An academic Service-Learning approach to the provision of pro-bono language services:

Support and development of the IN.TRA Lab

This research fellowship will contribute to the strengthening, innovation, and internationalisation of the Department of Interpreting and Translation's Service-Learning ecosystem.

Service-learning is an educational approach that combines academic learning with meaningful community service. Students apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world problems, reflect on their experiences and thus deepen their understanding and develop global citizenship competences.

Wthin the Master's in Specialized Translation, the Department of Interpreting and Translation has created a pro-bono translation unit, IN.TRA (Inclusive Translation), operated by final year students under the guidance of Department staff and in collaboration with community partners. The methodological and theoretical underpinnings of this initiative are to be found in several fields at the crossroads of translation studies and pedagogy (interpersonal ethics, social responsibilty, community engagement, socio-constructivism, critical pedagogy and experiential learning; see bibliography).

Building on previous work and existing departmental structures—particularly the pro-bono translation unit IN.TRA—the project aims to support the design, coordination and institutional consolidation of Service-Learning initiatives, as well as the development of competitive funding proposals under Erasmus+ and related programmes.

A central thematic area is the enhancement of student training in translation through authentic community-engaged activities. The fellow will contribute to maintaining and expanding collaborations with community partners, coordinating student groups involved in language services, and ensuring that IN.TRA's digital communication channels remain active, updated, and aligned with pedagogical goals.

Parallel to this, the project includes a strong international and strategic development component. The fellow will support the refinement and re-conceptualisation of the U-LEAD project proposal, drawing lessons from the previous submission and adapting the proposal to new Erasmus+ priorities and institutional constraints. Work will include reviewing and redesigning the overall structure, developing a new budget and coordinating activities with international partners from Senegal and Kenya, to ensure coherent planning and competitive project design. Additionally, the fellow will contribute to the exploration and early development of a new potential Cooperation Partnership aimed at expanding access to translation training for immigrants and first-generation Italians.

Overall, the project aims to consolidate the Department's role as a leading actor in service-learning for translator education, strengthen partnerships both locally and internationally, and establish the foundations for medium-term funding and outreach initiatives.

Activity Plan

1. Support for the Service-Learning course and IN.TRA

- Coordinate and supervise student groups involved in content creation and management for website and social media, translation, revision, and quality assurance tasks, inclusive-language and other thematic projects requested by community partners;
- Maintain regular communication with students, offering guidance while supporting autonomy and responsibility;
- Prepare and update pedagogical and organisational materials, including tools for monitoring student participation and project impact;
- Ensure the IN.TRA website remains up to date, accurate, and easy to maintain; propose improvements as needed.

2. Community Partner Coordination

- Maintain continuous communication with established community partners;
- Identify, contact, and onboard new partners for curricular and extra-curricular service-learning projects;
- Collect, evaluate, and schedule translation and language support requests to ensure a steady and pedagogically meaningful workflow for students;
- Support the integration of partner needs into course design and IN.TRA planning.

3. Exploration/pursuit of funding opportunities at EU level

- Reassess and adapt the previous U-LEAD project to align with updated Erasmus+ guidelines and institutional restrictions;
- Coordinate communication among Italian, African, and European partners, ensuring timely contributions and coherent planning;
- Explore funding schemes alternative to Erasmus+ CBHE;
- Support the conceptualisation of a new project aimed at providing introductory translation training to immigrants and first-generation Italians;
- Contribute to preliminary drafting of project rationale, objectives, partnership structure, and activities.

4. General Project Management and Reporting

- Maintain internal documentation of activity progress, partner communication, student tasks and outputs;
- Prepare short reports or summaries for internal use;
- Participate in meetings and working groups.

5. Bibliography

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