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AntofaEDUCA: Empowering educational leaders and teachers in Chile through collaboration with TAMK experts

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Juha Lahtinen (standing) conducted the first online webinar from Tampere to Antofagasta on 18 August 2023. The live transmission from the studio was assisted by Marta Gil-Carcedo (by the table). Photo: Virpi Heinonen

The Antofagasta Region in Chile witnessed a significant step forward in its educational landscape as the AntofaEDUCA project kicked off on Saturday 18 August 2023. The project aims to foster collaboration and learning through a comprehensive programme delivered by professional teacher education experts from Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) in Finland.

The AntofaEDUCA project is an ambitious endeavor designed to enhance the skills and expertise of educational leaders and teachers, bringing together 30 educational leaders and 200 teachers from various public educational establishments across the Antofagasta Region in northern Chile.

What makes this initiative particularly remarkable is the inclusivity it brings to the table. Participants representing nine different communes within the Antofagasta Region have converged to embark on this almost two-year long learning adventure. The diversity of perspectives and experiences promises to enrich the collaborative learning environment, enabling the participants to exchange ideas, strategies, and insights that transcend geographical boundaries.

The physical distance of more than 13 thousand kilometers makes no difference when modern tools and a common mission are at hand. The inaugural event of the AntofaEDUCA project saw **Juha Lahtinen**, a seasoned educator and expert from TAMK, conducting the first online module for the participants on Saturday, 18 August 2023. The 20 educational establishment leaders and teachers, hailing from diverse educational institutions such as schools, colleges, high schools, and professional technical education centers in Chile, were virtually connected to commence their journey of growth and development.

In October a team of TAMK experts, **Jiri Vilppola**, **Ville Palkinen**, **Marta Gil-Carcedo** and **Virpi Heinonen**, will travel to the Antofagasta Region to continue with the project locally. This visit will concentrate on the work with the local leaders and getting to know the 20 institutions involved in this pilot project. The long-term nature of the initiative underscores the commitment of all involved parties to effect meaningful and sustainable improvements in the education sector of the region.

The collaboration with TAMK, known for its excellence in teacher education, brings a blend of international best practices with hands-on practices within classrooms. Towards the end of the AntofaEDUCA project, a local development work conducted by these educational institutions which is mentored from Finland is expected to empower educators with innovative tools and approaches that address the unique challenges and opportunities of the Antofagasta Region's educational landscape.

A local consortium of Chilean actors will be jointly delivering part of the programme and taking care of the project in situ. The consortium binds together Fundación Entrepreneur as responsible for the project, a group of local educational leaders who traveled to Finland on a self-funded educational mission in 2022, Fab Lab Atacama and the Alianza Antofagasta. The AntofaEDUCA project is financed by the Regional Government (GORE) of Antofagasta and has complementary contribution of SQM (Sociedad Quimica y Minera De Chile) company.

During the whole duration of AntofaEDUCA, long-term research with the local University will be conducted to measure the regional impact and the perception of the change process in education.

As the project unfolds, it is anticipated that the AntofaEDUCA initiative will not only enhance the skills and knowledge of the participating educational leaders and teachers but also contribute to the overall advancement of educational practices within the region. The dedication of all Chilean stakeholders involved, combined with the expertise of TAMK professionals, holds the promise of a brighter and more empowered future for education in Antofagasta.

Watch the introduction video produced by Fundación Entrepreneur on YouTube (3:50, English subtitles):

[Launch of the "AntofaEDUCA: Antofagasta Quality Education" Program](#)

More information from the AntofaEDUCA project team at TAMK:

[Virpi Heinonen](#)

[Marta Gil-Carcedo](#)