

# USING EDUCATIONAL NETWORKS TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONALIZATION EXPERIENCES IN PHYSIOTHERAPY EDUCATION

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# Background



- In the constantly changing global landscape, the world has evolved into an interconnected system in which international collaboration is considered a vital component.
- To adapt and succeed in an international environment, individuals need to develop new and additional competencies. Educational institutions have acknowledged this necessity, often incorporating international and intercultural competencies into their curricula to equip students for the challenges of the global context.
- For example, various physiotherapy education programmes have included international experiences in their curriculum design, enabling students to gain global health knowledge.

# Background



- One of the ways that HEI can develop Internationalisation is to be part of International Education Networks because it enables institutions to collaborate and share knowledge, which can lead to the development of new research, innovation, and best practices in higher education.
- Networks also expose institutions, faculty, and students to diverse perspectives, enriching the learning experience and promoting a greater understanding of global issues and cultures.
- Also encourages collaboration between disciplines, addressing complex global challenges that often require interdisciplinary.

# Background

The Rede Académica das Ciências da Saúde da Lusofonia (RACS) is a collaborative network of academic institutions focused on health-related research, education, and training.

It was founded in 2007 with the primary goal of promoting and strengthening cooperation between higher education and research institutions in Portuguese-speaking countries.



This is accomplished through various initiatives, including the organization of conferences, seminars, and workshops on health-education topics.

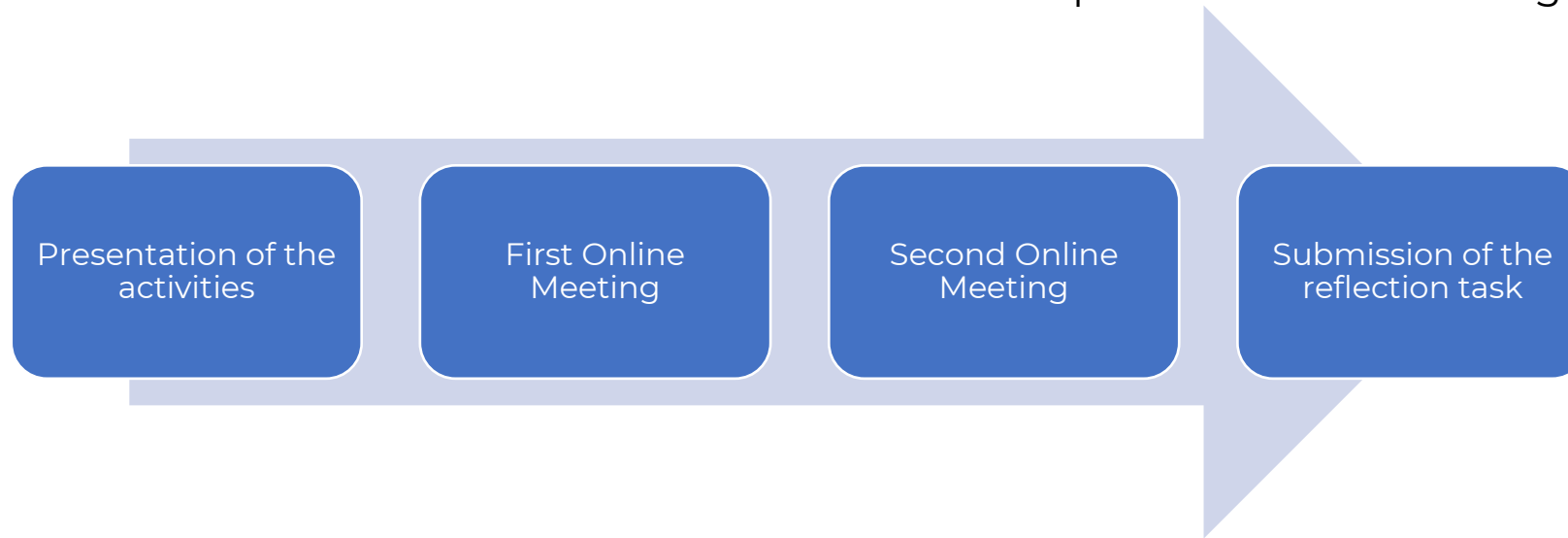
RACS is composed of member institutions from Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste. Within the network exists several working groups, each focused on specific areas of health research and education.

# Methodology

Within the Physiotherapy Education Group of RACS we develop a project called “Pontes Atlânticas” with a set of activities, developed along the academic path of the physiotherapy students, which allow them to be exposed progressively to the international context.

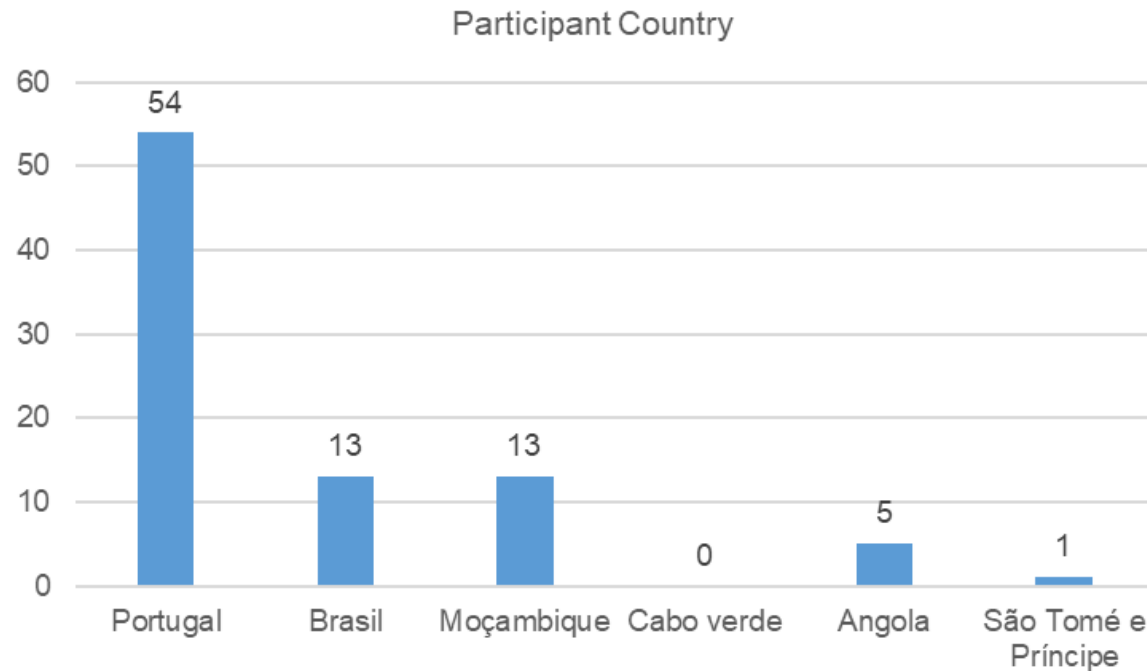
During the 2021/22 academic year, we implemented the project, that involved 103 physiotherapy students from 10 institutions across 6 different countries (Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Cabo Verde, Angola, and São Tomé e Príncipe).

Over a period of 2 months, students were tasked with participating in at least 2 online meetings within an international group to discuss 3 dimensions (Personal, Educational, Professional). Subsequently, students submitted an individual reflection on the most relevant points identified during this process.



# Results

To assess the impact and satisfaction of the students with activity, an online questionnaire (10 questions) was used, with several dimensions (preparation, performance, and overall opinion) where a response rate of 83% was obtained (n=86).

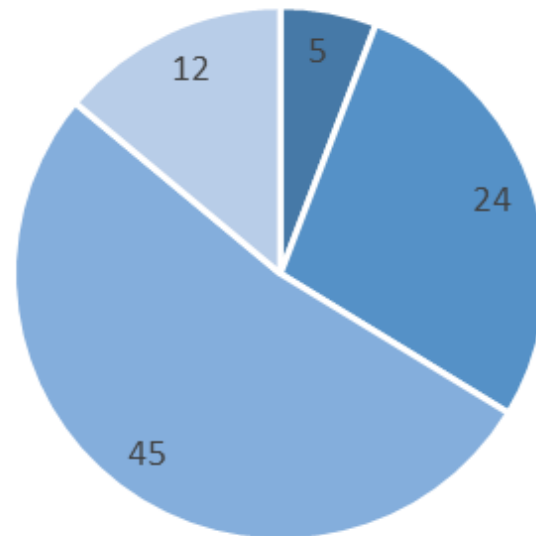


Regarding the participants characteristics, they came from 10 different institutions representing 5 different countries

# Results

Most of the students did at least 2 online meetings (52%) with some groups meeting 3 or more times (14%)

Number of Online Meetings

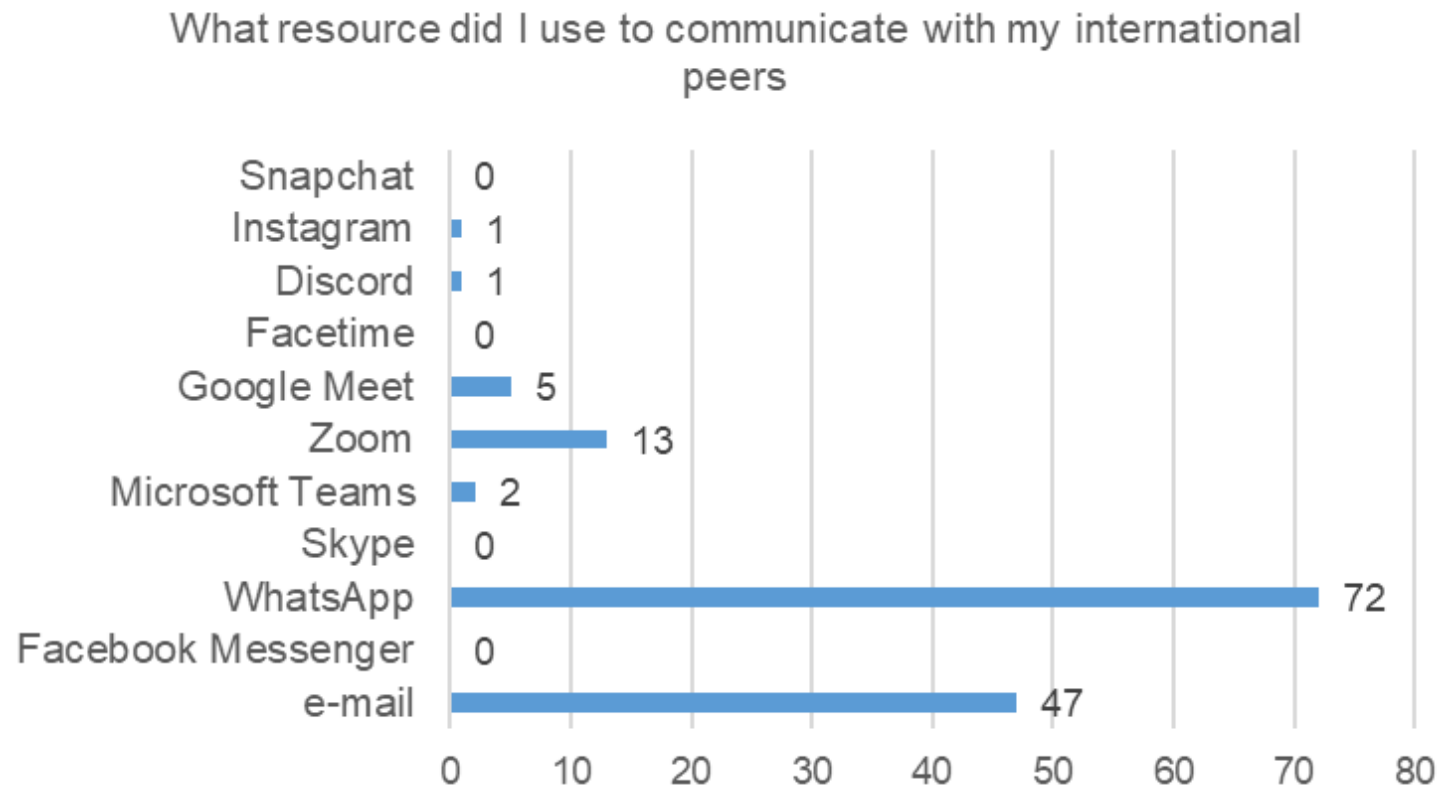


■ 0 ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 or more



# Results

In relation to the resources used to communicate with the peer before and during the meetings, most of the students reported the tool WhatsApp (72) and email (47)





# Results

93%

Agree / Totally Agree

considered that the objectives of the activity were clear and attainable

83%

Agree / Totally Agree

considered that the objectives of the activity were clear and attainable

70%

Agree / Totally Agree

said that communication was easy during the meetings

91%

Agree / Totally Agree

that the proposed objectives were achieved

94%

Agree / Totally Agree

activity contributes to a better understanding of the international context of teaching and practice of physiotherapists

89%

Agree / Totally Agree

this activity should continue within the scope of the physiotherapy course

# Conclusions



- The collected feedback from both students and teachers involved in the internationalisation initiative has been generally positive, highlighting the potential benefits of this activity.
- Moreover, this evaluation has helped pinpoint key areas for enhancement, particularly in relation to student recruitment strategies and the provision of support throughout the entire process.
- Based on the outcomes, it appears valuable to continue and expand this project, as it exposes students to international contexts and a diverse range of experiences.
- This exposure to a global environment encourages the development of essential skills and competencies, preparing students to assume more globally oriented roles in their future professional endeavours.
- By considering the lessons learned and addressing areas for improvement, the project may further impact the educational and professional trajectories of its participants in a meaningful way.

# Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the various partners who have played a role in the implementation of this project. Their collaboration and involvement have been important in working towards our shared objectives. We would like to specifically mention the participation of students, teachers, and institutions from around the world, including:

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- **Faculdade Piaget – Campus Suzano (Brazil),**
- **Cooperativa de Ensino Superior - ESS Egas Moniz (Portugal),**
- **Escola Superior de Saúde Atlântica – ESSATLA (Portugal),**
- **Instituto Superior de Ciências de Saúde de Moçambique (Mozambique),**
- **Instituto Superior de Ensino Celso Lisboa – UCL (Brazil),**
- **Instituto Superior de Saúde – ISAVE (Portugal),**
- **Universidade Jean Piaget (Portugal), Universidade Jean Piaget (Angola),**
- **Universidade Jean Piaget, Viseu (Portugal).**

Their collective efforts have supported the project and facilitated the development of an international network of professionals and institutions focused on education and global competencies.