IDEA
Inclusive Tertiary
Education in WBs

Final Quality Report

"Inclusive Tertiary Education in the Western Balkans (IDEA)"

January 31, 2024

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Polis University (ALB)

Universum College (KS)

University "Aleksandër Moisiu" Durrës (ALB)

University of Donja Gorica (MNE)

University of Medicine, Tirana (ALB)

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (GR)

University "Luigj Gurakuqi" Shkodra (ALB)

Masaryk University (CZ)

Catholic University "the Lady of Good Council" (ALB)

University of Limerick (IE)

Epoka University (ALB)

Albanian Disability Right Foundation (ADRF)

University of Pristina (KS)

Association of Paraplegic and Paralyzed Children in Kosovo (HANDYKOS)

International Business College of Mitrovica (KS)

Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro (AYDM)

ACRONYMS

CBHE – Capacity Building in Higher Education

EACEA – Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

IDEA - Inclusive Tertiary Education in the Western Balkans

HEI – Higher Education Institutions

PMT – Project Management Team

QAC – Quality Assurance Committee

QAP – Quality Assurance Plan

SC – Steering Committee

PU – Polis University

WP – Work Package

AMDU- Aleksandër Moisiu-Durrës University

UMT- Medical University of Tirana

UNISHK- University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"

UNIZKM- University Lady of Good Council

EPOKA- Epoka University

UP- University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"

IBC-M - International Business College, Mitrovica

UC - Universum College

UDG - Donja Gorica University

NKUA - National University of Athens

UM - Masaryk University

UL - Limerick University

ADRF - Albanian Foundation for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

HANDYKOS - Association of Paraplegic and Paralyzed Children in Kosovo

AYDM - Association of Youth with Disabilities in Montenegro

MES (ALB) - Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports - Albania

MES (KOS) - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology - Kosovo

MES (MNE) - Ministry of Education and Sports - Montenegro

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Introduction

The Inclusive Tertiary Education in the Western Balkans (IDEA) project represents a significant milestone in the efforts to enhance educational opportunities for students with disabilities (SwD) and students with learning difficulties (SwLD) in Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro. Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and coordinated by Polis University, this initiative has brought together a consortium of 16 partners, including 13 universities and three organizations dedicated to supporting people with disabilities. The overarching aim of the IDEA project is to build capacities within higher education institutions (HEIs) to provide inclusive education, foster accessibility, and promote equitable access to learning and employment opportunities for all students, regardless of their physical or cognitive challenges.

This Final Quality Report provides a comprehensive analysis of the project's implementation, focusing on the quality of processes, activities, and outcomes achieved. The report evaluates the effectiveness of the capacity-building initiatives, training sessions, dissemination strategies, and the establishment of support structures aimed at enhancing the educational experience for SwD and SwLD. It highlights the project's adherence to its objectives, the methodologies employed to ensure quality delivery, and the impact of the project on the participating HEIs and their stakeholders. Key components of the IDEA project included the development of modern inclusion practices, the integration of assistive technologies, and the creation of networks to support disadvantaged groups across various educational levels. Throughout its implementation, the project adopted a systemic approach, tailoring activities to the specific needs of the target groups and fostering a culture of accessibility and inclusion within the partner institutions.

The quality assurance processes within the IDEA project involved continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure that activities were aligned with the project's goals and that outcomes were both effective and sustainable. This report delves into the quality management strategies that were employed, the challenges encountered, and the mitigation measures adopted to overcome these challenges. It also provides an overview of the feedback received from stakeholders, including academic and administrative staff, students, and external partners, and how this feedback informed the ongoing improvement of the project.

By examining the successes and areas for improvement, this Final Quality Report aims to provide valuable insights into the implementation of inclusive education projects. It serves as a testament to the collaborative efforts of the consortium members and the transformative impact of the IDEA project on higher education in the Western Balkans. As the project concludes, this report underscores the importance of sustained commitment to accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that the lessons learned and best practices developed continue to benefit students with disabilities and learning difficulties in the years to come.

Aims of the Work Packages

The Preparation work package was foundational in setting the stage for the IDEA project. Its primary aim was to establish the conditions and rules of cooperation among consortium partners through formalized Partnership Agreements. This phase included a pivotal Kick-off Meeting at POLIS University in Albania, where essential structures such as the Steering Committee, Managerial Committee, and Project Quality Committee were established. An in-depth Analysis & Master-Plan to Address the Needs & Wants of Accessible Higher Education in the Western Balkans was generated, drawing from comprehensive data provided by the Ministries of Education and consortium partners. This groundwork was crucial for clarifying roles, responsibilities, and strategic direction, ensuring a cohesive and well-coordinated project launch.

The Development work package aimed to create and implement new protocols and policy papers to enhance the normative and regulatory frameworks for inclusive higher education in Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro. This involved establishing Accessibility Units within partner HEIs, equipped with necessary assistive technology to ensure they operate in an equitable and accessible manner. Extensive training sessions were conducted for university administration, academic staff, and other stakeholders, supported by study visits to established accessibility units in Europe.

These efforts aimed to build capacity for providing accessible HE services, while the development of a Road-Map of processes and procedures ensures the long-term sustainability and transferability of the project outcomes.

The Quality work package was focused on maintaining high standards throughout the project implementation by utilizing both internal and external quality monitoring mechanisms. Led by the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, this work package involved the development and implementation of a Quality Monitoring Action Plan, establishment of a Project Quality Committee, and engagement of an external auditor for independent evaluation. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement processes were put in place to ensure that all project deliverables met the predefined success indicators. This systematic approach to quality assurance was designed to guarantee the effective and sustainable achievement of the project's objectives.

The Dissemination work package aimed to maximize the reach and impact of the IDEA project by engaging key stakeholders and ensuring widespread distribution and utilization of project outputs. This included the creation of a comprehensive Dissemination Strategy, development of various promotional materials, regular publication of newsletters, and maintenance of an interactive project website. Additionally, significant events such as the launching event, training sessions, and a final conference were organized to foster stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The primary goal was to create broad awareness and understanding of the project's objectives, ensuring the benefits of inclusive higher education were communicated and adopted beyond the immediate consortium.

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The Management work package focused on ensuring efficient and effective coordination of the project, spearheaded by POLIS University. This involved continuous project management activities, timely reporting, and strict adherence to EU financial and technical regulations. Key activities included the formalization of cooperation rules during the Kick-off Meeting, regular monitoring and reporting on project progress, and conducting external evaluations and audits. Emphasis was placed on fostering a collaborative and committed partnership among consortium members, ensuring alignment with the project's objectives and contributing to its successful implementation and sustainability.

Progress of Activities

Work Package 1	Progress
• D.1.1 – Launching the project. • D.1.2 - Analysis & Master-Plan to Address the Needs & Wants of Accessible Higher Education in the Western Balkans.	100%
Work Package 2	
• D.2.1.1 – Development of New Protocols and Drafting of Policy Papers with Normative Suggestions. • D.2.1.2 – Equipment Purchase, Setting-Up and Establishment of Accessibility Centres. • D. 2.2.1 – Training of the University administration Services for Accessible Tertiary Education. • D. 2.2.2. Training of Academic Staff on Inclusive Tertiary Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods. • D. 2.2.3 Piloting and Road-Mapping of Processes and Procedures Towards the Establishment of the Accessibility Units.	100%
Work Package 3	
• D-3.1: Development of a Quality Monitoring Action Plan. • D-3.2: Subcontract and External Auditor. • D-3.3: Mid-Term Quality Monitoring Report & Recommendations. • D-3.4: Final Quality Monitoring Report.	100%

Work Package 4	
• D-4.1. Development and validation of a Dissemination Strategy. • D-4.2: Development and Coordination of Dissemination Products, project and Accessibility Units' Websites, application development / customization. • D-4.3.: Dissemination & Exploitation Actions.	100%
Work Package 5	
• D-5.1: Continuous Project Management. • D-5.2: Mid-Term Project Management Report. • D-5.3: External Evaluation and Audit. • D-5.4: Final Project Management Report.	100%

*Table 1. Progress of Activities for each Work Package*

Project Deliverables Evaluation Summary

The Overall Evaluation questionnaires (See Annex 1 and Annex 2) have been drafted to gather feedback on the implementation and impact of the IDEA project, *specifically focusing on the development of new protocols, training sessions, and the overall project management and dissemination activities*. By collecting insights from participants (both staff and students), the aim has been to evaluate the effectiveness of IDEA initiatives and identify areas for improvement to enhance the inclusivity and accessibility of higher education in the Western Balkans. Below is given a summary of the responses for each question.

Questionnaire (and responses)- Staff from Each Partner

**Section 1: Development of New Protocols and Policy Papers**

1. **How effective were the new protocols and policy papers in addressing the needs of students with disabilities (SwD) and students with learning difficulties (SwLD)?**
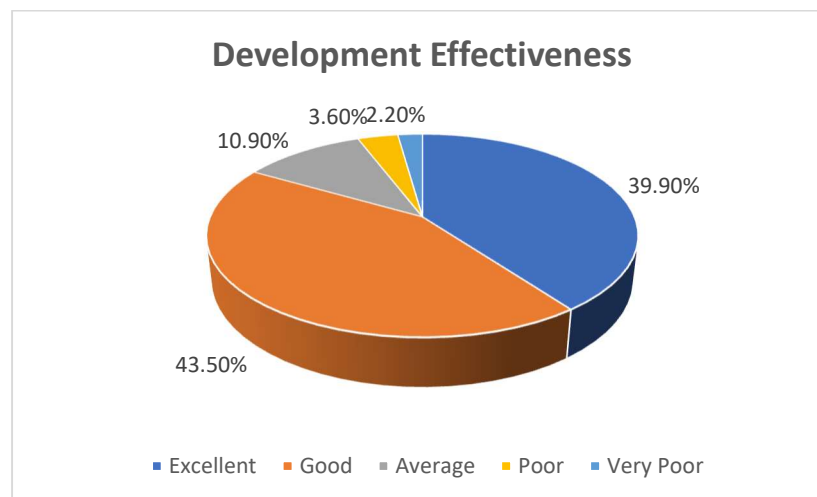
Graph 1. Development Effectiveness

Most staff found the development of new protocols and policy papers effective, with 40 respondents rating it as "Very Effective/Strongly Agree" and 70 as "Effective/Agree". A smaller group was neutral, and only a few found it ineffective.

2. **Were the drafted policy papers and normative suggestions well integrated into your institution's existing framework?**

Policy Integration

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

8.70% 5.80% 2.20%
36.20%
47.10%
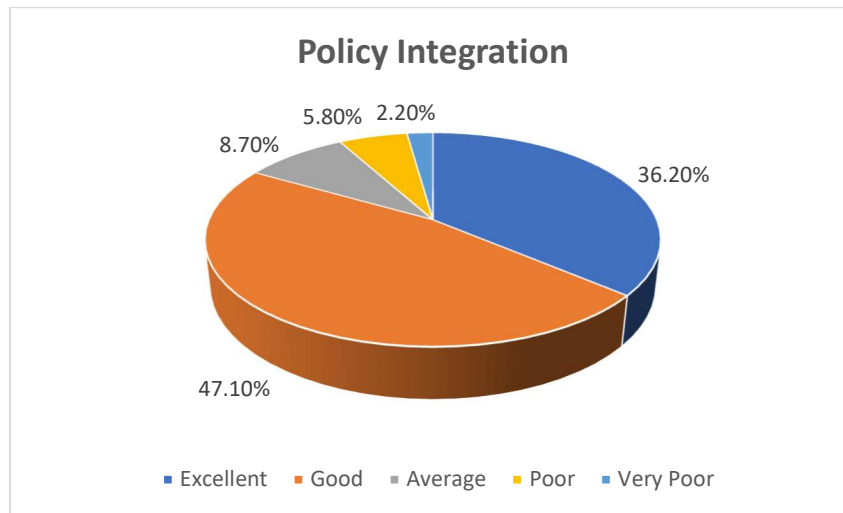
Graph 2. Policy Integration

The feedback on policy integration was similarly positive, with 36.2% rating it as Excellent and 47.1% as Good. This high approval reflects the effective integration of new policies into the existing frameworks. A minority rated it Average (8.7%), Poor (5.8%), or Very Poor (2.2%), highlighting areas that could benefit from further refinement and attention.

Section 2: Training Sessions

3. Please rate the effectiveness of the training sessions for university administration services.
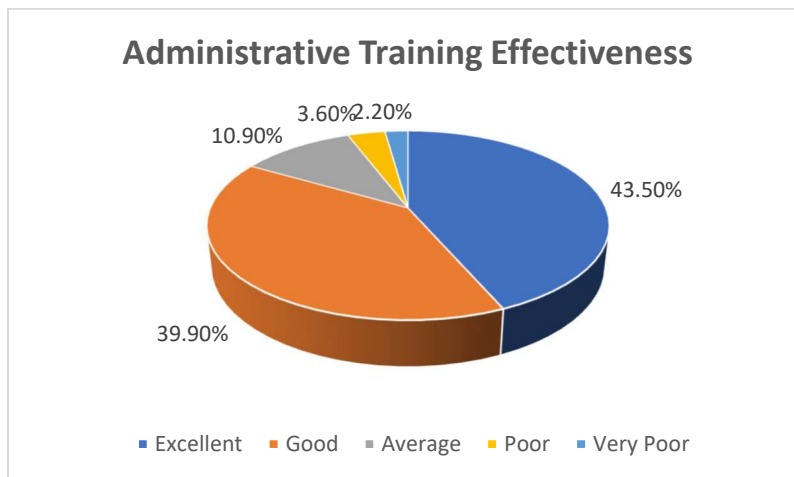
Graph 3. Administrative Training Effectiveness

The effectiveness of training for university administration services was well received. 50 participants strongly agreed, and 60 agreed, reflecting the success of these training sessions.

4. How applicable was the content of the academic staff training on inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment methods to your daily responsibilities?
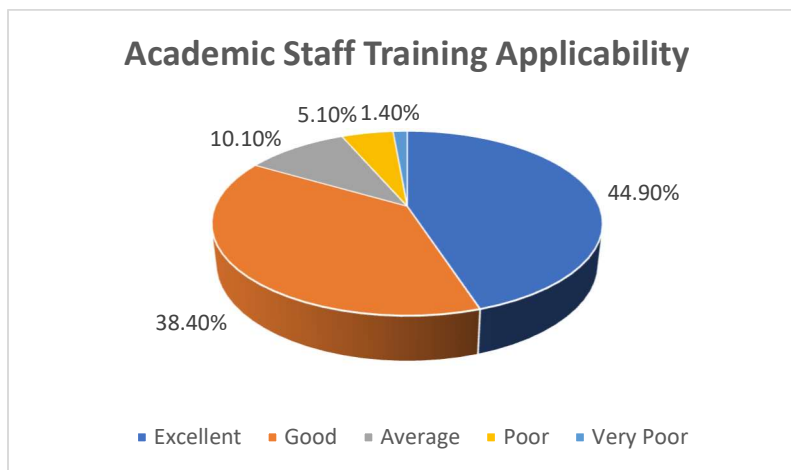
Graph 4. Academic Staff Training Applicability

The training for academic staff on inclusive education methods received favorable responses, with 44.9% rating it Excellent and 38.4% Good. This suggests that the training was largely applicable and effective.

5. How effective was the training of International Relations Offices' Coordinators & Career Officers in enhancing accessibility services?

Graph 5. IRO Training Effectiveness

The training for International Relations Offices' coordinators and career officers was effective according to the majority, with 50 strongly agreeing and 55 agreeing.

Section 3: Equipment and Accessibility Centers

6. **Was the equipment purchased and set up in your institution adequate for establishing or enhancing Accessibility Centers?**
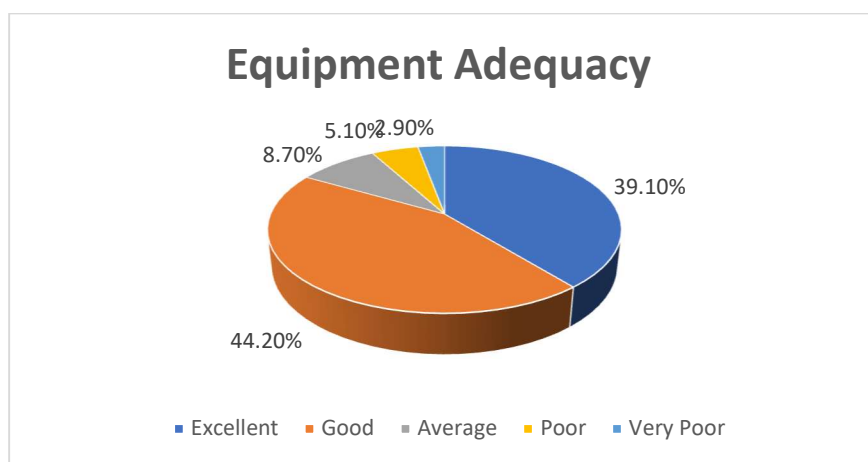
Graph 6. Equipment Adequacy

Participants rated the adequacy of the equipment for accessibility units quite highly, with 39.1% rating it Excellent and 44.2% Good. This reflects satisfaction with the equipment provided, though 8.7% found it Average, and 5.1% Poor, suggesting a need for better or additional equipment in some cases.

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7. **How functional is the newly established or enhanced Accessibility Unit in your institution?**
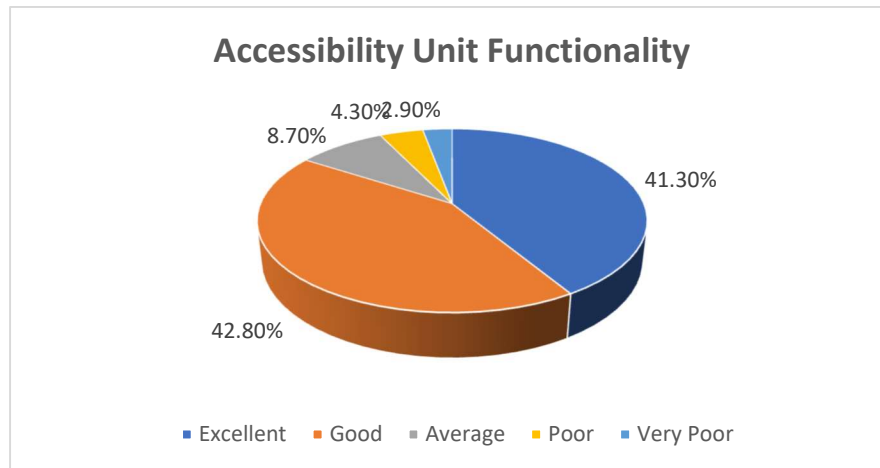
Graph 7. Accessibility Unit Functionality

The functionality of the accessibility units was well-regarded, with 41.3% rating it Excellent and 42.8% Good. This indicates that the units are generally effective. However, 8.7% rated them as Average, and 4.3% Poor, suggesting areas for further development and support.

Section 4: Project Management

8. **How would you rate the continuous project management and coordination provided by the coordinating HEI (POLIS University)?**
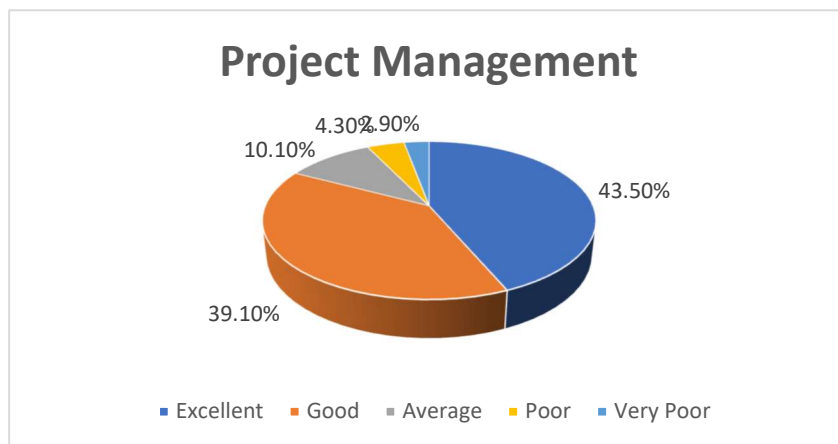
Graph 8. Project Management

The Project management team from Polis University received strong positive feedback, with 43.5% rating it Excellent and 39.1% Good. This indicates effective management practices coming from the coordinator of IDEA. Only a small percentage found it Average and Poor/Very poor.

9. **Were the communication and decision-making processes within the consortium effective?**
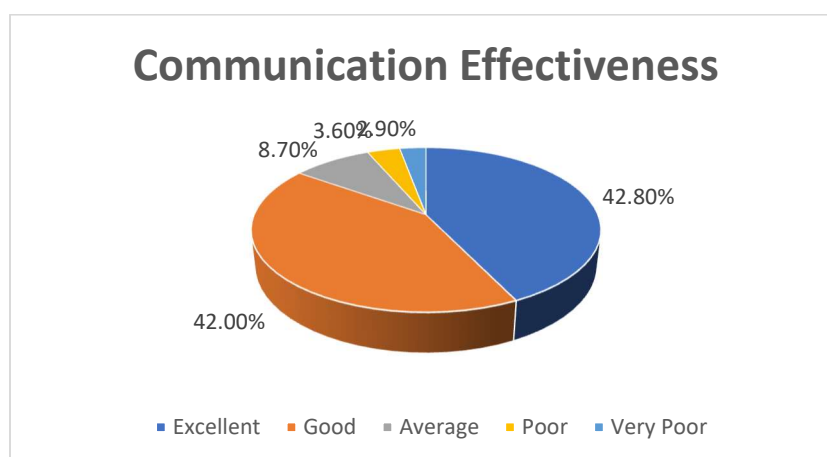
Graph 9. Communication Effectiveness

Communication within the project was rated highly, with 42.8% giving it an Excellent rating and 42.0% a Good rating. This suggests that communication channels used during the lifetime of the project were effective for most participants. However, 8.7% rated it as Average, 3.6% as Poor, and 2.9% as Very Poor, indicating a need for improved communication strategies in certain areas.

Section 5: Dissemination

10. **How effective were the dissemination strategies and activities in reaching a broad audience?**
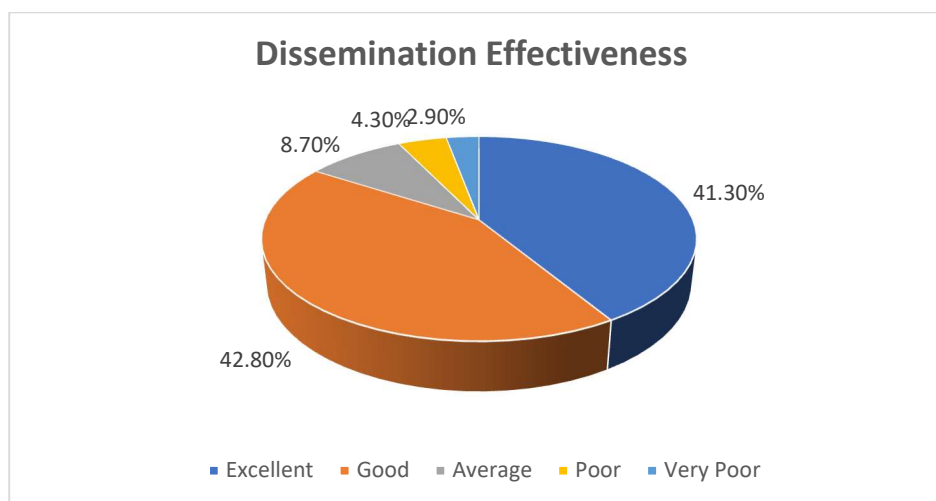
Graph 10, Dissemination Effectiveness

The effectiveness of disseminating project results was well-rated, with 41.3% rating it Excellent and 42.8% Good. This reflects successful dissemination efforts, though 8.7% found it Average and 4.3% Poor, suggesting that dissemination strategies could be enhanced to reach all intended audiences effectively.

11. Rate the usefulness of the project's user-friendly website as a source of information.
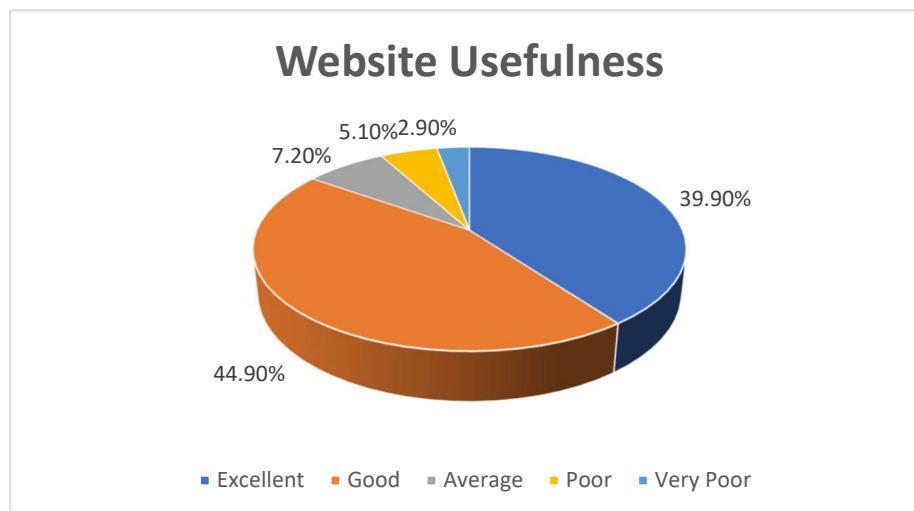
Graph 11. Website Usefulness

The project website was considered useful by the majority, with 39.9% rating it Excellent and 44.9% Good. This shows that the website served its purpose well for most users. However, 7.2% rated it as Average, 5.1% as Poor, and 2.9% as Very Poor, indicating areas where the website could be improved for better usability and accessibility.

the As clearly noted from the responses above, the questionnaire distributed to 138 staff members from partner institutions involved in the IDEA project yielded positive feedback regarding the project's initiatives. The majority of respondents found the new protocols and policy papers developed for Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro to be effective or very effective, with 82.61% expressing satisfaction. Similarly, the piloting and road-mapping processes towards the establishment of Accessibility Units were rated as excellent or good by 81.16% of the respondents, indicating a high level of approval. Additionally, 83.33% of staff members agreed or strongly agreed that the equipment purchases and the establishment of Accessibility Centers met their expectations. This overall positive response underscores the successful implementation and impact of the IDEA project on enhancing accessibility in higher education institutions.

Questionnaire (and responses)- Students from HEIs

Section 1: Accessibility Services

1. Are you aware of the new accessibility services and support provided by your institution as part of the IDEA project?

Awareness of New Accessibility Services
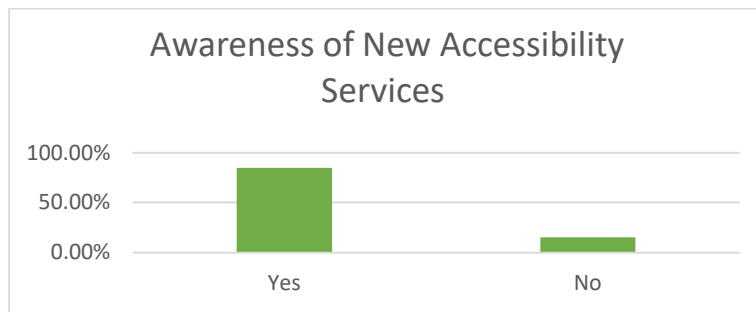
Graph 12. Awareness of New Accessibility Services

The majority of students, 84.83% (179 respondents), are aware of the new accessibility services and support provided by their institution as part of the IDEA project. However, 15.17% (32 respondents) are not aware, indicating a need for better communication or outreach.

2. How would you rate the accessibility of these new services and support for students with disabilities (SwD) and students with learning difficulties (SwLD)?

Rating of Accessibility of New Services
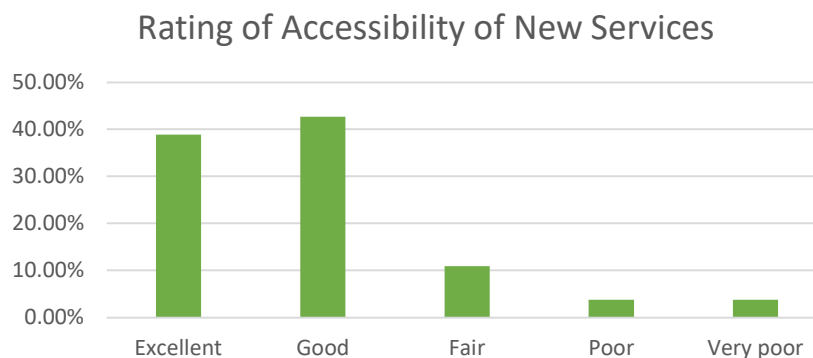
Graph 13. Rating of Accessibility of New Services

As represented in the graph, the majority of students, 81.51% (172 respondents), rated the accessibility of the new services and support as excellent or good. This indicates a high level of satisfaction with the accessibility improvements. However, 7.58% (16 respondents) found them poor or very poor, suggesting areas for improvement.

Section 2: Equipment and Facilities

3. How effective is the new equipment and technology in supporting your educational needs?
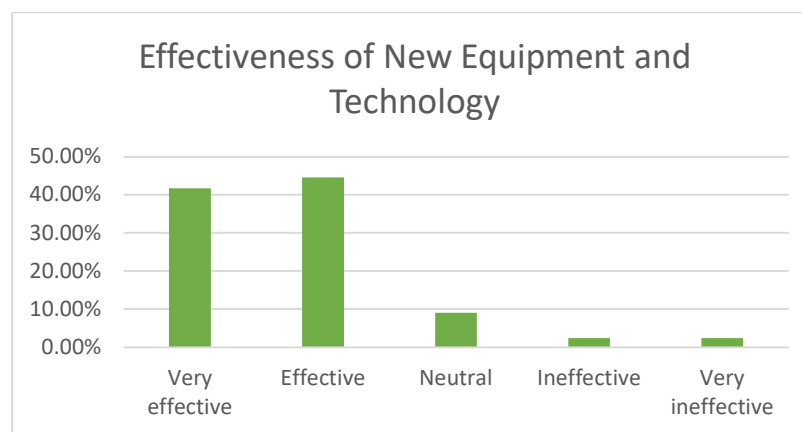
Graph 14. Effectiveness of New Equipment and Technology

Most students, 86.26% (182 respondents), found the new equipment and technology to be either very effective or effective in supporting their educational needs. A small percentage, 4.74% (10 respondents), found the equipment ineffective or very ineffective, indicating a need for further assessment and possible enhancements.

4. Are the newly established or enhanced Accessibility Centers meeting your needs?

Satisfaction with Accessibility Centers
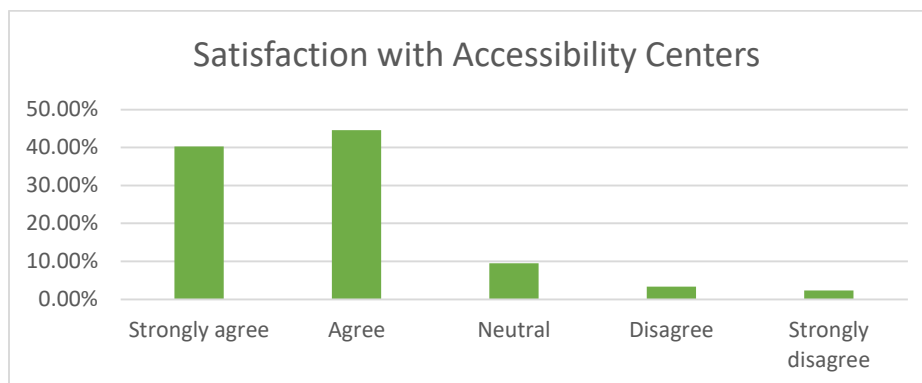
Graph 15. Satisfaction with Accessibility Centers

The majority of students, 84.83% (179 respondents), agree or strongly agree that the newly established or enhanced Accessibility Centers meet their needs. Only a small percentage, 5.69% (12 respondents), disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting overall satisfaction with the Accessibility Centers but also pointing out areas for possible improvements.

Section 3: Training and Support

5. Have you attended any event/info day or workshops organized as part of the IDEA project?

Attendance of Info Days/Events/Workshops
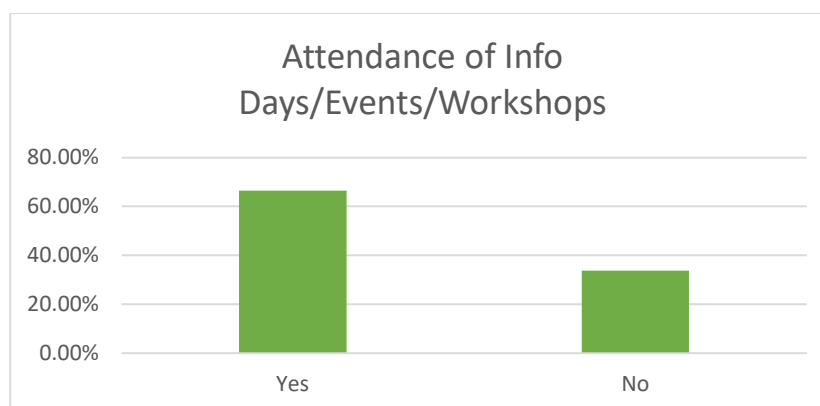
Graph 16. Attendance of Info Days/Events/Workshops

A significant number of students, 66.35% (140 respondents), have attended at least one for of the events (info day/workshop, etc.) organized as part of the IDEA project. However, 33.65% (71 respondents) have not attended, indicating a potential need for increased outreach or more accessible training options.

6. If yes, how would you rate the quality and usefulness of these events?
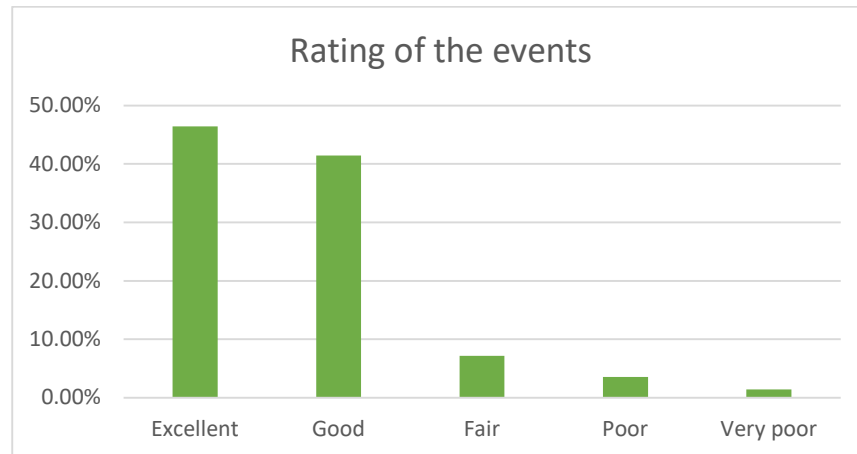
Graph 17. Rating of the events

Among those who attended the abovementioned events, 87.86% (123 respondents) rated the quality and usefulness of the later as excellent or good. This high level of satisfaction indicates the effectiveness of the training sessions provided. There was only a small portion, 5.00% (7 respondents), who rated the events as poor or very poor.

Section 4: Overall Satisfaction

7. How satisfied are you with the overall improvements in accessibility and support services at your institution due to the IDEA project?
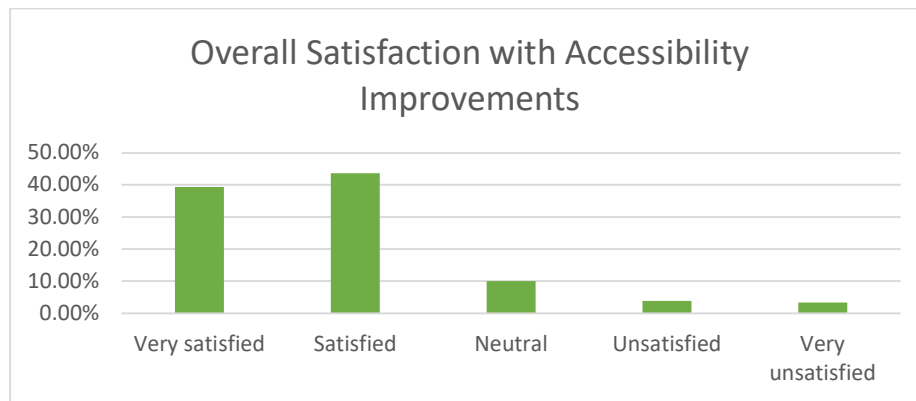
Graph 18. Overall Satisfaction with Accessibility Improvements

The overall satisfaction with the improvements in accessibility and support services due to the IDEA project is high, with 82.94% (175 respondents) expressing satisfaction. Only 7.11% (15 respondents) were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, indicating general success but also areas that need addressing.

8. Do you feel more included and supported in your academic environment as a result of the IDEA project initiatives?

Feeling of Inclusion and Support
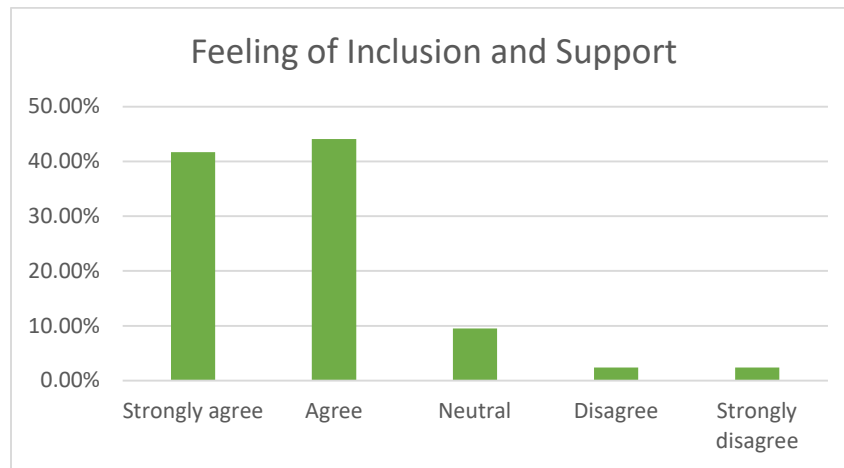
Graph 19. Feeling of Inclusion and Support

Most students, 85.79% (181 respondents), feel more included and supported in their academic environment due to the IDEA project initiatives. A small percentage, 4.74% (10 respondents), disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting overall effectiveness but also a need for continuous improvement to ensure inclusivity for all.

As noted on the responses of the second questionnaire, the respondents/students provided a variety of additional insights and comments with regard to the overall impact of IDEA. About 30.81% of the comments were positive, indicating satisfaction with the services. Suggestions for improvement comprised 21.33% of the comments, highlighting areas for further enhancement. Negative feedback accounted for only 9.48%, while neutral or other comments made up 38.39%, reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences.

Following the detailed analysis of both questionnaires, the following table summarizes in a single place the quality indicators, items to be evaluated, and the final evaluation for each work package of the IDEA project. This comprehensive evaluation framework ensures that all aspects of the project, from development to dissemination and management, are thoroughly assessed to guarantee successful implementation and impact.

WORK PACKAGE	QUALITY INDICATORS	ITEMS TO BE EVALUATED	FINAL EVALUATION
WP 1-3 Development	- Development of New Protocols and Drafting of Policy Papers with Normative Suggestions for Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro - Piloting and Road-Mapping of Processes and Procedures Towards the Establishment of the Accessibility Unit. - Equipment Purchase, Setting-Up and Establishment of Accessibility Centers. - Training of the University administration Services for Accessible Tertiary Education. - Training of Academic Staff on Inclusive Tertiary Education, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods.	- Training evaluations feedback - Students' questionnaire - Implementation Reports	- High satisfaction rates in training evaluations indicating successful knowledge transfer and applicability - Positive feedback from students through questionnaires demonstrating increased awareness and satisfaction with accessibility services - Comprehensive implementation reports documenting the establishment of accessibility units and effective use of equipment

	- Training of Built Environment Accessibility Consultants - Training of InternationalRelations Offices' Coordinators & Career Officers		
WP 4 **Dissemination of Project Results**	- Development and validation of a Dissemination Strategy - Development and Coordination of Dissemination Products,project and AccessibilityUnits' Websites, application development / customization Dissemination & Exploitation Actions	- Project marketing package published - Number of publications inthe press and social media - Number of visitors to the project events - Number of visitors on the project user-friendly website - Number of collaborations agreements	- Timely and widespread dissemination of project marketing materials - High number of publications and social media engagements reflecting strong public and academic interest - Significant attendance at project events indicating successful stakeholder engagement - High traffic on the project website showcasing its effectiveness as an information hub - Multiple collaboration agreements demonstrating extended project impact and sustainability.

WP 5 Management	- Continuous Project Management - Mid-Term Project Management Report - External Evaluation Report - Final Project Management Report	- Reports - Networking andcollaboration agreements -Minutes of meetings	Detailed and timely submission of management reports reflecting diligent project oversight - Successful establishment of networking and collaboration agreements indicating strong inter-organizational cooperation - Comprehensive minutes of meetings documenting effective communication and decision-making processes across consortium partners.

Table 2. Project Deliverables Evaluation

IDEA Sustainability Plan

The IDEA project's sustainability plan aims to ensure the lasting impact and integration of inclusive education and accessibility measures across the higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Western Balkans (WB). This comprehensive plan outlines objectives and strategies to maintain and expand the progress achieved during the project, ensuring that inclusivity remains a fundamental aspect of the educational experience for disabled students.

The objectives are as follows:

1. Institutional Integration of Accessibility Protocols
2. Operational Continuity of Accessibility Units
3. Continuous Awareness-Raising Campaigns
4. Normative and Policy Interventions
5. Maintenance and Utilization of Accessibility Equipment
6. Online Presence and Visibility
7. Monitoring and Reporting
8. Continuous Funding and Resource Allocation
9. Collaboration and Partnership

By achieving these objectives, the IDEA project aims to create a sustainable, inclusive educational environment that empowers disabled students, ensuring they have equal opportunities to succeed in higher education. The commitment to these goals will help embed a culture of inclusivity within the WB educational system, ultimately leading to broader societal change.

KEY SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS (and stakeholders in charge)	Short Term (1-2 years)	Medium Term (3-5 years)	Long Term (More than 5 years)
1. INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION OF ACCESSIBILITY PROTOCOLS HEIs and Ministries of Education	• Integrate accessibility protocols into institutional rules and regulations. • Conduct regular training sessions for staff and students on these protocols.	• Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the implementation of these protocols. • Facilitate workshops and conferences to share best practices among HEIs.	• Review and update protocols periodically based on feedback and technological advancements. • Ensure sustained funding and support for accessibility initiatives from HEIs and Ministries.
2. CONTINUOUS AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS NGOs and Ministries of Education	• Conduct initial awareness campaigns targeting high schools, civil society, and the general public. • Organize events related to the International Day of Disabled Persons (December 3rd).	• Partner with different media channels to regularly showcase success stories and ongoing efforts. • Develop educational materials and resources to be distributed in schools and community centers.	• Maintain a continuous cycle of awareness campaigns to keep the public engaged. • Collaborate with international organizations to broaden the reach and impact of the campaigns.
3. NORMATIVE AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS HEIs and Ministries of Education	Develop and propose policy recommendations based on project findings.	• Advocate for the adoption of these policies at the national and institutional levels. • Engage in dialogue with policymakers to ensure supportive legislation.	• Monitor the implementation and impact of these policies. • Periodically review and update policies to reflect new insights and changes in the educational landscape.
4. OPERATIONAL CONTINUITY OF ACCESSIBILITY UNITS	• Support Accessibility Units within each HEI.	• Secure ongoing funding from national	• Continuously evaluate and improve the services provided by the units.

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HEIs and NGOs	• Ensure these units are adequately staffed and resourced.	and international sources. • Develop partnerships with NGOs and other stakeholders to support unit activities.	• Expand the scope of these units to include more comprehensive support services.
5. USE AND MAINTENANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY EQUIPMENT HEIs and NGOs	Train staff and students on the use and maintenance of accessibility equipment	• Develop a maintenance plan and allocate resources for equipment upkeep. • Conduct periodic audits to ensure equipment is functional and up-to-date.	• Plan for the replacement and upgrading of equipment as needed. • Explore opportunities for technological innovation and integration.
6. PROJECT WEBSITE AND ONLINE PRESENCE HEIs, NGOs and Ministries of Education	Maintain and regularly update the project's website.	• Add a permanent section for Accessibility Units on university websites. • Use online platforms to share updates and success stories.	• Ensure the project's online presence remains active and relevant. • Continuously update content to reflect ongoing activities and achievements.
7. MONITORING AND REPORTING HEIs, Ministries of Education and Institutes of Statistics	Develop a framework for monitoring disabled student enrollments and dropouts.	• Regularly publish statistics and reports on Accessibility Units' webpages. • Use data to inform policy and operational decisions.	• Continuously monitor and report on key metrics to ensure transparency and accountability. • Utilize data to drive continuous improvement in accessibility and inclusiveness.
8. CONTINUOUS FUNDING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION HEIs, Ministries of Education, Businesses, Municipalities,	• Secure initial project-specific funding from Ministries of Education and HEIs to establish foundational programs. • HEIs should form dedicated grant	• Establish annual funding from Ministries of Education and institutional budgets to ensure ongoing support. • Continue to secure multi-year grants and increase fundraising	• Achieve permanent budget allocations from government bodies and institutions for continuous support. • Maintain a diverse portfolio of funding sources, ensuring sustainability through consistent grant

ERASMUS+ Programme offices, National Agencies for Civil Society, and Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), etc.	writing teams to apply for EU grants and other international funding opportunities. • Establish initial corporate partnerships and secure sponsorships for pilot projects and initial equipment needs. • Launch alumni donation campaigns and engage community stakeholders to support initial funding needs.	activities to expand programs and services. • Develop long-term partnerships with corporations, ensuring sustained sponsorships and donations. • Grow alumni and community support programs, creating endowments or permanent funds for accessibility initiatives.	applications and donor engagement. • Strengthen and expand corporate partnerships to include technology donations, scholarships, and infrastructure improvements. • Establish a robust alumni network that actively supports accessibility initiatives through mentorship, donations, and advocacy.
9.COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS HEIs, Ministries of Education, NGOs and Donors	• Establish working groups among partner HEIs to share best practices and resources. • Form initial partnerships with relevant ministries and NGOs to align objectives and resources. • Engage with international organizations to secure expertise, funding, and collaborative opportunities.	• Develop joint programs and initiatives among HEIs, facilitating student and staff exchanges and collaborative research. • Implement joint projects with government bodies and NGOs, focusing on inclusive policies and community outreach. • Participate in international conferences and projects, showcasing successes and learning from global best practices.	• Create a formal network of HEIs dedicated to accessibility, ensuring continuous collaboration and mutual support. • Institutionalize partnerships through formal agreements and long-term collaborative frameworks. • Lead international consortia on accessibility in higher education, positioning partner HEIs as global leaders in inclusive education.

Table 3. Key sustainability strategies and actions

This sustainability plan has been designed to ensure the long-term impact and integration of inclusive education and accessibility measures within the Western Balkans (WB) higher education landscape. By engaging a diverse array of stakeholders, including HEIs, Ministries of Education, NGOs, and other national and international partners, this plan provides a comprehensive framework to continue the progress initiated during the project. Over the next 5+ years, the plan emphasizes institutional integration of accessibility protocols, continuous awareness campaigns, normative and policy interventions, operational continuity of Accessibility Units, maintenance and use of accessibility equipment, robust online presence, and rigorous monitoring and reporting.

The active involvement of HEIs from Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, and partners from Greece, Czech Republic, and Ireland, ensures a collaborative approach to fostering inclusive education. These institutions, along with ministries and NGOs, are tasked with not only implementing but also perpetuating these changes through regular training, resource allocation, policy advocacy, and public engagement. By embedding accessibility measures into the core operations of HEIs, and maintaining a dedicated online presence for visibility and transparency, the IDEA project aims to create a lasting culture of inclusivity. Furthermore, the plan highlights the importance of continuous funding, periodic reviews, and the adoption of innovative technologies to keep the project's initiatives relevant and effective. **By focusing on the sustainability of Accessibility Units, the project ensures that disabled students receive ongoing support and resources necessary for their academic success.** The commitment to monitoring and reporting on key metrics such as enrollments and dropouts will provide invaluable data to guide future policies and improvements.

In essence, the IDEA project's sustainability plan is a blueprint for a future where higher education in the WB region is not only accessible but also supportive and empowering for disabled students. This plan, grounded in collaboration, continuous improvement, and stakeholder engagement, aims to uphold the values of inclusivity and accessibility, making them integral to the educational fabric of the Western Balkans for years to come.

Conclusions

The IDEA project has made significant strides in enhancing accessibility and support services across higher education institutions in Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro. Through the successful development and implementation of new protocols and policies, the establishment of Accessibility Centers, and the comprehensive training of university staff, the project has substantially increased awareness and support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. High satisfaction rates from training evaluations and positive feedback from student questionnaires represent another indicator of the effectiveness and impact of these initiatives.

In addition to that, the dissemination efforts have been equally successful, with a robust marketing strategy, widespread media engagement, and substantial attendance at project events, reflecting strong stakeholder interest and involvement. The meticulous project management has ensured diligent oversight, effective communication, and strong inter-organizational cooperation, as evidenced by the timely submission of reports and the establishment of numerous collaboration agreements. ***Overall, the IDEA project has met its goals, paving the way for sustained improvements in accessible tertiary education in the region.***

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather feedback on the implementation and impact of the IDEA project, specifically related to the development of new protocols, training sessions, and the overall project management and dissemination activities.

Please answer the following questions based on your experience with the IDEA project. Your feedback is essential for assessing the project's quality and identifying areas for improvement.

Section 1: Development of New Protocols and Policy Papers

1. **How effective were the new protocols and policy papers in addressing the needs of students with disabilities (SwD) and students with learning difficulties (SwLD)?**
    - Very effective
    - Effective
    - Neutral
    - Ineffective
    - Very ineffective
    - [Open-ended comment]
2. **Were the drafted policy papers and normative suggestions well integrated into your institution's existing framework?**
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree
    - [Open-ended comment]

Section 2: Training Sessions

3. **Please rate the effectiveness of the training sessions for university administration services.**
    - Excellent
    - Good
    - Fair
    - Poor
    - Very poor
    - [Open-ended comment]
4. **How applicable was the content of the academic staff training on inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment methods to your daily responsibilities?**
    - Highly applicable
    - Applicable
    - Neutral
    - Not very applicable

- o Not applicable at all
- o [Open-ended comment]

5. **How effective was the training of International Relations Offices' Coordinators & Career Officers in enhancing accessibility services?**
   - o Very effective
   - o Effective
   - o Neutral
   - o Ineffective
   - o Very ineffective
   - o [Open-ended comment]

Section 3: Equipment and Accessibility Centers

7. **Was the equipment purchased and set up in your institution adequate for establishing or enhancing Accessibility Centers?**
   - o Strongly agree
   - o Agree
   - o Neutral
   - o Disagree
   - o Strongly disagree
   - o [Open-ended comment]

8. **How functional is the newly established or enhanced Accessibility Unit in your institution?**
   - o Highly functional
   - o Functional
   - o Neutral
   - o Partially functional
   - o Non-functional
   - o [Open-ended comment]

Section 4: Project Management

9. **How would you rate the continuous project management and coordination provided by the coordinating HEI (POLIS University)?**
   - o Excellent
   - o Good
   - o Fair
   - o Poor
   - o Very poor
   - o [Open-ended comment]

10. **Were the communication and decision-making processes within the consortium effective?**
    - o Strongly agree
    - o Agree

o Neutral
o Disagree
o Strongly disagree
o [Open-ended comment]

Section 5: Dissemination

11. **How effective were the dissemination strategies and activities in reaching a broad audience?**
    o Very effective
    o Effective
    o Neutral
    o Ineffective
    o Very ineffective
    o [Open-ended comment]
12. **Rate the usefulness of the project's user-friendly website as a source of information.**
    o Very useful
    o Useful
    o Neutral
    o Not very useful
    o Not useful at all
    o [Open-ended comment]

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Annex 2. Questionnaire for Students of HEI Partners

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect student feedback on the accessibility improvements and support services implemented through the IDEA project.

Please answer the following questions based on your experience with the IDEA project's initiatives at your institution. Your feedback is valuable for evaluating the project's impact and effectiveness.

Section 1: Accessibility Services

1. **Are you aware of the new accessibility services and support provided by your institution as part of the IDEA project?**
   o Yes
   o No
   o [Open-ended comment]
2. **How would you rate the accessibility of these new services and support for students with disabilities (SwD) and students with learning difficulties (SwLD)?**
   o Excellent
   o Good
   o Fair
   o Poor
   o Very poor
   o [Open-ended comment]

Section 2: Equipment and Facilities

3. **How effective is the new equipment and technology in supporting your educational needs?**
   o Very effective
   o Effective
   o Neutral
   o Ineffective
   o Very ineffective
   o [Open-ended comment]
4. **Are the newly established or enhanced Accessibility Centers meeting your needs?**
   o Strongly agree
   o Agree
   o Neutral
   o Disagree
   o Strongly disagree
   o [Open-ended comment]

Section 3: Training and Support

5. **Have you attended any training or workshops organized as part of the IDEA project?**
   - o Yes
   - o No

6. **If yes, how would you rate the quality and usefulness of these training sessions?**
   - o Excellent
   - o Good
   - o Fair
   - o Poor
   - o Very poor
   - o [Open-ended comment]

Section 4: Overall Satisfaction

7. **How satisfied are you with the overall improvements in accessibility and support services at your institution due to the IDEA project?**
   - o Very satisfied
   - o Satisfied
   - o Neutral
   - o Unsatisfied
   - o Very unsatisfied
   - o [Open-ended comment]

8. **Do you feel more included and supported in your academic environment as a result of the IDEA project initiatives?**
   - o Strongly agree
   - o Agree
   - o Neutral
   - o Disagree
   - o Strongly disagree
   - o [Open-ended comment]

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