

Recebido em: 07 de março de 2019  
Aprovado em: 19 de julho de 2019  
Sistema de Avaliação: Double Blind Review  
RPR | a. 16 | n. 3 | p. 25-27 | set./dez. 2019  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25112/rpr.v3i0.1967>

## **BEYOND ALLIANCE FOR KNOWLEDGE – STRONGER TOGETHER**

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The Beyond Alliance for Knowledge between Hämeenlinna University of Applied Science, Feevale University and VIA University College is a strategic partnership between three institutions of higher education focused on applied sciences. The alliance was founded in 2017 based on the intention of cooperation in ways in which 1 + 1 + 1 equals more than three. In a world of full of global challenges, it is important to us at VIA, as well as to our partners, to go beyond what each of us can do alone.

From my chair as Rector of VIA University College, the alliance is of great importance in relation to creating outlook for our academic environments, e.g. in the form of quality assurance, how to conduct research and new concepts. We are a globally oriented institution and being a part of the Beyond Alliance for Knowledge contributes to the internationalisation of our entire organisation. The staff directly involved in projects under the alliance, carry the knowledge and inspiration they gain back into activities and teaching at home – for the benefit of both colleagues and students, as well as VIA as such.

## **BORDERLESS EDUCATION**

Additionally, education is under rapid development going from local to global and from requiring physical presence at a specific location to being truly digital, conducted in online spheres, moving freely across borders, physical as well as immaterial. In 5-10 years, components different from the ones we know today will be relevant within education, which just underlines the need to look beyond borders even further.

## **JOINT TEACHING**

Since the beginning, there has been a number of educational and research activities under development within the alliance, especially within the themes of sustainable development, resilience and transdisciplinarity.

Specifically within education, we are working together to create joint teaching modules – a part of the collaboration that has shown a lot of potential despite differences in context, educational structures, language and culture between the partners. Currently, the joint modules under development include two academic fields: Water Management and Successful Ageing. The modules will be created as common trilateral e-modules, which will, hopefully, in the future, work as the base of jointly developed Massive Open Online Courses.

In addition, VIA is among the largest and leading players within continued education in the Nordic countries and I hope that we will be able to share this knowledge through the Beyond Alliance in the

years to come. As I see it, VIA, HAMK and Feevale have each our own strengths and in this strategic collaboration, we share these strengths and grow together.

Common research has been one of the pillars of the alliance since the very beginning. At the moment, we are working on increasing our mutual knowledge in the academic fields of energy efficiency and materials, carbon binding, water, ageing and rehabilitation. In the coming years, we hope to be able to work together with local businesses to a greater extent, than is the case today, so that we stay in tune with the discourse in society in general and make sure that our research remains relevant.

### **SOLVING STRATEGIC AND ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES**

We not only seek inspiration from each other within education, research and cooperation, but also for strategic challenges at senior management level. Personally, the alliance inspires and contributes with new perspectives when it comes to developing institutional strategies and organisational structure.

Currently, VIA is going through a major reorganisation, which will make our institution more transparent and agile. In addition, we have appointed a former director and researcher as executive international manager to oversee and develop selected international partnerships strategically, thus, creating a better base for seamless cooperation across borders with our partners.

I look very much forward to working with our partners in this alliance in the years to come and see how our individual skills and strengths can be of benefit to all of us.