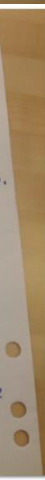
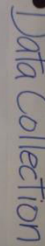


June 2017,
American University
of Armenia



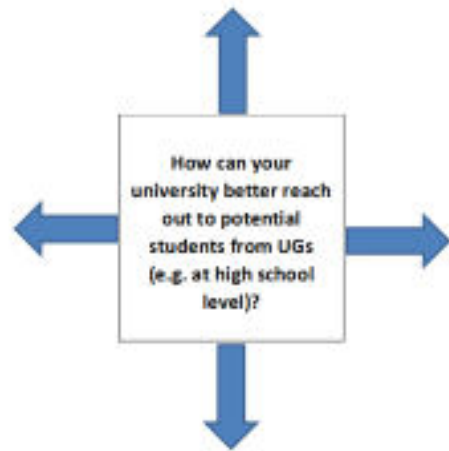
World café discussions

- We used the World café methodology to engage in discussions around themes that emerged during the literature review, the site visits and the surveys
- Each table had a 10 minute discussion on their set topic, and participants then moved to the next table
- You can read more about the World Café at:
<http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>

World café discussions

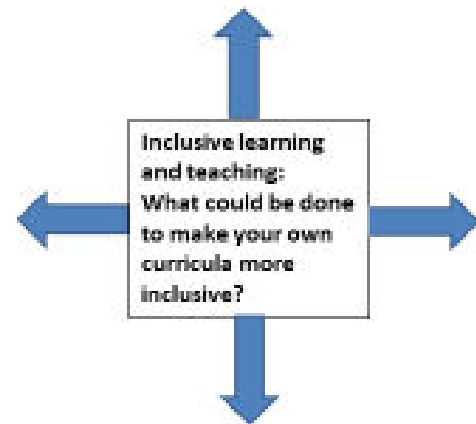
We set up 5 tables with pens and paper. Our five themes were:

1. Outreach activities
2. Student voice
3. Inclusive learning and teaching
4. Data collection
5. Feeling “included”



Our 5 discussions

What can be done to ensure that students' voices are being heard and incorporated into the process of developing a SD strategy at university level?



What could be done at your university to enhance data collection on students from underrepresented groups and their needs?



Think of a student that you know who did not feel "included". What could your university do differently?





1. Outreach activities

Question: “How can your university better reach out to potential students from UGs (e.g. at high school level)?”

All sorts of courses:

Conducting (English) courses in rural areas, offering the same opportunities as in Yerevan

Study visits to university, joint classes

Summer school at university / broad invitations for open days

Master classes in high schools (e.g. art) by students + promotion about university

Preparatory classes

Information

Awareness of programs in high schools (through presentations and online information)

Making an inclusive promotion team (including students from UGs) and visit high schools to share experiences and stories of students from UGs (as role models)

Visit communities, orphanages, special schools, specialized school (e.g. arts)

Explicitly inform that the university is friendly towards specific UGs

Share information on mass media (YouTube, etc)

Raise awareness that every person can go to university (regardless of age, gender, nationality, socioeconomic background, etc)

Find UGs through the data bases from the government (special needs) to be able to reach out to the students

Broad dissemination of INCLUSION project with high schools

Collaboration with NGOs that organize summer camps for students with special needs

Financial aspects

Making discounts for (English) courses to be admitted

Making discounts for tuition fees

Scholarships for sports and cultural activities

Dormitories and stipends

Skills

Trainings to receive the knowledge and skills about addressing UGs and their challenges

Demonstrate the capacity of the university to support students from UGs (equipment + knowledge and skills)

Programs for university students and staff in schools with children with special needs: volunteering work, internship

Training for university students and staff in underserved areas

Various ideas!

Organization of art exhibition on inclusion and education

2. Student voice - What can be done in order to ensure that students' voices are being heard and incorporated into the process of developing a SD strategy at the university level?

- **Representation**
 - Students should be represented in all relevant committees (including curriculum development and financial affairs); quotas for participation
 - No policies should be made without the participation of students (students as stakeholders)
 - Students from underrepresented groups should be represented in the committees as well
 - Students' role in such committees should be more than a mere advisory role. Their votes should be binding as well.

- Motivation to participate*

*One issue discussed has been how to motivate students to get active since active participation of students in representative student organisations (such as student councils, student communities) seems to be regressive.

- Students must not face negative consequences for engaging actively in university politics (safe spaces)
- Students should have some incentives for participating in shaping university policies (e.g. contribution to drafting a SD policy should be considered as internships and granted ECTS credits)
- Students from underrepresented groups may hesitate to participate in time consuming university politics since they may already face pressure to finish their studies. Therefore, compensation mechanism (prolongation of maximum study duration; financial benefits should be provided)

- How can students ensure that they are heard?
 - Monitoring of implementation of policies at university level
 - Use social media or students' newspapers as means for discussions, to communicate constructive criticism but also to highlight if policies have not been respected
 - Evaluation of lectures and follow-up

3. Inclusive learning and teaching :

What can be done to make your curricula more inclusive?

STUDY SPACES:

- have a study area in your library with staff there to answer queries about writing or research skills , e.g. every afternoon from 14:30-16:30
- ensure that all students have sufficient access to a computer for their term papers / research projects etc.

RANGE OF RESOURCES:

- make sure that a diverse range of case studies and scenarios are discussed in class, to ensure that students gain a good understanding of their subject area from different perspectives
- make library resources and e-journals more inclusive, e.g. with better support for students who are not so confident about using the library. Check out the different types of accessibility options / software, or find out who can advise students about this topic

CURRICULUM CONTENT:

- make sure that faculty have a good understanding of students' prior subject knowledge. This is not necessarily reflected in grades from exams taken, whether the grades are high or low
- if teaching international students, make sure they are familiar with all symbols / formulae / alphanumeric characters etc., to avoid any confusion
- have a glossary of key terms in your subject area, so that students have a clear idea of correct definitions. This will help them to learn the subject more confidently

ASSESSMENT FORMATS:

- make sure that a diverse range of assessments are offered, e.g. Don't just offer essays / terms papers and formal exams. . Think about other ways that students can be assessed, e.g. with a group presentation, or by making a short film.
- see if there is more than one way to assess competences or professional skills. Not all students will be able to demonstrate competency / skill in the same way. Offer alternative assessments, and a choice of assessments when possible
- offer some general study skills sessions, but also make sure that students are offered academic writing skills sessions that are relevant to their subject area, e.g. report writing for engineers; presentation skills for law students

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS:

- offer language classes that are appropriate for the subject being taught, e.g. ' An introduction to Armenian chemistry vocabulary' or ' common phrases for law students studying in Bosnia'
- consider whether some classes can be taught or supported in other languages, especially for new arrivals . How do some international students cope with an unfamiliar language?

WORKING WITH YOUR STUDENTS:

- help students to review the sessions and activities for each course at the beginning of the semester, so that they can make an individual learning plan, e.g. ask them how they will plan for the paper due in week 12; or what they need to do to get ready for the mid- semester exam. Have a session on planning / workloads to enable as many students as possible to achieve success
- ask the students to feed back to faculty during the course and at the end of the course, to reflect on how inclusive the classes are. Look at your end of course surveys / evaluations and see if you can have a question on inclusive ways of learning and teaching. E.g. Were there sufficient opportunities to ask questions? Were new topics sufficiently explained? Were there adequate resources available for you to complete your report / term paper? Do you have any suggestions for next year's students?
- Involve your students in reflecting on the programme content; offer them some training in programme review or course design. Ask them what suggestions they have for next time the course runs

4. Data collection

WHAT COULD BE DONE AT YOUR UNIVERSITY TO ENHANCE DATA COLLECTION ON STUDENTS FROM UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS?

Surveys

- surveys should be an integral part of the admissions/enrollment process
- wording should be sensitive and student-friendly
- students should be informed prior to survey as to the nature and objective of the data collected
- to maximize results, surveys can be administered (anonymously) during designated classes
- survey results should be shared with respondents

Forms/Applications

- financial aid application should include an appendix with specifications
- admissions forms/applications should include provision for self-identification
- purpose of information/data should be clearly communicated to student
- provision to safeguard confidentiality should be clearly communicated

- **Data Collection Mechanisms**

- establish a special department with the university
- establish a centralized unit for data collection
- design a system to store and manage student data
- obtain consent of student to release information
- question/review ethical aspect of gathering, using specific data
- be in compliance with university rules and regulations
- explore various options for data collection (e.g. paper, on-line, in class)
- Ethics & Grievance committee data to serve in writing and revising policy/procedure/guidelines
- health records intended to enhance support services

Data Protection

- clearly stated in-house policy on data collection/usage/protection
- tech security provisions
- guard against data duplication

Confidentiality

- raise awareness by consistently informing students/parents about adherence to confidentiality
- build a culture of "trust"
- understand that confidentiality permeates all levels, all aspects

5. Feeling “included”

Think of students that you know who did not feel “included”.

What could your university do differently?

- How do we know that someone needs support? How to reach out/support students that do not want to be labelled?
- Set up support measures that do not need any/much extra money > mentoring and peer-to-peer support
- What makes a good mentorship? > Identify/make clear the goals (purpose of mentorship), identify/make clear the responsibilities of mentor and mentee, it should be about empowerment not telling what to do
- What do you expect from a mentor? > Mentors should be open (to different ways of being and living), meet eye-to-eye, be honest/open about their own experiences (challenges, failures)
- Peer – to – peer support can be students mentoring/guiding other (potential) students

- How do you get a mentor/supporting person involved? How do you get the university interested in providing additional support? It is in the interest of the university to make sure that enrolled students finish their degree (retention/drop-out rates, reputation); for a mentor it can be part of his/her CV/career development
- Support can be organised top-down (identified and implemented by the institution) or bottom-up (identified and organised by students/peers)

- Guidelines/handbook help to understand and respect the framework of support; institutional policies make sure that all staff (academic/ administrative/management) get involved
- **A lot of challenges for students (not just underrepresented groups but for ALL students) can be solved by providing more information (website, hard copy brochures, via offices) to (potential) students:**
Information about campus infrastructure and campus life (the student experience: e.g. available accommodation for students, internet and computer on campus, costs of living in the city, student loans, library opening hours etc.)
- Information on study programmes: curriculum provided online, but also narratives/experiences from current students and graduates
- Information about the support services provided at the university/available in the city (how can I get a student loan/scholarship? Where do I find support for writing my thesis? Etc.)

- More information will enable future students to make informed decisions on whether and what/where they want to study and help them prepare for it (e.g. if library opening hours are limited young/single parents can make arrangements for babysitters in advance and make sure that their family/friends can support them also during self-study/learning hours by looking after the children).

At our next INCLUSION event

- We will be thinking about these suggestions when we meet again in Leuven in November 2017
- Can you share this presentation with some colleagues / students?
- Are there some ideas that your institution could adopt?
- Which could you introduce in 2017-2018?

inclusion

World café discussions

..... keep those discussions going!

