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

DISS 8 Dissemination and raising awareness

DISS8 Report on dissemination activities

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Introduction

The objective of the Dissemination Report is to present the summary of the planned dissemination activities conducted during the project. The activities were carried out in order to promote aims of the project and to ensure the widest possible use of knowledge and results derived from the project. The report will describe the summary of activities carried out by the Association of Youth with Disabilities as leading partner for this working package as well by other partners.

Montenegro is a country at the Western Balkans (former Yugoslav Republic) at the southern coast of the Adriatic Sea. According to census from 2011 Montenegro has 625,266 inhabitants. Its capital is Podgorica with 185,937 inhabitants.

Also, according to this census 11% of the population has some kind of disability. According to some unofficial data from Ministry of Education, there is between 1800 and 2000 pupils and students with disabilities in primarily and secondary education while at the higher education institutions there are about 70 students with disabilities (AYDM’s database for 2014).

Despite certain progress in last period, persons with disabilities still face discrimination in different areas of their lives such as: accessibility, education, employment, social and health care. Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro (AYDM) established in 2001 is one of the leading NGO’s in Montenegro active in field of promoting and protecting human rights of persons with disabilities. AYDM have huge experience in working with students with disabilities. It is the only organization which provides support services for students with disabilities in Montenegro.

As reported in the project form DISS 8 the main motivation for dissemination is increasing the awareness of upgrading university capacities for supporting and quality studying among current and prospective students with disabilities and relevant bodies at the national level. In scope of this, during the project following activities where implemented:

8.1 Creation of the project website

8.2 Raising awareness and motivation among current and prospective students with disabilities

8.3 Media promotion of new university capacities for education of students with disabilities -

8.4 Dissemination conference with stakeholders
DISS8.1 Creation of the project website –Other products

General concepts of the SINCHE portal site (http://sinche.uom.gr)
This page discusses some general concepts that will be useful as you begin to explore our site that was achieved using the free and open source CMS “Drupal”. The remaining topics in this section go into more detail on a few of these concepts.

Module
A module is software (code) that extends Drupal features and/or functionality. Core modules are those included with the main download of Drupal, and you can turn on their functionality without installing additional software.

User, Permission, Role
Every visitor to your site, whether they have an account and log in or visit the site anonymously, is considered a user to Drupal. Each user has a numeric user ID, and non-anonymous users also have a user name and an email address. Other information can also be associated with users by modules; for instance, if you use the core Profile module, you can define user profile fields to be associated with each user.

Fields
A field is the smallest unit of information in Drupal. Examples of fields include a number, date or some text.

Node/Entities
A node in Drupal is the generic term for a piece of content on your web site. A node consists of several fields. (Note that the choice of the word "node" is not meant in the mathematical sense as part of a network.) Some examples of nodes:

- Pages in books
- Discussion topics in forums
- Entries in blogs
- News article stories

Taxonomy
Drupal has a system for classifying content, which is known as taxonomy and implemented in the core Taxonomy module. You can define your own vocabularies (groups of taxonomy terms), and add terms to each vocabulary. Vocabularies can be flat or hierarchical, can allow single or multiple selection, and can also be "free tagging" (meaning that when creating or editing content, you can add new terms on the fly). Each vocabulary can then be attached to one or more content types, and in this way, nodes on your site can be grouped into categories, tagged, or classified in any way you choose.
Database
Drupal stores information in a database; each type of information has its own database table. For instance, the basic information about the nodes of your site are stored in the Node table, and if you use the CCK module to add fields to your nodes, the field information is stored in separate tables. Comments and Users also have their own database tables, and roles, permissions, and other settings are also stored in database tables.

Path
When you visit a URL within your Drupal site, the part of the URL after your base site address is known as the path. When you visit a path in your Drupal site, Drupal figures out what information should be sent to your browser, via one or more database queries. Generally, Drupal allows each module you have enabled on your site to define paths that the module will be responsible for, and when you choose to visit a particular path, Drupal asks the module what should be displayed on the page.

Theme
The theme controls how your site is displayed, including the graphic look, layout, and colors. A theme consists of one or more PHP files that define the HTML output of your site’s pages, along with one or more CSS files that define the layout, fonts, colors, and other styles.

Region, Block, Menu
Pages on your Drupal site are laid out in regions, which can include the header, footer, sidebars, and main content section; your theme may define additional regions. Blocks are discrete chunks of information that are displayed in the regions of your site’s pages. Blocks can take the form of menus (which are concerned with site navigation), the output from modules (e.g., hot forum topics), or dynamic and static chunks of information that you’ve created yourself (e.g., a list of upcoming events).

There are three standard menus in Drupal: Primary Links, Secondary Links, and Navigation. Primary and Secondary links are built by site administrators, and displayed automatically in the page header of many themes (if not, you can enable their blocks to display them). Navigation is the catch-all menu that contains your administration menus, as well as links supplied by modules on your site. You can also create your own custom menus, and display them by enabling their blocks.

Specific features of the “SINCHE” dynamic site:
- Bilingual interface everywhere in the site.
- Creation of categories and respective pop up menus
- Downloadable attachment documents area
- Creation of event calendar
- Creation of photo gallery
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- Creation of site map
- Creation of social network groups (in facebook and twitter)

Accessibility Review with Guidelines WCAG 2.0 (Level AA) (view more: http://achecker.ca/checker/index.php)
8.2 Raising awareness and motivation among current and prospective students with disabilities - Other products

This is the most important deliverable, since previous WP1-WP5 are aimed to establish quality base for accepting a greater number of students with disability. Partner universities with significant help from national ministries and associations relevant for educating children and people with disabilities, in the third project year (piloting) will enroll greater number of disabled students. Media promotion of new university capacities for education of disabled students will help to publicize it. In Scope of this we have planned and organize 6 dissemination events as well some additional events for this target group.

They were organized in forms of public debates, info sessions and workshops.

In October 2012 two public debates have taken place at the University of Mediterranean and at the University of Donja Gorica. Speakers where Ramo Sendelj, UNIM, Marina Vujačić and Miroslava Mima Ivanovic from AYDM and Viktorija Mihovic, IERK. Participants at these 2 debates were students with disabilities and representatives of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro, Institute for education and rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders Kotor, University of Mediterranean, University of UDG. There where 20 participants at Mediterranean and 55 participants at UDG, 75 participants in total.

Representatives of the of the Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro talked about terminology of disability, history of Association, main areas of activities and about problems and needs of students with disabilities in higher education in Montenegro. Also, they presented “Students service”, regular activity of Association in aim of providing different support services to students with disabilities. And they emphasize importance of the project for students with disabilities and expressed expectation that this project will improve quality of education for students with disabilities.

Viktorija Mihovic from Institute for education and rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders shared experience from her work and work of Institute with young persons with hearing impairments and about complexes problems and needs of this population. Students with disabilities Miroslava Mima Ivanovic and Andrija Samardzic, talked about their personal experience at University. They have mentioned all the problems they faced during their studies, from inaccessibility, lack of adequate teaching tools and equipment to lack of support services organized by Universities to negative attitude of the society toward persons with disabilities. In this regard, they also mentioned importance of support services provided by Association of Youth with Disabilities.
At the Dissemination Conferences, in October 2012 and November 2013, there were 2 workshops for current and prospective students with disabilities. During the first Conference in October 2012 three sessions were organized from AYDM trainers on the topics:

- Disability concept, rights of persons with disabilities – leaded by Milenko Vojicic from Association “Plegije”-Niksic.
- Language, etiquette, and disability culture when communicating and interacting with persons with disabilities – trainer Goran Macanovic, representative of Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro.
- Support services and accessibility - trainer Milan Saranovic from AYDM

There were more than 30 participants, students with disabilities, students without disabilities, students from Gymnasium “Slobodan Skerovic” and students from Resource center for schooling and rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders.

On the second day of the Conference in November 2013 a special dissemination event was organized and it was dedicated to prospective and current students with disabilities. There were than participants who were students from Institute of Education and Rehabilitation in Kotor, Resource centre for children and youth from Podgorica, current students with
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disabilities from University Donja Gorica, University Mediterranean, University of Montenegro, as well as high school students from several schools from Podgorica. Sign language interpreter was provided for students with hearing impairments. Main aim of this event was motivation of prospective students to continue their education at HE institutions and to present of Students Advisory Office to all students. Also, at the end, they were informed about the technical equipment and IT technology purchased during this project which they can use during their studies.

On 10th April 2014 an event was organized with students with disabilities. There were 12 participants, students from Montenegro and Slovenia (members of DSIS). They have shared mutual experience, talked about different aspects of being student with disability and agreed on future communication and cooperation. http://youtu.be/Nwt8PFyxrc8

On 19th September 2014, representatives of IERK, together with the Dean of FMHN – Sinisa Kusovac, held an info session on the FMHN for students and professors. There were 51 participants. Following the Agenda, keynote presentation was done by the Dean of FMHN-Siniša Kusovac. He informed present professors and students about the focus and priorities of the Tempus project SINCE@HE in Montenegro Mr Viktorija Mihovic, Vidna Matovic and psychologist Jelena Avramović presented Student Advisory Office (SAO).

It was pointed out all benefit that students with disabilities have as members of the SAO and AYDM. These are: funding scholarships, transportation, availability of teaching materials with the assistance of assistive technology, dormitory technical assistance and advisory support. During the project, institutional capacities were improved by providing special equipments for student with hearing and visual impairments. Acquired technical resources will be available to all students on the use. Participants were interested in possibilities to attend course of sign language. They were also interested in psychological workshops. They got materials related to Tempus project SINCE@HE, leaflets about AYDM, the alphabet and communication with people with hearing impairments.

On the same day at premises of the University Mediterranean, another info session was held. This info session was organized in order to welcome all new students with disabilities which were enrolled this year. Beside 5 new students, there were also their parent, professors from their faculties and representatives of AYDM which introduced to them Students Advisory Office.
8.3 Media promotion of new university capacities for education of students with disabilities

Media campaign “SupportME@HE” is carried out and included significant appearance on national and local media (TV, Radio, Newspapers). During past period AYDM, IERK and universities Donja Gorica and Mediterranean had appearances in different national and local electronic and printed state and private media. Beside general promotion of the project, focus was on information of current and prospective students with disabilities and establishment of Students Advisory Office. Here is more detailed info:

- [http://www.cdm.me/drustvo/crna-gora/umhcg-podrska-studentima-i-mladima-sa-invaliditetom](http://www.cdm.me/drustvo/crna-gora/umhcg-podrska-studentima-i-mladima-sa-invaliditetom)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCI5-cEDAd0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCI5-cEDAd0)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv04HhbHi00](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv04HhbHi00)

In March 2013 rectors of University Mediterranean, UDG and University of Montenegro, together with Marina Vujacic, Executive Director of AYMD signed Chapter on support on inclusion of students with disabilities at HE. This event had big media coverage and it was presented at all major media in Montenegro.

More about this event at:

- [http://www.ucg.ac.me/254.html](http://www.ucg.ac.me/254.html)

Also, for the period of the enrollment at the Universities, Mediterranean in cooperation with Atlas TV has prepared promotional video for prospective students:

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Fn37WRYxE4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Fn37WRYxE4)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1ZGl9NWp7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1ZGl9NWp7A)

SINCHE project was also known in Greece on Chalkidiki TV [10'39’’-13'57’’] Working visit at University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece) 18th-20th June 2014

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RlCiNwTD-8#t=655](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RlCiNwTD-8#t=655)
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During the project promotional material has been created, brochures, pens, folders, notepads and T-shirts which were given to students and other participants at different dissemination events. There were 500 brochures in Montenegrin and English.

8.4 Dissemination conference with stakeholders

The first Dissemination Conference took place at the premises of University of Donja Gorica and it was organised in December 2012, in cooperation with the Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro. The Conference was opened by Marina Vujačić, executive director of the Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro. This conference had was organized on 10th of December, the International Human Rights Day and therefore her presentation was focused on the rights and current services for people with disabilities in Montenegro.

High representative of Ministry of education and sport, Vesna Vucurevic presented the hierarchy of all reforms and activities related to pre-university education already implemented in Montenegro. There were also highest representatives from all three montenegrin Universities. by Sandra Tinaj, MSc from the University of Donja Gorica, Mira Vukčević, PhD, Vice Rector of University of Montenegro and both, Slobodan Backović, PhD, Recor and Janko Radulović, PhD, Vice Rector of University „Mediterranean“. Mira Vukčević, PhD, Vice Rector of University of Montenegro pointed that even if the University of Montenegro is not a partner institution, they want to provide full capacities (human, spatial, etc) for furter support of students with disabilities in Montenegro. The presentation was concluded by agreeing of establishing joint chapter for students with disabilities, signed by Rectors of all three universities in Montenegro.

After morning session two round tables were organized “The rights people with disabilities and their inclusion in HEIs” and “Support services for persons with disabilities in HEIs”

The speakers of the round table were Pawel Wdowik (UW), Joe Cullen (Arcola), Victoria Mihović (IERK). At the second round table word had Natasha Mauko (DSIS) and Lefkothea Kartasidou (UOM).
The second dissemination Conference was held at the University of Donja Gorica on 13th of November 2013 and it was organised in cooperation with the Montenegrin partners at the project and the logistic support from University of Donja Gorica. The Conference was opened by Milica Vukotic, Vice Dean of University Donja Gorica. Janko Radulovic, Vice Rector of the University Mediterranean explained the role of University Mediterranean in the project and said that beside active role in this project, University Mediterranean has adopt decision to exempt all students with disabilities from tuitions fees.

Marina Vujačić, Executive Director of the Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro started discussion with analysis of current position of students with disabilities, their problems and barriers during studies. She mentioned that Students Advisory Office (SAO) will gather all support services for students with disabilities in Montenegro in one place. SAO represents continuation of AYDM’s Students Service which provides different support services for students with disabilities for more than one decade. Also, AYDM has prepared necessary regulations for the work of SAO and formed experienced staff that will provide support for the students. Marina said that it is extremely necessary to provide financial support and to create a model which will enable long term existence of this Office.

Ivana Ognjanovic from University Mediterranean presented results of the project for the second year. She referred in particular to purchase of the IT equipment which will provide technological support to students with disabilities, establishment of Students Advisory Office, web site of the Office, trainings of academic and non-academic staff at the Universities. Mr. Dzenan Strujic, from Institute for information and communication technologies had very interesting presentation on Learning Management System which was developed during this
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project. He explained in details many possibilities which this system will provide to students with disabilities as well as already adapted textbooks.

Enes Banda from University of Donja Gorica, presented technical support to students with disabilities which will be provided to all students with disabilities. Lefkothea Kartasidou, Coordinator of the Project spoke about Factors of SINC@HE project and about importance of self determination of persons with disabilities, while her colleague from University of Macedonia Elizavet Pavlidou had presentation on Quality of life of individuals with disabilities as indicators of success.

Also, other partners, Pawel Wdowik Donata Konczyk from University of Warsaw Natasa Mauko and Miha Kosi from Slovenian Association of students with disabilities had interesting presentations on Universal Design and support services for persons with disabilities.

The third dissemination conference took place on 29th September 2014. This last conference has focused on prospective students and their families. Since already workshops have taken place during the 3rd project year it was necessary to include them during the conference and let them speak for themselves. Also representatives from all HEIs in Montenegro presented their point of view focusing on the benefits of this project as well as the obstacles for the future. Speakers were Sandra Tinaj and Enes Banda from University UDG, Ivana Ognjanovic and Srdjan Jovanovski from University Mediterranean, Marina Vujacic from Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro and Mira Vukcevic from University of Montenegro. Special contribution to this event was discussion done by Milusa Zugic from association of parents of children and youth with disabilities and Miroslava –Mima Ivanovic, student with disability. There were more than 100 participants, representatives from all Montenegrin
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universities, Ministry of Education, Resource centres, students unions; NGO's dealing with disability and students with and without disabilities.
Other events
There were significant number of other events organize with aim to introduce project to the public and to prospective and current disabilities from which we will point out some of them. In scope of WP6, together with partners from Universities and DSIS we have organized several different events (info sessions and workshops) with aim to motivate prospective students to continue their education. Their parents were also present at this events. One of this events were Workshop held on 10th of April with 11 prospective and current students with disabilities. During that workshop a short video was made were students had interesting testimonials about their education.

On 7th March 2013 there was also another Dissemination Activity on Law Faculty, University Mediterranean and AYDM organized under presentation of different projects through Partnership Building Activity “Making a privilege for few an opportunity for all” (Youth in Action Programe) where SINC@HE project was presented to young people from Montenegro and Europe.

During MECO conference in September 2014 in Budva project were presented to visitors. Srdjan Jovanovski has made comprehensive introduction to participants about results of the project in the past three years. He explained all technical and administrative aspects that are implemented. He highlighted the importance of integration of student services on universities and AYDM and also explained to participants about way of usage of Student advisory office. He also have made accent at the technical services implemented to help students with disability. More information can be found at: http://embeddedcomputing.me/en/meco/projects-dissemination

IERK was focused also on students with hearing impairments and during entire project they had several workshops with high school students. More about their activities at: www.resursnicentarzasluhigovor.me.

IERK has also organized workshops with parents of hearing impaired students also. Experience tells us that parents are an important element in the further process of education students with disabilities, their most important support. There have been held three workshops in which, on average, attended by six parents. Workshops were carried out by...
Conclusion

Through this project we had different target audience, students with disabilities, teaching and non teaching staff at the universities, students without disabilities and broader public. Using different approaches and communication channels, conferences, public debates, info sessions, social media and networks, appearances at significant number of media we have reached all parts of Montenegrin society. During this time, we have AYDM has used all their websites and social networks for promotion of the project, www.disabilityinfo.me, www.umhcg.com, https://www.facebook.com/pages/Udruzenje-mladih-sa-hendikepom-Crne-GoreAYDM/103487593019703?fref=ts.

What we have learned and what could be good example of raising awareness among society and target group in specific is use of social networks. For many persons with disabilities they are the most suitable channel of the communication since due the inaccessibility, they are facing different kinds of barriers in getting necessary information and in communication with others. On AYDM official Facebook page there is more than 2000 followers. A lot of them are high school and university students with disabilities. Through these networks AYDM had constant communication with students and persons with disabilities. They were regularly informed about all activities of the project as well as about work of Students Advisory Office. AYDM had sent official letter to all high schools in Montenegro introducing Students Advisory Office to potential students with disabilities. Also, AYDM had constant direct communication with students with disabilities in aim of promoting Students Advisory Office and its services since most of these students are users of different support services provided by the AYDM.

In future it is necessary to continue and to strengthen communication with students with disabilities using different approaches. We expect that partners at the Universities will work on improvement of the status of persons with disabilities and their further integration into academic life.