



GUIDELINES FOR ENSURING THE INNOCHANGE INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

~ John Dewey

Education plays a key role in all countries and the more focus it receives, the more action is needed to fill the gaps and inequalities that are discovered, not only in Europe, but all over the world. The quality of education affects every every aspect of our lives. Not surprisingly, the Quality of Education is the United Nations 4th Sustainable Development Goal. Ever since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) education has been identified in international conferences, reports and agreements as key to addressing imminent environment and development issues. One of the key aspects that testifies for the welfare of a country is the quality of education it offers to its youth. “Sustainability logically necessitates a deep learning response in educational thinking and practice as it does in myriad other human activities, whether economics and business, design and construction, agriculture and energy, trade and aid, health and so on.” [Sterling, S., 2008] Providing access and safeguarding, equality has become prominent in countries' higher education policies and practices. Reflecting on structural barriers that hinder students' effective and full access and participation in various circumstances have become a high priority to ensure that no one is left behind. [Fazekas, 2018]. In order for all students, including individuals from various backgrounds, with their own lived experiences, to fully and effectively access and participate in various spheres of society to be able to properly face life, what is really needed is a shift towards more inclusive and sustainable models of education.

Today we aspire to think more of education, not simply as a process of visiting an institution, learning facts, receiving grades and eventually earning a degree, but rather a place which provides inclusive and sustainable practices, teaches competences and develops skills that can be exploited in various fields and circumstances. For this reason, a holistic approach to inclusive and sustainable education is mandatory. Both terms *inclusive* and *sustainable* have become widespread in many fields of social life and have acquired definitions in contemporary education. The present guide takes an in-depth look at both concepts in the context of education and linked to project activities.

1.1. Why was this guide developed?

Despite international policies being the harbinger in finding new ways to improve educational practices, the hardest work sometimes begins on the national, regional and institutional level, responsible organizations and policy makers being required to tailor concrete actions and measures to deal with inequalities, segregation and exclusion. The first step is to establish an equal opportunity for educational progress, perform research, learn from best practices and apply them in practice, tailored to the local context. In this respect, this guide discusses and supports the practical

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implementation of inclusion and sustainability policies at EU and international level, at the same time supporting incorporation of the same aspects in all project activities, including sustainability skills included in the curriculum, that students can learn to make decisions and take action based on sustainable criteria.

The mission is the establishment of a sustainable educational system free from barriers and accessible to all people - no matter their gender, race, ethnicity, social status or disability, i.e. each person should be valued and engaged equally.

1.2. For whom is the guide intended?

The guide is intended for use by the InnoChange Project partners and key stakeholders such as teachers, instructors, and other educators, administrative staff, students, and community representatives.

1.3. What does the guide include?

The guide presents the main principles that need to be followed during all Project activities and core competencies and skills that involved have to possess to ensure inclusion and sustainability. For each principle, concrete recommendations (with explanations and specific actions) are provided.

In addition, the document delivers a brief overview of the key international and European policies closely related to sustainability and inclusion that can be regarded as the pillars of this guideline.

The guide relies on the previous experience and documents of Project partners connected to inclusion and sustainability. Existing practices were used as a basis for building the guidelines.

Additionally, the guide contains references for further references and readings – documents, books and papers – the wider explanation of the main concepts associated with inclusion and sustainability and examples of initiatives that are contributing to more inclusive and sustainable education systems in different parts of the world were also incorporated.

1.4. How was this guide developed?

The guide is based on research and the description of best practices prepared by partner institutions related to inclusion and sustainability. It was developed with the advice and support of a group of international experts from InnoChange Project Partner Institutions, including practitioners, researchers, teacher educators and curriculum developers. It relies on international and European strategic documents, with emphasis on: United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, EIT Strategy 2021 – 2027, Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 [European Commission, 2020], Curriculum Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals, A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education [United Nations, UNESCO, 2017] and European pillar of social rights.



1.5. Where can the guide be used?

This guide is relevant for all Project countries and partner institutions, as well as to any related educational institutions with vested interest in the domain of inclusive and sustainable education. While targeting improvements in formal education, it recognizes that education occurs in many contexts – in formal, non-formal and informal – and across one's whole lifetime and caters for each setting. The guide can either be used independently for supporting all Project activities or it can be incorporated into other policy review processes and tools to ensure equity, inclusion and sustainability.

1.6. What are the key topics?

Inclusive education

Educational environments today are gradually moving to more inclusively designed classroom experiences and spaces which aim to cater the needs and learning processes of all students to the greatest extent possible.

Inclusion is creating an environment where people feel both welcomed and a true sense of belonging, while at the same time their uniqueness is acknowledged and valued. Inclusion means having an approach that understands and encourages people to be different. An inclusive approach values, respects, and celebrates people's differences and equal value. It enables people to participate fully in any mainstream activity. Being inclusive means listening to each other and being open to change. [Todd, 2014; Fazekas, 2017] People's identities are shaped by the diversity of contexts which intersect within an individual's life. Intersectional identities of people should be valued, respected and celebrated for the richness and diversity they bring to society. [Fazekas, 2018, 17; Fazekas & Csalagovits, 2019, p.7-8]

In its essence inclusion is about belonging, not just being present. Best practices are achieved through scaffolding the instruction process, a type of functional instruction which is intentional, planned, and helps all parties become more successful and confident in the process.

Inclusion refers to the practice of acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual (talents, competencies) and at the same time making them feel welcomed and an intrinsic part of a team/organisation/group (sense of belonging). It requires a systematic change in structures, approaches, strategies to dismantle visible and invisible barriers existing in the environment. It means a shift in an organisational culture where different groups or individuals with diverse backgrounds, various circumstances, own lived experiences feel the sense of belonging, feel respected and valued, socially accepted, welcomed, and treated without discrimination. [Fazekas, 2018]



The outcomes that inclusive education seeks are: membership, relationship and skills. Memberships are related to students and in which ways students interact within a group, at university, in the classroom, in the community and access and participation in education are supported by reducing structural barriers that hinder access and participation and support provisions are offered that participation. Relationships, on the other hand, are connected to how the students interact on a one-on-one basis, helping, receiving help, and solving conflicts. Skills by themselves do not help students accomplish great things, however, the skills put in practice, bring education into a more inclusive environment. In this relation, inclusive design, smart practices facilitate interaction, since everyone is supported, everyone is challenged and everyone benefits.

It is noteworthy to mention that many definitions of inclusion define the term through what it should not be. According to prior research, inclusive education should not practice exclusion, segregation and integration. Exclusion is when students are denied access to education, segregation is when students are provided education in a separate environment to their peers.

Integration is when individuals are in mainstream classrooms, but no adjustments are made, while teaching and assessments remain the same.

Integration and Inclusion are often used interchangeably; however, they are not the same. Integration is allowing individuals to access mainstream environments but not making adaptations to somebody's needs. Integration expects everyone to fit into the already existing environment. This approach does not help in the long term. Fazekas & Csalagovits, 2019, p.7]

Genuine inclusion happens when all students are educated in classrooms (or e-learning systems), alongside their peers with inclusive design of curriculum, instruction, assessment and the learning environment caters learning of the diverse student base [Fazekas, 2018]

Sustainable education

Sustainable education or sustainable learning in education (SLE) is a fairly novel term with little research or agreement related to its definition, assessment, or application. SLE is an evolving “educational philosophy that refers to the curricula and methods of teaching and learning that provide individuals with the knowledge and know-how necessary for maintaining their learning in different circumstances (e.g., normalcy or crisis), during life transitions (e.g., from college to the labour market), and across different domains (e.g., math or literature)”. The SLE teaching practices include open-mindedness, inquiry, recycling, renewal, and rebuilding in order to deal with the challenging surrounding environments. What is expected from the learner is to be “active and vigilant, mindful and aware of external and internal conditions as part of ongoing assessments of their social and material world, acting effectively to better themselves and others” [Ben-Eliyahu, A., 2021].





These teaching approaches help instructors set out “proactive and intentional learning from the individual as part of collaborative learning”.

Sustainable education is “a transformative paradigm which values, sustains and realizes human potential in relation to the need to attain and sustain social, economic and ecological well being, recognizing that they must be part of the same dynamic” [Sterling, S., 2001]. Sterling (2001) argues that there is a need for an “educational culture and practices” which will be suitable to fit “the volatile, densely interconnected, and dangerously vulnerable world” we live in.

For the future what is needed is an “anticipative education, recognizing the new conditions and discontinuities which face present generations, let alone future ones: the massive challenges of global warming, species extinction, economic vulnerability, social fragmentation and migration, endemic poverty, the end of cheap energy, and more positively, the rise of localism, participative democracy, green purchasing, ethical business, and efforts to achieve a low carbon economy.”

In this sense, inclusive and sustainable teaching practices should be based on holistic methods which need to be carefully scaffolded in order to make education accessible and inclusive to all and durable in time. This guide aims at helping partner institutions adapt to the constantly challenging conditions of the present, as well as to apply flexible, successful, innovative and inclusive teaching and learning practices during the project implementation.

2. KEY POLICIES

United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals

The UN general assembly was held in September 2015, with 193 countries unanimously adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), an assurance to end poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change effects, as the most pressing social and environmental challenges we face. The 17 interconnected goals are a guide and serve as a blueprint for substance. The SDGs are an agenda to balance human prosperity while protecting the planet.

The 17 SDG built on the success of a previous 15-year plan, coming to an end in 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which achieved equal primary education for boys and girls, and dropped HIV infections among other successes. The SDGs go beyond the MDGs and are the result of a process that took 3 years of intensive community consultation and engaged about 8 million people to discuss and frame out the issues that mattered the most to their communities and on the planet. They ended up with 17 goals, with 169 targets, 232 indicators, which are integrated and indivisible. The SDGs were designed for all sectors and require participation from all sectors. The SDGs require safeguarding policy coherence, inclusiveness in societies that supports full and effective access and





participation of everyone, subpopulations, especially the poorest and the most vulnerable in order to achieve a long mission of no one left behind.

The SDGs are focused on a specific set of data, especially for individuals and social groups who are at risk of exclusion as mainstream data collection does not reflect the real situation. The SDGs are functional since they refer both to domestic and international issues. The SDGs are universal, meaning that the goals apply to all countries regardless of their development trajectories.

EIT Strategy 2021 – 2027

On 29 January the European Parliament and Council reached a political agreement on the new The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Strategy for 2021-2027. EIT now serves as an instrument that creates even more impact beyond the 8 existing Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs): climate change, digital transformation, energy, food, health, raw materials, urban mobility and added-value manufacturing e.g., the new strategy foresees a stronger importance of entrepreneurship and innovation. EIT's idea is to produce more talents and equip more people to become innovators, changemakers, researchers with the skills and mindset to unlock their potential. New innovation communities in cultural and creative industries are being developed. It will build on previous /already existing practices but the focus will be on where EIT brings concrete solutions out and has a broader geographical coverage to work in the direction of making the EU the global powerhouse for startups and to build a new pan European innovation ecosystem.

A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2020

On 5 March 2020, the European Commission published “A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025”, as one of a series of EU initiatives and strategies concerning equality, diversity and inclusion that the Commission will adopt and enact as part of delivering on its headline ambitions “A stronger Europe in the world” and “A new push for European democracy”.

Despite, the EU proving to be a global leader in gender equality and making significant progress in the past years, gender-based violence and stereotypes continue to persist: one in three women in the EU was subject to physical and/or sexual violence. To address this, the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 of the European Commission presented its strategy for equality between women and men in Europe. The Strategy outlines how the Commission will deliver on the promise made by President von der Leyen about Europe providing the same opportunities for all that share the same aspirations. It presents actions for the next 5 years and aims to ensure that the Commission will include an equality perspective in all EU policy areas.

To bridge those gaps and allow Europe to reach its full potential the European Commission's proposed 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy aims at “achieving a gender equal Europe where gender-based violence, sex discrimination and structural inequality between women and men are a



thing of the past. A Europe where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are equal.” It is structured around six themes: Being free from violence and stereotypes; Thriving in a gender-equal economy; Leading equally throughout society; Gender mainstreaming and an intersectional perspective in EU policies; Funding actions to make progress in gender equality in the EU; and Addressing gender equality and women’s empowerment across the world.

3. INSTITUTIONS INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE APPROACHES IN PARTNER

Babeş-Bolyai University

As the oldest and best ranked university in Romania, Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU) is the only higher educational institution that besides Romanian, officially teaches in Hungarian and German, the languages of the two biggest national minority groups in the country. BBU strives to increase the quality of education as it places an emphasis on academic competitiveness and development of human and social capital based on inclusive and sustainable practices. The inclusive and sustainable principles based on which BBU conducts its activities, include a set of 5 documents related to the topic, as well as 4 specific approaches which have already been adopted by the institution.

The first document is the Charter of Babeş-Bolyai University (2014). Inclusion and equal chances are seen as one of the universal principles guiding the institutions' work. This document promotes proactive attitudes, as well as integration into diversity and globalization. The second document is the Strategic Plan of Babeş-Bolyai University (2020-2024), which foresees six main priorities: education, R&D&I, relationship with society at large, quality – competitiveness – excellence – ethics, human resources, administration and services. The third document is the Ethical code of BBU (2013), assuring the framework for a healthy dialogue between all faculty, staff and students. The fourth document is the University guide for non-discrimination (2019), which has the goal to tackle any form of discrimination and harassment, that can hinder equal chances to education for disadvantaged students. The last document, UBB Goes Green programme (2016), promotes sustainable development and environmental protection, outlining measures under four different pillars: 1) Web-page with green content, 2) Individual reporting e.g., participation at conferences, publications and research, 3) Administration, which foresees environmental measures, 4) Ecologic education and nature protection, which includes raising awareness about sustainable development and nature protection through brochures in 4 different languages.

The approaches that BBU is currently using aside from the already implemented practices include the development of further documents and guidance which is currently developing. The guide for gender equality is under finalization, together with concrete actions targeting training in this field. Other



measures applied aim to actively promote social inclusion/positive discrimination, which provides access to education for persons belonging to disadvantaged ethnic minority groups, for disabled and generally for economically disadvantaged.

BBU also established programmes to reduce the drop-out rate and provide support for first year students. In addition, regular events, as well as lectures and seminars are constantly held touching upon or specifically targeting inclusion and sustainability. The university also offers both BA and MA level courses for different specializations and transversal courses opened to all students that include the field of inclusion and sustainability. Connected to the UBB Goes Green programme, the university develops a yearly report analysing outcomes and suggesting specific actions for future. Including both inclusion and sustainability the report follows the lines of the recommendations of the European Commission and the United Nations, as well as with priorities of the National Sustainable Development Strategy, including proposed indicators.

The university's ongoing and past practices also include the implementation of projects financed by the EU or from the national budget. Some of the recently finalized or currently included projects - PROMIS, RE-ACT, InclusUBB2 and Student practice for sustainable development - aim at: developing research-based instruments to help students better understand social inclusion, strengthening the role of higher educational institutions within regional innovation ecosystems, stimulating disadvantaged students to continue their studies in higher education, as well as reducing the drop-out rate and preparing students for the labour market.

Pavol Jozef Šafárik University

Pavol Jozef Šafárik University (UPJS) has several university units (Lifelong Learning Centre & Project Support, Technology and Innovation Park, MEDIPARK, University Counselling Centre), which provide sustainable support for students and graduates of the university. It means that it has provided the opportunity to every student to start a career with the support of the university and so it is easy for students to start their research activities and be competitive in the entrepreneur field. The IT Academy for young people is an ongoing project at UPJS, which aims to create a model of education and train young people for the current and future needs of the knowledge society and the labor market with a focus on informatics and ICT.

University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski"

The University of Plovdiv (PU) and respectively the PU project team has expertise in gender equality domain as it is currently a participant in a gender equality project under Horizon 2020 (No 824544, *SPEAR: Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research, 2019-2022*). PU has already had a *Gender Equality Plan* of the university, which works in the following areas: Designing and driving institutional change towards GE; Commitment of the university and sustainable

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support towards GE; Building gender-capacity; Gender-sensitive culture at the university; Work-life balance and work or study conditions; and Gender dimension in research and education. The inclusion policy of the university is supported not only by the Gender Equality Plan but also by the *Code of Ethics*, which guarantees equal treatment of academic and non-academic staff and students, without any form of discrimination.

In the sustainability domain, PU participates in ERASMUS+ project (No 2020-1-PT01-KA203-078646, : *Promoting Sustainability as a Fundamental Driver in Software Development Training and Education*, 2020-2023), together with ELTE, where education in sustainability is providing to the students and teachers at participating universities. PU will also be an organizer of the 2022 edition of the International Conference of *ICT for Sustainability*.

Eötvös Loránd University

Within the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) with 32.00 students, the Faculty of Informatics educates over 3,000 students. ELTE is a member of important university networks as Coimbra Group, Universities from the Capitals of Europe, European University Association, Danube Rectors' Conference, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, Central Europe Leuven Strategic Alliance (CELSA), CENTRAL Strategic Network of the Humboldt University of Berlin, ELTE co-operates in Erasmus programmes; various CEEPUS networks, and coordinates the 3-time (2004, 2007, 2019) award-winning HU-0019 network. InnoChange consortium is rooted in this Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS) network and is a fruit of long-lasting strategic cooperation

Eötvös Loránd University actively fosters inclusion and sustainability through various of activities, university policies, bodies and projects out of which the European University Alliance Erasmus+ project CHARM-EU provides a joint master programme “Master’s in Global Challenges for Sustainability” and also a toolkit in inclusivity showcasing e.g.. Hybrid Classroom Handbook, Inclusivity tips for CHARM-EU educators, Emerging Technologies Reader.

ELTE also participated in the Uni-ECO project aiming to raise awareness about sustainability on university campuses, and foster cooperation and actions among all the users of the campuses (students, academic and non-academic staff members). Summary of the report can be found here: https://uni-eco.umontpellier.fr/media/UNI-ECO_Summary-Report_FINAL_web.pdf. The main commonalities of the five HEIs participating are waste management, water reduction, education and research. However, the renewal of energy management and the development of sustainable procurement processes are still awaiting further development at the participating universities. Sustainability perceived as a core element is included across the university from teacher training, trough special education but also in computer science (eg. Promoting Sustainability as a Fundamental Driver in Software Development Training and Education 2020-1-PT01-KA203-078646).

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4. GUIDELINES ON INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1. Target groups

This guide is for all participants and stakeholders of the EIT HEI InnoChange Project: managers, educators, mentors, university teachers, students, PhD students, non-academic staff and others involved in Project implementation.

The guide has to navigate and support all participants in the variety of Project activities:

- Developing curriculum, training materials (incl. self-learning), demos and guidelines for different groups;
- Selecting students, teachers, non-academic staff and startup teams for trainings;
- Delivering self-learning materials, guidelines and demos;
- Conducting online and on site training for different groups;
- Mentoring different groups;
- Conducting online and on site meetings and events (workshops, hackathons, administrative meetings);
- Creating groups and communities (Entrepreneurship Community, etc.);
- Producing Project documents (Project handbook, case studies, impact reports, etc.);
- Establishing and maintaining Project repositories (SVN, Student Entrepreneurship Digital Hub, Digital Practitioners' Hub, etc.);
- Communicating in different environments and on site;
- Organizing and conducting dissemination campaigns/activities (social media campaigns, posters, papers, posts, videos, events' presentations, Rector's Conference, etc.);
- Promoting and ensuring lifelong learning opportunities on entrepreneurial and innovation;
- Ensuring societal embedding (and/ecosystem);
- Fostering sustainable innovation ecosystem;
- Developing entrepreneurial and innovation skills;
- Building entrepreneurial and innovation communities;
- Supporting the entrepreneurial transformation at partner institutions, etc.

4.2. Core competencies

The introduction and safeguarding of inclusion and sustainability depends critically on the commitment of all people [Curriculum Framework for Enabling the Sustainable Development Goals] with competencies understood to cover knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that build on individual capacity.

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RawMaterials
Connecting matters



Climate-KIC



Digital



Food



Health



InnoEnergy



Manufacturing



UrbanMobility



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The competencies, outlined in this document, can strengthen equality, tolerance and respect for all and enhance individual and collective responsibility, and, when included into curricula, can assist connection with the SDGs and envision a better future for all.

These competencies that individuals possess or should acquire are fundamental to staffing, recruiting, credentialing, personal advancement, workforce development, curriculum development and policy making.

Necessary competencies as outcomes from learning are: team building, communication, decision making, problem solving, sense of community, self-esteem, personal responsibility, empathy, moral development, ethics, values, resilience and improved inclination for educational achievement.

Alongside the learning outcomes, core competencies for achieving the SDGs are [Curriculum Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals]:

1. **Envisioning** – being able to imagine a better future. The premise is that when we know where we want to go, we will be better able to work out how to get there. The objective is to establish a link between long-term goals and immediate actions, and to motivate people to take action by harnessing their deep aspirations. Under this competency, key elements are:

- identifying relevance and meaning to the diversity of the individuals population people;
- exploring how to achieve change;
- offering direction and inspiration to take action;
- taking ownership of visions, processes and outcomes.

2. **Critical thinking and reflection** – learning to question our current belief systems, to reflect on unconscious and conscious biases, to reflect and question the structural barriers in society, and to recognize the assumptions underlying our knowledge, perspectives and opinions. Critical thinking helps people learn to examine economic, environmental, social and cultural structures in the context of sustainable development, and challenges people to examine and question the underlying assumptions that influence their world views by having them reflect on unsustainable practices. Critical thinking leads to confidence in addressing the dilemmas and challenges of sustainable development. It encompasses the knowledge, skills and processes associated with intellectual development. Under this competency, key elements are:

- developing the ability to participate in change;
- providing a new perspective;
- promoting alternative ways of thinking;
- creating metacognitive awareness.



3. **Systemic thinking** – acknowledging complexities and looking for links and synergies when trying to find solutions to problems and challenges. Systemic thinking helps us recognize that intersectional approach, that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and it is a better way to understand and manage complex situations. Under this competency, key elements are:

- shifting the way of thinking from ‘things’ to wholes, and linking these to ‘processes’ and functions;
- understanding the nature of feedback and how feedback affects system behaviour;
- integrating decision-making and adaptive management techniques.

4. **Building partnerships** – promoting dialogue and negotiation, learning to work together, co-creation, so as to strengthen ownership of and commitment to sustainable action through education and learning. Under this competency, key elements are:

- building a shared vision among a diverse range of stakeholders;
- motivating and adding value to initiatives;
- communicating, imparting and exchanging information.

5. **Participation in decision making** – empowering oneself and others. This means being involved and involving all people, and meaningfully implementing nothing about us without us approach, especially those individuals and groups who are traditionally excluded in decision making processes in joint analysis, planning and control of local decisions. Under this competency, key elements are:

- practicing inclusive decision making and responsibility for outcomes;
- encompassing a greater sense of ownership of and commitment to responsible action;
- building capacity for self-reliance and self-organisation;
- empowering individuals to take action.

4.3. Guiding principles and recommendations

1. Equal opportunities and access to the education, training and lifelong learning

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in the labour market.

1.1. Information provision about trainings - with accent to equal opportunities

All learners must be provided equal access to education and opportunities to enrich their knowledge and to develop their skills. Information provision about trainings (i.e. open calls) have to clearly state that training will provide equal opportunities for all and will accommodate





the specific needs of individuals, ensuring that everyone's access and learning needs will be met.

1.2. **Selecting learners/learning groups** without any form of discrimination

Every learner has the right to equal education and training, regardless of gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, nationality, origin, religion, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, property status or any other characteristics, established by law or in an international treaty, signed by partners' countries. Selection procedures must be conducted without any form of discrimination and include inclusion measures by all partners achieving both reducing barriers to access and addressing disadvantage, as well as for the programme to reflect the diversity of Europe's populations. The inclusion measure processes should thus reflect both these considerations.

1.3. Ensuring **equal training opportunities** for all learners from all partner institutions

The design of the training should be inclusive from the beginning (preventive approach) rather than retrospective (fixing the environment afterwards) (Fazekas, 2018). The inclusive design ensures that individuals with various backgrounds, life circumstances access and participate in the programme. Access to and participation in education in an inclusive manner based on the principles of fairness in distributing resources, opportunities, treatment, and success for every student. During the project inclusion by design is aimed and learners will be provided as well with adequate support provisions to access and participate effectively in the training session. Providing inclusive teaching and learning environments, mentoring and access to learning materials and demos, will benefit all.

2. Gender equality

Equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men must be ensured and fostered in all areas, including access and participation in different forms of education. Women and men have the right to equal pay for work of equal value, that is why education must safeguard equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, terms and conditions of employment and career progression.

2.1. Development of **inclusive curricula** with specific attention to gender

Development of a holistic inclusive curriculum that has a specific attention to gender means changing the way we provide and engage in learning. The proposed curricula should avoid and also reflect on conscious and unconscious bias and include diverse representations of all



people, history, and events. A holistic gender inclusion statement has to be included or mainstreamed in the syllabus.

2.2. Implementing **inclusive teaching practices** with specific attention to gender

These include creation of an inclusive teaching and learning environment with a specific focus on gender-neutral practices, in which teachers and learners are implementing, using inclusive language that respects diversity of the population, including avoiding gender stereotyping and aiming to ensure that all learners are appreciated, respected and treated equally.

Teachers have to ensure and facilitate that power of group dynamics are smoothen, and group roles are equally distributed among all individuals, especially focusing on gender. It is important to create welcoming and safe spaces for all individuals and check (ask them instead of making assumptions) with individuals how they experience their access and participation in the settings and develop their skills with technology and other equipment.

Teachers have to design inclusive learning experiences to embrace context and problem-solving, create an environment that fosters curiosity, make learning projects relevant and meaningful and incorporate various learning strategies and opportunities for creativity.

They have to connect learning to careers and role models, and provide opportunities for social learning and collaboration.

Educators have to provide choices and creative opportunities for multiple means of representation, and to demonstrate understanding since engaging with creative problem-solving also encourages students to embrace failure as part of the learning process, thus, building resilience. They have to encourage and empower an expanding mindset as opposed to natural talent or ability.

Teachers have to use inclusive language that is respectful for all.

2.3. Selecting **diverse learning groups**, with a specific focus to gender

In the selection procedures, trainers must provide opportunities for diverse, meaningful and equal participation of everyone, reflecting on and taking into account aspects of gender.

2.4. Usage of **inclusive language**, with a specific focus to gender in all project activities and documents

Applying inclusive language to all, especially safeguarding gender equality in all types of communications is implemented. The usage of respectful language is discussed with the individuals (rather than assuming what is politically correct) in the given circumstances and educational setting. It is essential to embrace the diversity of gender, especially when it comes





to those who do not identify themselves in the binary settings. Inclusive language should be addressed for all individuals - language should reflect inclusion, diversity and should respect people and treat them in their dignity. In English, this includes use of nouns that are not gender-specific to refer to roles or professions, such as chairperson, instead of chairman, or using they or them in documents and also be inclusive with announcements, such as Dear Participants, instead of Dear Ladies and Gentlemen. It can be achieved with usage of gender-neutral language [GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE in the European Parliament], which is not gender-specific and considers people in general, with no reference to women or men (for example: people or pronoun “they”).

2.5. Addressing the **gender gap in STEM**

The gap in the fields of STEM is a globally discussed issue (for the EU only 41% are women in these fields). During the learning process, as well as in the learning materials, positive female role models in STEM-related careers should be exposed.

2.6. Developing an **understanding of equality and diversity** with a specific focus to gender

Awareness raising is very important for tackling inequalities (even hidden ones) and for introducing and mainstreaming equality, especially gender equality. Gender equality should be addressed throughout the design, delivery, and monitoring phases of the project. The first aspect of that is to scan all project documents and especially its communication materials and project websites with an inclusive “glasses”, and it can be supported by an inclusivity checklist, especially with focus on gender equality.

3. Equal treatment

Regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, everyone should have the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to available goods and services.

3.1. Providing **equal treatment to all** in each project activity

Reducing inequality in all aspects and in all levels is one of UN SDGs. From the project point of view, all learners, teachers and participants in activities and events should be treated equally. Equal opportunities of under-represented groups with various backgrounds, lived experiences should be safeguarded.

3.2. Being **free from stereotypes**

All individuals should be empowered to freely express their ideas and emotions, especially those who are underrepresented or experiencing any form of oppression in society such as





based on gender and pursue their chosen educational and professional paths without the constraints of stereotypical gender norms. Involvement in project activities should be based only on objectivity regarding personal competences (for project work) and non-discriminatory selection (for training activities), which have nothing to do with any stereotypes, especially gender stereotypes. Interpersonal relationships during project implementation should also reflect on and exclude any stereotypical attitudes, especially any gender stereotypical attitudes.

3.4. Being **free from violence**

Everyone should feel a sense of belonging, and feel safe in any forms of (physical, or online) settings, whether it is education, workplaces, and in public spaces. Project partners must create welcoming and safe(r) spaces to individuals and follow this principle during all project design, delivery of activities and monitoring avoiding any form of violence (verbal, physical and psychological, incl. sexual harassment).

3.3. Developing an **understanding of equality**

Developing an understanding is crucial for tackling inequalities and for mainstreaming equality and inclusion in different spheres of project activities. All project documents (incl. communication materials) must clearly reflect the commitment towards equality and inclusion of partners, participants and stakeholders.

3.4. Ensuring wellbeing and fair **learning and working conditions**

Maintaining a healthy work environment is essential in the modern stressed society. People strive to keep a work-life balance, which refers to the level of prioritisation between personal and professional activities in an individual's life and the level to which activities related to their job are present in the home. Project activities should promote mental health and wellbeing measures and actions for all individuals and not violate work-life balance of the involved learners, academic and non-academic staff (flexible working arrangements, self-learning opportunities, etc.).

The other important aspects are ensuring the well-adapted work/learning environment and data protection. People have the right to a working environment that caters to their professional and learning strategies, and needs, which enables their participation in the labour market, as well as allows them the right to have their personal data protected in the employment context. Project management has to ensure a suitable work/learning environment and personal data of sensitive information protection for all participants.

4. Education for sustainable development

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Education for Sustainability is a learning process which is relevant to people, communities and organisations. Its ambition is to engage learners in thinking critically and creatively about the future as well as in considering the systemic changes that are needed to improve quality of life across the globe. The terms Education for Sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development are often used interchangeably. The concept of sustainability focuses on achieving human wellbeing and quality of life, pursued through the maintenance, care and equitable use of natural and cultural resources.

4.1. Stimulating **critical thinking** and reflection

Education for sustainability values the capacity of individuals and groups to reflect on personal experiences and world views and to challenge accepted ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. The project educators should encourage learners' critical thinking and reflection connected to their interpretation from a sustainable point of view on all learning topics.

4.2. Promoting **transformation and change**

Education for sustainability is not simply about providing information but involves equipping people with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes capacity and motivation to plan and manage change towards inclusive sustainability within an organisation, industry or community. Persons involved in teaching activities should aim to develop specific skills of learners that give them the ability to continue sustainable changes at all levels in society.

4.3. Providing education for all and **lifelong learning**

Education for sustainability is driven by a broad understanding of education and learning that includes people of all ages and backgrounds, life circumstances and at all stages of life and takes place within all possible learning spaces, formal and informal, in schools, workplaces, homes and communities. Project activities and outcomes should be strongly oriented to establishing lifelong learning opportunities after the end of the project and fostering the communities created during the project. Such groups can provide a framework and a network for informal education in the long run.

4.4. Fostering **complex systems thinking**

Education for sustainability aims to equip people to understand connections between environmental, economic, social and political systems and subsystems. Training should emphasize these relationships, leading to possible sustainable changes in both positive and negative aspects.

4.5. Provoking **envisioning** a better future

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Education for sustainability engages people in developing a shared vision for a sustainable future. Sustainable future topics should be discussed with every stakeholder, also following “Nothing about us without us” during the training sessions organized within the project.

4.6. Ensuring **participation**

Education for sustainability recognises participation as critical for engaging groups and individuals in sustainability. A crucial approach, such as inclusive approach the training sessions should and active and participatory forms of learning (as discussions and collaborative work), as a way of the active engagement of all learners.

4.7 Creating **partnerships** for change

Education for sustainability focuses on the use of genuine partnerships to build networks and relationships, and improve communication between different sectors of society. Including learners with various backgrounds and from different university subject domains in the training groups will convince them of the power of intersubject opportunities in the driven sustainable change in the society.

5. Sustainable innovation ecosystem

Innovation ecosystem is an intertwined network of multi-layer relationships between quadruple helix actors engaged in the innovation system. Through the engagement and interaction of knowledge explorers and exploiters relevant knowledge and creativity flow through a framework of sustainable, socially and environmentally sensitive value co-creation and innovation. These complex relations between players aim to enable technology development and innovation with an open mindset and promote the responsible and inclusive exploitation of resources.

5.1. Supporting **economic sustainability**

Economic sustainability refers to practices that support the long-term economic development of a company or nation while also protecting environmental, social, and cultural elements. Project training sessions have to teach all different groups of trainees on economic sustainable practices that reflect on and include that no one is left behind and to support innovation and entrepreneurship closely related to or using such kinds of practices.

5.2. Supporting **social sustainability**

Social sustainability [Social Sustainability] occurs when the formal and informal processes; systems; structures; and relationships actively support the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy and livable communities. Socially sustainable communities are





equitable, diverse, connected and democratic and provide a good quality of life. [WACOSS, Western Australia Council of Social Services]

From a project perspective, social sustainability is about understanding the impacts of project work on people and society. Project activities and post-activities can become the source of innovation for new product or service lines.

Social sustainability has 5 dimensions/factors [Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen; Hodgson N.], which determine if a project is socially sustainable:

- Equity (reduces the disadvantages of the target groups, meets the needs of everyone, delivered without bias, promotes fairness, etc.);
- Diversity (meets the particular needs of diverse target groups, recognizes diversity within cultural, ethnic and racial groups, allows their beliefs and values to be taken into consideration, promotes understanding and acceptance within the broader community of diverse backgrounds, cultures and life circumstances, etc.);
- Social cohesion (helps the target groups develop a sense of belonging in the broader community, increases participation in social activities, builds links between the target groups and other groups in the broader community, encourages the target groups to contribute towards the community or provides support for others, etc.);
- Quality of life (improves education, training and skill development opportunities for the target groups, etc.);
- Democracy and Governance (allows for a diverse range of people to participate and be represented in decision-making processes, the processes of decision-making will be clear to and easily understood by partners and stakeholders, holds a budget sufficient to ensure adequate delivery by qualified trained staff, the duration of the project is sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes, the end result is considered what after the project completion, etc.).

5.3. Supporting **environmental sustainability**

Environmental sustainability is the responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect global ecosystems to support health and wellbeing, now and in the future. Partners have to manage, organize and conduct all project activities in an accessible way to cater needs of involved stakeholders and respect EU goals for becoming carbon neutral and going towards zero waste production.

5.4. Strengthening **partnerships for sustainability** among partners

To establish and strengthen a sustainable innovation ecosystem is a big challenge, which is beyond the capabilities of individual organizations. In this case, the best approach for partners

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is to team up in a sustainable way, not only during the project design and implementation, but also during the monitoring phase and after ending the project. During the project implementation, a supporting community has to be established.

5.5. Developing an **understanding of sustainability in all dimensions**

The understanding of sustainability means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability topics should be addressed during the training sessions and included in the syllabus.

6. Entrepreneurial and innovation skills in a lifelong learning perspective

EIT HEI INITIATIVE - Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education supports increasing the innovation capacity of higher education and aims to help higher education institutions teach innovation and entrepreneurship by encouraging these institutions to build their capacities and develop concrete actions to increase their impact.

6.1. Supporting the **entrepreneurial transformation** at partner institutions

The EIT initiative aims to unlock the full innovation potential of HEIs by increasing their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity whilst integrating them into Europe's larger innovation ecosystem. Partner universities have to prepare for creating this sustainable change, that is why the project has to ensure communication and knowledge transfer with Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

6.2. Ensuring **sustainable teaching** and **lifelong learning opportunities** on entrepreneurial and innovation

To achieve the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals of UN and especially SDG4, that aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030, universities must provide education that enables students to learn in a way that is student centred, inclusive and teaches entrepreneurial and innovation as lifelong learning. Project activities must prepare sustainable lifelong learning opportunities in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation that can be exploited later in all university activities.

6.3. Establishing **sustainable partnership** in the long run

A type of long-term and sustainable partnership will strengthen the European innovation ecosystem. During the project design, implementation and monitoring, partners need to establish strong relationships for exchange of knowledge and best practices and include various stakeholders and individuals or groups with lived experiences to share their authentic own lived experiences of exclusion and inclusion.





5. CHECKLIST FOR INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Principle/ Recommendation	WP No ... check	Not applicable	Comments
Equal opportunities and access to the education, training and lifelong learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Information provision about trainings - with accent to equal opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Selecting learners/learning groups without any form of discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensuring equal training opportunities for all learners from all partner institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Development of inclusive curricula with specific attention to gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implementing inclusive teaching practices with a specific attention to gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Selecting diverse learning groups, with a specific focus to gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Usage of inclusive language, with a specific focus to gender in all project activities and documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Addressing the gender gap in STEM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Developing an understanding of equality and diversity with a specific focus to gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Principle/ Recommendation	WP No ... check	Not applicable	Comments
Equal treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Providing equal treatment to all in each project activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Being free from stereotypes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Being free from violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Developing an understanding of equality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensuring wellbeing and fair learning and working conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Education for sustainable development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Stimulating critical thinking and reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Promoting transformation and change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Providing education for all and lifelong learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fostering complex systems thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provoking envisioning a better future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensuring participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Creating partnerships for change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainable innovation ecosystem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting economic sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting social sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting environmental sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	





Principle/ Recommendation	WP No ... check	Not applicable	Comments
Strengthening partnerships for sustainability among partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Developing an understanding of sustainability in all dimensions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Entrepreneurial and innovation skills in a lifelong learning perspective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting the entrepreneurial transformation at partner institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensuring sustainable teaching and lifelong learning opportunities on entrepreneurial and innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Establishing sustainable partnership in the long run	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. GLOSSARY

Education for Sustainable Development – empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity.

Equity – is ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance.

Exclusion – happens when students are directly or indirectly prevented from or denied access to education in any form.

Gender mainstreaming – is an approach to policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns. It is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

Gender stereotypes – are the beliefs that people have about the characteristics of males and females. The content of stereotypes varies over cultures and over time. These expectations are often related to the roles that the sexes fulfill in the context of the specific culture.



Inclusion – is creating an environment where people feel both welcomed and a true sense of belonging, while at the same time their uniqueness is acknowledged and valued. Inclusion means having an approach that understands and encourages people to be different. An inclusive approach values, respects, and celebrates people's differences and equal value. It enables people to participate fully in any mainstream activity. Being inclusive means listening to each other and being open to change. (Todd, 2014; Fazekas, 2017) "People's identities are shaped by the diversity of contexts which intersect within an individual's life. Intersectional identities of people should be valued, respected and celebrated for the richness and diversity they bring to society." (Fazekas, 2018, 17)." (Fazekas & Csalagovits, 2019, p.7-8) Inclusion requires a systematic change in structures, approaches, strategies to dismantle barriers existing in the environment. Inclusion means a shift in an organisational culture where that different groups or individuals having different backgrounds, various circumstances, own lived experiences are feeling the sense of belonging, feel respected and valued, socially accepted, welcomed and treated without discrimination. These circumstances can be visible or hidden, self-evident or more inherent.

Integration – Integration and Inclusion are often used interchangeably, however, they are NOT the same. Integration is allowing individuals to access mainstream environments but not making adaptations to somebody's needs. Integration expects everyone to fit into the already existing environment. This approach does not help in the long term Fazekas & Csalagovits, 2019, p.7).

Segregation – occurs when different groups or individuals with various circumstances, own lived experiences are forced to be in separate environments designed for these groups or individuals and it is an isolation from other groups or individuals (Fazekas, 2018).

Sustainable development - requires balanced integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Sustainable innovation ecosystems – are intertwined networks of multi-layer relationships through which relevant knowledge and creativity flow through a framework of sustained value co-creation. These complex relations between players aim to enable technology development and innovation with an open mindset and promoting the responsible and inclusive exploitation of resources.

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8. ANNEX

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EIT HEI Initiative

Innovation Capacity Building
for Higher Education



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UNIVERSITATEA BABEŞ-BOLYAI
BABEŞ-BOLYAI TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM
BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITÄT
TRADITIO ET EXCELLENTIA

Inclusive and sustainable approaches in partner
institutions:

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1. Introduction

Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU) is the best ranked and oldest higher educational institution in Romania, aiming to become a world-class university promoting both academic competitiveness and development of human and social capital, based on the principles of inclusiveness. It is the only university in the country that offers higher educational programmes in three languages spoken in the country. Thus, besides Romanian (the official language of the country) the university also has Hungarian and German (the languages spoken by the two biggest national minority groups of the country) lines of study. In addition, there are also programmes offered in languages of international circulation.

Due to the specific historical path of the country, as well as the social and economic context, in the last decades the university put accent on inclusiveness and sustainability from the point of view of assuring equal access to education for members of the most represented national minority groups, as well as of disadvantaged categories of population due to ethical origin, socio-economic status or disabilities. However, in the last years, accent started to be put more and more on sustainable development from an economic and environmental point of view (green development), in parallel with the development of the universities' third mission.

According to the data of the National Statistical Office, for several years now, the number of girls/ women enrolled and graduating from any level of higher education is considerably higher than that of boys/males in Romania. This is also characteristic for BBU, which, until now only put accent on gender equality from the point of view of combating discrimination and sexual harassment. Nevertheless, currently the university is developing a more extensive and comprehensive gender inclusion/equality strategy in line with the latest recommendations of the European Commission.

2. University documents closely related to the topic

- **Charter of Babeş-Bolyai University (2014)**

According to the Charter of the university, (currently under revision) alongside other areas, BBU puts accent on the promotion of multiculturalism, intercultural and inter-confessional dialogue; pro-active and participatory attitudes; as well as integration into diversity and globalization, based on respect for identity and reciprocity.

The principle of equal opportunities for students with different linguistic backgrounds is part of BBU's mission, but is also considered as one of the general principles guiding the institutions' whole activity together with other principles such as: transparency, solidarity and social inclusion. Besides the first two missions, the university puts accent on the development of its third mission, as well, aiming to support social, economic, cultural and political development at all territorial levels in line with the needs of community.

- **Strategic Plan of Babeş-Bolyai University for the period 2020-2024**

The six priorities of the university underlined in the Strategic Plan cover education, R&D&I, relationship with society at large, quality – competitiveness – excellence – ethics, human resources, administration and services. Inclusiveness is especially highlighted linked to the development of human resources, along with





competitiveness, trust and diversity. However, as presented below, aspects linked to both inclusion and sustainable development appear under several priorities:

a) Education priority underlines the multilingual, multi-confessional character and orientation of the university and sets directions of action in this sense;

b) R&D&I priority puts accent on the orientation of research and innovation activities towards major societal challenges, with accent on environment and health related ones;

c) Relationship with society priority articulates the intention of the university to be oriented towards the specific needs of society and businesses and to further support and develop two specific programmes, i.e.:

- UBB4Society&Economy: a programme aiming to develop services for disadvantaged categories of population,
- UBB Goes Green: a programme for sustainable development and attention towards the environment;

d) Quality – competitiveness – excellence – ethics – inclusion priority aims to promote from an socio-economic perspective an organizational culture based on solidarity and cooperation, as well as equal chances and high ethical standards;

e) Human resources priority foresees support for students through grants and scholarships not only based on merit, but also with the aim to assure social protection to those in difficulty. As part of this priority BBU also supports further development of professional and psychological counselling and mentorship activities for students and the implementation of strategies to reduce the risk of drop out. Additionally, according to this priority BBU is paying special attention to the needs of students with disabilities. To this end a special Office for Students with Disabilities was founded and is operating within the institution. At last, but not at least, development of tailored services for employees with children and former employees who retired is also part of this priority;

f) Administration priority underlines the goal to assure equal access for all students, faculty and employees to the digital resources and services of the university and outlines measures for the further development of the campus in order to assure a bigger number of places for students in dorms.

- **Ethical code of BBU (2013)**

As a general guidance for conducting all activities of the university and relationship between all employees, as well as between them and students, the document promotes and relies on the principles of academic freedom, competence and professionalism, integrity, intellectual honesty, collegiality, loyalty, justice and fairness, responsibility. Alongside several other provisions, the code foresees measures to combat any form of discrimination and harassment based on gender, ethnic origin or any other aspect.

- **University guide for non-discrimination (2019)**

The guide is aiming to combat all forms of discrimination and harassment, being especially targeted towards activities such as education, recruiting, admittance of students and social-administrative facilities available to students. Additionally, the documents promotes positive discrimination in order to assure equal chances to



education for disadvantaged categories of students due to their ethnic origin, physical disabilities or socio-economic circumstances.

As measures and actions adopted at the level of BBU, the guide outlines:

- measures to prevent any form of discrimination, including affirmative action and positive discrimination,
- mediation and amicable settlement of disputes arising from discriminatory acts,
- sanctioning discriminatory behavior,
- support and assistance in case of discrimination and harassment.

As part of measures and actions under point a) it is worth to mention some of the specific means foreseen by the guide, such as: organization of information campaigns, seminars, workshops regarding the situation of minority groups and forms of discrimination; institutional involvement in voluntary activities linked to non-discrimination; promotion of non-discriminatory approaches within the university; forming of strategic partnerships with institutions and organizations dealing with non-discrimination and promotion of equal chances; development of courses covering themes such as tolerance and diversity; development of physical and educational infrastructure in order to correspond to the needs of students with disabilities, etc.

- **UBB Goes Green programme (2016)**

Is an overarching programme aiming to promote sustainable development and environmental protection, outlining measures along four main pillars:

- Web-page: development of a dedicated web page green.ubbcluj.ro in order to present concrete activities linked to the universities' green policy, as well as annual reports on the results achieved,
- Individual reporting: faculty and researchers employed at the university are encouraged to report through the Application on the Management of Research academic activity linked to sustainable development, e.g. participation at conferences, publications and research,
- Administration: foresees measures to be implemented in the buildings used by the university in order to reduce CO2 emissions, to sustainably use resources (with accent on the use of water, paper, plastic, glass and energy efficiency), to handle waste, including toxic, electric and electronic waste, as well as biomass, and to raise the size of the green spaces in the areas used by the university,
- Ecologic education and nature protection: includes as measures the introduction in the university curricula of activities linked to sustainable development, environmental protection and of transversal activities; support for events linked to sustainable development and nature protection; involvement of students in the UBB Goes Green programme and implementation of actions with the participation of both students and academia; awareness raising about sustainable development and nature protection through brochures in Romanian, Hungarian, German and English, as well as through informative panels in the parks and green areas that are owned by the university, but are accessible to the general public (for ex. Botanical Garden, Iuliu Hațieganu Sports and Recreational Park, etc.)

3. (Most important) approaches currently used in the institution

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Besides the general actions and measures that are already in place (as mentioned above under the headings University guide for non-discrimination and UBB Goes Green programme) below we give specific details about some of the most important and already mentioned actions, as well as point out new initiatives, thus:

- **Development of further documents and guidance**
 - based on the ethical code and the guide for non-discrimination BBU is currently developing a guide for gender equality, that besides other concrete actions will also contain a measure targeting the development of training content and organization of training courses in the field.
 - in line with the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 the university is currently finalizing the Procedure for mental welfare within BBU.
- **Active measures for social inclusion/positive discrimination**
 - in line with the national legislation access to education for disadvantaged categories of youth – members of the Roma minority ethnic group and youth coming from disadvantaged, rural areas – is assured through specially reserved places at different faculties of the university,
 - there are certain faculties at the university that also have specially reserved places for persons with physical disabilities,
 - the university is supporting students that are economically disadvantaged, through social scholarships, as well as by giving them priority in the student dorms,
 - there are several ongoing programmes aimed at reducing student drop-out, as well as inclusion in the academic community specifically and the wider community in general, such as the Student Mentor programme and the psychological counseling programme, or the StudentHub that offers infrastructure and specific services to support integration and learning of first year students;
 - in the context of the pandemic caused by the spread of the Sars-COV2 virus, the university widened the scope of support for the most economically deprived students and provided them with laptops in order to be able to participate at online courses and seminars; in addition access to basic digital resources, such as the MS Office package was accorded to all students. Free laptops and internet access is going to be offered starting with the 2021-2022 academic year to all 2000 students receiving social scholarship, in the framework of a project supported from the European Regional Development Fund under the Competitiveness Operational Programme 2014-2020;
 - students and prospective students with disabilities are supported by the Office for Students with Disabilities, that provides information for prospective students about the specially reserved places for them at the different faculties of the university; translation services into sign language for students with hearing impairment; free access to screen reader and screen magnifying applications for students with visual impairment; adapted education content for students with both visual and hearing impairment, as well as services linked to the electronic elaboration of papers, dissertations. The Office regularly organizes events, lectures, seminars for both faculty and students in order to better understand the needs of students with disabilities and better support their integration. With the aim



to support integration of and interaction with disadvantaged, the office also organizes targeted training courses, for example on learning sign language, for both faculty and students.

- **Inclusion and sustainability linked to education**

The educational offer linked to inclusion and sustainability covers specializations, courses offered within faculties for different specializations and transversal courses opened to all students. Linked to the first category we can mention BA and MA level specializations such as Sustainable Development and Environmental Management offered by the Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, or the MA in Sustainable regional development offered by the Faculty of Economic Science and Business Administration, as well as the MA specialisations at the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work in Applied Sociology in Regional Development¹; Social Work and Social Economics; Advice and Assistance in Social Services; Management of Social Services; Social Work in the Justice System, Probation and Mediation or the BA degrees in Social Work. Courses linked to social inclusion or related to social inclusion are offered at the Faculties of Political Sciences, Administration and Communication, European Studies; Sociology and Social Work, Law, History and Philosophy, Psychology and Educational Science, Physical Education and Sport, Economic Science and Business Administration. Courses linked to sustainable development are offered at various specializations within Faculties of European Studies, Geography, Economic Science and Business Administration.

In addition the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences has included in its psycho-pedagogical module the thematic of social inclusion, as well as sustainable development. The module is opened to students from years I and II from different faculties and specializations. The same faculty is offering an accredited continuous learning programme with the title “Professional development in the field of inclusive/special education”, as well as a didactic masters’ programme. The latter has a course linked to social inclusion. The Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering regularly organizes summer schools, open lectures, workshops hackathons focused on different subjects that are linked to sustainable development, green transition. Some of these events are open to a wider audience than students and faculty, targeting for example high-school pupils.

Starting with the academic year 2021-2022, BBU is going to offer a transversal course for all students at all educational levels in the field of entrepreneurship. The course will also include the topic of sustainable development. At last, but not at least BBU is offering on a yearly basis excellency scholarships in different fields, one of them being sustainable development.

- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning**

Linked to the UBB Goes Green programme, the university develops an annual report and based on learning from previous results proposes a concrete action plan for the upcoming year. Even if it is linked to the

1 This specialization is in Hungarian only.



sustainable development university agenda that is more focused on sustainable development from an environmental point of view, the report also covers aspects related to inclusion and inclusiveness in line with the University guide for non-discrimination and the recommendations of the European Commission and the United Nations, as well as with priorities of the National Sustainable Development Strategy.

4. Best practices

Through the adoption and operationalization of the UBB Goes Green programme, BBU was the first university in Romania to put in place a general programme oriented towards sustainable development. To measure progress, the institution is constantly monitoring outputs using the Green Metric indicators on sustainability, sustainable development and responsible use of resources. Based on this indicator system is the 2nd most advanced university on national level and ranks 340 on global level. The yearly report on the UBB Goes Green programme also includes an overview on institutional level in terms of fulfillment of the UNECE indicators targeting higher education institutions according to the questionnaire prepared by Economic Commission for Europe of the UNO.

5. Current and previous (work) projects in the domain

UBB had and has several projects financed from European or national public funds dealing with inclusion and sustainability within the institution and in the wider society and community at local, regional and national level. Some of the most important and recent initiatives especially impacting institutional development and capacity building are:

- **PROMIS – Promoting social inclusion skills in a post-truth world: A gamified online platform and curriculum:** is a Strategic Partnership project financed from Erasmus+, running between 2019 and 2022. Within the project, 7 organizations from 6 countries aim to develop under the coordination of BBU, research-based instruments to help students better understand what social inclusion is and how they can enhance their competencies in order to be able to interact with marginalized groups. Project web-page: <https://promis.education/>
- **RE-ACT – Self-reflection tools for smart universities acting regionally:** is one of the three strategic projects financed by Erasmus+ KA3, aiming to strengthen the role of higher educational institutions within regional innovation ecosystems and more specifically linked to the design, revision and implementation of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). One of the main outputs of the project is foreseen to be a new self-assessment tool “HEInnovate for RIS3”, complementary to the original HEInnovate tool. The project in which BBU is a partner is implemented between 2020 and 2021, being coordinated by Porto Business School. Project web-page: <http://ris3heinnovate.eu/the-project/>
- **InclusUBB2 - Facilitating the Integration, through Inclusion Policies, into the Labour Market of the Youth in the Academic Environment:** the project financed by the National Council for Higher Education and RDI was closed by BBU in 2020. It aimed at creating the premises for pre-university students from disadvantaged environments to continue their studies, as well as to reduce the drop-out rate of enrolled students. As a result BBU's capacity to propose concrete measures and actions linked to



inclusion and equity was enhanced and the university was capable to answer specific societal challenges deriving from the Covid-19 pandemic. Further information: <https://news.ubbcluj.ro/en/ubb-project-on-facilitating-the-integration-through-inclusion-policies-into-the-labour-market-of-the-youth-in-the-academic-environment/>

- **Student practice for sustainable development:** is a project started in 2021 and currently running. With financing from the European Social fund under the Human Capital Operational Programme 2014-2020 the project aims to increase the capacity of students to integrate in the labour market, in fields closely linked to sustainable development, through student practice programmes and stimulated enterprises. Activities that are targeting students from the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, the Faculty of Physics, the Faculty of Biology and Geology also contain a component of skills, knowledge and competence development through training programmes and lectures that cover areas linked to sustainable development. Project web-page: <http://dezvoltaredurabila.granturi.ubbcluj.ro/>

6. Other information

The Research Centre for Sustainable Development is an interdisciplinary research Centre within the Faculty of Geography having the mission to involve university, institutional and private resources in order to enhance the research efforts and as well as the development of expertise and education regarding sustainable development. The Centre and some of the individual researchers from the Centre closely cooperate with the Department for Sustainable Development within the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government, responsible for the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy. As one of the results of this cooperation in 2020 a joint conference on Sustainable Development was organized and hosted by BBU. Besides other achievements the Centre developed in the last years an indicator system tailored to Romania to assess local and regional progress towards SDG's and novel methods to measure regional inequality based on night-time lights observation system data.

Further information about the centers' work: <http://ccdd.centre.ubbcluj.ro/en/about-us/>

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