WP 1 – CAPACITY BUILDING

FACT-FINDING REPORT BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (Act. 1.5.)

CONTENTS

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.** <u>This very report summarizes the man results for Bosnia and Herzegovina.</u>

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 BiH took place in April (WUS AT to UNTZ, 24.4.-27.4.) and May 2017 (UCLL to UNT with participation of SMOC, 3.5.-6.5.).

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 Bosnia and Herzegovina 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 (UNTZ) and Annex II (UNT).

A.) Underrepresented groups (UGs) at UNTZ and UNT

The following groups are considered underrepresented in higher education:

UNTZ	UNT
Students from economically disadvantaged families including also students without parents	Students from economically disadvantaged families including also Students with small children; - Single parents; - Students from remote/rural areas
Students with disabilities	Students with disabilities
Non-traditional students (students who are employed (part-time/full-time))	Non-traditional students
Students from Roma communities	Students from minority groups
Students from LGBT communities	
Students from other countries/immigrants	

B.) Roles and strategies for the Social Dimension of Higher Education at UNTZ and UNT:

The following findings are made regarding roles ad strategies:

UNTZ	UNT
No strategy	No strategy
Center for Students with Special Needs at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Consultations on an ad hoc basis and depending on commitment of staff	Informal approach (bilateral consultations as required)

C.) Measures to support underrepresented groups at UNTZ and UNT:

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

UNTZ	UNT
On an ad hoc basis; largely depend on commitment and good will of staff	On an ad hoc basis; largely depend on commitment and good will of staff
Examples:	Examples:
PWDs: arrangement of special exam modalities	Students from economically disadvantaged families: measures concerning payments: payments in installments, working at the university, (government) scholarships,….
Some (financial) support for single parents, students without parents or students whose parents fought in the war (government scholarships).	If the socio-economic status of a student changes in the course of their studies, UNT provides financial support.
	Informal consulting mechanisms

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

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:

UNTZ	UNT
Life-long learning	Life-long learning
Distance learning	Distance learning
Accommodation	
Innovative/flexible exam modalities (e.g. for students with disabilities, non-traditional students)	Innovative/flexible exam modalities (e.g. for students with disabilities, non-traditional students)
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.

ANNEX I: SITE VISIT REPORT UNTZ

WP 1 – CAPACITY BUILDING

Report on Site Visit to Tuzla (1.4.1.)

PCU where site visit took place	University of Tuzla (UNTZ)
Name of EU expert(s) conducting the visit	**Louise Sperl (WUS Austria)**
Focal points at UNTZ	**Jasmina Altumbabic** **Dzeneta Omerdic**
List of persons met during the site visit	**See separate registration lists (attached to this report)**
Summary of main activities during the site visit	**During the site visit, the following activities were conducted:** - **Meeting with UNTZ teaching staff, representatives of UNTZ management and administration**, 25 April 2017/UNTZ Rectorate; - **Meeting with UNTZ students** (including students from underrepresented groups such as PWDs, students from LGBT communities as well as from economically disadvantaged backgrounds); 26 April 2017/Faculty of Law. - **Meeting with teaching staff from the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation;** 26 April 2017/Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation. As also outlined in the concept note for the site visit, the aim of the visit was to: • 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** within the project.
Main findings and recommendations from the site visit	Main findings/recommendations (see text below table): **A. Findings/recommendations regarding underrepresented groups at the PCU:** **B. Findings/recommendations regarding roles and strategies of the PCU:** **C. Findings/recommendations regarding specific measures to support students from underrepresented groups:** **D. Findings/recommendations regarding capacity building/training needs:** **E. Other points raised**

Follow-up actions for EU experts based on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)	• Consider key findings from site visit in the preparation/implementation of the June workshop in Yerevan, targeting HEI and government representatives from partner organisations (with participation of students from PCUs). • Incorporate key findings from the site visit in the final fact finding report on BiH (act. 1.5.; due in July). • Consider key findings for the development of a.) an UNTZ strategy targeting students from underrepresented groups (WP2) and b.) inclusive learning and teaching materials (WP3).
Follow-up actions for PCUs based on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)	• Raise awareness on the Social Dimension of higher education in line with the Bologna Process; • Disseminate information about the INCLUSION project; • Purchase appropriate equipment within the INCLUSION project in line with existing needs of students from underrepresented groups; • Doublecheck with INCLUSION mgmt. budget options for travel costs of persons with disabilities (if required). Follow up on following suggestions from meeting with teaching staff from the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation: • Use opportunities to promote the Center for the Support of Students with Special Needs within the scope of the INCLUSION project and explore ways on how to strengthen the cooperation of the UNTZ faculties with the Center.
Other comments (*if any*)	
Attachments to report (on dropbox)	Agenda for the site visit Minutes and registration forms from meetings outlined above PPP from meeting with UNTZ staff PPP from meeting with UNTZ students
Submitted on	

A. FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS AT THE PCU:

Findings

IDENTIFICATION OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

- The results from the PCU and student survey at UNTZ have shown that **the following groups are considered underrepresented at UNTZ:**
  - Students from **economically disadvantaged families including also students without parents** (multiple entries);
  - Students with **disabilities** (multiple entries).

  Other groups which were mentioned as underrepresented in higher education at UNTZ:
  - Students from **LGBT communities**;
  - Students from **Roma communities**;
  - Students from **other countries/immigrants;**
  - Students wo are **employed** (part-time/full-time).

This was also confirmed during meeting discussions.

- **Students with disabilities:** Challenges faced and highlighted by meeting participants relate to inadequate education (e.g. lack of flexible teaching and learning arrangements), disapproval, and discriminatory attitudes of colleagues towards students with disabilities.

- **Students from economically disadvantaged families:** Financial difficulties form a major problem for students in a region with high unemployment (app 54,8%, 67% youth unemployment (Source: Worldbank). It was therefore also proposed by key stakeholders met during the site visit that students from economically disadvantaged families should be considered as core target group for the INCLUSION project, to be addressed also in the development of a Social Dimension Strategy for UNTZ. Possible entry points could also include the provision of consulting services even though the establishment of new positions will not be possible at this stage.

- **Non-traditional students:** Students stated that the system of higher education is not adapted to non-traditional students – e.g. to those working part-time or full-time. This includes challenges in terms of class attendance and exam dates.

- During discussions, it was also noted that some underrepresented categories may be treated preferential over others (example of students who lost one of their parents during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and got a financial support accordingly).

AVAILABLE DATA:

- **Lack of data**: It could be seen both from the survey results as well as from discussions that official data at UNTZ concerning the status and number of students from underrepresented groups are scarce. Some data on specific categories of students from underrepresented groups are available through the enrolment process. This includes information on students who are orphans and whose parents got killed in combat in BiH. Self-identification, however, poses challenges in this context as some students prefer not to identify themselves as a member of such categories. No specific information is required during the enrolment process on disabilities.

- **Special application form for students with disabilities**: In this context, it was proposed that a special application form should be introduced for PWDs at the stage of enrolment, indicating which disability students are facing and which support would be required. It was highlighted that such information would be essential for providing adequate support during studies (e.g. related to exam modalities, teaching etc.) Opposed to other categories of underrepresented groups, self-identification does not seem to be considered problematic in this context.

- According to information provided by professors of the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, there is the Rulebook on the identification of students with dyslexia which is the result of a project realized at UNTZ in 2008. At UNTZ there are 4% of students with dyslexia.

- Meeting participants also noted that in terms of identifying underrepresented groups, UNTZ should not solely rely on self-identification. Special methods or procedures (enacted by Law) are also considered necessary in this context.

RETENTION:

- No information is available why students leave university before the end of the course. In this context, the Dean of the Faculty of Economics has indicated during meetings that she is planning to introduce a short questionnaire for students who wish to leave university prematurely, asking about their reasons for leaving. Inputs may also provide information on whether students from underrepresented groups are more likely to leave university earlier and if so, why.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Students from economically disadvantaged families and students with disabilities** should be considered as **core target group for the INCLUSION project at UNTZ** which should be also considered for the development of the UNTZ Social Dimension Strategy (WP 2).

- **Data on underrepresented groups of students and their needs** are essential and an important precondition for identifying the best possible support measures. The current information acquired from the enrolment process seems insufficient to stakeholders met during the site visit. In this context, it is suggested to introduce new channels for data collection to the extent possible. This may include (but is not limited to) **specific enrolment forms for students with disabilities**, **questionnaires for students who leave university prematurely** and others.

- **Benchmarking**: In order to periodically take stock of the situation of underrepresented groups of students and progress made in enhancing the Social Dimension of Higher Education at UNTZ, it is recommended for UNTZ management to regularly (e.g. every 2-3 years) engage in benchmarking. For this purpose, an easy to handle benchmarking tool will be developed within the INCLUSION project (to be discussed at the workshop in Yerevan, June 2017).

B. FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ROLES AND STRATEGIES OF THE PCU:

Findings

STRATEGY

- It was evident from discussions as well as from the survey that **no strategy is in place so far at UNTZ to implement the Social Dimension of Higher Education in general/provide support to students from underrepresented groups.**

- Meeting participants concluded that it is very important to put questions around the Social Dimension into the **local context** (i.e. underrepresented groups and their challenges might not be the same in BiH and Armenia). **Strategies and measures to be designed within INCLUSION should be therefore tailored to the specific local context of each respective partner university.**

- In relation to a **future strategy** (to be developed within WP2 of the INCLUSION project), participants concluded that the following areas should be addressed/included in such a strategy:
  - **Life-long learning,**
  - **IT-learning**
  - **Accommodation.**

- **Teaching**: During meetings, it was also highlighted that **curricula/resources need to be diverse** and should be (culturally) appropriate regarding underrepresented groups in society

(e.g. portrayal of PWDs, Roma etc.). The diversity of curricula and teaching resources may be also addressed in the future strategy.

- During the site visit, professors also emphasized the high level of teaching obligations on the expense of individual consultations with students and the limited time available to engage in research. A future strategy may also have to explore **opportunities on how to strengthen opportunities for individual consultations with students** (including from underrepresented groups), considering the given regulatory framework.

- It was also highlighted by students, that a future strategy should **clearly outline responsibilities** of key stakeholders.

ROLES

- Apart from the **Center for Students with Special Needs** at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation (established through a previous TEMPUS project), there is no specific department, institution or focal point tasked to provide support to students from any of the above mentioned underrepresented groups. Even though respondents to the survey seem to be aware of this Center, professors from the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation see the need to further strengthen the visibility of the Center and awareness of UNTZ staff and students on the services provided.

- The teaching staff met during the site visit from the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation has expressed interest to cooperate with the INCLUSION project. INCLUSION, vice versa, could promote the Center for Students with Special Needs in order to strengthen its visibility.

- In order for the Center to negotiate e.g. specific exam modalities for students with special needs with teaching staff, students need to be registered at the Center with a medical certificate indicating the nature of their disability/special needs. In addition, also informal consultation services are possible.

- Regarding the activities of the Center, the following suggestions were provided by meeting participants:
    o The Center should be open and accessible to students without self-identification;
    o Cooperation of UNTZ faculties with the Center should be strengthened;
    o Each faculty should provide a tutor who should function as a link to the Center.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- For a future Social Dimension Strategy of UNTZ, it is recommended to include the **following topics/areas**:
    o **Life-long learning;**
    o **Distance learning;**
    o **Accommodation;**
    o **Innovative/flexible exam modalities** (e.g. for students with disabilities, non-traditional students);
    o **Diversity of learning and teaching** (e.g. diversity of curricula, resources);
    o **Opportunities for strengthening consultative, mentoring and peer to peer mechanisms,** aiming to provide support to students (including from underrepresented groups);
    o **Flexible funding modalities for students** from economically disadvantaged families (see also under C.);

- - - Cooperation with the **Center for Support of Students with Special Needs;**
- Furthermore, **responsibilities of key stakeholders need to be clearly defined** and opportunities sought to **institutionally anchor** the Social Dimension at UNTZ to the extent possible (considering the given regulatory frameworks). Overall, it is essential for the UNTZ strategy to **fit the local context**.

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

Findings

- **Measures to support students from underrepresented groups**: So far, measures are implemented on **ad hoc basis and largely depend on the commitment and good will of teaching staff** (e.g. special arrangements on exam modalities for PWDs (oral instead of written exams etc.)). As outlined above, the Center for Support of Students with Special Needs can provide support to negotiate special arrangements for students with special needs.

- In the **surveys**, the **following measures were identified** by UNTZ staff and students:
  - **PWDs**: arrangement of special exam modalities, easy physical access to (certain but not all) facilities (elevator, large bathroom on ground floor etc.);
  - Some **(financial) support for single parents, students without parents or students whose parents fought in the war;**

- Overall, both survey respondents and meeting participants noted that there was **not enough support for students from economically disadvantaged families and students from minority groups.** In particular, it was noted that
  - There is **no counselling service** in place for students with financial difficulties (highlighted through several entries in the survey as well as discussions during the site visit);
  - Every institution should have a social worker, psychologist and a support (counselling)team.

- **Scholarships/financial support:** There is no financial support for students of the above identified underrepresented groups, as there are **no scholarships awarded by UNTZ**. Students form economically disadvantaged families are particularly affected from the lack of funding opportunities. On the other side, there are **scholarships mostly by Ministries of Tuzla Canton** (**mix of merit and needs based system**). Preference is given to students whose parent(s) got killed in combat in BiH. In addition, **some NGO s provide financial support** to students who belong to **minority groups** (i.e. Roma students).

- Meeting participants proposed that when developing the UNTZ Strategy on the Social Dimension of Higher Education, **possibilities should be explored for paying school fees in instalments**.

- In relation to **students with special needs** (audio or visual impairments, dyslexia, dyscalculia, or other forms of physical or mental impairment) there are no **specially adapted forms of exams or tests** systematically arranged in order to facilitate the educational process for these categories of students. As outlined above, some teachers are taking measures in this respect on an ad hoc/individual basis. During discussions with students it was also mentioned that a **special assistant/tutor** would be very helpful for some students with disabilities during exams. According to UNTZ staff/students, **physical access** to certain parts of the buildings is considered inappropriate for students with physical disabilities.

- **Special IT equipment for the INCLUSION project**: Meeting participants suggested to purchase equipment which is not already available to students at the Center for Students with Special Needs in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. It was further recommended, that PCs and other equipment should be available to students coming from socially and economically disadvantaged families at their respective faculties.

- **Need to address also lower levels of education**: Meeting participants highlighted that there is a need to address also lower levels of education, when it comes to underrepresented groups and their access/participation in higher education. Some activities take place in this respect already and will be continued in future (promotional events of UNTZ at high schools). This will be also an important entry point for WP4 of the INCLUSION project.

- Meeting participants also agreed on the necessity of a legislative intervention to further **enhance cooperation between government and UNTZ with the aim to improve the status of students from underrepresented groups**.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Explore opportunities to **introduce consultative mechanisms for students** (within the given regulatory framework of UNTZ which does not allow the establishment of new positions);

- Explore opportunities to introduce other measures such as **mentoring programmes or peer to peer support** from/for students from underrepresented groups;

- Explore opportunities to **systematically arrange exam modalities that fit the needs of students with disabilities;**

- Explore opportunities within and beyond INCLUSION to **strengthen capacities of teaching staff for working with students from underrepresented groups** (see also under D.).

- Explore opportunities for students from economically disadvantaged families to pay **school fees in instalments;**

- Purchase **IT equipment** within INCLUSION that is **in line with identified needs of underrepresented groups of students;**

- **Continue efforts to promote higher education at high schools**.

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

Findings

- So far, **training opportunities of UNTZ staff to support students from underrepresented groups are very limited**. Some trainings took place within previous Tempus projects (e.g. to enhance support for students with special needs).
- The following **capacity building needs** have been identified in the PCU and student surveys from UNTZ and/or discussions during the site visit:
    - **Awareness raising of teaching staff/mgmt. on needs of students from underrepresented groups.**
    - **Inclusive teaching, tutoring and mentoring** for students from underrepresented groups.
    - **Teaching methods for students with disabilities;**
    - Teaching staff to learn **how to use IT equipment for students with disabilities;**

- o **Distance/IT learning** as possible means to enhance access to higher education for students from rural areas/economically disadvantaged backgrounds: In this context it was however noted, that access to IT equipment is a major challenge.

Overall, it was noted that special attention should be devoted to **enhance capacities of UNTZ staff to address the needs of students with disabilities and students belonging to economically disadvantaged families.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider the above outlined topics for future trainings of UNTZ staff within and beyond INCLUSION.

E. Other points raised

In addition to the points mentioned above, the following recommendations/findings were made:
- **Raising awareness on INCLUSION and the Social Dimension of higher education among students at UNTZ**, as well as in the **community** is considered absolutely essential;
- Students also recommended for the INCLUSION focal points at UNTZ/UNTZ staff in general to **liaise with CSOs promoting the needs of specific underrepresented groups**. **As some CSOs do provide financial support to students from minority groups (e.g. Roma students), this would be also very useful for disseminating information about possible funding opportunities among UNTZ students.**
- Teaching staff pointed out that **the funds foreseen for the realization of the student trips within INCLUSION are considered very tight**. This was particularly emphasized when it comes to students with special needs who may require additional assistance.
- For the future, students also proposed to have **mixed meetings together with teaching staff**.

ANNEX II: SITE VISIT REPORT UNT

WP 1 – CAPACITY BUILDING

Report on Site Visit to Travnik (1.4.1.)

PCU where site visit took place	**University of Travnik (UNT)**
Name of EU expert(s) conducting the visit	**Liesbeth Spanjers & Helena Bijnens (UC Leuven-Limburg)**
Focal points at UNT	**Maya Djuric**
List of persons met during the site visit	**See separate registration lists (attached to this report)**
Summary of main activities during the site visit	**During the site visit, the following activities were conducted:** - **Informal meeting with employees of the Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures Organisation;** 3 May 2017/car and dinner. - **Meeting with UNT teaching staff, representatives of UNT management and administration**, 4 and 5 May 2017/UNT Vip sala & rectorate - **Meeting with UNT students** (including students from underrepresented groups such as students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds); 4 and 5 May 2017/Vip sala. As also outlined in the concept note for the site visit, the aim of the visit was to: • 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** within the project.
Main findings and recommendations from the site visit	Main findings/recommendations (see text below table): **A. Findings/recommendations regarding underrepresented groups at the PCU:** **B. Findings/recommendations regarding roles and strategies of the PCU:** **C. Findings/recommendations regarding specific measures to support students from underrepresented groups:** **D. Findings/recommendations regarding capacity building/training needs:** **E. Other points raised**

Follow-up actions for EU experts based on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)	• Consider key findings from site visit in the preparation/implementation of the June workshop in Yerevan, targeting HEI and government representatives from partner organisations (with participation of students from PCUs). • Incorporate key findings from the site visit in the final fact finding report on BiH (act. 1.5.; due in July). • Consider key findings for the development of a.) an UNT strategy targeting students from underrepresented groups (WP2) and b.) inclusive learning and teaching materials (WP3).
Follow-up actions for PCUs based on findings and recommendations from the site visit (if any)	• Raise awareness on the Social Dimension of higher education in line with the Bologna Process; • Disseminate information about the INCLUSION project; • Purchase appropriate equipment within the INCLUSION project in line with existing needs of students from underrepresented groups; • Doublecheck with INCLUSION mgmt. budget options for travel costs of persons with disabilities (if required).
Other comments (*if any*)	
Attachments to report (on dropbox)	Agenda for the site visit Minutes and registration forms from meetings outlined above PPP from meeting with UNT staff, management and students
Submitted in	May 2017

A. FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS AT THE PCU:

Findings

IDENTIFICATION OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

- The results from the PCU and student survey at UNT have shown that **the following groups are considered underrepresented at UNT:**
  - Students from **economically disadvantaged families including** (multiple entries);

Other groups which were mentioned as underrepresented in higher education at UNT:
  - Students with **disabilities;**
  - Students with **small children;**
  - **Single parents;**
  - Students from **remote/rural areas;**
  - Students from **minority groups**;

This was also confirmed during meeting discussions.

- **Students from economically disadvantaged families:** Financial difficulties form a major problem for students to enrol in UNT, a private university. It was said by a stakeholder met during the site visit that almost all students in BiH are students from economically disadvantaged families and should be considered as core target group for the INCLUSION project, especially when raising awareness for the subject of inclusion outside the university.

- **Students with disabilities:** Challenges faced and highlighted by meeting participants relate to lack of equipment for teaching and learning, disapproval, and discriminatory attitudes of other students towards students with disabilities.

- **Non-traditional students:** The management stated that UNT offers adaptations to non-traditional students – e.g. to those working part-time or full-time, top sport students. This includes solutions in terms of class attendance and exam dates.

- **Single parents**: During discussions, it was also noted that UNT plans to build a private kindergarten and a free playground, where children from students can play, under surveillance of other students from UNT.

- Students from **remote/rural areas** and from **minority groups**: Those underrepresented categories have not been mentioned in the discussions.

AVAILABLE DATA:

- **Data collection**: Some data concerning the status of students, on specific categories of students from underrepresented groups are available through the enrolment process. This includes information on the following categories: method of financing, status of parents, students who are children of a father who fought in the war and orphans. Self-identification, however, poses challenges in this context as some students prefer not to identify themselves as a member of these categories. No specific information is required during the enrolment process on disabilities.

- **Informal approach of support**: Additional information is often gathered by the management and the staff of UNT, as each student after enrolment has an individual talk with the dean or/and with other members of the staff / management. Based on this talks the appropriate support for students with special needs is found.

- **Research on UNT data on students**: It was highlighted that more information on the categories of students from underrepresented groups and their needs is required. UNT plans to do research on the topic of inclusion in general and about student data more specifically. Such information would be essential for providing adequate support during studies (e.g. related to exam modalities, teaching etc.).

RETENTION:

- In the survey and in the discussions, retention is non-existing at UNT. If problems occur during the studies, students find their way to the staff or management and problems are solved within 7 days. This informal communication approach guarantees the best solution for each student, according to the staff and management.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Students from economically disadvantaged families, students with disabilities and non-traditional students** should be considered as **core target group for the INCLUSION project at UNT** which should be also considered for the development of the UNT Social Dimension Strategy (WP 2).

- **Data on underrepresented groups of students and their needs** are essential and an important precondition for identifying the best possible support measures. Research at UNT can be done to further identity the groups and their needs. The current information acquired from the enrolment process provides a lot of information, but can be refined according to the research needs.

- **Benchmarking**: In order to periodically take stock of the situation of underrepresented groups of students and progress made in enhancing the Social Dimension of Higher Education at UNT, it is recommended for UNT management to regularly (e.g. every 2-3 years) engage in benchmarking. For this purpose, an easy to handle benchmarking tool will be developed within the INCLUSION project (to be discussed at the workshop in Yerevan, June 2017).

B. FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ROLES AND STRATEGIES OF THE PCU:

Findings

STRATEGY

- It was evident from discussions as well as from the survey that <u>**no formalized strategy is in place so far at UNT to implement the Social Dimension of Higher Education in general/provide support to students from underrepresented groups.**</u> UNT has a personal communication approach through which each students receives the necessary information concerning support in a private talk with the dean and/or other staff and management members. The individual talks lead to the appropriate support for each student. The participants of the meeting concluded that the development of a more formalized support strategy, that outlines responsibilities, is needed.

- Meeting participants concluded that it is very important to put questions around the Social Dimension into the **local context** (i.e. underrepresented groups and their challenges might not be the same in BiH and Armenia). **Strategies and measures to be designed within INCLUSION should be therefore tailored to the specific local context of each respective partner university.**

- <u>Teaching</u>: During meetings, it was also highlighted that **curricula/resources need to be diverse.** The diversity of curricula and teaching resources may be also addressed in the future strategy.

ROLES

- There is no specific department, institution or focal point tasked to provide support to students from any of the above mentioned underrepresented groups, but the personal communication approach at the university provides each student with the necessary support. This means that staff and management all feel the responsibility to act whenever problems occur.

- New staff is informed about this communication model before they sign their contract.

- The teaching staff decides on an individual basis about specific exam modalities and specific programs for students with special needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- For a future Social Dimension Strategy of UNT, it is recommended to include the **following topics/areas**:
  - o **Life-long learning;**
  - o **Distance learning;**
  - o **Innovative/flexible exam modalities** (e.g. for students with disabilities, non-traditional students);
  - o **Diversity of learning and teaching** (e.g. diversity of curricula, resources);
  - o **Opportunities for strengthening consultative, mentoring and peer to peer mechanisms,** aiming to provide support to students (including from underrepresented groups);
  - o **Flexible funding modalities for students** from economically disadvantaged families (see also under C.);
- Furthermore, **responsibilities of key stakeholders need to be clearly defined** and opportunities sought to **institutionally anchor** the Social Dimension at UNT to the extent possible (considering the given regulatory frameworks).

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

Findings

- **Measures to support students from underrepresented groups**: So far, measures are implemented on **ad hoc basis and largely depend on the commitment and good will of teaching staff** (e.g. special arrangements on exam modalities for students with special needs (oral instead of written exams etc.)).
- **For students from economically disadvantaged families** there are specific measures concerning payments: payments in installments, working at the university, scholarships,…
- **Other measures**: The university feels like a home for the students: university is open 24/7, mentors provide support, the teaching process promotes inclusion, the students union works with the management and staff together, there is constant communication between all partners (staff, management, students).
- **Scholarships/financial support:** UNT is a private university. Students from economically disadvantaged groups, children without parents, children with a parent who fought in the war, etc can receive scholarships. If the socio economic status of a student changes in the course of their studies, UNT provides financial support. In the student survey it was highlighted that financial problems are the main reason for not entering the university.
- **Special IT equipment for the INCLUSION project**: UNT has no special equipment for students with physical disabilities (blind, deaf, etc). The Bosnian consortium (with the University of Tuzla) has decided that the University of Tuzla will build experience in working with blind and deaf students and that they will learn to use the appropriate equipment for those categories of students. UNT will learn how to use other equipment. The idea is to exchange experiences between universities and in that way reach a greater potential. On the other hand, there are already some INCLUSION measures in place, as professional sportsmen receive adapted programs, based on arrangements with individual professors (e.g. distance learning and coaching, late exams, etc).
- **Need to address also lower levels of education**: The vision of the university is to develop kindergarten, primary and secondary school before university, with a clear inclusion policy. Moreover, the university wants to know where the students with specific needs are in the

labor market after graduating. There is an alumni organisation present at university which can help follow up on the graduated students. Another measure is the organisation of seminars for inclusion, organized in December, in elementary and secondary schools (disabled students). Lastly, if the social background of a student changes during his/her studies, the management decides to help.

- **Need for medical service**, because there are social and economic problems. People who have everything talk about it, people who don't have everything, don't talk. It is important to keep information secret and to respect the student's wish about the information the student shared with staff and/or management.

- Meeting participants also agreed on the necessity of a legislative intervention to further **enhance the process of inclusion in BiH.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Explore opportunities to **introduce more formalized consultative mechanisms for students**;

- Explore opportunities to introduce other more formalized measures such as **mentoring programmes or peer to peer support** from/for students from underrepresented groups;

- Explore opportunities to introduce a **medical / psychological service**;

- Explore opportunities to **systematically arrange exam modalities that fit the needs of students with disabilities;**

- Explore opportunities within and beyond INCLUSION to **strengthen capacities of teaching staff for working with students from underrepresented groups** (see also under D.).

- Purchase **IT equipment** within INCLUSION that is **in line with identified needs of underrepresented groups of students and train staff how to use it**;

- **Continue efforts to promote higher education at high schools**;

- Address lower levels of education to work on inclusion;
- Do research about former students with special needs on the labour market.

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

Findings

- UNT organizes training and workshops for **staff to support students from underrepresented groups.** Joint meetings, during which specific situations from students are discussed, are another instrument for professionalization of the staff in the field of inclusion.
- The following **capacity building needs** have been identified in the PCU and student surveys from UNT and/or discussions during the site visit:
  - **Awareness raising of teaching staff and management on needs of students from underrepresented groups.**
  - **Inclusive teaching, tutoring and mentoring** for students from underrepresented groups, including training in self-confidence / anxiety problems
  - **Teaching methods for students with disabilities;**
  - Teaching staff to learn **how to use IT equipment for students with disabilities**;

- Distance/IT learning as possible means to enhance access to higher education for students from rural areas/economically disadvantaged backgrounds: In this context it was however noted, that access to IT equipment is a major challenge;
- **Research** about the topic of inclusion (analysis and detection of the underrepresented groups at UNT, analysis of needs);
- Creation of a **team in the parliament of the students, including students with special needs.** Making sure that they take part in the decision making;
- **Exchange of experiences;**
- **Case studies** that show how to approach certain situations, based on present examples of problems and discussing possible solutions Comparing how things are organized in EU and in BiH as a starting point for the development of specific strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider the above outlined topics for future trainings of UNT staff within and beyond INCLUSION.

E. Other points raised

In addition to the points mentioned above, the following recommendations/findings were made:
- **Raising awareness on INCLUSION and the Social Dimension of higher education among students at UNT**, as well as in the **community** is considered absolutely essential;