

# Smile

SMILE Final Symposium on Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity in modern society

*Making inclusion a central strategy in our universities*

SMILE

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16 November 2023

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Erasmus+ KA3 Social inclusion and common values | 621433-EPP-1-2020-1-BE-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN

*The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



# Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iasi Romania (TUIASI)

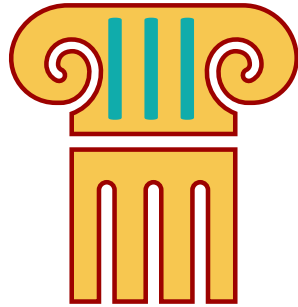


"Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University of Iasi (TUIASI), classified in top ten Romanian Universities is among the oldest and best-known higher education institutions in our country, with an important tradition in technical, scientific and cultural education and a thriving presence on the international scene.

TUIASI is home to over 13.500 diverse and creative students on one of the largest national campuses, located in the heart of the city of Iasi, a true cultural capital city in North-East of Romania.

# Focus area: pillar III

Our work was focused mainly on **Learners with low socio economic status**



Partners in Pillar III:

University of Turku (FI)



Solidar Foundation (BE)



- ✓ The opportunity to address the **access, participation** and **attainment** of learners with a lower socio-economic status (low SES);
- ✓ The development of the **tools** to **increase the engagement** of HEIs, civil society and national authorities to further the **impact of diversity and social inclusion**;
- ✓ The challenge to develop the appropriate **training environment** and materials for the **university staff** (both academic and non-academic) in relation to this dimension.

# Audit of Diversity

**3 audit sessions**, within TUIASI (September 2022), addressing to different target groups as follows:

- ✓ TUIASI Management;
- ✓ Academic Staff Session;
- ✓ TUIASI students and graduates.

**2 audit sessions**, organized on local public universities:

- ✓ Iasi University of Life Sciences „Ion Ionescu de la Brad” – March 2023
- ✓ National University of Arts „George Enescu” Iași – March 2023

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Photos taken during the *audit sessions*



Some **CHALLENGES** and **ACTIONS** identified during the Audit sessions

<b>CHALLENGE 1</b>	<b>Everyone should understand its role regarding the inclusion and diversity within the university</b>
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**Actions**

- ✓ Training of the administrative staff / CPDs
- ✓ Increasing students' communication and inclusion during study activities

<b>CHALLENGE 2</b>	<b>To promote an inclusive integrated internal communication especially for students</b>
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**Actions**

- ✓ Training of students
- ✓ Inventory of existing communication channels

## Some CHALLENGES and ACTIONS identified during the Audit sessions

### CHALLENGE 3

To integrate the various initiatives into a strategic plan *and*  
To foster the culture of diversity and inclusion (organizational/structural level, people and services) – in all procedures and communication, in fostering attitudes and behaviours for addressing equity of people.

### Actions

- ✓ Inventory of existing practices/persons/projects
- ✓ Future projects; Involving NGOs
- ✓ SMILE CPDs
- ✓ Training of students

### CHALLENGE 4

Increasing efforts to address discriminations

### Actions

- ✓ Mentorship programmes
- ✓ A task force to engage in addressing diversity and inclusion

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Some **CHALLENGES** and **ACTIONS** identified during the Audit sessions

**CHALLENGE 5**

**Students for students!**  
**Better connected**

**Actions**

- ✓ Improving future projects based on the lessons learned (ROSE projects)
- ✓ Increasing the number of multicultural programmes for students



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# National Colloquium

On 21 June 2023, within the framework of the international event INVENTICA 2023, "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University of Iasi, Romania organized *NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY*.

Different groups of stakeholders attended the event and discussing the project tools: *representatives of the Romanian universities and universities from Republic of Moldova, researchers, representatives of recognized Romanian research institutes, national organizations and civil associations.*



## Ways of supporting low-SES students in Romania



- often students' educational activity is supported by *professors willing to help them in their spare time* (by email, phone or online meetings);
- representatives of academic and administrative community have been involved in supporting students with lower SES background, *providing equipment, computers or other electronic devices* to finalise their thesis or other practical projects for various subjects;
- students with lower SES background are part of the target group for some projects coordinated by the university, as *ROSE projects*; students with economic issues and students with various physical disabilities were involved in projects of social inclusion carried out by the university/school to help them improve their self-confidence and *to support them to complete their studies and to get to the next level of their personal growth.*

## Ways of supporting low-SES students in Romania



- activities of supporting *students with excellent academic results, but with lower income, students who were constantly helped to carry out their diploma project.*
- the counsellors from *TUIASI Counselling Centre* and the teaching staff from *TUIASI Department of Teacher Training* were involved in improving not only *educational achievements of low-SES students*, but also their personal development, through individual and in-group counselling meetings.

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*Measures that could contribute to improving the inclusion of students with low socio-economic status, both within and outside the education system*

Solutions regarding the *educational environment*:

- A continuous development of educational programmes to stimulate and attract students with low-SES background;
- A specific academic monitoring, in order to notice low-SES students' academic progress over a period of time;
- The national after-school programmes or remedial programmes;
- Continuous training courses for the academic community to acquire/develop transversal skills.
- Access for low SES students to the infrastructure specific to their field of study by developing a formal framework which would permit to the students to access the technical infrastructure from the laboratories without being strictly limited to teaching activities and without requiring the attendance of a teacher;

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*Measures that could contribute to improving the inclusion of students with low socio-economic status, both within and outside the education system*

Solutions regarding *the educational environment*:

- Providing each dormitory with a room equipped with computers where access should be a priority for those with economic issues;
- Reducing the number of students in a group at seminars, laboratories could contribute more to the student self-affirmation in the study group;
- Free access of low-SES students to more laboratories equipped with tools (technical drawing and project design laboratories) which could eliminate the feeling of financial constraints that some students face especially in their first year of study;

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*Measures that could contribute to improving the inclusion of students with low socio-economic status, both within and outside the education system*

Solutions regarding *the scholarships and financial support*:

- Ensuring social scholarships to a larger number of beneficiaries (disadvantaged students);
- Ensuring social scholarships to those low SES students with recognised activity and attendance at courses;
- The possibility of awarding low-SES students with merit-based scholarships, even when they also receive the social scholarship;
- Financial support to low SES students by providing them with the necessary equipment in the teaching-learning process (laptop, internet subscription);

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*Measures that could contribute to improving the inclusion of students with low socio-economic status, both within and outside the education system*

Solutions regarding *the scholarships and financial support*:

- Ensuring access to social services (accommodation in the educational institution dormitories for free or for smaller fees, free/smaller fees for daily food at the student canteen, free trips/camps during holidays, etc.);
- National programmes for schools and universities for the acquisition of electronic devices, to facilitate low-SES students access to information;
- Programmes for study loans;
- Funding training programmes, free of charge for students with low SES background.





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**THANK YOU!**

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