

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the lead of WUS AT and with contributions from all partners, fact-finding has been conducted within this WP based on previously identified issues. The results of the fact-finding phase are summarized in **two reports – one on Armenia and one on Bosnia and Herzegovina**. This very report summarizes the main results for Armenia.

The fact-finding has started with development of tools and methodology (**survey for staff of partner country universities (PCUs), student survey, literature review**) and is expected to feed into a set of guidelines for the countries on how to cascade down the national SD strategies (WP2). Feedback from EU partners and respective stakeholders throughout the process is supposed to ensure validity throughout the various development stages.

Prior to applying, tools have been **piloted on a sample (February 2017)** and a **broader fact-finding process has been launched in March 2017**: At the end of the piloting phase, data were available as following:

- 35 responses from PCU staff on the PCU survey
- 184 responses from students on the student survey (from all four PCUs including also responses from the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, the French University of Armenia and the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia)
- More than 70 entries to the literature review on moodle

In a next phase, data collected have been analysed and **a two-day-site-visit by EU partners to HEIs was conducted. The aim of the site visits was**

- to **verify the data generated during the piloting phase** and
- to **close existing data gaps to the extent possible.**
- to further **identify capacity needs to be addressed.**

The **target groups** of the visits were

- Staff of PCUs (management, teaching staff, administrative staff (e.g. related to student enrolment/student supervision or data collection) including
- Special departments at PCUs with specific responsibilities related to inclusion/diversity
- Students at PCUs including students from underrepresented groups.

As part of the preparations for the site visits, WUS AT elaborated **specific guidelines for meeting with students/PCU staff during site visits as well as a reporting template** for summarizing findings from the site visits. Guidelines and reporting template can be found in the concept note for site visits (available on drop box).

The site visits to PCUs in Armenia took place in May 2017 (UoR to AUA and YSAFA, 4.5.-5.5. plus travel).

Based on the fact-finding results and identified training needs and a two-day **training for the total of 40 HEI staff members and respective government representatives has been delivered in AUA** regarding the design and implementation of SD strategies. During the training, participants also elaborated key elements for benchmarking.

2. KEY FINDINGS

Below key findings from the fact-finding phase for Armenia are summarized (based on literature review, PCU and student surveys, site visits, workshop for HEI and government representatives). Detailed findings for each partner country university (PCU) can be found in Annex I (AUA) and Annex II (YSAFA).

A.) Underrepresented groups (UGs) at AUA and YSAFA

The following groups are considered underrepresented in higher education:

AUA	YSAFA
Students from economically disadvantaged families, on funded and part funded places	Students from economically disadvantaged families
Students with disabilities	No physical disabilities due to access difficulties
Some students work part time	Some students work part time
Several nationalities already attending	Chinese students on new government scheme

B.) Roles and strategies for the Social Dimension of Higher Education at AUA and YSAFA:

The following findings are made regarding roles and strategies:

AUA	YSAFA
Good range of informal strategies already in place	No strategy
Student success centre available to all students	None at the moment – in discussion

C.) Measures to support underrepresented groups at AUA and YSAFA:

The following measures are in place to support underrepresented groups at partner country universities:

AUA	YSAFA
Several initiatives in place already	On an ad hoc basis; largely depend on commitment and good will of staff
Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student success centre/ academic writing support • Funding and scholarship advice • Supportive tutor system Extensions from some staff if work overdue (for disabled students)	Examples Informal approaches for some individual students

D.) Entry points for the development of Social Dimension Strategies at PCUs (WP2) and inclusive learning/teaching (WP3) at AUA and YSAFA

Based on the findings from the fact-finding phase (WP1), the following entry points have been identified for the development of SD strategies and inclusive learning/teaching:

AUA	YSAFA
Addressing needs of older students attending	Addressing needs of older students attending
Virtual learning environment	Distance learning - might be a challenge
Accessible classrooms and campus	Some classrooms with technology / screens
Innovative/flexible exam modalities (e.g. for students with disabilities, non-traditional students);	Provide opportunity for additional time for some assignments if requested
Diversity of learning and teaching (e.g. diversity of curricula, resources)	Diversity of learning and teaching (e.g. diversity of curricula, resources)

These entry points will be furthered followed up during the upcoming work packages 2 and 3.

Time	Activity	
13:30	Coffee	
13:30-15:00	Meeting with AUA management, faculty, and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of “Inclusion” project • Presentation of survey results by UoR (UK) • Q&A
14:45-15:00		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up • Summing up the results and next steps
15:30	Coffee	
15:30-16:30	EU partners’ meeting with AUA students (3 students from underrepresented groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of survey results by UoR (UK) • Discussion

Main findings and recommendations from the site visit¹

Please outline relevant findings/recommendations you may have in line with the guidelines elaborated for site visit meetings (ANNEX 1):

A. Findings/recommendations regarding underrepresented groups at the PCU:

- Faculty and staff attending the meeting had a good awareness of many of the issues raised, and are keen to develop their expertise further. It was great to see full support from senior staff at the meeting.
- It would be good to start collecting student data at the admissions stage, to identify and track under-represented groups. This data might include socio-economic background / disability / religion / first language spoken / chronic health conditions etc. This will help faculty and support staff to directly target particular groups of students, and to ensure that their learning needs are being met.
- The students suggested that schools were not usually a key factor when deciding to come to university, and they felt that parental influence was more important. This suggests that links with school teachers / schools need to be strengthened, so that schools are much more aware of what universities can offer potential students.

B. Findings/recommendations regarding roles and strategies of the PCU:

- It may be that some able students are not coming to university because the school system does not have a clear way of indentifying talented young poeple from under-represented groups. When one of the students was asked why some boys and girls did not apply to a university, he replied it was because *they just didn't like learning*. The introduction of more inclusive and accessible approaches to learning and teaching would perhaps change such attitudes, and

¹ This is the very essence of the report and should summarize all main findings in line with the topics identified in Annex 1.

encourage a wider range of students to apply for a university place.

- It would be good to have a clear and transparent policy in place for students who need to apply for an extension (e.g. to hand in their work later for medical / academic reasons). One student reported that some professors always grant an extension, yet others often refuse. A good policy would make it fairer for everyone.

C. Findings/recommendations regarding specific measures to support students from underrepresented groups:

- One of the students reported a very heavy workload on her programme, and said that as a visually impaired student she often found it very hard to keep up to date with the readings. It was suggested that readings could be sent out in advance, e.g. before the beginning of the new term; or they could be made available in advance via Moodle / WebCT whenever possible. This would also enable any international students to look up key terms / definitions in advance.
- One of the students was very unaware of how people learn / how he learns in his own subject area. Some work with students on their individual “learning styles” and different ways of remembering would be useful.
- An excellent presentation was made with suggestions for software / equipment to be purchased with the E+ INCLUSION grant, and a useful discussion took place around the possibility of buying suitable software / equipment for use with under-represented groups. This will be discussed further at the June meeting at AUA.

D. Findings/recommendations regarding capacity building/training needs:

- It would be useful for all new faculty (and existing faculty) to undertake some training in *inclusive approaches to learning and teaching*, to ensure that all students have a fair chance of academic success during their time at the university. The INCLUSION project will be able to offer support and advice in this key area.
- The further development of suitable IT support systems and electronic resources will benefit all students, especially those with a disability and / or international students
- Faculty training on inclusive assessment / reasonable adjustments for students with a disability would be useful

E. Findings regarding literature reviews:

- The literature review provided a useful starting point for discussions with the group of students, especially around the topics of:
 - Transition planning / admissions arrangements
 - IT / e-learning support for certain groups of students (e.g. those with dyslexia / weak writing skills)
 - Learning styles / different ways of learning
 - Admissions procedures
 - Faculty training in inclusive and accessible approaches

Follow-up actions for EU experts based on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridget to bring resources / information to the INCLUSION June AUA event regarding specialist software and equipment (e.g for students with disabilities) • Discuss with INCLUSION colleagues the need for guidelines for inclusive and accessible approaches to learning and teaching (including inclusive assessment formats & arrangements) • Discuss with INCLUSION colleagues the need for inclusive practices to be fully reflected in institutional quality assurance systems and processes (e.g. on course evaluations by students)
Follow-up actions for PCUs based on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at the moment
Other comments (if any)	<p>This was a useful and beneficial visit, and provided a good starting point for our INCLUSION discussions.</p> <p>AUA already has an excellent range of initiatives in place to support a range of student needs, and faculty /staff are keen to develop their expertise and knowledge in this area.</p>
Attachment to report	PPP with presentation of main results from PCU and student surveys of your twinning partner
Submitted on	7.6.2017 Bridget Middlemas, University of Roehampton

During the mission, the following activities were conducted:

SESSION	TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTED BY:
INTRODUCTION	12:00-12:30	Welcome to YSAFA	Vice-rector for Education and Science
		Presentation of the Project INCLUSION	INCLUSION management team
		Presentation of the aim of the meeting	Bridget Middlemas
Meeting with Students	12:30-13:30	Discussion on the fact-finding and results of the survey (conducted by students)	Bridget Middlemas, INCLUSION team at YSAFA and Students
		Sum-up of the discussions and results of student survey. Identification of any concerns / issues that students would like to raise.	
13:30-14:30 LUNCH			
Meeting with INCLUSION team, faculty and administration	13:30-15:30	Discussion on the fact-finding and results of the survey (conducted by staff)	Bridget Middlemas, INCLUSION team at YSAFA

Main findings and recommendations from the site visit

Please outline relevant findings/recommendations you may have in line with the guidelines elaborated for site visit meetings (ANNEX 1):

F. Findings/recommendations regarding underrepresented groups at the PCU:

- Nearly all of YSAFA's students come from just 2 or 3 schools in Armenia, due to the very specialist nature of the subject area (fine art and design). It would be good to see a wider range of schools / colleges involved in the admissions process, to ensure that more students with an interest in fine art / design are able to apply for places.
- It would be good to have regular tutorial times for students, as some students noted that certain faculty were remote, difficult to contact and did not regularly use their email accounts. This aspect of the faculty role could be explored during the **INCLUSION** project, as better contact from faculty (regarding assignments or exams etc) would be of benefit to all students.
- It would be useful to have one or two classrooms that were particularly accessible and well equipped for students, e.g. with full IT facilities and a hearing induction loop for students with impaired hearing. Some of the YSAFA buildings may be unsuitable for lifts / ramps due to their design / age, but a full review of teaching accommodation would be useful during the course of the **INCLUSION** project, with a view to future planning opportunities.

G. Findings/recommendations regarding roles and strategies of the PCU:

- It will be useful for YSAFA to review their admissions policy, to enable a wider range of students to attend the university.
- Perhaps consider the way in which international students are supported in their learning of the Armenian language (e.g. provide a subject glossary / definitions of key terms). These issues were discussed at length in the PICASA project, which YSAFA participated in from 2013-2016, perhaps the **INCLUSION** team can involve these colleagues at some point in their discussions around inclusion / accessibility?
- A useful discussion took place around the possibility of buying suitable software / equipment for use with under-represented groups, and this will be discussed further at

	<p>the June meeting at AUA.</p> <p>H. Findings/recommendations regarding specific measures to support students from underrepresented groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several faculty who do not use Powerpoint or any other form of software, but prefer to present verbally. This may disadvantage students who find it hard to take notes in class, or those with impaired hearing. It will also disadvantage any international students who are unfamiliar with the Armenian language. One student noted that “some faculty never give us a handout or do a PowerPoint, so some of us find it very difficult to concentrate for any length of time”. • It will be useful for the university to consider implementing a virtual learning environment, such as WebCT / Blackboard / Moodle, to enable faculty to share handouts / reading lists / other learning resources. Faculty and students will need training and support for this to happen. • Students noted that some faculty are not willing to give very much advice or support when work is due in for assessment. A virtual learning environment, as noted above, may be a solution to this issue. One student noted that occasionally faculty are quite negative when students request support, and are not very patient when students are experiencing difficulties with their work. <p>I. Findings/recommendations regarding capacity building/training needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be useful for all new faculty (and existing faculty) to undertake some training in <i>inclusive approaches to learning and teaching</i>, to ensure that all students have a fair chance of academic success during their time at the university. The INCLUSION project will be able to offer support and advice in this key area. • Development of IT systems and electronic resources will benefit all students, especially those with a disability and / or international students <p>J. Findings regarding literature reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literature review provided a useful starting point for discussions with the group of students, especially around the topics of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IT / e-learning ▪ Learning styles / different ways of learning ▪ Admissions procedures and marketing / publicity initiatives ▪ Faculty training in inclusive and accessible approaches ▪ Accessibility of teaching rooms / accommodation
<p>Follow-up actions for EU experts based on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridget to bring resources / information to the INCLUSION June AUA event regarding specialist software and equipment (e.g for students with disabilities) • Discuss with INCLUSION colleagues the need for guidelines for inclusive and accessible approaches to learning and teaching • Discuss with INCLUSION colleagues the need for inclusive practices to be fully reflected in institutional quality assurance systems and processes (e.g. on course evaluations by students)
<p>Follow-up actions for PCUs based</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at the moment

on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)	
Other comments (if any)	This was a useful and beneficial visit, and provided a good starting point for our INCLUSION discussions.
Attachment to report	PPP with presentation of main results from PCU and student surveys
Submitted on	5.6.2017 Bridget Middlemas, University of Roehampton