INCLUSION

WP 1 – Literature Review

Main Conclusions and findings of the Literature Review

1) **General Literature on the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process and Inclusive Education**

Social Dimension Bologna Process

- The SD still has low popularity based on the fact that social fairness seems to be a problematic and unproductive matter. Still, solving the problem of equal chances on high education access seems to be the best way to ensure social advancement. The SD as it is framed know seems however, to stabilizing inequality that continues after due its misconception requiring an evaluation of education policies and their effects in the EHEA.

- Measures making the social dimension empirically tangible could include (as suggested by the Bologna process Working Group)

    o measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion;

    o Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education,

    o Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience;

    o Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

    o Finances in order to start and complete studies

General on the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) – National Policy Level

- All countries in the EHEA have to develop a coherent set of policy measures to address participation in higher education which identify underrepresented groups in higher education and outline specific, measurable actions (see above) to improve access, participation and completion for those groups, consistent with national approaches. National policies with regard to inclusive higher education shall thus include:

    o Cooperation with higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders to identify underrepresented groups and the barriers to access, participation and completion;

    o Development of strategies to overcome identified barriers and set objectives for underrepresented groups and the elimination of barriers;

    o Outlined actions for both the national and institutional level;

    o Arrangements for the systematic collection of relevant comparable data, making optimal use of existing resources, to enhance the evidence base for policy development and enable the effective monitoring of the common objectives on access, participation and completion among under-represented and disadvantaged groups in higher education.

- Very few member countries integrated relevant measures into a coherent national strategy. As a consequence, systematic approaches of identifying barriers into and within the higher education system based on reliable data remained missing.

- In order to overcome these challenges an European strategy and guidelines for national action plans have been developed to support members in their efforts to develop a coherent set of policy measures and effective national plans or strategies to ensure greater access to quality higher education for non-traditional learners and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Widening Participation for Equity and Growth - A Strategy for the Development of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning in the European Higher Education Area to 2020.

- The aim of the guidelines is to assist countries to meet the challenge of developing or enhancing national plans or strategies, they serve as a roadmap for member countries in the EHEA to ensure that national plans or strategies are developed using a systematic approach to identifying barriers into and within the higher education system, based on relevant data providing evidence for action.

- The guidelines foresee to

  1. Set up a coherent and inclusive process (Involve higher education institutions, student representatives and all other relevant stakeholders, but also to consult with the pre-tertiary education system (schools, vocational education).

  2. Set general objectives. (The national advisory or consultation structure should agree on short-term (3-4 years) and long-term (10-15 years) national objectives).

  3. Analyse the current position. This step involves the analysis of two different but critical elements: A) an analysis of the student population entering, participating in and completing higher education and B) cataloguing the existing measures designed to promote the social dimension.

  4. Identify data gaps and ways to overcome them. (Data gaps should be taken into account and ways to close these gaps should be considered for the future.)

  5. Identify barriers to access, participation and completion in higher education. (Once the detailed composition of the student population has been compared to the general population, certain groups can be identified as being underrepresented either in the whole higher education system or in certain sub-areas of the system. Usually, the barriers are multidimensional and therefore appear sometimes vague, unclear and difficult to designate.)

  6. Contrast existing measures with identified barriers. (The following kinds of questions should be discussed: Do the measures catalogued in Step three address the identified barriers in a comprehensive way? Are these measures effective, at least in the long-run? If the measures being taken are effective, why do the barriers continue to exist? What additional actions/initiatives are needed to overcome them?)

  7. Develop strategies to overcome these barriers. Strategies to overcome the barriers to effective participation in higher education may include:

     - Provision for the development of proactive strategies at institutional level, including lifelong learning and outreach activities, provision of information on educational and labour market-related opportunities and outcomes, guidance on appropriate course choice and skills acquisition and other supports;

     - Develop transparent progression routes into higher education from vocational and other types of education based on the implementation of national qualifications frameworks linked to the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA;

- Support the development and implementation of student-centred approaches to teaching and learning. This includes measures to increase opportunities for flexible learning through diversifying modes of delivery of learning content, including through part-time provision, modularisation of programmes and distance learning through the use of ICTs and open education resources.

- Address the overall structure of institutional funding, fees and student financial supports. How can financial supports best be targeted to achieve national objectives for access, participation and completion?

8. Implement a follow-up process and set specific targets.

9. Restart the process.

- If a member country has adopted measures that address barriers for underrepresented groups, is monitoring the effectiveness of its policies on access, participation and completion and has addressed the need for data collection, then this can be considered equivalent to a national plan or strategy.

- One project aimed at strengthening the social dimension and inclusive higher education has been the "Peer Learning Initiative for the Social Dimension (PL4SD) project". Its activities aimed to encourage policy-makers and stakeholders in higher education to further develop peer learning for the social dimension and to educate policy-makers and stakeholders on the various approaches for addressing the social dimension and the possibilities of peer learning.

  o One outcome of the project was the The PL4SD database (www.pl4sd.eu) with good practices and examples regarding the implementation of the SD across the EHEA;

  o Furthermore, country reviews on the SD (Armenia, Croatia, Lithuania) are supposed to provide a basis and example for the development of national strategies on the SD. The objective of the reviews is to assist the analysed country in the development of a coherent and effective national strategy for improving the social dimension of higher education. The country reviews focus in particular on:

    - Systematic data collection in HE in general and on the SD in particular;

    - Merit vs needs-based support,

    - Inequalities in pre-tertiary education which impact on access to HE,

    - Lack of alternative routes for entry into HE;

    - Social situation of students;

    - National targets for underrepresented groups

    - Division between vocational and academic education paths

Criticism

- Due to diverging interests of the member countries in the EHEA and the diverging priorities set by the states with regard to the social dimension of the Bologna process all attempts to harmonise state activities have not brought the expected results (*inter alia* the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)).

- Especially the lack of comparable data resulting from different perceptions on the social dimension impede truly coherent approaches within the EHEA.

Inclusive education in universities – Projects related to HE in HE institutes

- In order to guarantee inclusive education as the expression of every citizen having a basic human right to life-long learning, HE institutions have to aim towards the inclusion of under-represented populations as students but also at the leadership and decision making level.

- Inclusive education is in the fundamental interest to do so. Addressing inclusivity is central to remaining an educational institution in an environment where technology and globalization - through creating markets for educational services are reforming universities as corporations which adopt corporate competitive values.

- HEI's have to have a clear definition of the term "inclusive", particularly the coverage of the definition to include, in addition to disabled students, also other disadvantaged students such as those living in remote areas. Once having decided a definition:

  o It is critical to engage the senior management of HEIs to implement inclusion strategies at the University level. A useful way to gain commitment by the senior management level is to tag the objectives of the project onto ongoing commitments such as improving student experience.

  o For projects related to the inclusion of underrepresented groups at HEI it is important to engage staff from an early level on in the project including a piloting effort and scoping staff and senior management commitment before the start of the project.

  o Effective communication is necessary to make sure that the staff who is not directly engaged in the implementation of cultural change project "sees the evidence of the need for project activities and that the aims and objectives of projects align with existing ways of working".

- The lack of resources and of effective funding mechanisms may impede the implementation of such changes projects aim to bring.

2) Group specific literature

Students with Disabilities

- Appropriate design of the infrastructure of HEI to ensure full accessibility of physical facilities is crucial for inclusive education, but not sufficient.

- It is important that universities consider the especially sensitive transition of students with disabilities during their first year and even the first weeks of attendance. The university should be proactive in transition planning to avoid early leaving and to foster academic success for students with disabilities. This can be achieved via special orientation sessions, tutorials (e.g. assigning a student in a higher year or an instructor as a counsellor) or having reference persons or groups related to the disability among the faculty.

- University faculty have to possess the necessary knowledge and skills on how to teach students with special needs. In this context, universities should provide appropriate training course for the faculty

- Students with disabilities generally have lower incomes than their peers without disabilities. These students rely on the same federal, state, and institutional programs that serve low-income students generally. Therefore, their opportunities have been diminished by the inadequate levels of financial aid, particularly grants, that affect all low-income students. In addition, it is expensive for low-income students with disabilities to meet the special needs associated with daily life and academic life. These additional costs are often not met because financial aid funds are limited or the financial need of students with disabilities exceeds the maximum awards in various programs.

- Students with disabilities also generally need more time for self-care, daily living, and academic tasks than their peers without disabilities. This results in students with disabilities taking twice as long to complete their degrees as their peers without disabilities. The longer time that students with disabilities need to complete their studies increases their costs and the financial barriers they face.

- Whilst students now have an expectation that their voice will be listened to in relation to the quality of their higher education, many institutions are embracing the opportunities of engaging students as partners in their higher education. Through meaningful and sustainable involvement, HEIs can achieve a truly inclusive learning environment to the benefit of all students and the institution itself.

3) Country specific literature

Kosovo

Existence of significant challenges in the implementation of the Social Dimension arising with regard to policy, financial, institutional and personal issues negatively affecting equal opportunities for all in higher education.

Key recommendations to overcome challenges for the implementation of SD in Kosovo include the following:

a) Recommendations addressing legislators and higher education authorities:

- Consider key issues related to the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process in the current process of rewriting the legal framework; draft a National Strategy for the Bologna Social Dimension;

- Establish a sustainable system providing reliable and accurate data and information on education of underrepresented groups;

- Raise awareness on the Social Dimension in higher education and its practical implications among students, HEIs and HE authorities; address also cultural barriers and stereotypes, in particular among the Roma community and in rural areas of Kosovo; also strengthen career guidance services at pre-university level of education.

- Implement measures that improve the quality of higher education provision for all, including targeted measures that increase opportunities for underrepresented groups.

- Design and implement policies and measures to alleviate administrative and legal obstacles (such as recognition of documents) for members of non-majority communities and for students attending the parallel system of education.

b) Recommendations addressing higher education institutions and teaching staff

- Implement awareness building measures to improve the understanding and requirements in the implementation of the Social Dimension.

- Design and implement an institutional plan of action for better implementation of measures in the field of Social Dimension.

- Provide more study programmes in languages of minority communities and in English language to diversify provision in Kosovo higher education as a means of preventing members of minority communities from leaving Kosovo as a result of lack of study programmes in their languages.

- For HEIs to develop a scheme of incentives for teaching staff providing individual and group support to underrepresented groups (e.g. through mentoring).
- Implement measures that address the needs of underrepresented and vulnerable groups (eg stipends, career counselling service, provision of transport etc.)

c) Recommendations addressing civil society organizations

Civil Society organizations can play a unique role in:

- Building awareness and disseminating information among all stakeholders including authorities, community political organizations and NGOs, rural population, community and higher education institutions;
- Addressing cultural issues and causes behind underrepresentation and marginalization;
- Serving as a bridge between authorities and underrepresented groups and at the same time
- Acting as a currently missing voice for underrepresented groups in HE;
- Monitoring if adequate implementation of government policies is taking place, including for enrolment quota, scholarships and stipends, etc.

d) Recommendations addressing students/student unions

Participants identified a great potential for increased engagement of students and student organizations which could greatly contribute to the implementation of the Social Dimension in higher education: They could play a role by:

- Providing peer support for students members of the Roma community and members from other vulnerable groups to increase their academic performance, participation in and benefits from higher education;
- Increasing inclusion and voice of underrepresented groups in their student organizations;
- Engaging in dissemination of information on the Social Dimension

Croatia

- In Croatia like in other countries there is a strong relationship between the performance of students and the **socio-economic status** of schools. Unemployment and education levels: an uprising trend in the share of unemployed young people since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008/09.

- Looking at the representation rates of **different societal groups**, the review team notes that students coming from family backgrounds with lower levels of education are more likely to have a delayed transition into higher education compared to their peers and they are also more likely to enrol in higher numbers in professional studies.

- Women in Croatia have attained higher educational levels than men. At the same time though, there are considerably more women than men that have only completed lower education.

- Legal Framework: 2007, the Act on Student Council and other Student Organisations strengthened the role of the student in higher education governance. Also, the quality of higher education has been addressed within the last decade through the establishment of the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO), responsible for quality assurance in higher education, and the passing of the Law on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (2009).

- *The Croatian Qualifications Framework Act* (MSES 2013) defines and describes Croatia's system of qualifications, learning outcomes and competences and thereof resulting professional profiles. It aims at improving opportunities of lifelong learning and second-chance access to higher education. Furthermore, it refers to social equality and equity in its principles and objectives (Article 3, CROQF). A most recent draft of a *Strategy for Education, Science and Technology* - profoundly referring to the social dimension - is currently debated in Parliament.

- Croatian higher education legislation does not specifically define target groups. Following category of students are defined as underrepresented groups in various steering documents on higher education: Roma minority, students with special needs, students from rural areas and students from single parent families, mature students, students affected by the War of Independence, students with lower socio-economic status, students with full-time employment and students without parental care.

- Research has shown that students from **underrepresented groups** are more pessimistic about the options regarding participating in higher education. For this reason, one of the main goals for improving the equality of opportunities and the inclusivity of higher education is to make special efforts to prepare prospective students beforehand, providing them with information about the available options and raising their aspirations.

Bosnia

- Higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is regulated by the Frame Act of Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette", No. 59/07, 59/09).

  - The Frame Act of Law on Higher Education provided for harmonization of the Laws on Higher Education in the Republic of Srpska, ten cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, after which Bosnian high school education is fully transferred to the Bologna system of education

  - The Frame Act of Law on Higher Education does not contain provisions which regulate in detail the rights and obligations of students belonging to underrepresented groups. This law only prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of one of the vulnerable groups.

  - Access to higher education will not be limited, directly or indirectly, on any actual or presumed ground such as sex, race, sexual orientation, physical or other impairment, marital status, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national community, property, birth, age or other status.

  - Higher education institutions in accordance with the respective Acts on Higher Education and the statutes of higher education institutions can prescribe other requirements for access to higher education, which also implies the possibility of regulatory intervention in terms of improving access, participation in and completion of education at the universities in BH

- The general goals of education regulated by the Frame Act on the Law on Primary and Secondary Education arise from the generally accepted universal values of the society and proclaim, among other things, ensuring optimum development for every person, including those with special needs, in accordance with their age, abilities, and mental and physical characteristics.

  - This law shall provide equal opportunities for education and choice at all levels of education, regardless of gender, race, nationality, social and cultural origin and status,

family status, religion, psycho-physical and other personal characteristics. Primary and secondary education in public institutions in BH is free. Free primary education is provided to all children.

- With regard to the financing of inclusion programs in BiH, some provisions of the regulative framework are aimed to accommodate the needs of underrepresented groups

  - Fund for Student Loans of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
    Student loans are awarded according to the ranking list established based on scoring the following academic and social criteria. One criterion refers to the specific social student status: The status of a disabled person with a disability of at least 60%, civilian victims of war (except for disabled persons with a disability of at least 60%), a child of martyrs / killed solders, a child without both parents, a child without parental care or child without one parent (except for child of martyrs / killed solders), a child of both unemployed parents with whom lives in the same household, a child of both retired parents or a child from a households with three or more children in regular education or studies (mostly based on two criteria which are more favorable for a student).
    In case of the equal ranking, students with a specific social status have priority with regard to receiving a student's loan.

  - Students from underdeveloped cantons - for students from Posavina, Bosnia-Podrinje Canton and Canton 10 as well as Republika Srpska may receive subsidies to accommodation and meals of

  - Special funds may be allocated for incentive education of Roma, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are studying in higher education institutions in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

  - Support for students with disabilities, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are studying in higher education institutions in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Several Priorities for Development of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2016 - 2026 (Draft), have been identified for BiH in particular

  - Good governance and management

  - Resources

  - The link between the labor market and higher education

  - Qualification standards

  - Student experience

  - Internationalization

  - Statistics

- There is also an intention to synchronize the activities of all the government institutions, starting with the local community and moving on to national levels, to achieve maximum efficiency of investments, and concentrate resources in order to avoid overlapping investments from several sources

- There is a need to engage the chamber of employment in a process of inclusion and that could help the population of people with special needs to make them desired applicant in competitions through donations; then engage entrepreneurs and present them with the competence of graduates and the advantages of employing staff who falls into this category.

- There is a need to prepare a study on the comparative advantages of the population of people with special needs in certain fields, as well as propaganda activity in order to inform and sensitize the universities, and the general public, with the aim to achieve full inclusion in the processes of higher education of those groups of the population which so far did not significantly participate in the academic processes.

- Six manuals were developed as part of the tempus project: „Equal opportunities for students with special needs in higher education"(EQOPP) (2011-2014) (project number: 516939-TEMPUS-1-2011-1-BA-TEMPUS-SMHES). The main goal of this project is to support B&H Universities in improving quality and modernisation of higher education by creating institutional capacity and by developing politics of practice, which will enable all students to study on B&H universities. All manuals are available on www.equopp.ba in three versions on Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language.

Armenia

In Armenia, the social dimension in higher education is regarded as a policy priority, however, general perception in the society about inclusive education remains twofold.

Policy and legislative Level:

- Inclusive education is poorly defined in policies and legal framework, and it is primarily perceived in terms of disability and special needs.

- Higher education is predominantly framed by the Law on Education (1999) and the Law on Higher and post-Graduate Professional Education (2004). Regarding the social dimension of higher education, the Law on Education (1999) determines (among others) that a certain number of students are provided with state-funded study places.

- HEIs are obligated to provide additional free study places of an extent of at least 10% of non-state funded study places

- The Law on Higher and post-Graduate Professional Education (2004) determines that the state provides student financial support such as full or partial refund of tuition fees, scholarships or loans. According to the Law, tuition fee refunds shall be provided to students who demonstrate high academic performance, are "socially insecure", as well as to students from borderline or highland settlements

- Amendments to the Law on Higher and post-Graduate Professional Education in 2014 reveal that the regulations regarding the social dimension are still in progress. However, the legal and institutional reforms already done, included the introduction of general educational schools that provide inclusive education services (in addition to the two types of schools inherited from Soviet system - Special Schools, and General Education schools).

- Main Findings of the national review of the Social Dimension of Higher Education of the Bologna Process in Armenia 2015 (PL4SD)

  - Data: currently availability of data is limited for higher education. More detailed and comprehensive data (eg on the social background of students) could inform new policy making and strategy development.

  - Different ongoing initiatives and strategies: Different initiatives and strategies are ongoing, being implemented by different actors, but information is at times difficult to access.

  - Definitions of social inclusion for institutional strategies: The Law for HE from 2014 clelarly classifies underrepresented groups as those with a disability, those who are orphans,

children of war veterans or disabled parents, or children of families classified as financially vulnerable. Whilst such a broad classification is welcome and important for national policy, it is also important that HEIs have their own strategy related to the diversification of their student body.

What has to be done

Short term:
- - Importance to gather data on the social background students in current initiatives

- - Need to develop benchmarks on the participation of underrepresented groups in HE

Mid term:
- - Importance to develop a student support system, less fragmented and based on needs, not on ability.

- - Need to develop an integrated strategy to decrease demand for private tutoring at secondary school level.

- - Need to recognise the sustainability and effectiveness of the HE funding system

- - Need to review policy-making and implementation processes and develop a national strategy.

- The ministry accepted the recommendations made by the review team and had indeed already realised some of them: a tertiary education information system has been launched and will be made publicly available, an assessment of the social needs of students had been conducted in 2014, Armenia intends to continue participating in the EUROSTUDNET survey, and a revision of secondary school curricula (financed by the World Bank) will be implemented in the period from 2015-2019. Strong attention will be given to the social dimension within the "National Strategy for Education Development 2016-2025".

Higher Education system:

- There is a lack of holistic approach in the education system, which is conditioned by the lack of formal and practical mechanisms for information flow and exchange of experience among professionals

- The increase of enrolment is prioritized over improvement of the quality of education. But together with the increase of enrollment it is equally critical to ensure quality services for the child/student with special educational need (SEN children).

- There is a strong need for capacity building and enhancement in all the spheres and levels of education system related to inclusive education

- It is important to ensure the funding schemes of inclusive education allow to effectively address the needs of the disabled and disadvantaged. For example it would be better if costs could be separated for each SEN child/student and thus calculated based on individual needs