



SINC@HE
Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities
at higher education institutions in Montenegro

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3rd External Evaluation Report

Prepared by:

Georgios Kouroupetroglou

e-mail: koupe@di.uoa.gr

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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
HEI	Higher Educational Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
M	Month
ME	Montenegro
QCM	Quality Control Management
TEMPUS	The trans-European mobility scheme for university studies

WP Work Package

Executive Summary

The main goal of this External Evaluation report is to assess whether the objectives of the SINC@HE project for the third period of its execution (M21-M36), as well as the project as a whole, described in the project proposal, have been achieved through the means proposed. After providing the external evaluation methodology and the project description, the external evaluation findings are presented together with the deliverables achieved. Moreover, the indicators of progress defined in the Logical Framework of the project. The activities of the SINC@HE project have been realized according to the project plan, they are in line with its aims and objectives outlined in the original application. All the expected deliverables of the project have been produced in an acceptable way. But, the deliverables are not provided in a full accessible electronic format. Moreover, the management of the project by the coordinator partner was very effective and successful.

External Evaluation Objective

The main goal of this External Evaluation report is to assess whether the objectives of the SINC@HE project for the third period of its execution (M21-M36), as well as the total project, as described in the project proposal, have been achieved through the means proposed. Specifically it will evaluate the extent the project's activities and deliverables are in line with the aims and objectives, as well as with regards to expected results and planned activities, outlined in the original application. Linked to that this evaluation seeks to assess as to whether all project activities have been realized according in due course and to certify that no delays have occurred with a negative impact on the project results.

External Evaluation Methodology

In order to carry out the External Evaluation the author was given full access to all relevant external and internal documents and on the contents of the project's website <http://sinche.uom.gr/>. Documentation comprises above all relevant documents including the original project proposal, as part of the official grant agreement, progress reports and deliverables. Several telephone, e-mail and teleconference communication contacts were realized with the project manager Professor Lefkothea Kartasidou. In order to monitor and control all activities for the 2nd project year the author visited the partners at Podgorica and Kotor (Montenegro) from 10 to 14 June 2013. I had the opportunity to meet and discuss on the SINC@HE project with a number of project participants. Moreover, I was able to inspect all special and general equipment and also discuss with all partners issues concerning Training (WP5), (WP4) Establishing support services and capacity building for university students with disabilities.

To provide a context for reporting the evaluation findings, first the SINC@HE project aims and approach will be summarized, along with a list of its WPs, activities and deliverables.

Project Description

Project SINC@HE: **“Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Montenegro”** has been designed to improve the quality and relevance of support and inclusion of students with disabilities in Montenegro. The main objective of the project is to create the conditions and standards that will assimilate the quality of inclusion of students with disabilities in EU HEIs and will be harmonized according to EU practices and policies. Developed standards would be incorporated into existing legal and sublegal acts at the national levels and at the HE institutional levels. A long term objective of the outcomes will be to strengthen the open society values regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in HEIs. In order to provide a solid base for the implementation of newly developed inclusive

standards the SINC@HE project will build necessary capacities through establishing of a framework for improving the support, inclusion and quality assurance at HEIs. This framework will be incorporated in HEI regulatory documents. HEIs have to keep the academic and nonacademic staff well informed and trained on the needs of students with disabilities. Thus, the SINC@HE project will provide extensive training for all levels of staff involved in support and inclusion of students with disabilities in HEIs.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To improve university regulatory frameworks, guidelines and recommendations to allow full support for disabled students in ME higher education institutions.
- To improve institutional capacities through providing special equipment, support services and staff training for teaching students with disabilities.
- To establish Student Advisory Offices at each partner university for counseling, guidance, tutoring, relationships and psychological support.
- To raise awareness and motivation on inclusive education and to increase the number of prospective students with disability.

The SINC@HE project is coordinated by the University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece) along with the following 10 partners: University of Warsaw (Warsaw, Poland), University Macerata (Macerata, Italy), Arcola Research LLP (London, United Kingdom), the Slovenian Association of Disabled Students (Ljubljana, Slovenia), University of Donja Gorica (Podgorica, Montenegro), University Mediterranean (Podgorica, Montenegro), Institute for Education and Rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders (Kotor, Montenegro), Association of youth with disabilities of Montenegro (Podgorica, Montenegro), Ministry of information society and Telecommunications (Podgorica, Montenegro), Institute of Information Technology (Podgorica, Montenegro) and the Faculty for Management Herceg Novi (Igalo, Montenegro).

The content of the SINC@HE project is organized in ten WPs that follow a logical development of the main idea of support and inclusion of students with disabilities in HEIs. The WPs are classified in five types: development, quality control, dissemination, exploitation and management. Table 1 presents the titles, duration and the type of each WP.

The data in Table 1 indicate that only six WPs (WP5, WP6, WP7, WP8, WP9 and WP10) are active in the reference period (M21-M36) of this External Evaluation Report.

Table 1
WorkPackages of the SINC@HE project
(active WPs in the period M21-M36 are in bold)

WP	Title	Duration	Type of WP
1	<i>Background analysis for inclusion of students with disabilities in HE</i>	<i>M1-M4</i>	<i>Development</i>
2	<i>Improvement of institutional frameworks for inclusion of students with disabilities</i>	<i>M4-M10</i>	<i>Development</i>
3	<i>Definition of support services for students with disabilities at HEIs</i>	<i>M4-M6</i>	<i>Development</i>
4	<i>Establishing support services and capacity building for university students with disabilities</i>	<i>M6-M18</i>	<i>Development</i>
5	Training of university staff for working with disabled students	M13-M23	Development
6	Piloting and evaluation at partner universities	M24-M36	Development
7	Quality control and monitoring	M1-M36	Quality Control
8	Dissemination and raising awareness	M3-M36	Dissemination
9	Exploitation of results	M1-M36	Exploitation
10	Management of the Project	M1-M36	Management

The WPs of the SINC@HE project are further analyzed in a number of activities. Each activity corresponds to at least one deliverable with the same title. The deliverables are classified in five types: report, methodology, learning resources, events and other products.

The duration of the SINC@HE project is 36 months. This External Evaluation Report refers mainly to the third year of its execution (M21-M36). The current External Evaluation Report is the final one for this project, and thus it refers also to the project as a whole.

External Evaluation Findings

The partners responded to the recommendations raised in my previous report [1] as follows:

- They have provided the final Deliverables 5.3, 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4, in an acceptable way.
- For the Deliverables 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 they have prepared a 14page long separate report [2] that indicates the dissemination activities.

But,

- Deliverable 4.4 does not include the specific international guidelines that have been followed.

Table 2 presents the titles, duration, delivery date and type of the deliverables for the reference period M21-M36. In total 15 deliverables have been produced (including the current report), out of the 15 expected.

Moreover, the project produced two more documents: “Dissemination activities” [2] and “Evaluation report on Training” [3].

Tables 3 and 4 present the titles, duration, delivery date and type of the deliverables for the previous two reference periods: M1-12 and M13-M20.

The website <http://sinche.uom.gr> provides detailed and in depth information on the SINC@HE project. Its main menu include: a) project overview, b) project objectives, background, description and dissemination, c) the list of the participants along with their profiles and contacts, d) the activities of the project (workpackages and deliverables), and e) the three year workplan. Moreover it includes a calendar, photo gallery from the meetings, download area, links and site map.

The management of the project by the coordinator partner was very effective and successful. Also, the internal QCM team was very efficient.

The project’s activities and deliverables presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 are in line with the aims and objectives, as well as with regards to the expected results and planned activities, outlined in the original application. All the produced Deliverables (Tables 2, 3 and 4) are acceptable. Thus, all the activities of the project have been realized in due course and no delays have occurred with a negative impact on the project results as a whole.

My comment is that the available documents of the deliverables are not provided in a full accessible electronic format. The value of all the deliverables would be strengthening if they include a section with references to the literature or the information resources. The above remark on the quality of the deliverables was

raised in my previous reports [1] and [4], but unfortunately it has not been taken into consideration.

Table 2
Deliverables/activities of the SINC@HE project for the period M21-M36

Reference number	Title of Delivery / Activity	Total Duration (weeks)	Delivery Date	Type
6.1	Monitoring of university regulatory documents implementation	24	M36	Report
6.2	Piloting and evaluation of defined support services in partner universities	24	M36	Other products
6.3	Piloting of peers' support workshops	24	M36	Events: Conferences and Seminars
6.4	Monitoring and evaluation of training effects at partner universities	10	M34	Report
7.1	Internal quality monitoring and control	72	M36	Report
7.2	Internal quality monitoring and control	12	M36	Report
8.1	Creation of the project website	18	M36	Other products
8.2	Raising awareness and motivation among current and prospective students with disabilities	18	M36	Events: Conferences and Seminars
8.3	Media promotion of new university capacities for education of students with disabilities	6	M36	Other products
8.4	Dissemination conference with stakeholders	3	M35	Events: Conferences
9.1	Agreement on future inter-university peers support	36	M36	Other products
9.2	Agreement on networking for supporting cognitive, social and intrapersonal issues of SwD	24	M36	Other products
9.3	Agreement on networking for supporting cognitive, social and intrapersonal issues of SwD	24	M36	Report

10.1	Overall project management and administration	72	M36	Methodology
10.2	Project coordination meetings	6	M36	Report

Table 3
Deliverables/activities of the SINC@HE project for the period M1-M12

Reference number	Title of Delivery / Activity	Duration (weeks)	Delivery Date	Type
1.1	Review and analyze EU practices and policies for inclusion in HE	12	M4	Report
1.2	Analysis of national practices and policies for HE inclusion	10	M4	Report
1.3	Comparative analysis of National/EU policies for inclusion of disabled students	10	M4	Report
2.1	Analysis of legislative framework and human resources at partner institutions	15	M7	Report
2.2	Defining institutional structure to support inclusion of students with disabilities	15	M8	Methodology
2.3	Development of university regulatory documents for the support of students with disabilities	12	M10	Other products
3.1	Analysis of needs and identification of support services in partners' institutions	6	M7	Report
3.2	Design of services: ICT support, peers' support, guidance and counseling	12	M10	Other products
3.3	Planning for the implementation of services at institutional level	6	M10	Methodology
4.2	Providing special equipment and teaching aids for students with disabilities	15	M12	Learning Resources
7.2	External quality monitoring and control	12	M8	Report
8.3	Media promotion of new university capacities for education of disabled students	6	M3	Other products
8.4	Dissemination conference with stakeholders	3	M9	Events
10.2	Project coordination meetings	6	M1, M6	Report

Table 4
Deliverables/activities of the SINC@HE project for the period M13-M20

Reference number	Title of Delivery / Activity	Total Duration (weeks)	Delivery Date	Type
4.1	Development of ICT support services for student with disabilities	40	M18	Learning resources
4.3	Establishment of the network of Student advisory offices at each partner	15	M18	Learning resources
4.4	Upgrade university websites for guidelines on studying with disability	15	M18	Methodology
5.1	Analyzing training needs for each partner institution involved	8	M14	Report
5.2	Basic Training on inclusive practices and support services for SwD	12	M15, M18, M20	Training and Report on Training
5.3	Advanced training on inclusive practices and support services for SwD	12	M15, M18, M20	Training and Report on Training
7.1	Internal quality monitoring and control	72	M36	Report
7.2	External quality monitoring and control	12	M20	Report
7.3	Inter-Tempus coaching	2	M13	Report
8.1	Creation of the project website	18	M13-M20	Other products
8.2	Raising awareness and motivation among current and prospective disabled students	18	M13-M20	Events: Conferences and Seminars
8.3	Media promotion of new university capacities for education of disabled students	6	M13	Other products
8.4	Dissemination conference with stakeholders	3	M13	Events: Conferences

				and Seminars
9.1	Establishing of inter-university peer support	36	M13-M20	Other products
10.2	Project coordination meetings	6	M13, M18	Methodology

Indicators of progress

According to the Logical Framework Matrix indicators such as increased number of students with disabilities enrolled in university by 2014 have to be taken into consideration in order to evaluate to what extent the project objectives have been achieved. Thus, it must be marked that during the project period 28 students with disabilities from ME Institutions were involved in the dissemination activity (see Table 5).

Table 5
Involvement of students with disabilities

Dissemination Conference	
Current HE Students with Disabilities	15
Students with Disabilities from IERK	7
High School students with disabilities	6
Total	28

Moreover, 5 individuals with disabilities were involved as trainers in the training activities of the consortium (see Table 6).

Table 6
Trainers with disabilities from the Consortium

Partner	Type of disability of the trainer
1. UW	Visual Disability
2. UW	Physical Disability
3. FMHN	Mobility Disability
4. DSIS	Mobility Disability
5. DSIS	Visual Disability

It is important to focus that during the project period the focus of the project was on training. In total 252 academic and nonacademic staff was trained (see Table 7). Moreover, I would like to mention that the consortium partners provided further training through the Moodle Learning Management System [5].

Table 7
Indicators of Training

Trainees during the training period	
Basic Training	
Teaching staff	30
Non teaching staff	58
Students	4
Gender	
Male	24
Female	68
Total	92
Advanced Training	
Teaching staff	45
Non teaching staff	85
Students	4
Gender	
Male	50
Female	84
Total	134
Trainees with the Moodle	
Non teaching staff	10
Teaching staff	16
Total	26
Grand Total	252

Final Remarks

In conclusion, the activities of the SINC@HE project for the period M21-M36, as well as the activities of the whole project, have been realized according to the project plan, are in line with its aims and objectives outlined in the original application,

But, the deliverables are not provided in a full accessible electronic format. The value of all the deliverables would be strengthening if they include a section with references to the literature or the information resources.

References

- [1] G. Kouroupetroglou: 2nd External Evaluation Report of the Project “Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Montenegro”, 30 Nov. 2013
- [2] V. Boskovic and L. Kartasidou: “DISS8 Report on dissemination activities”, SINCHE Project, 14 Oct. 2014
- [3] L. Kartasidou, E. Pavlidou, C. Giaconi, and L. Fedeli: “Evaluation report on Training”, SINCHE Project, 19 Oct. 2014
- [4] G. Kouroupetroglou: 1st External Evaluation Report of the Project “Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Montenegro”, 30 Jan. 2013
- [5] The MOODLE Learning Management System <https://moodle.org/>