that the communication to the benefits of the membership should be improved and said that it needs more hearing and visibility.

Short Introduction of Global Campus (GC) Alumni Associations: The short presentations were given by David Medina, RM Latin America; Laura McManus, RM Asia Pacific and Sos Avetyian, RM Eastern Europe. All three representatives briefly presented their respective masters in Buenos Aires, Sydney and Yerevan and expressed readiness to exchange their experiences with us.

Working Groups (WG) – exchange of ideas and draft of recommendations to strengthen strategic lines of the E.MAlumni Association: The GA continued with the working groups on:

- Community Building. Ongoing initiatives: E.MAlumni in the field, E.MAhubs, E.MAg;
- Career Service
- Institutional Strengthening (Including the Statute); Enhance cooperation between EIUC and the GC

After lunch each WG presented its conclusions as follows:

Community Building - conclusions:

- Integrate GC with the E.MAhubs (software to ensure to integrate together the new projects like hubs…);
- Necessity to centralize communication through facebook and email;
- Majority of people do not know about the website;
- Importance of getting information instantly and to know what is going on;
- Issue of E.MAhubs and E.MAmbassador—it would be good to centralize membership on country level. One person should be

in charge of all members in one country who would coordinate the group;

- E.MAmbassadors in certain countries should be differently coloured on the website so that they would be more easily identified;
- Setting up couch-surfing possibilities for E.MArrivals.

Career service - conclusions:

- Raise the awareness that everybody can post job opportunities;
- "When your internship finishes alert E.MAlumni..."
- People can email info@emalumni.org if they themselves do not want to post, so that the admin can do it for them;
- Create the possibility to advertise profiles in the E.MAlumni email digest (only for active members);
- Lobby/target specific alumni organisations;
- Sell log-in to recruiters in agencies;
- Create data on which base institutions employ Alumni;
- Highlight exclusive job opportunities;

This WG also provided suggestions for the mentoring programme:

Most feedback received from the 1st pilot year was positive but there is room for improvement. More detailed guidelines for mentors should be given (provide them with some sort of a co-coaching manual, but also organize online seminars) as well as more attention should be paid to choice of mentors and pairing of mentors and mentees. Finally, pairs should share their good practices with others as well as there should also be a website forum area to share the practices.

One of the alumni suggested: "traffic lights system" for alumni profiles: green if you are available immediately; orange if you have a job, but are looking for a new one and red if you have a permanent job and are not interested. She also suggested that it would be good to divide (filter) profiles into sections (according to specialties).

E.MAlumni Board 2.0 stressed that it was keen on increasing tools for profiles. Finally, Cristiano showed how to use the profiles on the E.MAlumni website. The main conclusion were that many functionality are already available and need simply to be used and that one urgent thing is for all E.MAlumni community to updated profiles and are lacking CVs on the website. This is a big issue and it should be fixed as soon as possible.

Institutions building - conclusions:

The discussion of this WG highlihgted important elements and actions that were already addressed in the E.MAlumni Board Action Plan as presented on 19 September 2012 (pp. 2-3). More specific issues discussed about the cooperation between EIUC and GC:

- Links sharing among Global Campus Alumni Associations;
- Publish some joint announcements, disseminate and publish some common statements;
- Compile shared publications; contribute all together to these publications; share call of papers for these publications;
- Create a common database for readers;
- Importance supporting newly established Global Campus Alumni Associations in their institution building;
- Raise visibility of GC in other institutions (also good for more job opportunities);
- Create one unified network (Different Alumni Association can co-exist, but share strategies);
- Have common forum where alumni, students can post issues, discuss human right arguments and find jobs.

One of the suggestions was also Internship exchange programs between universities.

Defining the Annual Theme for 2013

Monika and Iva introduced the importance of the Annual Theme as the topic focus that the Association will consider in realising its project and ideas. Then they moderated the debate to make a shortlist of eligible topics. The list emerged as follow:

1. "Human rights and the financial crisis"
2. "Forgotten crisis: no news, is not good news"
3. "Immigration and borders"…
4. "Human Rights of regression after the Arab spring" (follow up with E.MAlumni annual theme 2011). As regression after the progress of the Arab Spring.
5. "Communicating and educating youth for Human Rights"
6. "Crisis, social upraise and Human Rights"
7. "Right to participation in public life and inclusion"
8. "Full participation through all Human Rights?"
9. "Solidarity, charity or cultural imperialism? - The role of Europe in promoting Human Rights"

The topics will be put on the website soon and members will vote in order to select the thematic of the year.

Podium discussion titled "Intercultural Human Rights or Playing God in the South?"
Moderators: Cristiano Gianolla and Lydia Malmedie
Participated by: Sos Avetyian (RM Eastern Europe); Niaz Ahmed (RM Asia Pacific - skype); Laura McManus (RM Asia Pacific); David Medina (RM Latin-America), Emilia Venetsanou (E.MAlumni) and Iune Baravalle (E.MAlumni).
David said that human rights today were challenged by imperialism and multiculturalism and thus this discussion was important. He further stressed the impact of IGOs and NGOs and said that civil society plays a fundamental role in participation and human rights. Civil society has been the main promoter of human rights in Latin America while IGOs had played an important role also before, during dictatorships as well as after the fall of those dictatorships.

He further emphasized the relationship between IGOs, NGOs and local cultures and said NGOs are much closer to people when implementing their projects. IGO projects are not close to the people, but they incorporate intercultural components as a sort of mainstream attitude.
He also stressed the fact that the struggles of indigenous people has been very relevant in defining the intercultural approach of both IGOs and NGOs.

Sos said that IGOs were better in terms of resources, but the future lies in the hands of NGOs. He further talked about human rights issues and Eastern partnerships and said that the integration in the EU is still a long way to go. There was still no other perspective apart from the Russian perspective which is the main way of analysing reality. The challenge of Eastern partnerships is that Russia remains the main player in the region.
He also underlined that the human rights agendas should be more inclusive, relevant and up to the point with the need of local populations. Sos said that NGOs are local and better perceived. IGOs set standards and templates to standardise social relationships and regulation and this might kill the diversity itself. However, human rights are a relevant issue now and it should flow with attention to cultural diversity otherwise human rights loose their main power.

Laura said that there were people who try to identify with main cultures and then there were those who did not. She showed two cartoons from one of her colleagues of the Asia Pacific RM. The first

one reflected on development and what people thought was right. Cartoons show that human rights and development become oppressive if forced from outside. People were happier with their living conditions before development and that development many times grants an artificial environment which is worst and poorer of perspectives if compared to the original environment that was to be overcame. The second cartoon showed the critical view of the UN system and the concept of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Iune said that whether human rights defenders demonstrated awareness or played God when working in the field was a matter of personal choice. She stressed that there was no coherence between personal and professional level and offered her personal experience, saying that there was a huge difference in social relations depending on the context of the community. In larger cities human rights workers tend to stick to the expat community while in smaller communities there is more engagement with the local population. In the end it turns out that we are dealing with two different worlds in the same country. Expats very often neglect the expertise and knowledge of local staff and people. Human Rights activists, defenders and experts often think they know everything but in the facts they play God and need to be more humble. Iune concluded that it is important to be coherent with principles and to match local community and the context in which human rights activists, defenders and experts work.

Emilia explained how the North consider the South as a chaotic situation needing support and order, and how the North considers itself as the actor able to grant that order. She said that the situation in human rights started to change around the year 2000 because of the new instruments which are more about human rights, democracy and good governance.

Niaz was not able to fully contribute to the podium discussion via skype due to insufficient quality of internet connection. However, he was able to understand the audience present in Aula Magna and his interventions were eventually summarized in writing into the skype chat. He stressed that the situation in Pakistan (his country of origin) is way more complex than what people think from the North and it need a complex framework for cultural attentive practices to be addressed.

Based on the above the main conclusion drawn by Cristiano and Lydia is that the we (human rights activists, defenders and experts) and them (local population) should be overcome. The E.MA and Global Campus are achieving these scopes not only because they

facilitate the cooperation between the North and the South but also because they increasingly educate people form the South in the human rights disciplines and, in the same time, get enriched by those human rights activists in creating a truly intercultural perspective of human rights theoretical grounding and practical implementation.

Selected Action Points:

- Use the existing resource list, update it and put it on the website;
- Use the feedback received from this 1st pilot year of the mentoring scheme and in accordance with the feedback introduce changes;
- Call members to update profiles and add CVs.