Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

# GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE FEDERATION OF BIH

Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019.

Partners:

Federal Ministry of Education and Science, BiH

University of Tuzla

University of Travnik

Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures


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*FOREWORD*

*Inclusive practice can be defined as attitudes and methods that ensure all learners can access mainstream education. Everyone works to make sure all learners feel welcome and valued, and that they get the right support to help them develop their talents and achieve their goals. (ALFFIE, 2018)*

In the context of the ERASMUS+ project "Development and Implementation of Social Dimension Strategies in Armenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina through Cross-regional Peer Learning - INCLUSION" , co-funded by the European Union, important work on the ground at higher education institutions and related stakeholder groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been accomplished in the spirit of inclusiveness in education. BiH partners of the consortium aimed to clarify how higher education institutions can challenge theoretical, methodological, institutional and practical aspects of implementing inclusive learning environments. Partners are bearing in mind the goal to contribute to the further development of HEIs that promote the enjoyment of human rights, the respect of human dignity and putting inclusion into practice.

Inclusion in this project implies a process whereby the University of Tuzla and University of Travnik employ all efforts to respond to the individual needs of all students by enabling teaching processes, funds and resources to improve equal opportunities. Through this process, the University builds its capacity to accept all those interested from the community who want to attend classes and reduce all forms of exclusion on any ground (SebbaandSachdev, 1997; Booth and Ainscow, 1998).

The student body should reflect the diversity of our populations. This indicates that we need to enable students to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. In order to achieve this undertaking, we need to continue with our efforts to provide adequate student services, create more flexible learning pathways into higher education and within higher education, and to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.

The Guidelines are a set of useful tools and information for university faculty and high school teachers, so that all the possibilities and opportunities of inclusive learning and teaching at higher education institutions and in classrooms could be explored, by highlighting five most important dimensions. The document is a result of a two-year extensive research of the BiH partners of the consortium implementing the INCLUSION project – Federal Ministry of Education and Science, University of Tuzla, University of Travnik and Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures.

**OVERVIEW**

1. EUROPEAN CONTEXT AND LONG-TERM GOALS OF IMPLEMENTING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1.1.    Introduction

In a complex world and with challenges that are increasingly interrelated, the necessity for collective answers to complex questions is ever growing. The document "Guidelines for Implementing the Social Dimension at Higher Education Institutions in the Federation of BIH" is a product of the ERASMUS + project "Development and Implementation of Social Dimension Strategies in Armenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina through Cross-Regional Peer Learning" (INCLUSION), which takes into account the possible solutions connecting us on an individual, federal, national, regional and even a global basis. The guidelines and recommendations addressing the inclusive approach to higher education aim at strengthening higher education institutions from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the area of inclusion, in its broader sense. Beginning with the analysis of the current state, more than 15 experts from four institutions in the Federation of BiH, including the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, a public and private higher education institution and a non-governmental organisation, participated in drafting the presented document, thus supporting the development process of the social dimension in higher education.

1.2.    European context and challenges for Bosnia and Herzegovina

The European Union has shown success in supporting higher education through cooperation policies and numerous funding programmes. One of the European Union's priorities in the context of a support system for higher education is developing an inclusive and connected higher education system. The European Commission emphasises the significant role of higher education in facing the European social and democratic challenges (COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on a renewed EU agenda for higher education/Brussels 30.5.2017).

All countries in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) must develop a coherent set of policy measures to address active participation of higher education in inclusion which identify underrepresented groups in higher education and outline specific, measurable actions to improve access, participation and completion of studies for those groups (A Strategy for the Development of the Social              Dimension              and              Lifelong              Learning              in              the EHEA to 2020).

The Fifth Bologna Policy Forum (Paris, 25th May 2018) has initiated a global policy dialogue focussing on two common concerns - social inclusion and the wider civic role of higher education. A statement by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education, heads of delegation, institutions and organizations states that "Although the percentage of the population attending higher education is growing in most countries, social inclusion and widening access to higher education is still a challenge across the world. Disadvantaged groups, including migrants and refugees, face additional challenges not only to access higher education but also to succeed. The debate therefore about social inclusion is not just about fair access, it also about success in higher education – this includes retention, progression, successful completion and good employability for all our students and graduates."

In this context, the challenges Bosnia and Herzegovina faces together with the European Union are not negligible taking into account the existing policies and integration of the social dimension into strategic planning, as well as creating the corresponding management structures that strive towards improving the student support mechanisms and the higher education system as a whole.

The document "Education for All, 2015 National Review", created by the Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ministry of Civil Affairs, states several key comparisons with the European Union and points out the shortcomings of the education system in BiH:

- Women's education in BiH, in comparison with the EU standards, is extremely low. These are, from a gender perspective, alarming indicators. Groups with poor education lack some of the basic skills, vocational skills and a foundation for lifelong learning.

- The Education Reform Strategy, laws and various policy documents promote the principles of equal access, availability, acceptance and effectiveness of official recognition, non-discrimination and reduction of segregation in education. It is necessary to make adequate efforts to implement the principles of inclusiveness prescribed by the education legislation. The existing practice and prejudice continue to affect a large number of children with developmental disabilities. These children are marginalized from the beginning, from early childhood, due to the lack of access to basic education in mainstream educational institutions, teaching staff who are not prepared to work with them, and school programmes that are not flexible and adapted to the specific educational needs.

1.3.     Insufficiently represented groups and groups with special needs
Classification of insufficiently represented groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be broken down into the following:

- Single mothers
- Students from rural areas
- Students with special needs
- Employed students
- Students with a special social status


The document "Strategic Directions for the Development of Higher Education in the Federation of BiH from 2012 to 2022 – Synergy and Partnership", in the section Include the social dimension into higher education, emphasises that "the country must take care of these social classes. The Federal Ministry of Education and Science has already been continually helping all students of the Roma and other minority nationalities, students with disabilities and socially vulnerable groups, while intending to expand the list further in their future work. It is necessary to conduct synchronised activities on part of all national authorities, starting with the local community to the state level, in order to reach maximum efficiency of investments."

The social dimension is reflected not only in the approach to higher education but also in the continuous inclusion in the education process and successful completion of studies.

1.4. Implemented measures concerning the inclusive education system at higher education institutions in FBIH

In line with the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH[1], higher education institutions must not discriminate against students on any grounds, including disability, must not give students with disabilities/difficulties a less favourable treatment than that which is provided to other students, and they are obligated to ensure that all students have appropriate accommodation and conditions, preventing them from being placed at a disadvantage.

In the higher education sector, the Federal Ministry of Education and Science has, together with all public HEIs from BiH, been a partner in the TEMPUS project "Equal Opportunities for Students with Special Needs in Higher Education" (EQOPP), andone of the key outcomes of the project was establishing a Special-Needs Student Support Office in all public HEIs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The offices were equipped with assistive technologies facilitating students with special needs to equally obtain knowledge and degrees. The goal was to treat students with respect, objectively, openly and justly, as well as in line with ethical principles. In case one of the teachers is familiarised with the student's private life, they should be strictly confidential. Academic staff can individually, and in coordination with the Special-Needs Student Support Office, support students with special needs if the students are encouraged to state their needs. Students with special needs are provided with assistance in solving specific problems which they can encounter in their studies.

The Special-Needs Student Support Centres/Offices ensure that students have an opportunity to reach their full potential in the following manner:
  ➢ by coordinating academic adjustments and support services,
  ➢ by promoting independence and self-representation,
  ➢ by providing information and pointing towards mechanisms for exercising the rights of students with special needs.

Their supportive activities are conducted within the following:

✓ providing professional assistance to students with disabilities and special needs at HEIs and a systematic approach in satisfying educational, social and psychological needs of the stated students, as well as monitoring their needs in order to improve the study and accommodation conditions (alongside students with visual and hearing impairments, as well as physical disabilities, include students with chronic diseases, mental disorders, and specific learning difficulties, as well as vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, students in an academically unfavourable and low socioeconomic position, those who have experienced violence, trauma, etc.),
✓ improving international cooperation and exchange programmes for students with disabilities (in collaboration with the International Cooperation Offices),
✓ providing professional assistance in applying for and implementing national and international projects,
✓ cooperating with partners: relevant ministries, the city, associations of students and people with disabilities, and associations which programmatically act in favour of people with disabilities, as well as experts,

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[1] "Official Gazette of BiH", No. 59/07, 59/09

- ✓ gathering information on the number of students with disabilities and creating a database with the purpose of planning activities,
- ✓ appointing, educating and coordinating the operations of the Support Board members in all organisational units,
- ✓ counselling and strengthening freshmen with disabilities/special needs as well as their parents with the purpose of self-actualisation,
- ✓ studying legal regulations determining the status of people with disabilities in order to provide legal aid to students with disabilities,
- ✓ initiating changes in legal acts and by-laws which prevent students with disabilities in exercising their rights and obligations,
- ✓ performing other activities with the goal to accomplish primary tasks in line with the law and general acts of the University.

At their disposal, centres also have documents which provide support in their operations and which are created within the project, namely:
- ▪ a Special-Needs Student Support University Guide,
- ▪ Students with Physical Disabilities in Higher Education,
- ▪ Students with Visual Impairments in Higher Education,
- ▪ Dyslexia in Higher Education,
- ▪ Supporting Students with Mental Difficulties and Behavioural Disorders and
- ▪ Students with Hearing Impairments in Higher Education.

Article 11 of the University of Sarajevo's Statute[2] emphasises that "with the goal to encourage complete social integration and participation of people with disabilities in community life, the University/organisational units, in accordance with their capabilities, undertakes/undertake measures for providing access to education for those categories of individuals."

Article 157 of the Statute (Individualisation of Studies for Students with Disabilities) stipulates that:
(1) Students with disabilities and developmental difficulties have the right to individualisation during the implementation of the teaching process, i.e. the right to have special conditions provided for them when it comes to attendance and participation in classes, as well as educational tests and student improvements.
(2) The University/organisational units will, within their capabilities, provide special infrastructure and other support in mastering the teaching process in line with the form and type of disability the student has.
(3) The rights and methods of exercising the rights of students with disabilities and developmental difficulties, especially with regard to providing the conditions for their inclusion in the teaching process, the procedures of individualising the studies and verifying the capabilities of individuals with developmental difficulties and disabilities when it comes to studying in general or attending a certain type of studies, are detailed in the study rules for each study cycle.
(4) The organisational unit's council can enable students from paragraph (1) of this article to study longer than specified by the law, in accordance with the individualised and adjusted curriculum.
(5) The diploma obtained by students from paragraph (1) of this article specifies that the study has been implemented in line with paragraph (4) of this article, and the diploma addendum contains the learning

outcomes achieved by the student during such studies in case of implementing the lessons and exams according to an individualised programme.

(6) The University/organisational units will, within national and international public calls, as well as by using their own funds, improve the conditions for enabling people with disabilities and developmental difficulties to study in accordance with paragraphs (1) and (2) of this article.

The Student Support Office operates within the University, and the principal focus of its activities is directed towards providing help and support in choosing the studies, improving access to education, ensuring the conditions for satisfying the needs and exercising the rights, psychological help, informing and educating students, improving the study experience for students with disabilities, research activities, organisation and implementation of trainings for teaching and non-teaching staff, participating in passing and changing legal acts and by-laws related to education, providing scholarships for students, etc. In addition, the goal is to harmonise the individual's needs and potentials with the labour market needs so as to increase employability.

Article 201 (Student Support Centre) of the University of Tuzla's Statute[3] states:

1) With support from the Founders, the University will provide adequate conditions for accessing studies and enabling students with special needs to study, accomplished through the Special-Needs Student Support Centre.
2) Within the scientific, educational and research process, the University organises and implements activities on ensuring equal opportunities for higher education in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Ensuring Equal Opportunities in the European Higher Education Area.
3) A student with the special-needs student status can be authorised to acquire the study programme, provided with teaching and examinations under special conditions determined by the University Senate, and proposed by the Special-Needs Student Support Centre.
4) The Special-Needs Student Support Centre plays the role of a coordinator in ensuring equal opportunities and implementing regular training of the teaching and administrative staff in order to ensure support for students with special needs.
5) The Support Centre ensures that students with special needs have equal access to all university programmes and activities.

The Special-Needs Student Support Office at the University of Zenica represents a coordinating body at this HEI which contributes in creating a society to which each individual belongs and in which they completely participate. The role of the Office is to improve access, satisfy the needs and rights, and improve the study experience for students with special needs (students with motor impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, specific learning difficulties, mental disorders, students with speech and language disorders, chronic diseases, students with risks such as belonging to an ethnic minority, students at an academically unfavourable position and those with a low socioeconomic status, students who have experienced violence, trauma, etc.).

The Special-Needs Student Support Office at the University of Bihać provides support for students and the university staff in all activities including working with students as well as all other persons with special needs with the goal to improve their status in higher education. The goal of the Office is to provide these students with an opportunity to fully participate in university life both in the teaching and

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[3] http://www.untz.ba/uploads/file/akti/2016-17/STATUT_UNTZ_i_Aneks_djelatnosti_03_02_2017.pdf

social regard. Additionally, the Office aims at making all the study areas available to students with special needs under the same conditions and standards. To that effect, the Office has a coordinating role in order to make the studies available to all students.

Article 170, par. 3) of the "Džemal Bijedić" University of Mostar's Statute states that the University will ensure adequate conditions for accessing studies and enabling students with special needs to study.

Likewise, article 153 of the University of Mostar's Statute stipulates that the University will ensure adequate conditions enabling access to studies for people with special needs, and art. 169 is dedicated to the Office for Students with Special Needs in Higher Education. The Office represents a University-level body which coordinates and helps students with special needs, as well as strives to enable equal study conditions for all students. The Special Needs Office headquarters are located at the University of Mostar's Faculty of Medicine and it is managed by the Head of the Office.

In 2012, within the TEMPUS project "Towards Sustainable and Equitable Financing of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia", Bosnia and Herzegovina has, for the first time, joined the fifth cycle of EUROSTUDENT research on the social dimension of higher education, and the research cycle lasted from 2012 to 2015.

The results of EUROSTUDENT V research for BiH within this project indicate that 8.7%[4] of surveyed students consider that they have health problems, and the largest number from the group of students estimating they have such difficulties is related to sensory impairments with a percentage of 41.8%, which is followed by students with chronic diseases (15.8%), and then other long-term health problems (15.4%), mental problems (11%), learning disabilities (10.2%) and a small percentage of those who have movement difficulties (5.8%).  The total percentage of students who consider that difficulties represent a large obstacle in their studies was 9.8%, while 3.7% of students who estimate that they have some health problems stated that they have very good support during their studies, 21% consider that they do not need any support, and 72.5% of them even state that the support is not of quality.

Within the Funds Allocation Programme, in the Transfer for Financing Student Standards and/or Financing Education, in each budget year, funds are allocated to support programmes:

a)  for students with disabilities/special needs in cooperation with support centres. In 2017, 24% of students who received support studied applied sciences, while the rest, 76% of them, studied humanities and social sciences, whereas in 2018, 30.10% of students who received support studied applied sciences, and the rest, 69.90%, studied humanities and social sciences; and

b)  for Roma students, who are BiH citizens, and who study at public higher education institutions in the Federation of BiH. In 2017, 60% of them studied applied sciences, and in 2018, their percentage was 33.3%.

The continuous inclusion programmes which are (co)funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science (FMON), i.e. the Government of the Federation of BiH in the higher education sector are:

1. The Student Loans Fund [5]

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[4] That is, from the total number of 3272 surveyed students, and the data is related to students from BiH

[5] Website: www.zajam.ba

Student loans are granted based on a ranking list - awarding scores according to academic and social criteria:

a. Overall grade average during the previous academic year of studies, that is, the overall grade average during secondary education for students enrolling in the first year of studies.

b. The number of remaining curriculum-specified semesters and/or study years until obtaining the qualification for employment based upon completed studies.

c. students with a specific social status (according to priority): disability status of individuals with a degree of disability equal to or greater than 60%, civilian victims of the war (except individuals who have a disability status with a degree of disability equal to or greater than 60%), the child of a shahid/fallen soldier, a child without parents, a child without previous parental care or a child without one parent (except the child of a shahid/fallen soldier), a child who lives in a household with unemployed parents, a child with one parent unemployed and the other retired, a child whose parents are retired or a child from a household of three or more children attending formal education and/or studies (no more than two criteria most favourable for the student).

241 student loans have been awarded in total for the academic year 2017/18, and 61% was related to applied sciences, i.e. according to the following table:

**Table 1: The number of students - loan beneficiaries for the academic year 2017/2018 according to scientific areas**

| Scientific area | Biomedical sciences | Social sciences | Humanities | Agricultural sciences | Natural sciences | Technical sciences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of students | 49 | 72 | 22 | 4 | 20 | 75 |
| Percentage | 20% | 29.8% | 9.1% | 1.7% | 8.3% | 31.0% |
| Percentage for 2016/2017 | 16.66% | 25.30% | 10.49% | 1.23% | 9.87% | 35.18% |

That is, according to the cantons they reside in:

**Table 2: The number of students - loan beneficiaries for the academic year 2017/2018 according to the cantons they reside in**

| Canton/Entity | BD BiH | HNK | KS | SBK | TK | USK | ZŽK | BPK | RS | K10 | ZDK | Posavina |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of students | 1 | 43 | 61 | 21 | 40 | 19 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 39 | 2 |
| Percentage for 2017/2018 | 0.62 | 17.77 | 25.21 | 8.68 | 16.53 | 7.85 | 4.96 | 1.24 | 0.41 | 0.41 | 16.21 | 0.83 |

| Percentage for 2016/2017 | 0.62 | 16.05 | 24.07 | 7.41 | 18.52 | 8.02 | 5.56 | 0.62 | 0.62 | 0.62 | 17.28 | 0.61 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

The following table shows the number of students - loan beneficiaries according to their HEI.

**Table 3: The number of students - loan beneficiaries for the academic year 2017/2018 according to the university they study at**

| University | Džemal Bijedić Mostar | IBU(1) | IUS (2) | SSST (3) | AUBiH | University of Mostar | University Vitez | University of Bihać | University of Sarajevo | University of Tuzla | University of Zenica |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of students | 12 | 25 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 43 | 1 | 6 | 87 | 47 | 2 |
| Percentage | 4.96% | 10.33% | 5.37% | 0.41% | 1.24% | 17.77% | 0.41% | 2.48% | 35.95% | 19.42% | 0.83% |

2. Subsidies for accommodation and sustenance of students from underdeveloped cantons - Posavina, Bosansko-Podrinjski and Canton 10, as well as Republika Srpska, regulated by the Protocol on Subsidising Accommodations and Sustenance of Students in Student Centres and Dormitories in the Federation of BiH, a Decision on Subsidising Accommodations and Sustenance of Students from 2005 and 2015, and the funds are allocated based upon the data on the number of students delivered by student centres/dormitories in the Federation of BiH.

In average, subsidies for 400 students are awarded each academic year.

In the preschool and primary education sector, FMON provides support through the following programmes:

1. Support for inclusion projects and projects for improving work with special-needs children, and

2. Support for projects on improving educational work with children with developmental difficulties.

1.5. Long-term goals in terms of implementing the social dimension at higher education institutions

The Federal Ministry of Education and Science has participated in drafting documents which, among other things, aim at improving access, participation and equal opportunities in education for people with disabilities/special needs, namely:

1. "A Draft of the Action Plan Based on Recommendations of Inclusive Education Policies" in 2015,

2. "Strategic Directions for the Development of Higher Education in the Federation of BiH from 2012 to 2022"[6],
3. "Strategic Directions of Career Orientation Development in the Federation of BiH for the period 2015-2020"[7],
4. A Proposal of the Action Plan for Implementing the Strategic Directions of Career Orientation Development in the Federation of BiH for the period 2015-2020[8],
5. Priorities for Higher Education Development in BiH for the period 2016 – 2026[9], and
6. Strategy for Improving the Rights and Position of People with Disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016-2021)[10].

Chapter 3.2.10 Include the social dimension into higher education[11] of the strategic document stated under t.1. emphasises that the country must take care of these social classes and it is necessary to conduct synchronised activities on part of all national authorities, starting with the local community to the state level, in order to reach maximum efficiency of investments. Upon reaching an agreement without prejudice to its solution, employment offices which could make these social classes desirable applicants for vacancies thorough grants, and entrepreneurs who should be presented with the competences of graduate students and the advantages of hiring staff belonging to this category should be included in the inclusion process. Additionally, is necessary to work on informing and sensitising both the HEIs and the public with the goal to completely include those social classes who have not yet largely participated in academic processes in the higher education processes.

In the document, under t.5.Priorities for Higher Education Development in BiH for the period 2016 – 2026, that is Priority 2, Resources, it is emphasised that it is necessary to introduce financing systems for higher education which are based on success in reaching goals, the social dimension of higher education, and the participants listed in joint effort are relevant ministries from the area of education, finances, labour and employment, higher education institutions, rector's conferences, agencies from the area of higher education in BiH, the academic community, representatives of the labour market, student organisations and unions, as well as local authorities.

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[6]http://fmon.gov.ba/Upload/Dokumenti/9fef4cd0-f57a-4b51-aaa0-aaeadd4da691_Strate%C5%A1ki%20pravci%20razvoja%20visokog%20obrazovanja.pdf

[7]http://fmon.gov.ba/Upload/Dokumenti/9ce1a95c-1d1d-4817-b9fb-09479db744b7_Strate%C5%A1ki%20pravci%20razvoja%20karijerne%20orijentacije%20u%20FBiH%20za%20period%202015%E2%80%932020.%20godina..pdf

[8]http://fmon.gov.ba/Upload/Dokumenti/5b839f2c-293a-4472-b638-127bbf3039c2_PRIJEDLOG%20AKCIONOG%20PLANA%20za%20implementaciju%20Strate%C5%A1kih%20pravaca%20razvoja%20karijerne%20orijentacije%20u%20FBiH.pdf

[9]http://www.mcp.gov.ba/org_jedinice/sektor_obrazovanje/dokumenti/strateski_doc/default.aspx?id=7562&langTag=bs-BA

[10]http://fbihvlada.gov.ba/file/Strategija%20za%20unapre%C4%91enje%20prava%20i%20polo%C5%BEaja%20osoba%20s%20invaliditetom%20u%20Federaciji%20Bosne%20i%20Hercegovine%20(2016.-2021.)%20.pdf

[11] Strategic Directions for the Development of Higher Education in the Federation of BiH from 2012 to 2022 – Synergy and Partnership

**ERASMUS + CBHE – INCLUSION - 574139-EPP-1-2016-1-AM-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP**

In the document Strategy for Improving the Rights and Position of People with Disabilities in the FBiH 2016-2021, the specific goal 3. states: Include people with disabilities in all areas of life, on an equal basis with others, especially in the area of education, cultural, sports, public and political engagement, and the activities within this specific goal encompass removal of barriers and introducing elements of information support for visually and hearing impaired individuals in all educational, cultural and sports institutions and facilities which are still not available to people with disabilities.

## 2. INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Understanding an inclusive approach to learning stems from understanding the ultimate needs of students. The power and promise belonging to an inclusive approach to learning represents affiliation to the different, distinct and new. It implies belonging to a community, a group of people, friends, classroom, faculty, etc. Developing a sense of belonging and a paradigm shift of the approach to higher education is acquired by developing the same feeling. Its process is created through good guidance, i.e. instructions. Good instructions help both the teaching staff and the students to become even more successful, leading to important benefits on both sides. Therefore, inclusion does not represent a series of strategies, a special place, or a unique, special programme. It is about the manner of including different groups of students and providing the time, space, tools and knowledge through learning and teaching. The inclusive idea ultimately presents the importance and necessity of opening the way for equal creation of conditions for all students, whether they are students with special needs, a marginalised group of students, special categories, really advanced students, etc. The idea of an inclusive approach to learning implies dealing with the student as a "person", an individual who deserves attention, assistance and understanding of the teaching process in line with the trust they bestow on the higher education institution. There are a lot of different theories regarding the process of inclusive involvement and understanding of the approach. It is difficult to state which one is appropriate, and which is not, but that which is essentially common to most is the need for quality creation of an approach and understanding student diversity. Successful inclusive education happens primarily through acceptance, understanding and monitoring student differences and diversities which might include the physical, cognitive, academic, social and emotional aspect. The leading principle is to do everything to make the students feel welcome, appropriately challenged and supported in their efforts. Likewise, it is of key importance that adults are also supported. This includes the teaching staff working at the higher education institution, as well as all other employees and teachers who are key participants.

2.1. Improving quality and availability of information materials

In the world of information technologies, good familiarisation represents the foundation for acquiring quality information that the higher education institution can provide to potential students. This is also an important segment in raising the awareness on the significance and importance of inclusive education. To that regard, higher education institutions/organisational units could:

- Form special departments of "Inclusive Offices" which will deal with both the informing process and systematic data gathering on inclusive groups in the environment;
- Post available, visible and updated columns on web platforms of the higher education institutions/universities on inclusive education and steps taken within the institutions;

- Specifically include students as "inclusive teams" in the effort to spread awareness and the vision on inclusive education (round tables, meetings, visits to high schools, institutions dealing with special groups, etc.);
- Use their own creativity in making brochures, leaflets, printed materials;
- Use the power of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) for posting positive stories on inclusive education, the teaching process and the opportunities offered in this process;
- Launch a student magazine, a portal;
- Start a special Newsletter intended for inclusive learning and teaching;
- Organise "face to face" gatherings, open door days, for those especially interested groups of students, parents, associations, institutions, and present them with their own resources;
- Organise special radio and TV shows to present their ideas, visions and examples of good practices;
- Regularly use sources and the power of print media;
- Document every step and present it to the public with meaningful titles and keywords related to the purpose of inclusive classes, learning and teaching.

## 2.2. Activities directed towards high schools and establishing cooperation

An equally important aspect of raising awareness on inclusive learning and teaching in higher education is cooperation with high schools. High schools, de facto, represent a highly positioned key point on the list of participants for developing inclusion in higher education. Why? Through them, opportunities for potential, future students are manifested, trust is created, and international cooperation, as well as education in the field of inclusion are established. The notion of inclusion is not necessarily emphasised as a separate segment of higher education but as an equal opportunity for all students, creating a positive image of the environment and approaching certain groups of students. Such activities should be directed towards:

- Establishing an "open doors day" at the higher education institution (with previously determined timing);
- The possibility of accessing "Student info centres" for high-school students (create a two-way communication between students and pupils);
- Organising planned visits and presentations in high schools with teams of experts (with a previously determined dynamics);
- Including students through high schools as primary visitors and participants in certain student events;
- Organising creative workshops for high-school students according to the previously determined spheres of interest;
- Training high-school teachers through professional lectures, seminars and workshops;
- Developing project management and joint strongholds in view of obtaining grants for additional support in financing inclusive groups;
- Organising panels, round tables, discussions with the goal to jointly overcome the circumstances, problems determined in the inclusive education process;
- Creating faculty and high-school inclusive teams with the goal of disseminating information and an equal approach/right to study;
- Regularly encouraging educational contents, team-building workshops in the field of technological advancements and the approach to working with students.

2.3. Drafting and improving the inclusive guide for students

Inclusive guides for students represent a special tool which could be used by higher education institutions to present and meet the needs of both the present and future, potential students in the form of teaching contents, the teaching process, activities, equipment, resources, the teaching system, learning and teaching, as well as all other benefits offered to students depending on the contents and programmes of the higher education institution. To that regard, we should think about:

- A specific guide for inclusive teaching in terms of convenient access to studies for specific groups (e.g. single mothers, top athletes, socially vulnerable categories, foreigners, military personnel, students with certain difficulties, etc.);
- Specifying clear measures, activities, methods, curriculum and the dynamics of the teaching process;
- The guide should point at the learning and teaching process, explain and make it easier for the student to understand the teaching process;
- The guide should ultimately satisfy internal and external beneficiaries by sublimely explaining the significance and notion of inclusive education, introducing the very essence and ways of inclusive teaching and access to classrooms, explaining the resources higher education institutions/universities have at disposal when it comes to the approach to various groups of students, introducing information technologies, specific equipment, laboratories, libraries, and explaining the (modules) methods of examination, passing tests and communicating with assistants and professors;
- Taking into account the quantitative indicators, student involvement, the inclusive process of learning and teaching, as well as to present their progress.

It is important to note that the shift towards inclusion does not only mean a technical or organisational modification but also a movement with a clear philosophy. In order for the inclusion to be effectively implemented, institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina should jointly define a set of inclusive principles for the practical idea on directing the transition towards policies aimed at inclusion in education. The inclusion principles stated in various international declarations can be used as the basis. Then, they can be interpreted and adjusted to the context of the individual in our country.

2.4. The notion of Inclusive Incubators

The inclusion process can grow into the possibility of innovation. This is actually not only the creation of new, versatile perspectives, but also the creation of groups of individuals who use those unique perspective for designing new solutions. When awareness on such an approach is changed, in terms of providing opportunities for diversity and flexibility for development and personal growth of students, it is possible to consider a new, innovative aspect. In education, quality is often perceived and measured through academic results where students have successfully completed their final exams alongside other quantitative measures. However, there are also other parameters that can be taken into consideration, such as skills, competences and the knowledge acquired by students during and after they complete their studies. Inclusive Incubators can contribute to a stronger "content and value" of education.

The very notion of Inclusive Incubators represents one type of entrepreneurial infrastructure components. Its orientation could be directed towards:

- Strengthening intellectual capital;

- Establishing a clear vision, mission and guidelines for the functioning of the HEI's Inclusive Incubator;
- Investing in infrastructural aspects;
- The microenvironment, creating potential conditions for small start-up operations;
- Creating an area of higher education institutions for encouraging and hiring their students;
- Creating the conditions for the 3 important elements of the incubator: location, business advisory services and management services;
- Creating the conditions for finding financial solutions;
- Encouraging the economic development tool of the project incubator within the development of the idea itself;
- Cooperating with both the local and international partners on developing ideas;
- Networking with the local, cantonal, state ministries and institutions for development and stimulating small and medium-sized businesses;
- A systematic approach to developing a business plan for creating small business ideas provided by the students;
- Establishing good co-working, networking and the business plan.

According to the definition provided by the National Business Incubation Association, business incubators represent one of the tools for economic development by using a series of resources and services. The primary goal of an incubator is to produce successful businesses which are financially self-sustaining and independent upon incubation. When applied to higher education institutions, they represent an innovative approach in creating spatial capacities, resources and knowledge for this idea. For some social sciences whose learning system is based on these platforms, this could represent a "transformation" of theory into practice.

2.5. Recognising informal competences

Drawing from inclusive incubators, i.e. the encouragement for developing self-sustaining ideas, individuals or a group of students belonging to inclusive groups, it is highly important to pay attention to identifying, developing and recognising informal competences. In order to create independence, the ability to cope with emerging situations and stimulate social and intellectual mechanisms of an individual in the long-term, in students, it is necessary to develop/strengthen:

- The primary components of entrepreneurship competences which could be seen in introducing and supporting innovation;
- The encouragement of their own attitudes, skills and knowledge;
- Presentation of initiatives;
- The sense of risk-taking;
- The assumption of responsibility for their own actions;
- Setting goals and achieving them;
- Proactive agency and positive reaction to changes;
- Teamwork;
- The encouragement of motivation for success.


In the long run, in order to ensure harmony between economic progress and the development of national economy, it is necessary to systematically include entrepreneurial contents in education programmes and encouragements of inclusive incubators. Alongside developing the stated

competences, they represent excellent training grounds for acquisition in order for the individual to successfully act as an entrepreneur.

Developing informal competences in students is a necessary tool for the education process, strengthening their self-confidence and the sense of their own empowerment of the inclusive process during and after their studies. It additionally includes mentoring approaches and implies reinforcing the results of:

- Encouragement and support for the students' entrepreneurial way of thinking;
- Improving cooperation and networking educational, as well as scientific and research institutions with business subjects;
- Transferring knowledge through mentoring conducted by all professors, and, in that way, training all interested students in establishing, governing and managing;
- Preparing students for the real world;
- Strengthening practice and agency;
- Financial, technical and advisory support for students;
- Strengthening the examples of good practice.

3. **INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS AND DECREASE THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO WITHDRAW FROM STUDIES, AS WELL AS IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENTS ENGAGED IN THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Continuous changes reflect the increased demand for educational opportunities, especially at the higher education level. There are, however, several issues that need to be resolved. The goal is not only to increase the number of students, but also to develop a more efficient, effective and just system. One of the main issues is related to the differences in the approach created by the region/territory, sex, social groups and economic circumstances.

3.1. Enrolment and withdrawal dynamics, as well as the quality of academic success for students engaged in the inclusive education system at the universities in the Federation of BiH for the period 2010-2018

With regard to the development of public universities, in the context of inclusive awareness, it is necessary to make analyses that would address the following questions:

– What was the rate of access to the higher education system in the period 2010-2018?

– What was the rate of access for different social groups?

– What factors affect access to higher education, especially in the context of socially marginalised/non-representative groups?

– What mechanisms are necessary in order to increase the percentage of marginalised/non-representative groups?

– How to simplify the enrolment process for marginalised groups at public universities in FBiH?

- Which procedures should be used to redesign, innovate and adjust the way teaching is organised to the actual needs of students belonging to marginalised groups?

- In what way should inclusive curricula be reformed and innovated with the goal to improve outcomes which will bring about a rise in the level of competences for students belonging to marginalised groups?

- How to increase the compatibility of studies with other spheres of life?

3.2.    Simplifying the enrolment process at universities

The methods that can facilitate entry into higher education are:

- Organising preparatory courses in relation to the needs of the society and the labour market.

- Developing a "tutoring" system for freshmen, mentorship.

- Optimising study programmes in the way that introductory semesters are generalised (organised by several departments) in order to leave room for the students to choose their field of study, with the "general module" being a part of the total number of credits.

- Offering instructions on learning methods (introduction to academic learning and work).

- Developing an inclusive culture in higher education (organising info days, anti-discriminatory trainings for staff and students).

- Analysing the state of well-established habits towards improving academic integration.

- Assessing whether tuition fees are adequate. Universities should review the amount of tuition fees. Inadequate amounts cannot provide the conditions for granting scholarships to socially vulnerable categories of students under certain criteria.

3.3.    Organising an inclusive teaching process at universities

Even though an individualised approach and satisfaction of entirely specific students' needs is the only right way of supporting both the students with disabilities and those belonging to marginalised groups, still, there are measures and procedures that can resolve some key issues which are common for certain categories of students, most frequently defined according to their disability. However, flexibility and competences of teachers and the administrative staff, followed by monitoring the needs and conducting planned, systematic activities to satisfy them is precisely the adequate approach for all students. Steps that have to be undertaken are:

- Making higher education institutions' commitment to strive towards organising an inclusive teaching process visible on all levels: starting from the context and circumstances emphasising motivation to specific indicators of changes.

- Accessibility is one of the measures, as well as certain technical solutions in designing, constructing and maintaining the building of the educational institution, and the very access to the building. Such solutions should ensure unimpeded movement, stay and work for people with reduced mobility.

- Finding ways to overcome the difficulties faced by educational institutions in exercising the rights of equal access to education and the education process which are also recognised in insufficient financial capacities (technical equipping of the facilities, availability of assistive technologies, hiring teaching experts and assistants, etc.) and human capacities, i.e. strengthening and preparing the teaching (teachers, assistants, associates) and non-teaching staff (employees in student administration offices).

3.4. Creating inclusive curricula and improving teaching quality

An important aspect of quality assurance in learning and teaching at higher education institutions is to offer a curricula which will encompass the issues of freedom, equality and diversity, as well as include all students as equal participants of the teaching process. It is necessary to redesign study programmes in the way that will meet the needs of the community and the demands at the labour market. It is necessary to:

- When creating curricula, programmes and redesigning the existing ones, include an assessment stating to what extent the programme is accessible to everyone (e.g. students with disabilities).

- Design and implement strategies for learning and teaching, as well as related activities and a learning environment that should recognise the rights of the students with disabilities (to participate in all activities offered within their study programme).

- Evaluation and knowledge assessments should be accessible to everyone in order to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes and standard of competences.

- Through the curriculum, change the knowledge assessment and evaluation system which, for now, has the tendency to be theoretical whereby students are assessed based upon summative evaluation processes. Such assessments cannot properly estimate the ability, discipline and devotion.

3.5. Increasing the compatibility of studies with other spheres of life

Higher education institutions should work on becoming a part of communities learning about the differences of potential inclusive groups of students, accordingly understand how demands for workplace skills are changed, and, as a response, adjust their views on teaching and learning by acknowledging all types of diversity pertaining to the inclusive groups. The measures that have to be undertaken in order to make the study programmes more compatible with other spheres of life are:

- Establishing cooperation between educational institutions and businesses/companies through a mutually beneficial partnership structured around economic and social restoration in the way that continuous learning, cooperation, innovation and renewal are encouraged.

- Higher education institutions can more effectively focus on specific demands placed by local businesses and local communities, and, in such a context, they can expand their approach in offering qualifications and certification, as well as improving skills.

- Initiating joint research and using mutual resources, facilities and equipment among higher education institutions and other institutions and private businesses in the local community.

- Accrediting previous learning which provides a formal recognition to learning in the workplace would motivate individuals and speed up their entry into formal training courses and skill

development. Continuous changes and the development of information technologies demand specific competences, and the traditional strength of the university would be reflected in providing professional competences below degree levels for the development of individual careers and specific, missing skills.

- Organising information exchange processes through panels, round tables and discussions in order to continually be in contact with the changes.

- At the universities, establish Centres for Lifelong Learning which would intensify activities according to the previously stated items.

## 4. SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

4.1. Estimating costs of an inclusive model for organising the teaching process

With the goal to support development policies in the higher education sector, including the implementation of the social dimension at the universities in FBiH, it is necessary to review higher education financing, i.e. introduce an education system based on the social dimension, that is, integrate the social dimension criteria into financing (incentives, budget allocation), and therefore, the development and financing plan of the universities in FBiH.

In order to support the implementation of the social dimension at the universities in FBiH, the following measures are specified:

- Introduce or increase the public budget share in higher education (responsibility: cantonal government). This measure implies a long-term projection of the gross domestic product for higher education in terms of combining public resources and private contributions;

- Establish funds for the development of an inclusive model of higher education (cantonal government, relevant ministry);

- Reallocate the existing resources from the (cantonal, FBiH) budget with the purpose of building and developing an inclusivemodel of higher education;

- Use the project's financial resources to build and develop an inclusive model of higher education. Under project's financial resources we imply the federal, cantonal, international and EU funds. Activities for implementing the measure of using the project's financial resources are related to:

a) conducting training activities for ministry representatives, representatives of higher education institutions, centres for the development of inclusive practices, non-governmental organisations and other relevant participants on drafting project applications for the cantonal, federal, international and EU funds in the area of developing an inclusive model of higher education (responsibility: FMON, universities in FBiH), and
b) establishing strategic partnerships between non-governmental organisations and universities in terms of optimally using financial resources. Joint actions of the aforementioned actors, supported by the project's financial resources, are directed towards developing competitive vocations at the labour market for all categories of students, modernising the existing curricula and other scientific and teaching methods with the purpose of providing students with the qualifications necessary for labour market integration (responsibility: NGO, universities).

4.2    Determining systematic measures in the area of higher education
Systematic measures for implementing the social dimension at higher education institutions in FBiH imply the following:

- Specifying the social dimension as the central measure of educational policy and ensuring detailed control of the higher education institutions' management in the sense of supporting inclusion and its effects on the social dimension (responsibility: the relevant ministry of education and science);

- Adopting acts, i.e. amendments of the existing acts (laws, bylaws, universities' general acts) ensuring the development and implementation of an inclusive education model and monitoring (responsibility: relevant ministry, universities);

- Establishing/adjusting the enrolment criteria and procedures at the universities and adjusting the admissions tests in the way that they reflect and follow the determined standards of the inclusive education model (responsibility: relevant ministry, universities);

- Establishing guidelines for enabling the recognition of competences acquired outside the education system on all study programmes and higher education institutions (transferability);

- Networking and supporting research in the area of higher education on a national (federal) and institutional level (impact assessment, evaluation, quality control, questionnaires filled-in by graduates), updating data and the issue of data protection (FMON, cantonal ministries of education, universities).


4.3. Integrating the social dimension into strategic planning in the area of higher education and creating the corresponding management structures

- Set goals on equal access to higher education for target group members and assign a distinct budget item for universities with the goal to ensure their scholarships (responsibility: universities, the relevant ministry);
- Implement institutional guidelines for ensuring the inclusive model of higher education. (responsibility: universities);
- Establish adequate programmes for continuous training of academic and administrative staff on an institutional level in terms of implementing the inclusive education model (responsibility: relevant ministry, universities, external professionals);
- Improve study programmes and bring them into conformity with the standards of the social dimension and the labour market needs (responsibility: relevant ministries of education, ministries of labour and employment, ministries of finances, higher education institutions, agencies from the area of higher education in BiH, academic community, representatives of the labour market, student organisations and unions);

- Create guidelines on professional orientation based on the social dimension and publically promote information as a stimulus for enrolling in study programmes which provide the requested qualifications (relevant ministries of education, ministries of labour and employment, ministries of finance, higher education institutions, representatives of the labour market);

- Establish an information programme which implies each activity directed towards raising awareness, encouraging students belonging to marginalised groups to access higher education, as well as their achievement of the same (responsibility: higher education institutions);

-   Appoint contact persons for all study programmes at the universities/faculties in terms of guiding and offering advice and support to students belonging to the target groups (higher education institutions);

-   Initiate and support peer learning activities (responsibility: higher education institutions, student organisations).

    4.4. Creating or improving student support mechanisms

The following measures are specified in terms of building institutional mechanisms for student support:

-   Planning a distinct item in the higher education institution's budget with the goal to provide scholarships for students belonging to the target groups (responsibility: relevant ministry of education, Ministry of Finances, higher education institutions);

-   Lowering the study costs for students belonging to the target groups (responsibility: relevant ministry of finances, higher education institutions);

-   Planning the option of paying for study costs in multiple payments based on the social dimension (responsibility: relevant ministry of finances, higher educationinstitutions);;

-   Consider ensuring additional grants for financing target groups of students (responsibility: relevant ministry of finances, higher education institutions);

-   Introduce/or increase co-financing of the study costs at the II and III study cycles (responsibility: relevant ministry of finances, relevant ministry of education);

-   Examine the appropriateness of the learning outcomes/academic achievements necessary for students with disabilities/chronic diseases/specific impairment (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, higher education institutions, representatives of the labour market).


### 5. QUANTITATIVE GOALS UNTIL THE YEAR 2022

Nine quantitative goals in total have been determined with the goal to improve the social dimension in higher education:

1.   Increase the number of students in inclusive higher education through systematic measures with the purpose of increasing learning participation and decreasing exclusion within or due to education by way of:

     a.   increasing the enrolment quotas for applied sciences;
     b.   during the admissions process, i.e. direct enrolment beyond the enrolment quotas, create the options for limiting enrolment quotas to a minimum of 20% of fewer total points for enrolment in relation to the lowest-ranking candidate on the list who obtained the right to become a full-time student, and a maximum of 15% (in relation to the enrolment quota) of enrolled candidates with special needs outside the quota.
     c.   including special education and rehabilitation, as well as teaching HEIs in calculating the probability factors with the goal to improve the higher education institution's curriculum
     d.   adapting the curriculum to the inclusive education model.

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2. Improve environmental accessibility for people with disabilities by removing architectural, as well as information and communications obstacles, which is the key aspect for their complete inclusion in the social community:

   a. Provide continuous removal of architectural barriers in higher education institutions;
   b. Ensure that the newly-built facilities satisfy the standards of accessibility for people with disabilities;
   c. Provide unrestricted access to information in the corresponding formats for people with visual, hearing and intellectual impairments;
   d. Organise and conduct trainings for civil servants and employees (at the federal, cantonal, municipal/city level) concerning an approach without impediments in order to familiarise them with needs of people with disabilities.

3. Expand the definition of a student with disability/special needs who can exercise certain rights in higher education including priority when enrolling at studies, subsidising the study costs, providing scholarships, etc.

4. Include people who belong to underrepresented and vulnerable groups in all areas of life, on an equal basis with others, especially in the area of education, through the following measures:

   a. Improve initial teacher education
   b. Ensure continuous professional development of teachers, associates and the school management
   c. Provide access to contemporary technologies in line with the needs of people with disabilities
   d. Initiate the process of transforming special education institutions into resource centres for inclusive education with the goal to offer professional support services, assistance in education, etc.
   e. Create and implement peer support programmes in educational institutions.

5. Strengthen the existing offices for students with special needs in all higher education institutions including the creation of opportunities for starting "Inclusive Offices" at HEIs so that at least 20% of HEIs have such offices.

6. Increase the mobility of students with special needs within international exchange programmes by 50%.

7. Increase the number of grants/loans for students with special needs by 50%.

8. Promote equal opportunities alongside continuous increases in the number of students coming from families where neither parent has a university degree by 20%.

9. Continue with subsidy programmes for students with special needs with a clear criterion of student success.