

Three pillars for better inclusion in Higher Education

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Numerous European reports show that all EU countries face similar diversity and inclusion challenges. Higher Education Institutions, as research and knowledge centres, have some responsibility to implement an internal change and impulse and lead changes in the environments near them in order to improve the current situation.

The project SMILE, co-funded by Erasmus+, has identified 3 diversity pillars - Migrant background students, Women in leadership in HE, Low socio-economic status students - and by working with universities in 7 different EU countries and relevant civil society intends to pin-point the main challenges in each pillar, discuss and understand what the affected individuals think about their situation and create tools to help HEIs to address the identified problems with the final objective to make universities more aware and inclined to do something to prevent certain old approaches. SMILE has established already Focus Advisory groups in 7 countries and prepared a report on each pillar that highlights the critical points that need to be addressed. The project will also develop a Diversity Audit Model for HEIs to reflect and self-assess the way diversity is addressed in their institution. It will also develop a set of CPD courses to train HE staff on diversity and inclusion matters. SMILE will write an operational policy recommendations action plan as well to make the challenges more visible to policy makers at HE, national and European levels.

Topic: Diversity and inclusion in Higher Education: what we have and what we need