

Reinhard Bauer & Ursula Maurič

Namaste Nepal

"Educational Tour" to promote international cooperation in the field of education

From October 22 to 29, 2024, Dr. Ursula Maurič (Institute Urban Diversity Education, UDE) and Dr. Reinhard Bauer (Institute of Secondary Vocational Education, I:SBB) traveled to Nepal to strengthen the cooperation between the University College of Teacher Education Vienna (PH Wien) and the Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSoEd) in Lalitpur as well as Kathmandu University (KU) in Dhulikhel. The trip was funded through Erasmus+ Staff Mobility and made possible by the outstanding organization of Dr. Florentine Paudel from PH Wien. Manoj Paudel ensured seamless arrangements for transfers, accommodations, and local guides through his company "Erlebe Nepal", making this journey an unforgettable experience.



Figure 1: Ursula Maurič and Reinhard Bauer in Balthali, approximately 40 kilometers southeast of Kathmandu, near the historic town of Panauti (Photo: R. Bauer)

Professional Exchange and Collaboration

As part of the trip, several meetings were held with leading representatives of Kathmandu University and KUSoEd to discuss opportunities for future joint projects. The goal was to strengthen collaboration in the areas of research projects, publications, as well as student and faculty exchanges.



Figure 2: From left to right, Reinhard Bauer, Prof. Dr. Suresh Gautam, and Ursula Maurič in front of the Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSoEd) in Lalitpur (Photo: Valery Khomenko)

The first meeting focused on development education. Together with Prof. Dr. Bal Chandra Lutiel, Dr. Indra Mani Rai, Dr. Lina Gurung, and Dr. Suresh Gautam, discussions were held on integrating sustainable educational approaches into curricula. Particular emphasis was placed on promoting inclusion, digital competence, education for sustainable development, and global citizenship education.



Figure 3: From left to right, Ursula Maurič, Reinhard Bauer, and Prof. Dr. Bal Chandra Lutiel, Dean of KUSoEd (Photo: Valery Khomenko)



Figure 4: Prof. Dr. Suresh Gautam, Prof. Dr. Lina Gurung, Prof. Dr. Indra Mani Rai, and Ursula Maurič listening to Reinhard Bauer's presentation on the state of vocational education in Austria (Photos: Valery Khomenko)

Another meeting focused on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Together with Prof. Dr. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, Dr. Prakash Kumar Paudel, and Dr. Suresh Gautam, approaches to modernizing TVET programs in Nepal and Austria were compared. Discussions centered on how practical teaching methods and modern technologies can be integrated into vocational teacher education to address the challenges of the 21st century.



Figure 5: From left to right, Ursula Maurič, Prof. Dr. Suresh Gautam, Prof. Dr. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, Reinhard Bauer, and Prof. Dr. Prakash Kumar Paudel (Photo: Valery Khomenko)



Figure 6: The TVET team of KUSoEd in discussion with Ursula Maurič and Reinhard Bauer (Photos: Valery Khomenko)

In a conversation with Dr. Dinesh Kafle, Director of the Global Engagement Division Office at Kathmandu University, strategies for deepening international networking were explored. Both parties expressed great interest in developing joint research projects in the areas of Global Citizenship Education (GCE), democracy education, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).



Figure 7: From left to right, Reinhard Bauer, Ursula Maurič, Prof. Dr. Dinesh Kafle, and Prof. Dr. Suresh Gautam (Photo: Valery Khomenko)

Online Lectures for Master's Students

A highlight of the trip was the lectures by Ursula Maurič and Reinhard Bauer, which, due to storm damage at KUSoEd, were delivered online from their hotel in Kathmandu. Both presented current and practical topics relevant to the education sector to Master's students at Kathmandu University.

Ursula Maurič delivered a lecture on the topic *“How Global Citizenship Education can contribute to Democracy Education in a multilingual migration society like Austria”*. She explained how GCE can promote democracy and social cohesion, particularly in multicultural and migration-influenced societies. By fostering critical reflection and alternative approaches to thinking, the goal is to create learning spaces that enhance understanding and coexistence in diverse communities.

Reinhard Bauer presented *“Shaping the Future of Austrian Secondary Vocational Teacher Education: On Challenges and Curricular Innovations”*. He discussed the challenges faced by the Austrian vocational education system in an evolving labor market. The focus was on new curricula that integrate practical and theoretical

approaches while emphasizing topics such as digital competence, sustainability, and inclusion.

The flyer features a green background with a white watercolor-style splash at the bottom. In the top left corner is the logo of Kathmandu University, a circular emblem with a triangle and the letters 'KU' in the center, surrounded by text in Nepali and English, and the year '1991'. In the top right corner is the logo for PH Wien, consisting of the letters 'PH' in a bold, black font above the word 'Wien' in a smaller, red font, all enclosed in a white hexagonal border. The main title 'SEMINAR FUTURE TEACHERS FOR TVET AND CIVIC EDUCATION' is centered in a large, bold, black font. Below the title, there are two portrait photos. The first is of Prof. Reinhard Bauer, a man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a grey jacket over a light blue shirt. The second is of Prof. Ursula Maurič, a woman with red hair and glasses, wearing a black leather jacket over a yellow shirt. To the right of Prof. Bauer's photo is a large block of red text. To the right of Prof. Maurič's photo is a smaller photo of her at a conference, wearing a yellow lanyard and holding a sign. The text is in red and discusses the challenges of vocational teacher education in Austria and the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCE).

SEMINAR FUTURE TEACHERS FOR TVET AND CIVIC EDUCATION

The vocational teacher education system in Austria is facing significant challenges due to the evolving demands of the labor market and the need for comprehensive curriculum development. This presentation provides an overview of the vocational teacher training programmes at the University College of Teacher Education in Vienna (PH Wien), highlighting the structured competency and competence development model created specifically for the secondary level vocational education teacher training. This model is designed to integrate practical and theoretical components while addressing 21st-century skills, digital literacy, and inclusion. The presentation will further explore the role of curricular reforms in ensuring that future educators are well-prepared to adapt to changes in vocational education and training, thus maintaining high-quality teaching standards and contributing to a sustainable educational framework in Austria.

How Global Citizenship Education can contribute to Democracy Education in a multilingual migration society like Austria

Democratic societies are facing enormous challenges in the 21st century. However, the threats to democracy manifest themselves in different ways. Among other things, in Western democracies such as Austria they arise from national citizenship conceptions that do not correspond to the reality of globally connected migration societies (Füllekrus & Mecheril, 2021). In a critical interpretation, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) contributes to making alternative ideas of society possible. My research and teaching on GCE at the University College of Teacher Education Vienna focuses on issues that particularly divide perceptions of Austrian society such as linguistic diversity and migration. I will reflect on how teacher education can provide learning spaces for emancipatory democratic GCE in order to foster alternative thinking of living together.

Prof. Reinhard Bauer

Prof. Ursula Maurič

Figure 8: Flyer for the seminar "Future Teachers for TVET and Civic Education"

The lectures generated great interest and stimulated lively discussions among the students. Both speakers were able to provide valuable insights to foster international exchange in the field of education. (See [Bibek Poudel's comment](#) on LinkedIn).

Visit to Kathmandu University in Dhulikhel

In Dhulikhel, Ursula Maurič and Reinhard Bauer were welcomed by Mrs. Ambika Thapa, Administrative Officer of the Global Engagement Division, and Ashika Pokharel, a KU graduate. Following a warm reception, they were given an extensive tour of the campus, providing insights into the university's modern infrastructure and academic endeavors.



Figure 9: Ursula Maurič and Reinhard Bauer being guided through Kathmandu University by Mrs. Ambika Thapa and Ashika Pokharel (Photos: Valery Khomenko)



Figure 10: From left to right, Reinhard Bauer, Ursula Maurič, and Ashika Pokharel (Photo: Valery Khomenko)

Cultural and Scenic Highlights

In addition to the professional program, Ursula Maurič and Reinhard Bauer had the opportunity to experience Nepal's rich culture and stunning natural landscapes. Guided by Narayan Adhikari and Saroj Paudel, they explored some of the country's most significant landmarks.

Ason Bazaar

In the heart of Kathmandu's old town lies the bustling Ason Bazaar, a vibrant market teeming with colors, scents, and sounds. This lively hub blends commerce and culture, offering everything from spices and textiles to local delicacies, providing an authentic glimpse into the daily lives of the locals.

Kathmandu Durbar Square

This historic square, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, captivates visitors with its array of intricately designed temples, palaces, and statues. Particularly noteworthy is the Nyatapola Temple, one of the tallest and best-preserved examples of Nepalese pagoda architecture. Durbar Square reflects Kathmandu's royal past and cultural richness, offering a glimpse into its storied heritage.

Swayambhunath Temple Complex (Monkey Temple)

Perched atop a hill overlooking Kathmandu Valley, the Swayambhunath Temple Complex – popularly known as the Monkey Temple – offers breathtaking panoramic views. This sacred Buddhist site, adorned with a striking white stupa and gilded spire, is one of Nepal's oldest and most iconic religious landmarks. The presence of playful monkeys adds a unique charm to the spiritual atmosphere, making it a must-visit destination.



Figure 11: Swayambhunath Temple Complex (Photo: Reinhard Bauer)

Cuisine and Tradition

A special highlight was the dinner at the Bhojan Bhumi restaurant. Traditional Nepalese dishes were served, accompanied by live music and dance performances that showcased the richness and diversity of Nepalese culture.

Trekking in the Dhulikhel Area

The travelers also embarked on two trekking tours with guide Puru. The first trek led to Balthali, a picturesque farming village nestled in nature. Here, they experienced traditional village life and enjoyed the tranquility and stunning beauty of the surrounding landscape.



Figure 12: Balthali, a village of the Newar community, situated in the Kathmandu Valley basin at an altitude of 1,700 meters (Photo: Reinhard Bauer)

The second tour led to the Namobuddha Monastery, an important Buddhist pilgrimage site. According to legend, Buddha once sacrificed his life at this location to save a starving tiger. The monastery complex exudes a profound sense of spirituality and tranquility, while the surrounding area impresses with its verdant hills and spectacular views.

On the way back to Kathmandu, the historic towns of Panauti and Bhaktapur were visited. Panauti is renowned for its well-preserved temples and spiritual ambiance, while Bhaktapur captivated with its medieval architecture and vibrant pottery-making traditions.



Figure 13: View of Taumadhi Square from the Temple of Goddess Siddhi Laxmi, Bhaktapur (Photo: Reinhard Bauer)

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

The “Educational Tour” to Nepal was a resounding success on both professional and cultural levels. The intensive conversations and workshops laid the foundation for future collaborations and provided valuable insights into the education systems of both countries. Additionally, the cultural experiences and encounters with the Nepalese people enriched the journey and left lasting impressions.

Special thanks go to Dr. Suresh Gautam from KUSoEd, Nepal, and Florentine Paudel from the Research Management Center at PH Wien, for their comprehensive planning and support; Dr. Thomas Bauer from the Internationalization Center at PH Wien; as well as Manoj Paudel and his team from “Erlebe Nepal” in Kathmandu for their excellent organization and on-site support. Thanks to their efforts, this journey became an unforgettable experience and a gateway to future joint activities with Kathmandu University. **Namaste Nepal!**