Enhancing Language Teacher Education through Co-Designed Virtual Exchange: Policy Recommendations for Curriculum-Embedded Implementation

The White Paper

The GlobVELT Project

Enhancing Language Teacher Education through Co-Designed Virtual Exchange:
Policy Recommendations for Curriculum-Embedded Implementation
"The White Paper"

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1. Introduction

1.1. Definition of Virtual Exchange

Virtual Exchange (VE) refers to engaging groups of learners in structured, sustained online intercultural interaction and collaboration with international peers, as part of their formal education and under the guidance of educators or facilitators (O'Dowd, 2021). At its core, VE involves *guided online intercultural learner-to-learner contact* that promotes mutual understanding, intercultural competence, and collaborative learning.

VE is known by several other terms in both scholarly literature and practice, including:

- Telecollaboration
- Online Intercultural Exchange
- E-tandem / Teletandem
- Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)
- Global Virtual Teams
- Globally Networked Learning Environments

Despite these varied labels, this paper will use "Virtual Exchange (VE)" consistently, reflecting the practice's broader and more inclusive scope.
It is important to clarify what VE is not:

- VE is not distance education, online teaching, or blended teaching.
- VE is not a form of virtual mobility and does not aim to replicate physical mobility.
- VE should not be seen as a temporary substitute or emergency response for times of restricted international travel (e.g., during a pandemic).

Moreover, VE is a distinct learning experience, not an alternative to studying abroad. While both VE and physical mobility offer intercultural engagement, they do so in fundamentally different ways. Through carefully structured digital interaction, VE offers its unique set of benefits and challenges.

1.2. Context and Rationale

VE offers significant potential as an innovative method of online intercultural learning, with increasing acceptance by universities worldwide. It supports the digital transformation of higher education by providing practical strategies and research-based insights for integrating VE into internationalisation policies and curricula.

As an innovative and evolving pedagogical approach, VE is a highly effective educational tool for advancing Internationalisation at Home (IaH). It allows students to gain intercultural experience without leaving their home country, thereby expanding access to global learning and reducing the environmental and financial burdens associated with physical mobility. VE combines the benefits of intercultural dialogue with the accessibility of digital technology and is increasingly used as an IaH approach for students who cannot travel abroad. However, the digital platforms used in VE are not inherently equitable, as students' differing levels of digital literacy, multimodal communication skills, and semiotic awareness can significantly affect their experience (Satar & Hauck, 2021).

Research shows that VE can be successfully integrated into diverse educational settings and curricula (Batardière et al., 2019). Its digital format enhances equity, accessibility, and sustainability, making it especially relevant in global efforts to democratise international education (de Wit, 2016; O'Dowd, 2022).

VE supports the development of a range of important skills and competencies, including:

- Digital literacy and multimodal communication
- Self-confidence and intercultural sensitivity
- Critical thinking and reflection on personal beliefs and biases
- Recognition of cultural complexity and resistance to simplistic 'us vs. them' narratives (Helm & van der Velden, 2019; Sadler & Dooly, 2016)

Moreover, VE fosters deep, meaningful intercultural interaction, which is essential for promoting student empathy, tolerance, and global awareness (O'Dowd & Lewis, 2016). By engaging students in collaborative tasks with peers from other cultural backgrounds, VE encourages mutual understanding, perspective-taking, and dialogue skills that are increasingly critical in today's interconnected world.

VE is not merely a digital tool but a transformative educational practice that redefines how universities can deliver international learning experiences. It equips students with the intercultural, digital, and reflective skills necessary for active participation in diverse, globalized societies, making it a vital component of contemporary higher education.

The role of VE in teacher education has grown significantly in recent years as educational methodologies worldwide strive to prepare students and teachers for a more interconnected, globalised world. VE provides an innovative, cost-effective means of engaging learners across borders, promoting intercultural communication, and enhancing the digital competencies of both students and educators. The potential of VE in teacher education is particularly evident in its ability to bridge the gap between local and global learning environments, creating opportunities for authentic cross-cultural interactions and collaborative learning experiences.

The need for curriculum-embedded VE in language teacher education:

The theoretical foundations for VE in teacher education can be found in models such as Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) model, which emphasises the need for educators to not only understand other cultures but also develop the ability to engage in meaningful communication with individuals from diverse backgrounds. VE plays a key role in fostering ICC by immersing educators in intercultural learning experiences, helping them to develop the necessary skills to teach in multicultural environments. Additionally, VE aligns with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), emphasizing the intersection of content, pedagogy, and technology. In the case of VE, educators are required to integrate digital tools with their pedagogical strategies, fostering a more dynamic and technology-enhanced teaching environment.

VE's impact on teacher education has been well-documented, particularly through initiatives like Erasmus+ and eTwinning, which support cross-border educational collaborations across Europe and beyond. These initiatives allow educators to participate in international exchanges, providing real-world examples of how VE can enhance educational practices. In Türkiye and the UK, the potential for VE to enhance teacher education is particularly significant, as the countries seek to align their educational practices with international standards and provide teachers with the skills required to engage effectively in a globalised world.

In English Language Teaching (ELT), the need for curriculum-embedded VE is even more pronounced. The changing nature of language teaching requires that future teachers not only master pedagogical techniques but also possess strong intercultural competence and digital literacy (Helm, 2015). Research indicates that teacher education programmes must adapt to the demands of globalised classrooms by integrating technology and intercultural learning into their curricula. As Kramsch (1993) argues, language teaching is inherently intercultural, and effective ELT requires understanding the cultural contexts in which language is used. VE offers a practical means of embedding these dimensions into teacher preparation, providing authentic cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration opportunities.

Curriculum-embedded VE in language teacher education can help pre-service teachers engage with diverse learners, understand global perspectives on language use, and develop the digital skills needed to use online platforms effectively in teaching. Integrating VE into ELT curricula allows future teachers to practice teaching English in virtual classrooms, often reflecting the cultural diversity they will encounter in real-life teaching settings. This approach enhances their ability to teach English in an inclusive and culturally sensitive manner, preparing them for the complexities of modern ELT environments. The growing emphasis on digital literacy in education, as highlighted in the European Union's Digital Education Action Plan (European Commission, 2020), underscores the need for teacher education programs to integrate digital tools, such as VE platforms, into their curricula.

VE in ELT is also supported by the Bologna Process which aims to harmonise higher education systems across Europe and promote cross-border educational mobility. By embedding VE in ELT teacher education, universities can ensure that their graduates are equipped with the skills necessary to teach in diverse, international classrooms. The eTwinning initiative, a platform for collaboration among teachers across Europe, provides a practical example of how VE can be incorporated into ELT curricula. Through eTwinning, ELT educators can collaborate on joint projects, share resources, and engage in cultural exchanges with peers from different countries, providing real-world examples of how VE can be effectively integrated into teacher training.

1.3. Objective of the White Paper

To inform policymakers

The primary objective of this white paper is to inform key policymakers including the Higher Education Council (HEC) and Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Türkiye, as well as the Department for Education (DfE), Office for Students (OfS), Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office,), and Universities UK (UUK) in the UK about the growing role of VE in teacher education, particularly within the context of English Language Teaching (ELT).

This white paper aims to present VE as a critical tool for preparing teachers to work in diverse, globalised classrooms. By showcasing the evidence from successful VE initiatives such as GlobVELT, a co-designed project between Türkiye and the UK, this paper seeks to demonstrate the value of VE for improving teacher competencies in areas like intercultural communication, digital literacy, and pedagogical practices. Furthermore, it emphasises how VE aligns with Türkiye's broader educational goals, including modernizing teacher education and integrating digital tools into teaching practices.

In addition, the white paper aims to provide recommendations for policy action, highlighting the need for institutional support and funding to integrate VE into teacher education curricula. Policymakers will be encouraged to align VE with national and international educational frameworks, such as the Bologna Process and the EU Digital Education Action Plan, ensuring that VE becomes a permanent and sustainable part of Türkiye's teacher education landscape.

To provide an action plan for implementing VE in teacher education curricula:

In addition to informing policymakers, this white paper will present a comprehensive action plan for implementing VE in teacher education curricula across universities and schools in the UK and Türkiye. This action plan will include recommendations for the phased introduction of VE into teacher education programmes, beginning with policy adoption and institutional buy-in, followed by capacity-building initiatives and pilot programmes. The plan will emphasise the importance of faculty training, developing digital platforms, and establishing support structures for VE implementation.

To present evidence from a co-designed VE project between Türkiye and the UK:

A central aspect of this white paper is to present evidence from the GlobVELT project, a co-designed VE initiative between Türkiye and the UK, as a case study of successful VE integration in teacher education. The GlobVELT project has demonstrated the effectiveness of VE in enhancing pre-service teachers' global competence, intercultural understanding, and digital literacy. The project involved collaboration between Gazi University (Türkiye) and Newcastle University (UK), with pre-service teachers from both institutions. The VE included joint coursework, discussions, and collaborative tasks on global themes for language classrooms.

The evidence from GlobVELT highlights how VE can be embedded into teacher education curricula to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Pre-service teachers gained hands-on experience using digital platforms to engage with international peers by participating in the project. They learned how to integrate intercultural understanding into their teaching practices. This evidence will be used to demonstrate the potential of VE to transform teacher education in Türkiye and to provide a roadmap for its broader adoption in ELT curricula. The white paper will include detailed findings from the GlobVELT project, including participant feedback, academic outcomes, and insights into the challenges and successes of implementing VE in teacher education.

2. Background & Problem Statement

2.1. Challenges in Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

Limited Exposure to International Collaboration and Mobility Opportunities:

One of the primary challenges facing teacher education is the limited exposure to international collaboration and mobility opportunities for pre-service teachers. Traditional teacher preparation programmes are often confined to national or local educational settings, providing few opportunities for engagement in cross-border teaching practices. Many pre-service teachers lack access to such opportunities, particularly through physical mobility programs, which are often constrained by financial, institutional, or personal barriers (Beelen & Jones, 2015; de Wit, 2020). As a result, student participation in traditional study-abroad or teaching-abroad programs remains low, creating equity gaps and limiting their preparedness for multicultural classrooms. This restricted access to international collaboration and physical mobility reduces pre-service teachers' ability to build intercultural competence and adapt to the demands of globally connected educational environments.

Insufficient Digital Literacy and Online Pedagogical Skills:

A second significant challenge is the insufficient digital literacy and online pedagogical skills among pre-service teachers. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests that a key area for improvement in teacher education is integrating technology into teaching practices. Many teacher training programmes, particularly in Türkiye, still emphasise traditional methods and struggle to incorporate digital tools effectively. While digital literacy is an increasingly important skill for educators, research by Mishra & Koehler (2006) shows that many teachers are not adequately trained in the pedagogical use of technology, particularly in virtual and online learning environments. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the importance of online teaching skills, exposing the gaps in digital training for educators.

The Gap Between Theoretical Knowledge and Practical Teaching Experience:

There remains a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching experience. Pre-service teachers often receive intense academic instruction in educational theory, pedagogy, and subject content, but lack the hands-on experience to translate this knowledge into practice. In the context of language teacher education, Burns, Freeman, & Edwards (2015) stress the role of reflective teaching and teacher inquiry as tools to connect abstract pedagogical concepts with practical classroom challenges.

2.2. The Role of VE in Addressing These Challenges

VE for International Collaboration

VE offers a scalable, accessible, and sustainable solution to the challenges of limited international collaboration and restricted physical mobility in teacher education. Unlike traditional study-abroad programs, VE enables pre-service teachers to engage in structured, cross-cultural teaching and learning experiences without the financial, logistical, or institutional barriers associated with physical travel (O'Dowd, 2021). Importantly, VE also supports equity in access to international learning by including students who may not have the means or ability to participate in mobility programs (de Wit, 2020). As a form of Internationalisation at Home,

VE integrates global perspectives directly into local teacher education curricula (Beelen & Jones, 2015), ensuring that all future educators—not just a mobile minority—can prepare for diverse, multilingual, and multicultural classrooms. By doing so, VE expands international exposure and helps fulfil broader institutional goals for inclusive internationalisation and teacher readiness in a globalized world.

VE for Digital Literacy

VE refers to using technology to connect students and teachers from different cultural and geographical locations for collaborative learning activities. According to O'Dowd (2021), VE provides a unique opportunity for learners to engage in real-time, authentic interactions with peers from different countries, enhancing intercultural communication and understanding. It also offers a platform for teachers to develop their digital literacy, collaboration skills, and pedagogical practices internationally.

VE has been increasingly recognised as a powerful tool for developing digital literacy and online pedagogical skills among pre-service teachers. While foundational models such as Mishra & Koehler's (2006) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK) framework underscore integrating technology with pedagogy and content knowledge, recent research further demonstrates how VE fosters these capabilities in practice. For example, Helm & van der Velden (2019) found that VE projects contribute significantly to teachers' ability to navigate online platforms, communicate multimodally, and collaborate across digital tools. Similarly, Sadler and Dooly (2016) highlight that VE tasks, such as co-creating digital content or participating in cross-border collaborative discussions, lead to measurable improvements in digital communication strategies and classroom technology use. Moreover, O'Dowd (2021) argues that VE provides a real-world, low-risk environment where future teachers can experiment with educational technologies, develop confidence in digital interaction, and learn to adapt instructional strategies for online settings. These experiences strengthen their digital competence and enhance their readiness to integrate technology meaningfully into their future classrooms.

VE for Intercultural Competence

VE provides an opportunity for pre-service teachers to engage in direct, cross-cultural interactions with international peers, helping them to develop intercultural competence, a critical skill for ELT educators. Kramsch (1993) highlights the importance of intercultural communication in language teaching, noting that understanding cultural differences is essential for language teachers to navigate classroom dynamics effectively. Through VE, pre-service teachers can engage with diverse student populations and learn how to teach English in a culturally sensitive and inclusive way.

VE for Bridging Theory and Practice

VE offers a promising solution to bridging the long-standing gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching experience in teacher education. By engaging pre-service teachers in authentic, collaborative, and cross-cultural learning environments, VE provides structured opportunities to apply pedagogical concepts in real-world contexts. Werner et al. (2025) demonstrated that VE partnerships between pre-service and in-service teachers across Europe enhanced participants' ability to connect educational theory with the complexities of actual classroom practice. Similarly, the VALIANT project (Sauro et al., 2021) further supports

these findings, showing that VE promotes disciplinary integration, digital skills development, and reflective teaching, which are all essential for effective practice. These structured, facilitated experiences enable pre-service teachers to translate theoretical learning into meaningful practice while fostering critical thinking, adaptability, and intercultural awareness—skills increasingly vital in diverse, global educational contexts.

In conclusion, VE represents a transformative tool in teacher education that addresses many of the key challenges pre-service teachers face in Türkiye and the UK. By integrating VE into ELT teacher education curricula, universities can enhance pre-service teachers' global competence, digital skills, and pedagogical practices, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a globalized, technology-driven world. The use of VE improves teacher education quality and prepares educators to engage in meaningful, intercultural teaching that fosters inclusive, global classrooms.

Figure 1. Virtual Exchange in Teacher Education

3. Impact of the Co-Designed VE on Pre-Service & In-Service Language Teachers

3.1. Project Overview

The GlobVELT VE project was a collaborative, 8-week online programme designed to enhance the global competence of English language teacher trainees from Türkiye and the UK. Developed using Kerkhoff's Global Teaching Model (GTM), the VE involved pre-service and in-service teachers (as the e-mediator) engaged in structured, synchronous, and asynchronous intercultural tasks. The exchange was designed as part of the GlobVELT Project funded by the British Council Türkiye.

Figure 2. The GlobVELT VE Project Schedule

Week 1: Introductions

Participants completed the *My Identity Web* activity and selected or were assigned to working groups. A synchronous Zoom session was held to introduce participants, clarify roles, and establish expectations. Participants watched the *Global Competence* video and read *Kerkhoff's Global Readiness* article by the end of the week.

Week 2: Exploring Global Themes

Participants engaged with critical literacy resources and materials on global thinking routines. They also contributed to a forum discussion titled *"What is Culture?"* and shared personal and professional reflections. A Zoom session provided further discussion and synthesis of emerging themes.

Week 3: Theme Exploration Continued

Participants attended a Zoom session to explore their global themes in depth. They collaboratively reported key discussion insights and reviewed materials for designing global competence-aligned teaching resources. The first round of e-portfolio reflections and tasks was submitted.

Break Week

This week provided participants a scheduled break to rest and review previous tasks. No new assignments were issued.

Weeks 4–5: Listening, Speaking & Social Action

Over two weeks, participants designed listening and speaking materials based on their global themes. They viewed a training session on adapting materials for social action and planned their resources accordingly. A Zoom session facilitated feedback and peer input. Final versions of the materials were uploaded.

Weeks 6–7: Reading, Writing & Assessment

Participants watched training sessions on adapting reading and writing materials and assessing global learning. A Zoom session allowed them to reflect on progress and prepare for final submissions. All groups had uploaded their completed materials and engaged in final group discussions.

Week 8: Celebration and Reflection

The programme concluded with a celebratory Zoom session, where participants reflected on their learning journey and accomplishments. Participants completed the post-program *Global Readiness Survey* and uploaded the final *e-Portfolio* with two submissions.

3.2. Key Findings & Evidence-Based Impact

Pedagogical Development:

Pre-service teachers reported improved ability to design inclusive, globally aware lesson materials. As one participant reflected, "*We started to change their point of view and put ourselves in others' shoes*." The hands-on task design and collaboration helped participants embed global themes such as migration, identity, and multilingualism into their pedagogical approaches.

Intercultural Competence:

Participants demonstrated a notable shift in cultural awareness and empathy. Many who initially held narrow or nationally bound views expressed growth. For example, one e-mediator (in-service English language teacher) highlighted: "*Especially the pre-service teachers from our country... were so harsh about the Syrian students... but they started to change their point of view*."

Digital Literacy & Online Teaching Skills:

Tools like Zoom, shared Google Docs, Canva (a graphic design platform), and asynchronous readings enabled participants to develop their online teaching skills. Mediators emphasised the importance of scaffolding and technical support in inclusive participation: "*My main responsibility is ensuring that pre-service teachers have the technical, pedagogical and emotional support.*"

Collaboration & Professional Growth

The VE fostered international networks and reflective teaching practice. Participants shared challenges and teaching adaptations across diverse contexts, deepening their understanding of culturally responsive education. One pre-service teacher's shift was noted: "*We learned to bring our culture closer to the materials... adapting content to make it more relatable.*"

"*I learned many things from my pre-service teachers and you… It was a priceless experience.*"

Another reflected:

"*I feel better now… I have more confidence about being globally competent.*"

4. Policy Recommendations for Embedding VE in Language Teacher Education

Recommendation 1: Institutionalising VE in Pre-Service Teacher Training

o *Integrating VE into teacher education curricula:*

Integrating VE into pre-service teacher training curricula is a practical necessity and a strategic approach to preparing future educators for the demands of an increasingly globalised world. Theoretically, VE offers the opportunity to create a learning environment that bridges geographical and cultural divides, fostering a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and collaboration. According to the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) model by Byram (1997), understanding others' cultures and engaging in meaningful communication are essential for preparing teachers to work in diverse classrooms. By incorporating VE into teacher education, pre-service teachers can experience firsthand the challenges and rewards of intercultural interaction, preparing them for the diversity of their future students.

In practice, VE allows students to engage in real-time collaborations with peers from different cultural contexts, developing both language skills and the cognitive and emotional skills needed to navigate intercultural exchanges. The GlobVELT project serves as a key example here, as it integrates VE into the curriculum, where pre-service teachers from both institutions work together on shared learning activities. This exchange fosters professional and personal growth, empowering future teachers with the tools to enhance their intercultural and digital competencies. To scale this practice, universities must institutionalise VE by embedding it into their teacher education programs and developing clear, supportive policies for long-term integration.

o *Encouraging university partnerships for sustained VE programmes:*

The theoretical framework for encouraging long-term university partnerships is grounded in internationalisation of higher education, as Knight (2003) described, emphasizing the importance of fostering global learning environments through international partnerships. By engaging in sustained collaborations, universities create networks that enable the sharing of best practices, resources, and knowledge, ultimately enriching the learning experiences of students and staff. The success of VE programs hinges on the ability to build partnerships beyond short-term exchanges. The GlobVELT project exemplifies how these partnerships can be institutionalized. By collaborating with Newcastle University, Gazi University has enhanced its curriculum and strengthened its global footprint in teacher education.

For these partnerships to be effective, universities must establish long-term agreements, ensuring continuous knowledge exchange and the development of innovative curricula. Universities can also explore additional funding opportunities, joint research projects, and faculty exchanges to enhance the sustainability of these VE programs.

Recommendation 2: Capacity Building & Training for Educators

Training pre-service and in-service teachers on digital pedagogy:

The need for comprehensive digital pedagogy training is supported by theoretical frameworks such as the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), highlighting the importance of teachers' ability to integrate technology effectively into their teaching practices. As digital platforms and tools become increasingly central to education, teachers must be equipped with technical skills and the pedagogical knowledge to integrate these tools meaningfully into their classrooms. Training pre-service and in-service teachers in digital pedagogy ensures they can use VE tools effectively, fostering a more interactive and collaborative learning environment.

Practically, the GlobVELT project demonstrates the importance of such training through workshops organized at Gazi University, where faculty and teachers were trained to use VE platforms. These sessions focused on technical aspects (VE tools) and pedagogical strategies for fostering intercultural communication and collaboration. The training provided practical insights into how VE can be embedded into the curriculum, allowing teachers to design meaningful, engaging, and globally connected learning experiences. Scaling such capacity-building initiatives across universities will ensure that educators are well-prepared to engage with VE in their classrooms.

o **Supporting professional development initiatives:**

Professional development for educators is critical to improving teaching effectiveness and ensuring that VE remains a valuable pedagogical tool. Theoretical foundations such as the Learning-By-Doing model (Dewey, 1938) emphasise the importance of experiential learning in professional development. Rather than merely receiving training, teachers who actively engage in VE projects develop a deeper understanding and practical skills through real-world applications. The GlobVELT project's focus on continuous professional development through active participation in VE provides a strong example of how to foster long-term growth in educators. Institutions should build upon this model by offering regular workshops, collaborative projects, and reflective practices that encourage teachers to grow within the VE framework.

Recommendation 3: Technological & Infrastructure Support

o **Providing necessary digital tools and platforms:**

One of the fundamental theoretical concepts supporting the provision of digital tools and platforms is the SAMR model (Puentedura, 2006), which outlines how technology can transform learning experiences by enhancing engagement and interactivity. The effective use of VE platforms in teacher education relies heavily on the availability of appropriate tools that facilitate communication, collaboration, and content creation. Platforms like Zoom, Teams, and Canvas allow teachers and students to engage in virtual classrooms, share resources, and collaborate across borders. However, as evidenced by the GlobVELT project, providing access to these tools is only part of the equation—training on how to use them effectively is equally critical. In practice, providing schools and universities with the necessary digital infrastructure, including access to reliable internet, cloud storage, and collaborative platforms, will ensure teachers can effectively leverage VE programs.

• **Recommendation 4: Cross-Border Collaboration & Policy Alignment**

o **Strengthening Türkiye-UK cooperation in teacher education:**

The theoretical basis for strengthening cross-border collaboration is the idea of internationalisation at home, which refers to embedding global competencies into the curriculum through partnerships and exchanges. As seen in the GlobVELT project, strengthening cooperation between Turkish and UK institutions not only enhances the educational quality but also enriches the experiences of teachers and students by exposing them to diverse pedagogical approaches and cultural perspectives. Universities in both countries can share their expertise in digital pedagogy, intercultural communication, and VE practices, creating a global network of teacher educators.

o **Aligning VE activities with national and international educational policies:**

Aligning VE with national policies ensures educational initiatives are supported at the highest levels. Theoretical frameworks like the Bologna Process (European Higher Education Area, 1999) emphasise the importance of harmonising education systems across countries to create a more interconnected European educational landscape. Similarly, aligning VE with international educational policies, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will help ensure that VE programs focus on globally relevant issues such as climate change, gender equality, and peace education. The GlobVELT project aligns with these international goals by integrating SDGs into its curriculum design and activities.

Recommendation 5: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Sustainability

o **Establishing assessment frameworks for VE effectiveness:**

A comprehensive assessment framework for VE programs ensures that the intended educational outcomes are achieved. In the case of the GlobVELT project, a mixed-methods evaluation approach, including surveys, interviews, and qualitative data collection, has been used to assess the effectiveness of VE in enhancing global competence. These frameworks should be expanded to include broader longitudinal studies that examine the long-term impact of VE on teachers' career development.

o **Ensuring long-term sustainability through policy support:**

Ensuring the sustainability of VE requires continuous policy support, particularly in funding, infrastructure, and institutional commitment. Theories of sustainability in education (e.g., UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development framework) emphasize the need for long-term strategic planning and institutional buy-in to create effective and enduring programs. The GlobVELT project has shown that policy support is crucial for the continued success of VE, and other institutions should follow suit by integrating VE into their long-term educational strategies and securing funding to ensure its growth.

By embedding these theoretical foundations and practical examples into policy recommendations, this framework provides a comprehensive approach to integrating VE into ELT teacher education, ensuring its continued growth and success.

5. Action Plan for Implementation of VE in Language Teacher Education

Phase 1: Policy Adoption & Institutional Buy-In

Advocacy with National and International Policymakers: To implement VE in language teacher education effectively, strong policy support and institutional buy-in must be secured not only within Türkiye but also through collaboration with international stakeholders, especially in the United Kingdom (UK) and other EU/EEA countries.

In Türkiye, MoNE (Ministry of National Education) and HEC (Higher Education Council) remain pivotal for national education policy.

In the UK, key counterparts include:
- Department for Education (DfE)
- British Council (primarily through its international partnerships)
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
- Universities UK International (UUKi)

Engaging these UK-based policy actors can align strategically with the UK's international education strategy, emphasizing global partnerships, digital education, and intercultural competencies—values shared with Türkiye's educational reform agenda.

Action Steps:
1. Present Policy Recommendations to Turkish and UK Decision-Makers:
   o Align white paper recommendations with Türkiye's national strategies and the UK's international education objectives.
   o Disseminate the white paper with relevant policymakers such as DfE and UUKi.
2. Use Erasmus+ Examples:
   o Present Erasmus+ case studies (from Türkiye and the EU) to show VE's applicability across frameworks.
3. Leverage eTwinning and British Council Partnerships:
   o Utilize the British Council's digital partnership programs and eTwinning's reach to initiate VE collaborations across borders between primary, secondary, and higher education institutions.

Phase 2: Capacity Development & Pilot Programmes

Faculty Training and Pilot Implementation in Türkiye, the UK, and Partner Countries: Following institutional alignment, it is essential to provide joint faculty training and initiate pilot VE programs in select universities and schools across Türkiye, the UK, and broader Europe. This phase focuses on building transnational educator capacity in digital pedagogy and intercultural communication.

Action Steps:
1. Design Joint Faculty Training Programmes:
   o Co-develop training modules in collaboration with UK and EU universities, with content on VE methods, tools, and intercultural dialogue.
2. Pursue Funding for VE:
   o Apply for Erasmus+ and UK-based funding (e.g., British Council International Collaboration Grants) to support cross-national VE development.

3. Pilot VE via eTwinning and UK School Networks:
   o Launch pilots linking Turkish and UK universities/schools via eTwinning and British Council platforms. Incorporate trainee teachers in collaborative VE projects.

Phase 3: Nationwide and International Scaling & Long-Term Sustainability

Scaling VE through Strategic International Partnerships: As VE adoption matures, the focus should shift to scaling VE practices through structured partnerships and establishing sustainable governance models.

Bilateral UK-Türkiye university partnerships and ongoing eTwinning projects will be essential. Additionally, policy coordination across countries can be enhanced by establishing an International VE Coordination Body, ideally involving:
- Turkish Erasmus+ National Agency
- British Council
- European Schoolnet (for eTwinning)
- Representatives from higher education consortia (e.g., EUA, UUKi)

Action Steps:
1. Establish an International VE Coordination Body:
   o Create a coordinating body involving Türkiye, the UK, and European partners to manage strategy, funding, quality assurance, and international collaboration.
2. Scale VE through Multinational Erasmus+ and Turing Partnerships:
   o Design cross-border VE projects co-led by universities from Türkiye, the UK, and the EU—focusing on curriculum co-design, teacher exchange, and joint research.
3. Embed VE in Teacher Education Policy Frameworks:
   o Work with national and European education councils to formalise VE as part of teacher education standards and curricula.

Conclusion

This action plan outlines a phased, internationally integrated strategy for embedding VE into language teacher education. By engaging with policy actors and institutions in Türkiye, the UK, and Europe, and leveraging complementary programs like Erasmus+, Turing, and eTwinning, this plan promotes a globally connected, digitally empowered model of teacher education. Establishing a coordinated policy framework will ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of VE across borders—building a new generation of teachers prepared for global citizenship and 21st-century classrooms.

6. Conclusion and Call to Action

The growing importance of VE in teacher education is well supported by both research and practice. As classrooms become more diverse and digitally connected, teacher preparation programs must evolve to equip educators with global competencies, intercultural communication skills, and digital pedagogy fluency.

The GlobVELT project, a collaborative effort between Türkiye and the UK, has shown that VE offers transformative learning experiences for pre-service teachers. Teachers participating in VE programs enhance their confidence in using technology, develop intercultural sensitivity, and become better prepared to teach in globalized classrooms.

Key Policy Recommendations:

1. Embed VE in Curricula:
   o Encourage HEC in Türkiye, DfE, OfS, and UUKi in the UK to integrate VE into formal teacher education programs.
2. Joint Faculty Development:
   o Implement structured training programs across Türkiye and the UK focused on VE methodologies.
3. Enhance Infrastructure & Access:
   o Support universities with the necessary platforms and digital tools to facilitate sustainable VE engagement.
4. International Alignment & Funding:
   o Align VE strategies with Erasmus+, eTwinning, the UK's Turing Scheme, and broader digital education policies.
5. Monitoring & Evaluation:
   o Create cross-national evaluation frameworks to assess impact and inform continuous improvement.

Call for Coordinated Action

We call on national and international stakeholders—including HEC, MoNE, DfE, UUKi, and OfS—to:
- Recognize VE as a strategic innovation in teacher education
- Provide policy-level support for its national and international integration
- Coordinate with international education bodies to embed VE in structural reforms

Invitation to Collaboration

We invite:
- Universities in Türkiye, the UK, and Europe to include VE in teacher training programs
- Faculty members to engage in co-designed VE activities
- Educational associations and networks to support partnerships and share resources

Distribution & Dissemination Plan

Target Audiences
1. Primary Audience:
   o Türkiye: HEC and MoNE

- UK: DfE, Universities UK International (UUKi), Office for Students (OfS), British Council
2. Secondary Audience:
    - University administrations and teacher education faculties in Türkiye and the UK
3. Other Stakeholders:
    - INGED (English Language Education Association – Türkiye)
    - TESOL Türkiye
    - ADNE (Association for Distance and Networked Education)
    - Teacher educators, trainers, and ELT researchers

Circulation Strategy

1. Official Online Publication
    - The white paper will be hosted on the GlobVELT project website (https://globvelt.com)

2. Targeted Email Distribution
    - Shared directly with:
        - Key policymakers and education authorities
        - University deans, department heads, and VE project leaders
        - Professional associations such as INGED, TESOL Türkiye, and IATEFL

3. Social Media & Academic Networks
    - Disseminated via:
        - Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and academic listservs
        - Education-focused newsletters and mailing lists

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