The DAISSy-HOU enhances Inclusion, Diversity, and Equality in Education

IncluDE

Equity of educational opportunities is a fundamental human right. Inclusion has become a pivotal principle in policies and actions of the European Union (EU), UNESCO and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), yet many challenges remain in achieving truly inclusive education. The European co-funded project "**A European Inclusion Reference Framework for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (IncluDE)**" addresses these challenges by developing a comprehensive Inclusion Reference Framework for Higher Education Institutions across Europe. This initiative builds on the work of the **European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) - Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion (TFDI)**, which highlighted the urgent need for a coherent framework to manage and enhance inclusion in education.

It is a fact that Universities and member states have been developing strategies, frameworks, and actions to promote inclusion. Nevertheless, students continue to face barriers related to disability, health conditions, cultural differences, economic and social disadvantages, discrimination, and geographical limitations. These challenges can impact every stage of a student's academic journey, from admission to progression, assessment, and career preparation.

Given this, the general objective of *IncluDE* project is to create an **Inclusion Reference Framework** and related instruments, empowering Institutions to manage and improve **Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity** in Higher Education and lifelong learning. Therefore, the project will deliver a set of interrelated outcomes, designed to provide practical tools and sustainable impact, namely:

- **A Compendium of Principles and Recommendations**, consolidating research, innovation, EU and UNESCO policies, and institutional practices related to inclusion.
- **A matrix-based Inclusion Reference Framework**, structured along the student journey and European Commission's inclusion challenges, incorporating validated indicators for inclusion at institutional, curriculum, and course levels.
- **An Inclusivity Evaluation Instrument**, offering institutions a self-assessment tool with rating scales to evaluate implementation, desirability, and feasibility of inclusion measures.
- **An Inclusion Monitor**, functioning as a structured discussion and action tool, supporting institutional improvement and linking strategies to EU and national frameworks.

- **An Inclusion Consultancy Group of experts** providing tailored advice and support, both online and face-to-face.
- **An open-access Inclusivity Resources Portal**, powered by the Consultancy Group, offering design models, guidelines, best practices, technological tools, and an AI assistant.
- **A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Course**, introducing leaders, educators, and support staff to inclusion principles, the framework, indicators, and tools, made available through the EADTU EMPOWER webinars and the European Digital Education portal.

The **DAISSy Research Group of the Hellenic Open University (HOU)** is actively involved in all actions and deliverables of the **IncluDE** project and is responsible for the implementation of the project activities in **Greece**. Its main responsibility lies in the **Validation of the Inclusive Higher Education Resources Portal**, which will serve as a comprehensive repository of practice-oriented guidelines, pedagogies, educational technologies, and examples of good practice. These resources will be drawn from the project's systematic review and be enriched by contributions from both full and associated partners. In this context, DAISSy-HOU also contributes to the Inclusion Experts Consultancy Group, acting as a member of the Advisory Board to ensure the quality, sustainability, and long-term impact of the portal.

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For more information regarding *IncluDE*, you can visit the project's website at https://include.eadtu.eu/home.

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