AM€D

ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALDIVES THROUGH E-LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

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AMED ID CARD

PROJECT AIM

To support the modernisation, accessibility and internationalisation of higher education in the Maldives by improving the level of competencies and skills of university teachers by developing new and innovative education programme in the field of e-learning.

PROJECT PERIOD:

15/01/2019 - 14/07/2022

BUDGET:

720,592.00 EUR

COORDINATOR:

Faculty of Organization and Informatics of the University of Zagreb (FOI)

PARTNERS:

Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)

Croatian Academic and Research Network (CARNET)

The Maldives National University (MNU)

PROJECT NUMBER:

599008-EPP-1-2018-1-HR-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP (2018-2502/001-001)

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AMED TEAM

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." (P.J.)

Faculty of Organization and Informatics

AMED was an excellent opportunity for three institutions from Europe with expertise in different fields of e-learning to accept the challenge and create unique and modern e-learning model to be implemented within Maldives higher education system.

Igor Balaban, FOI

Project Coordinator
Igor Balaban
Project Manager
Josipa Bađari
Team members
Nina Begičević Ređep
Dragutin Kermek
Goran Hajdin
Bojan Žugec
Nikola Kadoić
Petra Vondra
Darko Grabar
Quality manager
Lana Škvorc

The Open University of Catalonia

AMED represents a robust partnership committed to broadening access to Maldives higher education and enhancing nation-wide capability through modern technologies and digital pedagogies, reducing distance and amplifying knowledge.

Marcelo Fabián Maina, UOC

Team lead
Marcelo Maina
Team members
Lourdes Guàrdia
Nati Cabrera
Albert Sangrà
Maite Fernández-Ferrer
Federica Mancini
Sandrine Albert

Croatian Academic and Research Network

We were proud and happy to transfer our know-how to transferour know-how to Maldives. By supporting the MNU in developing strategic documents and improving institutional capacity for e-learning we have purposefully invested our expertise and broaden our experience.

Dragana Kupres, CARNET

Team lead
Dragana Kupres
Team members
Aleksandra Mudrinić
Maja Quien
Hrvoje Lisac

The Maldives National University (MNU)

AMED project has offered a great opportunity for the Maldives National University (MNU) staff to collaborate with several e-learning experts from the project partners to enhance the e-learning capacity of MNU. We value the partnerships created through the project and also the knowledge, expertise and experience sharing opportunities provided within the project activities. Overall, it has been a great learning experience for me personally and also for all the others involved in the project.

Shimna Shakeeb, MNU

Project manager and dissemination manager
Shimna Shakeeb
Team members
Fathimath Nasiha Abdul Muhaimin
Fathimath Mumthaz
Niuma Mohamed
Aminath Zifna
Ibrahim Adam
Hamid Ali
Ahmed Shareef

AMED project was really a good project, through which it helped to add to my knowledge on Instructional technologies. The tasks were educational and interesting when it was opened to apply to our own subject contexts. There was a chance to meet other people through different forums, communicate and exchange ideas and opinions. Guidance was sought from the facilitator.

Maumoona Abdullah
Faculty of Education, The Maldives National University

Indeed, it was an eye-opening experience for me and I enjoyed reading and doing all the tasks of the modules. The best part is it made me "look at e-learning in a different and simple way" and made me very optimistic about how we could use the opportunities in the shipping and maritime-related fields of the Maldives to introduce e-learning. I am indebted to all the facilitators and peers who were very helpful in each of the learning stages of the AMED program. I believe with e-learning we could change the perception of learning in a positive way.
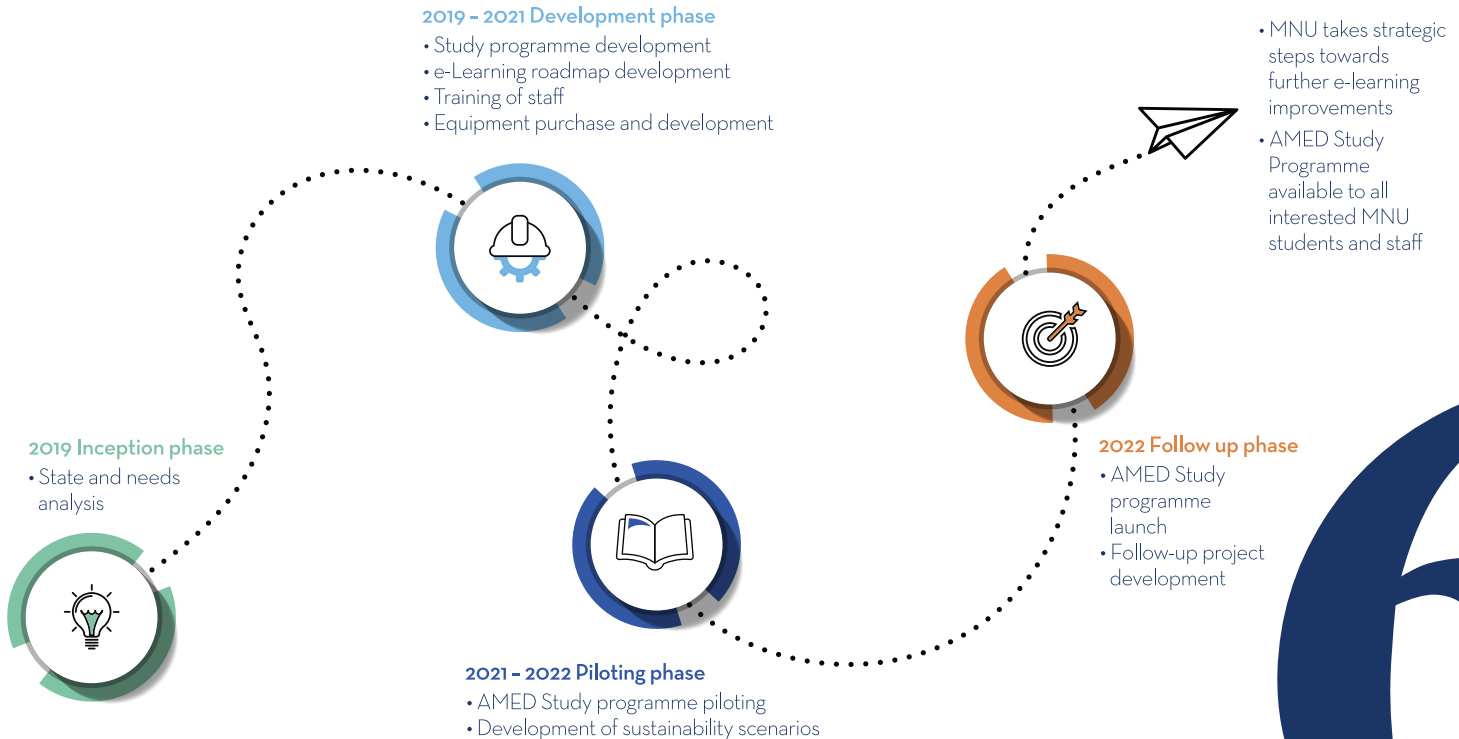
Mohamed Zaid
Centre for Maritime Studies, The Maldives National University

AMED LIFECYCLE

AMED activities were divided into four main phases:
Inception phase, Development phase, Piloting phase and Follow up phase.

2019 – 2021 Development phase
- Study programme development
- e-Learning roadmap development
- Training of staff
- Equipment purchase and development

- MNU takes strategic steps towards further e-learning improvements
- AMED Study Programme available to all interested MNU students and staff

2019 Inception phase
- State and needs analysis

2022 Follow up phase
- AMED Study programme launch
- Follow-up project development

2021 – 2022 Piloting phase
- AMED Study programme piloting
- Development of sustainability scenarios

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I enrolled in the AMED study program because I am keen to learn e-learning pedagogies and tools. I enjoyed learning about the theoretical aspects of e-learning design and discussing these with my colleagues. One-quarter into the program due to change in my job, I moved to the decision-making pathway of this program. Moving away from the pedagogical aspects of e-learning to policy-making and decision-making required me to look and think about e-learning from a different perspective. However, my previous engagement as a lecturer enabled me to bring that perspective into how I explored the decision-making pathway. As a result, I think how I engaged in the activities of this pathway was practical and based on collegial dialogue. As we went through the various activities, especially the capstone project, I used the learning resources provided and discussed the ideas based on how our existing policies facilitated or limited e-learning. As a result, I am quite happy with how my capstone project turned out – a very practical plan that I am keen to implement in order to ensure the quality assurance of MNU's e-learning is as per local and international standards.

Aminath Shiyama
The Maldives National University

AMED KEY BENEFITS

AMED partners were committed to reach the following specific objectives:

- Co-creation and piloting of a new study programme for professional development focusing on the use of ICT in education.
- Establishing institutional framework for e-learning at the Maldives National University by training of staff, improving IT infrastructure and (re)organisation of departments to provide support to e-learning;
- Promotion of new forms of teaching and learning in Maldives, notably strategic use of open and flexible learning, lifelong learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources and better exploitation of the ICT potential by raising awareness, supporting leadership, engaging early adopters and developing a community of practice.

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STATE AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

The project enabled identification of the internal and external practices and boundaries evident at MNU during the inception phase of the project, in 2019. During this phase, data was gathered through desk analysis, focus group interviews and administering a need analysis questionnaire. The engagement of key relevant MNU stakeholders such as the Registrar, deans, lecturers and students allowed the project team to develop a broader understanding of the state of e-learning at MNU. This exercise aided the project team to identify the relevant factors, prerequisites, enablers and barriers for e-learning at organization, policy, programme and individual staff level in the Maldives National University.

The project focus was primarily on capacity building based on the local needs and the local context and hence, the findings and observations of the need analysis exercise were used as the potential inputs to rationalize the decisions made in the project development phases.

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The project AMED is a cutting-edge learning experience that has enlightened my understanding of e-learning in the context of teaching and learning in higher education. This study enabled me to develop my knowledge on the effective approaches I can use to designing the course and also the essential content. I also learnt about the different ways I can deliver the courses and also about the flexibility and practices in Blended Learning which allows me to successfully achieve the intended learning outcome. Overall, AMED study was a great way to learn a variety of e-learning Models, how to design suitable blended learning activities and how to facilitate, plan, and implement the optimal Model.

Mausooma Mohamed
Centre for Foundation Studies, The Maldives National University

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foi

Naša vizija

Biti vodeći fakultet u Republici Hrvatskoj te među prvih 3 u regiji u obrazovanju i istraživanju u informatici, organizaciji i poslovanju, prepoznatljiv po inovativnom pristupu učenju i poučavanju, razvoju kompetencija digitalnog doba te poticanju i međunarodnoj suradnji.

E-LEARNING ROADMAP

Motivated by the need to establish an institutional framework for comprehensive development of e-learning at MNU and based on the findings from the analysis, the project enabled the development of the e-Learning Roadmap - a strategic document aligned with the MNU Strategic Plans 2013-2017 and 2020-2025 and that will be adopted by the Maldives National University through its operational plans and activities.

The Roadmap will enable the MNU to foster strategic commitment towards e-learning, better organization of e-learning activities, improvement in ICT infrastructure, positivity towards investment in education, e-learning as quality policy model for HE, support for teachers and students, awareness of e-learning benefits and better quality and usefulness of e-learning.

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STAFF TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT

Staff Training

Staff training is considered as a key critical factor that contributes to successful e-learning implementation and development. The AMED project supported the training of target groups from MNU including: system engineers, LMS administrators, study program implementation facilitators, lecturers and decision makers. The trainings which were initially planned for in-person sessions were conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following topics were covered through the four extensive workshops conducted by expert teams from FOI, UOC and CARNET:

Workshop 1: Moodle for administrators, Online Knowledge Assessment
and Designing e-course for hybrid or online teaching
Workshop 2: Video conference and video conference in teaching and learning
Workshop 3: Online course facilitation
Workshop 4: Strategic planning and decision making for e-learning implementation.

Equipment purchase and installation

The Maldives National University, the beneficiary of the project, was allocated a 201.000,00 EUR worth equipment to enable better e-learning and the following activities:
• Upgrade of the main server resources (main web server, main database server, backup system)
• Development of e-learning studio
• Establishment of e-training room
• Establishment of e-classrooms in the regional campuses
• Developing technology capacity at 12 MNU outreach centre classrooms.

The study program for decision-makers was extremely useful as I was able to develop a new vision for eLearning at MNU, especially for the School of Nursing (SN). The readings, activities, forums, and especially the capstone project provided me necessary knowledge and skills needed for strengthening eLearning at SN. The facilitator provided necessary guidance when required and I was able to complete the learning project on time. I am hoping to apply the newly gained knowledge and skills to improve eLearning at MNU, which I believe is a way forward for MNU in the future.

Asiya Ibrahim
School of Nursing, The Maldives National University

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At first, I was not sure what I was signing up for, but through the first module of the project, I understood the importance of the project, especially due the situation we all were in because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which enabled me to explore different modes and methods of teaching especially remote teaching and learning through technology starting from designing content, usage of learning management systems effectively and developing assessments through online sources. The modules really helped me in understanding the different techniques which can be integrated within the traditional teaching methods in order to enhance technological usage during remote teaching. Along with that the capstone projects at the end helped a lot in summing up what I learned throughout the different modules. In addition, the coordinators of the project were really helpful in guiding me throughout the project and provided enough leniencies to complete the project due to the time constraints I was having juggling work and personal life. Overall, I would say this project helped me a lot to understand the proper usage of technology and different techniques during online teaching and I will be using the knowledge I gained throughout my teaching career.

Hussain Naseer
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies, The Maldives National University

AMED STUDY PROGRAMME

One of the key results of the project is the unique AMED study programme designed to support the professional development of the lecturers and decision makers in the area of e-learning. The well-structured and tailor-made e-learning programme is expected to promote and support lifelong learning for all the lecturers/teachers and decision makers of MNU and also others involved in the higher education sector of the Maldives. As the programme has been published on a Learning Management System, it can be offered in the future both as a lecturer facilitated and as a self-paced independent study programme. The programme is modular, with 1 core course (Foundations of e-learning, 2.5 MNU credits) and 3 specialization courses of 2.5 MNU credits per specialization. Both pathways require the participants to complete a capstone project at the end of the programme. In total, the lecturer pathway requires 140 hours of learning and the decision makers pathway requires 100 hours of learning.

The pilot of the study programme was conducted from March 2021 until March 2022. The 50 participants who completed the pilot study represents lecturers from the Centre for Foundation Studies (8), the Faculty of Arts (1) the Faculty of Education (6), the Faculty of Engineering, Science and Technology (5), the Faculty of Health Sciences (3) the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies (2), the Faculty of Shariah and Law (3) MNU Business School (3), the School of Nursing (6), the Research Development Office (1) and the School of Medicine (5). The decision maker pathway included Deans/Heads (4), the Quality Assurance Controller (1), the Director of TDU (1) and a senior member of the library management team (1).

I am pleased to have contributed to the AMED Pilot project as part of my professional development. It was an intense project which opened avenues for new innovative educational programs in e-learning. It helped develop both theoretical and practical knowledge in designing and implementing e- learning courses. Specifically, I gained knowledge in competency-based learning, quality standards that needs to be maintained, made me aware of my role, tasks and responsibilities in the blended approach to learning and to be a better networked teacher.

Mariyam Suzana
Faculty of Health Sciences, The Maldives National University

AMED STUDY PROGRAMME

Using the power of knowledge to transform!

Modules	Decision makers	Lecturers
Module 1 "Foundations of e-learning" (2.5 Credits) This core course explains key concepts, principles and practices of e-learning. It provides a state-of-the-art of latest developments in online and blended learning and the implications to delivery systems, organizational transformation, technological requirements, changing roles of teachers, learners and stakeholders.	✓	✓
Module 2 "Leadership and management of e-learning (2.5 Credits) This course provides models and strategies for positioning the institution in the digital age and make change effective.	✓	✕
Module 3 "Designing digital learning (2.5 Credits) Participants of this module will put into practice course design models and principles for technology enhanced and enabled learning, flexible and open learning and networked learning. Students will develop digital content, e-tivities and e-assessment solutions.	✕	✓
Module 4 "The networked teacher" (2.5 Credits) In this course students will explore new ways of educational relationships enabled by technologies: changing roles of teachers, learner empowerment strategies, collaborative approaches in action, learning scaffolding techniques, e-assessment methods and instruments.	✕	✓
CAPSTONE PROJECT for Decision makers (5 Credits)	✓	✓
CAPSTONE PROJECT for Lecturers (6.5 Credits)	✕	✓

AMED COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Join us!

The pilot of the study programme was facilitated by a dedicated team which comprised of the following 16 members selected from different Faculties and Centres of MNU and trained within AMED training scheme:

1. *Shimna Shakeeb, Head of CETE and Project Manager at MNU*
2. *Fathimath Nasiha Abdul Muhaimin, Head of CFS (Decision maker pathway)*
3. *Aminath Zifna, Lecturer, CETE (Coordinator of Pilot Implementation)*
4. *Ibrahim Adam, Lecturer, CETE (Decision maker pathway)*
5. *Fathimath Mumthaz , Lecturer, CETE (Lecturer pathway)*
6. *Hamid Ali, Lecturer, CETE (Lecturer pathway)*
7. *Ahmed Shareef, Lecturer, CETE (Lecturer pathway)*
8. *Niuma Mohamed, Lecturer, CETE (Lecturer pathway)*
9. *Dr. Aminath Shafiya Adam, Assistant professor, FE (Lecturer pathway)*
10. *Ahmed Shameem Adam, Campus Manager, FE (Lecturer pathway)*
11. *Sizna Mohamed, Lecturer, SN (Lecturer pathway)*
12. *Aminath Rinzy, Lecturer, SN (Lecturer pathway)*
13. *Aminath Sudha, Lecturer, MNUBS (Lecturer pathway)*
14. *Mariyam Nadhira, Lecturer, FEST (Lecturer pathway)*
15. *Zameer Ahmed, Lecturer, CFS (Lecturer pathway)*
16. *Hashma Adnan, Lecturer, FHTS (Lecturer pathway)*

2019

AMED program helped me to broaden my horizon of knowledge on blended learning. As I was completing the tasks of the program, I always felt, in this era of technology we must incorporate blended learning in designing the courses. While teaching our students (medical students) I always felt that the time allocated for f2f sessions is not enough or barely enough to deliver the objectives of each session. AMED program taught me many tools and strategies which could be used to solve this issue. While working full time, on a very busy schedule it was very challenging to complete the given tasks on time. However, I managed my time to complete the AMED tasks and feel accomplished. I strongly recommend this program for everyone in the field of teaching.

Aminath Huda
School of Medicine, The Maldives National University

"Progress lies not in enhancing what is, but in advancing toward what will be."
(K.G.)