MenSI – Mentoring for School Improvement

MenSI Advisory Members - Introductory webinar

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About MenSI

- The **Mentoring for School Improvement (MenSI)** project is a 28-month Coordination and Support Action (November 2020 – February 2023) funded by the European Commission H2020 programme.

- The project will carry out a pan-European investigation into **how different approaches to mentoring can support the mainstreaming of innovative digital teaching practices** in primary and secondary schools.

- Involving ministries of education in **six countries** (Belgium-Flanders, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Portugal), MenSI will create a **network of 24 Mentor Schools working with 96 Mentee Schools**.

- By the end of the project, the network will open up to **other schools interested in applying school mentoring approaches** to develop innovative pedagogical practice involving digital technologies in teaching and learning.

Partners
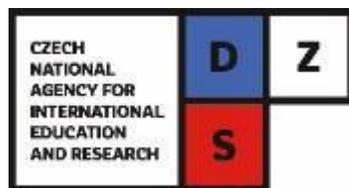
School-to-school mentoring

- **Transferring and scaling innovation** related to digital technologies in school education is an ongoing **policy challenge** across Europe.

- At individual teacher level, **peer-to-peer networking and mentoring** – an experienced teacher guiding and supporting a less experienced one – are **effective mechanisms for career-long professional learning**.

- However, at **whole-school level**, such approaches are less widespread despite the evidence for their potential.

Key objectives

To investigate school-to-school mentoring theory and practice including the strengths, weaknesses and related costs of different mentoring and school peer-to-peer learning models.

To create and animate a network of over 100 Mentor and Mentee Schools to pilot a range of approaches to addressing policy challenges.

To analyse the effectiveness of whole-school mentoring approaches applied by network schools to support mainstreaming of ICT and address policy challenges in partner countries.

To offer evidence-based recommendations and guidelines for the cost-effective coordination of school clusters through different approaches (top-down, bottom-up, virtual, etc.).

To create a community of practice and professional development opportunities for a wider group of school staff and an exchange mechanism for policy makers.

Expected main outcomes

1 **An overview of school-to-school mentoring in Europe** – Based on desk research, interviews and surveys, a report on different types of mentoring between schools in Europe, including examples and case studies, with reference to models of digitally supported innovation.

2 **24 school clusters in six countries** – The participating mentor and mentee schools will work collaboratively on developing digital competence and identified policy challenges (e.g. disadvantaged students), benefiting from customised professional development activities.

3 **Experimenting with different whole-school mentoring approaches** – Information on regional hub mentoring approaches, including the role of online mentoring and different incentive/ reward schemes, and how school clusters have implemented different types of bottom-up, self-organised approaches to cluster management.

4 **Documentation and analysis of mentoring practice** – A summary on the different types of mentoring clusters with focus on innovative, effective and scalable strategies, practices, processes and digital tools used, and a report on effective whole-school mentoring, as evidenced in the project.

5 **MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and community of practice for practitioners** – A MOOC on school mentoring open to teachers and school leaders across Europe and an open community of practice to share, exchange and improve.

Project timeline

Nov 2020   Sep 2021   May 2022   Oct 2022   Feb 2023

School pilot preparation (selection & material creation)

School pilots in 6 countries (training, activities, support)

MOOC

An overview of school-to-school mentoring in Europe (desk research, interviews and surveys)

Experimenting with different whole-school mentoring approaches

Documentation and analysis of mentoring practice

Dissemination and exploitation (Mentoring Policy Exchange, website)

Join MenSI as Advisory Member

The MenSI Advisory Members can be (the list is not exclusive):

- Ministries of Education

- Regional and municipal education authorities

- Organisations working in the area of school-to-school mentoring, e.g. research

- (EU-funded) projects of relevant topic

- Private organisations…

Join MenSI as Advisory Member

Benefits include among others:

- Opportunities for networking between key professional groups in 6 countries.
- Being invited to participate in the new 'Mentoring Policy Exchange' mechanism
- Being part of the MenSI projects decision-making mechanism
- Having an early access to project results and deliverables
- Professional development opportunities for their schools (in case of MoE and regional/local authorities)
- Using the MenSI visual identity in the capacity of an Advisory Board member.
- Being listed on the MenSI website as Advisory Member.

How to join:

- Read the Charter for Advisory Members
- Fill in the online form: http://bit.ly/mensi-adv-mem

School to school mentoring in Europe

Why, what, how, what works?

Roger Blamire

European Schoolnet

Why do schools co-operate, collaborate, network, cluster, partner, mentor?

- To support horizontal decision-making and solving complex problems
- To share responsibilities and creating synergies between stakeholders
  - Optimise the use of time and resources
- To incubate policy or practice
- To promote knowledge-sharing and scale innovation more quickly
- To enhance the professional development of teachers
  - Evidence shows benefits for teachers' professional development rather than for learners

Source: European Commission, 2018

Top-down school partnerships in MenSI

To meet the policy challenge of school improvement
- Basis school network (Hungary)

To foster innovation, new approaches to teaching and learning
- Innovative schools (Croatia, Belgium)
- Space, time and teaching innovation (Italy)
- 'Scio schools', makerspace schools, 'methodological cabinets' (Czech Republic)
- Pilot Project of Pedagogical Innovation (Portugal)
- Eco-schools (Hungary)

To share concerns and learn from each other
- 'Piccole scuole', small/isolated school network (Italy)
- E-islands (Croatia)

For capacity building of teachers and school leaders
- Capacity building of teachers and school leaders (Croatia)
- School leader live and Teacher live (Czech Republic)
- Institutional development mentors (Hungary)
- Avanguardie Educative (Italy)

To foster the update of digital technologies
- Digitising schools (Croatia)
- ICT innovation (Czech Republic)
- Digital education (Hungary)
- Living Schools Lab project

The Living Schools Lab 2012-2014

1 Top-down, incentivised participation initiative aiming to meet a policy challenge: to increase schools' digital capacity

2 Hub and spoke. Advanced Schools (2 per country) plus 5 Advanced Practitioner Schools), plus a national coordinator

3 Using a common framework and STEPS Plan (Share, Teach, Evidence, Plan, Support) schools shared practice and monitored progress

4 A Framework for Mainstreaming Change summarised evidence under categories defining the different levels of "connectedness": Reactive; Responsive; Connected; and Inter-connected

5 Working with peer schools inspired and stimulated ideas for innovation and created opportunities for teachers and students to work together across different schools

6 This successful model is adapted in MenSI

Bottom up collaboration

- Part of a self-improving system in which schools support themselves and each other to raise standards of teaching and learning and address educational issues

- Schools are learning schools in which teachers and learners are learning
  - Trvalá obnova školy (Czech Republic), a network of schools to change the internal climate of the school and manage change in education

- Self-review is a key element of the learning school
  - Many making use of self-evaluation tools such as SELFIE

- Peer reviewing involves teams of two or more schools visiting each other's school in order to gather information about the quality of the school visited

School-to-school mentoring

- Schools mentor each other
  - People with more experience or knowledge in one school support peers in the reviewed school
- Mentoring between schools, on a whole-school basis, is not widespread and little researched
- Reflection promoted by effective mentoring encourages a collaborative learning culture
  - This may alleviate some of the sense of professional isolation
- Mentoring is more influential when it 'fits' the wider context of a school
  - Consider the school's professional development plan when developing mentoring activities
- Support should be a priority for school leaders when developing mentoring activities
  - Promoting a learning and collaborative culture
  - Providing a framework for implementing mentoring
  - Training in mentoring is an important factor in effective mentoring

Success conditions

1   Strong and committed leadership, a clear plan and inspiring, agreed and shared goals. Incentives provided.

2   Well-defined and robust structures and processes, participants with status and skills, clear roles and responsibilities. Mentors trained.

3   A history of collaboration. If not, take steps to establish trust and cooperation.

4   Clear communication, show there is a problem solved for both mentor and mentee schools in return for investment in time and effort

5   Schools need to be carefully and contextually matched. Be aware of perceived power imbalances between schools

6   A reliable digital infrastructure and digital skills in place to enable everyone to contribute.

1st Q&A

MenSI at the national level: GO!

Sam Panckoucke

GO!

What is GO!? (Belgium)

- GO! Is one of the education networks of Flanders.

- Belgium is a very complicated country.

- We speak 3 different languages: Dutch, French and German.

- Education in Flanders is divided in three networks. Our network "GO!" (government-provided education) is the second largest.

Flemish (Dutch speaking) community

French (speaking) community

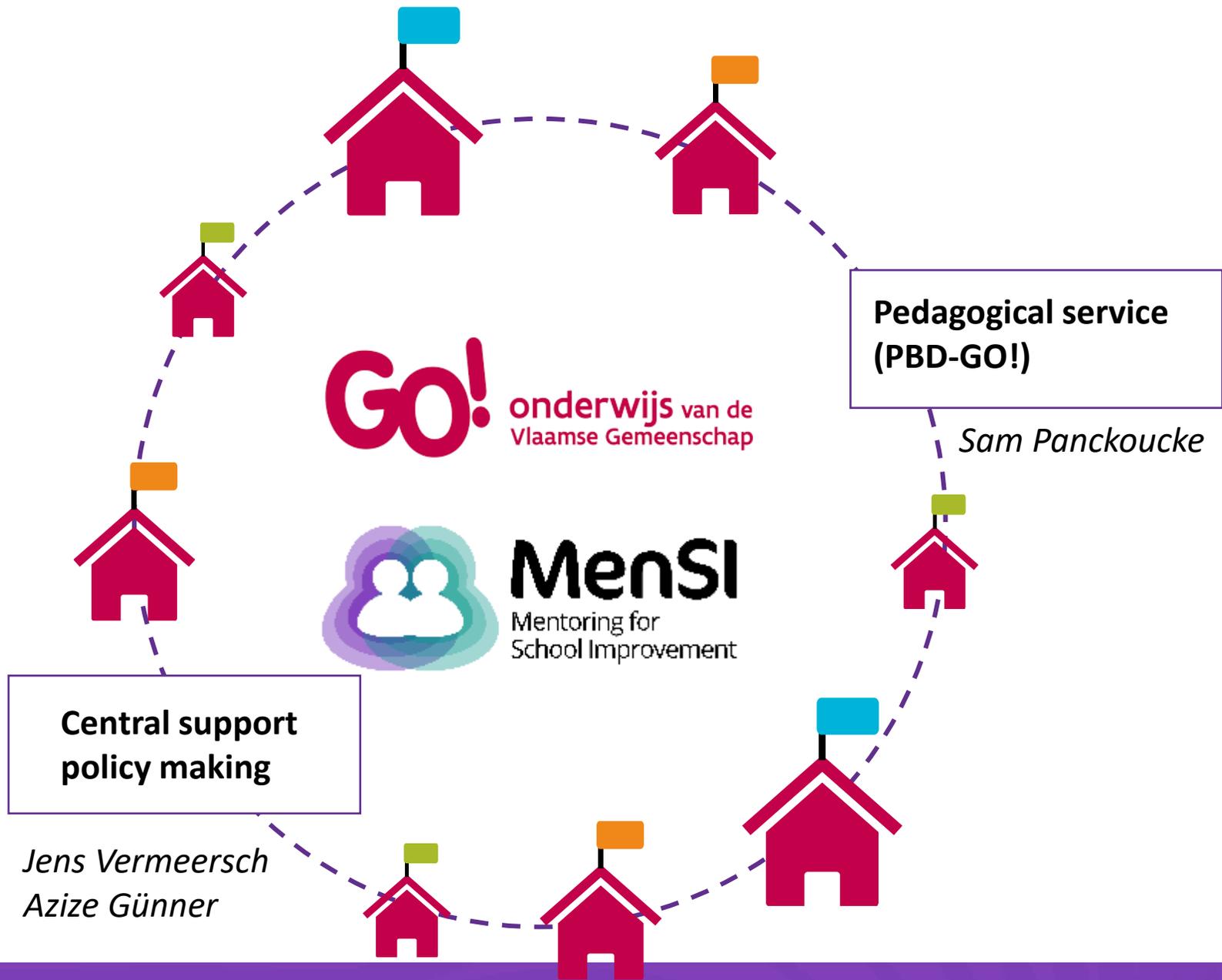German (speaking) community

Autonomy

- The autonomy of local schools has become **one of the key principles** of the Flemish educational organization.
  - But the autonomy only operates within **certain bounds.**
- The ministry defines **the general rules and the financial** means (buildings, wages,....).
- The networks (GO!) determine **the pedagogical project and provide services for schools** (legal service, pedagogical counseling,....).
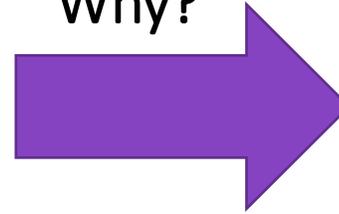
27 schoolgroups

Working together, networking & mentoring **is in our DNA!**

Pedagogical service (PBD-GO!)

Sam Panckoucke

Central support policy making

Jens Vermeersch
Azize Günner

Our vision on professional learning environments

Why? ➡

- **Most important!**
  Improving student education and outcomes

- But also:
  - Teachers have stronger belief in own abilities
  - Improving teaching and learning pratices at school level
  - …

Our vision on professional learning environments (based on Verbiest 2016)

- We speak of a professional learning community when
  - the education professionals in a school engage
  - in sustained
    - individual learning
    - collaborative learning
  - Critical-reflective way
  - **With the aim to improve student education and student outcomes.**

Our experience with mentoring/networking.

- Past years we saw an increase in the creation of networks and hubs on various topics
  - Examples:
    - Network on the use of ed tech platforms.
    - Network on digital education.
    - Network on digitale infrastructure & organisation .
    - ….
  - Variation of bottom up and topdown networks.
  - In schools, schoolgroups or GO! level.
- But…
  - Stops after a while for various reasons.
  - How can we make it sustainable?

Why are we partner in the MenSI-project

MenSI is perfect match with GO! vision & strategic plan

- Improve personalised learning.

- Blended & hybrid learning.

- Students, teachers and schools learning from each other.

- …

We are convinced that GO! schools do a lot of great things. Now it's time to share this knowledge and experience with each other in a sustainable way.
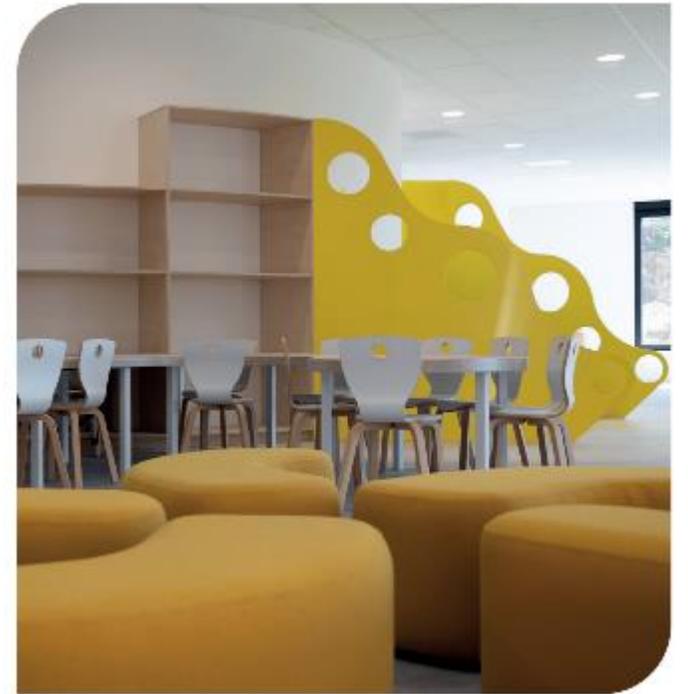
Why are we partner in the MenSI-project

GO! Flanders wants to improve digital competences of teachers and school leaders

- Strong increase of need of digital skills, knowledge of infrastructure, strong leadership, vision, … for various reasons.

- Digitalisation is lever to personalised learning.

- …

Digisprong (https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/40711) :

375 million euro's

- Better infastructure: the goverment will give every student from 5th grade an own device.

- Developing IT skills teachers.

- Better digital content.

- ….

What steps did we already take in the project

1. We contributed in literature study that has ben lead by EUN on mentoring, incentives, …

2. Preparation on policy, finance, GDPR, …

3. Promotion:

- internal:
  - What and why MenSI?
  - Looking for possible matches with other projects.
- external:
  - Call for schools (mentor & trainee)
  - Infosession
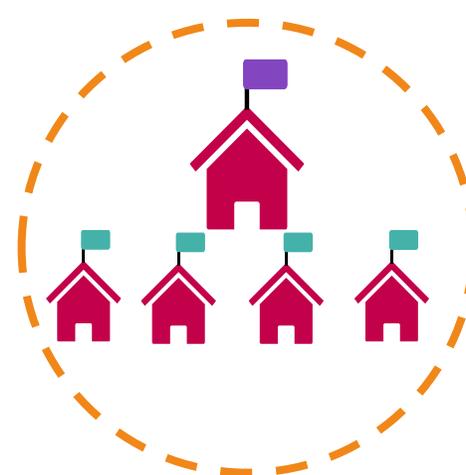 - 24 candidates
  - 20 schools have been selected.

HUB 1

Primary schools
- One schoolgroup
- Want to level-up their mentoring/networking practice

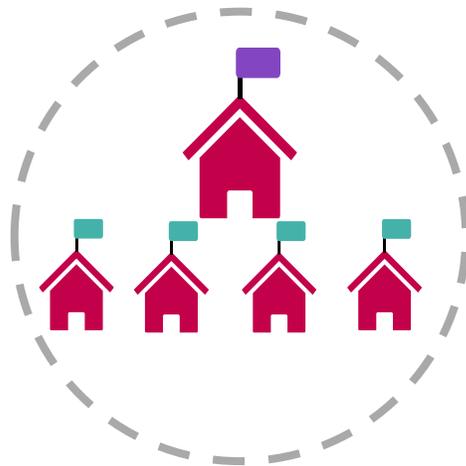Mentor: GO! Bs Klim-op

HUB 2

Secondary education
- Multiple schoolgroups
- Mentor is a strong innovative school
- BYOD project

Mentor: GO! TA Halle

HUB 3

Secondary schools
- Multiple schoolgroups
- Couple of innovative schools
- Focus on personalised learning

Mentor: GO! atheneum Avelgem

HUB 4

Primary schools
- Multiple schoolgroups
- Schools located in and around Brussels
- Urban context

Mentor: GO! BS Unesco Koekelberg

Policy issues: Small and Rural Schools

First Outcomes from the Interviews Conducted with Schools

Giusy Cannella

INDIRE

Initial Survey

- **<u>14 Participant countries</u>**:

Sweden, Malta, France, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Serbia, Greece, Check Republic, Croatia, Turkey, Italy

<u>Complete survey</u>: Sweden, Malta, France, Hungary, Spain, Switzerland, Serbia, Greece, Czech Republic, Croatia, Turkey, Italy

The survey confirmed what has been already knows by the research activities conducted by INDIRE:

- None of the countries have *systemic actions such as specific training activities* for newly hired teachers or in services training for teachers that work *in rural context*, except Sweden.
- Some of the countries that have *rural contexts activated some initiatives* addressed to the education/schools in rural area (France, Spain, Switzerland, Poland and Italy).
- A *common challenge is to face the multiage classroom* as a form of peer learning and the use of ICT to overcome isolation.
- The majority of the respondents suggest to be interested in the Reflection Group as an opportunity to *do a network to exchange teaching practices and to train teacher*s.

Challenges:

Teachers' training, multi-age classroom management, Teaching strategies to improve cooperative distance, education (ICT usage, distance learning methods in, small group, other....) and local curriculum

Investigation Sample: Case Study

Research Dimensions

identified after previous Indire research activities in the "Innovation in Education field".

- **Leadership and management:** school vision
- **Teaching Strategies:** Digital Content & Curricula, Classroom Management, Space and time organisation
- **ICT as inclusive tool:** Remote teaching, Distance learning
- **System Innovation:** Parents' role, Collaboration between schools, Collaboration with local community

NB: International dimension with direct and indirect impact

State of progress regarding school activities

Schools already interviewed

- 2 schools from Croatia

- 2 schools from France

- 2 Schools from Serbia

- 2 Schools from Spain

- 1 School from Hungary

- Classroom management
- Teaching strategies based on Differentiation, peer to peer, authonomus learning (es: circle time, working group, peer to peer activity)
- Digital content (use and create)
- Spiral, parallel, rotation curricolo
- Curricolo by topic
- Weekly plan
- Outdoor Learning and Learning Z

- Recognition of distance learning
- Use of digital resource in muti-age classroom (parallel curricolo)
- Use of laptop and interactive whiteboard with digital content
- Videoconferencing only for eTwinning project

Teaching strategies and school Curricolum

ICT and Distance education

Networking and System Innovation

Leadership and Management

- National and international collabor
- Parents council
- Oral agreement and with local association and municipalitie
- Some have a local library for the community

- Distributed leadership connected to a clearly defined school vision
- School Teams (class council, school quality team, class council)
- Keep relation with local tradition

Matching MENSI and SRSchool Network

- Identifying **Policy challenges that match both projects**
  - ✓ multi-age classroom management,
  - ✓ improve cooperative distance, education (ICT usage, distance learning methods in, small group, other….)
  - ✓ Networking as a form of peer tutoring among teachers
  - ✓ Etc

- **Mensi School Selection**

  Among the national (Italian) network of small and rural schools

2nd Q&A

Contact

- MenSI official email: mensi@eun.org
- Newsletter: sign up for the [Future Classroom Lab newsletter](#) that includes updates from the MenSI project
- Hashtag: #Mensi-schools

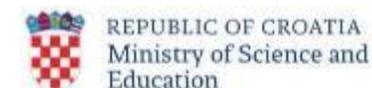**European Schoolnet**

Enrique Martin: enrique.martin@eun.org

Thank you!

#MenSI-Schools
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GO! onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITY

Brunel University London