

MOSAIC Project: Ukrainian Educators Advance Intercultural Awareness in ELT



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Three Ukrainian university educators – **Hanna Podosynnikova** (Sumy Makarenko State Pedagogical University), **Maryna Shevchenko** (Donbas State Pedagogical University) and **Yuliia Klymovych** (Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University) – have been selected to participate in the **MOSAIC** (Maximizing Opportunities for Shared Awareness and Intercultural Competence for Novice Teachers) Project, an initiative sponsored by the Regional English Language Office (RELO) Ankara of the U.S. Embassy in Türkiye and

supported by RELO Kyiv, TESOL Turkey and TESOL-Ukraine. This transformative program, designed for emerging English language educators from Türkiye, Georgia and Ukraine, aims to integrate intercultural awareness, critical thinking, inclusive teaching practices and socio-emotional learning into language instruction to pursue the sustainable development goals of the modern multicultural world.



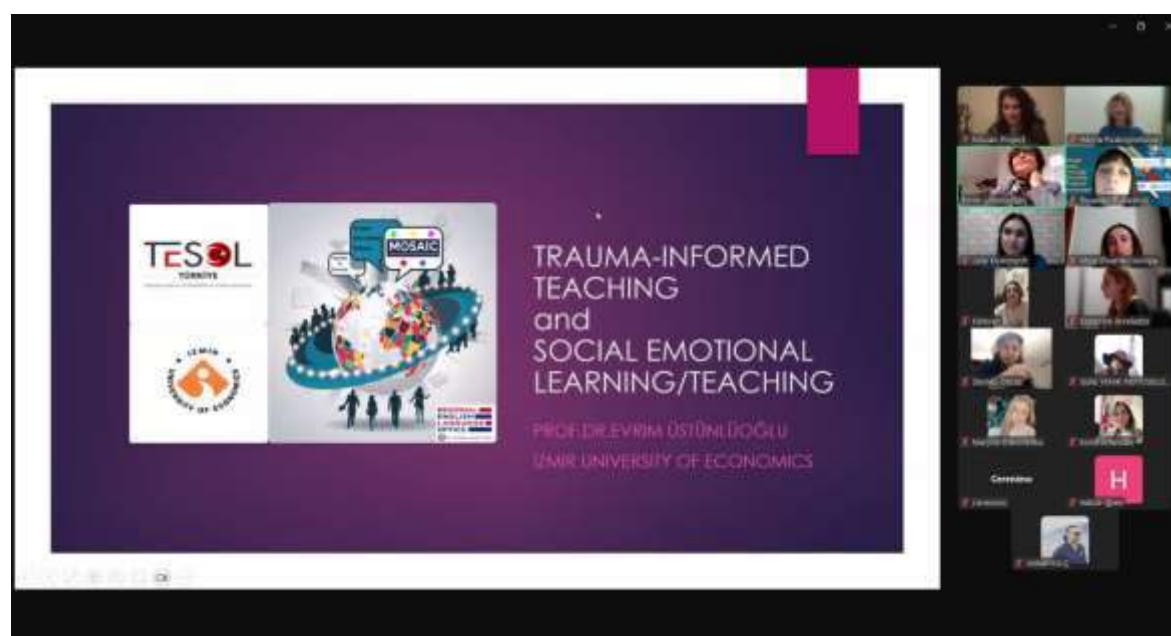
Over the course of four months (November–February), the MOSAIC Project Team engaged in a comprehensive **12-session Modular Training Program** led by distinguished experts in the field of English language education and intercultural studies. Each session provided valuable insights and pedagogical strategies to help participants foster culturally responsive classrooms and was followed by the range of reflective practical assignments.

Dr. Esen Metin (Çankaya University) introduced fundamental concepts of *intercultural competence*, laying the groundwork for understanding how culture influences communication and learning.

Dr. Hakan Tarhan (TOBB University of Economics and Technology) guided participants through *cultural beliefs, values and diversity* awareness, incorporating *Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory* and the DIE (Describe, Interpret, Evaluate) method to enhance cross-cultural understanding.

Beril Yücel (Turkish Education Association) led sessions on *intercultural communication*, *team building* and *active listening strategies*, addressing common barriers to effective communication in multicultural settings.

Prof. Dr. Evrim Üstünlüoğlu (Izmir University of Economics) focused on *trauma-informed teaching* and *social-emotional learning*, introducing the *CASEL framework*, cultural sensitivity in trauma awareness and strategies for integrating *critical thinking* into intercultural education.



Sinem Atamsoy Koşar (Ege University) emphasized *cultural intelligence*, *conflict resolution*, *motivation* and *well-being*, equipping participants with stress management techniques to foster a positive and inclusive classroom environment.

Assistant Professor Bahar Gün (Izmir University of Economics) concluded the Modular Training Program, introducing participants to *global citizenship*, *cultural adaptability skills*, *reflective thinking* and *action planning*, preparing the participants for further mentorship process.

The first phase of the program provided a balanced integration of theoretical frameworks and practical applications, equipping educators with the necessary tools to navigate cultural diversity and facilitate effective intercultural communication in the classroom. Engaging workshops, collaborative discussions and interactive activities helped broaden the

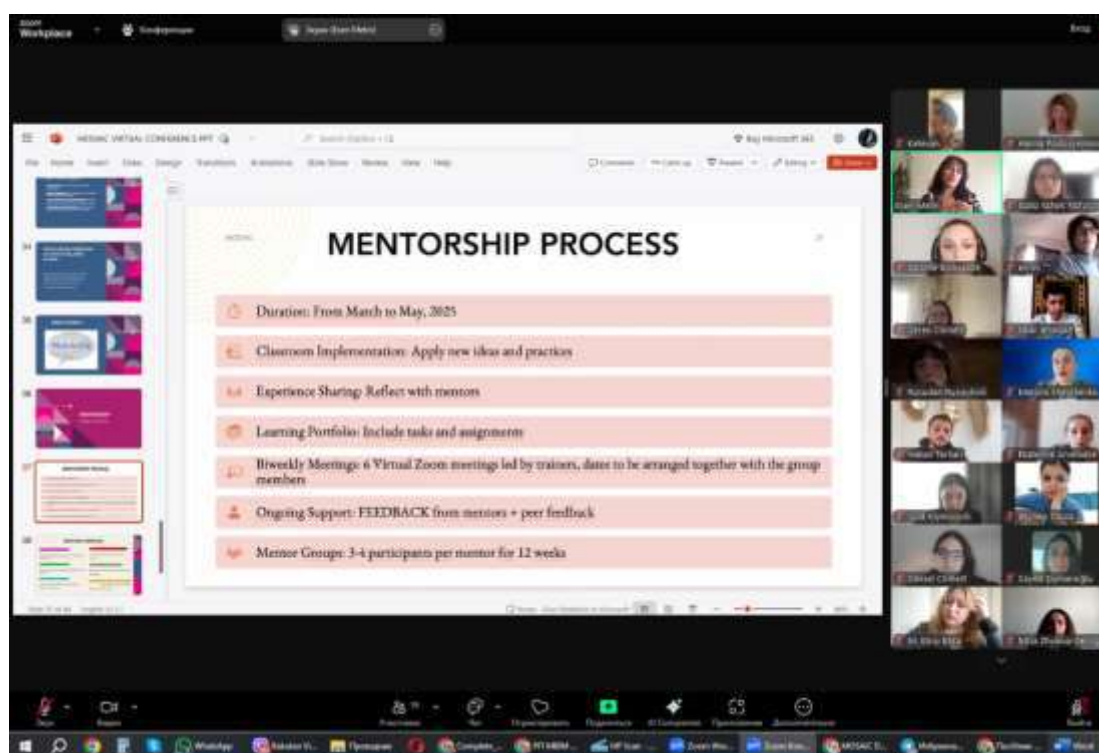
participants' perspectives and strengthen professional networks across Türkiye, Georgia, and Ukraine.



As the first phase of MOSAIC concluded, participants had the opportunity to engage in a **Virtual Mid-Project Conference**, featuring three distinguished TESOL professionals – **Bob Nguyen, Shannon Roach** and **Nuray Lük Grove** – who shared practical insights and innovative teaching approaches:

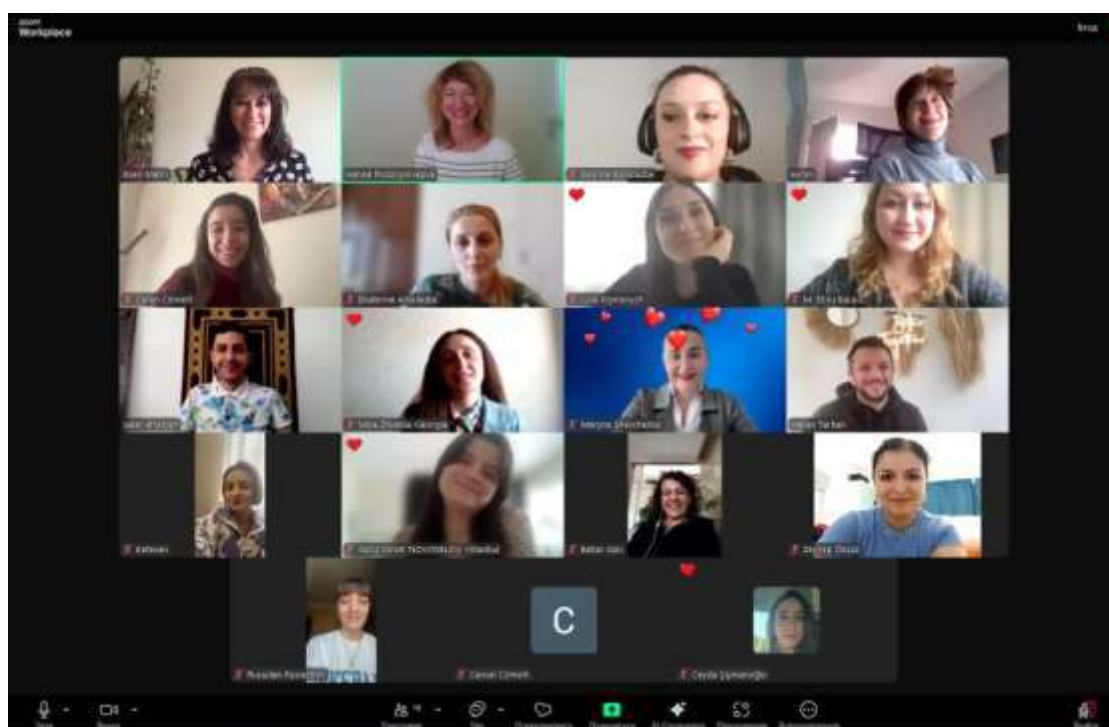
- **“DIVE’ing into Different Cultures like a Scientist”** – Bob Nguyen introduced ELT professionals to the DIVE method (Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate), a structured approach to multicultural awareness and intercultural competence.
- **“Thinking Creatively to Think Critically”** – Shannon Roach guided participants through an adaptable classroom activity designed to cultivate creative and critical thinking skills in language learners.
- **“Sense of Self and Culture”** – Nuray Lük Grove explored identity formation within cultural contexts, presenting strategies for both students and teachers to enhance self-awareness and cultural responsiveness in ESL classrooms.

Reflecting on their experience, the Ukrainian participants emphasize **practical relevance** of the MOSAIC Project, **supportive learning environment** and **immediate applicability** of newly acquired knowledge in their teaching practice. The project has not only deepened their understanding of cultural dynamics in education, but also inspired them to implement inclusive, student-centered methodologies in their classrooms.



However, this marks only the midpoint of their journey. Participants will continue their professional growth through a structured **mentorship process** with experienced colleagues, culminating in a final project conference.

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The MOSAIC Project has reaffirmed the critical role of intercultural competence in contemporary education, inspiring participants to integrate and share their insights within their institutions and professional networks. To be continued...

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