IncluDE

A European Inclusion Reference Framework for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

IncluDE Newsletter - September 2026

IncluDE is an Erasmus+ funded project focused on enhancing inclusion, equity and diversity in higher education institutions across Europe. By developing innovative tools and resources, the project empowers institutions to address systemic challenges and create inclusive academic environments that support all students.

Dear colleague,

Welcome to the IncluDE newsletter- September 2026!

In this edition, we share the project's achievements from its first 18 months, introduce key resources under development, and highlight European initiatives supporting inclusion, diversity and equity in higher education.

To stay up- to- date follow us: ***#IncluDE_EUproject***

Happy reading!

Latest Updates

IncluDE marks 18 months of progress

IncluDE is moving into an exciting new phase, turning its work on inclusion, diversity and equity into practical tools for higher education institutions, moving from principles to practice!

Following the completion of the Compendium, led by Universidade Aberta, The Open University is now leading the development of the Inclusion Reference Framework and Inclusivity Evaluation Instrument. The inclusion matrix and indicators are in place, with validation and refinement now progressing.

Meanwhile, FernUniversität in Hagen is preparing the Inclusion Monitor and Resources Portal, while UNED is advancing the professional development course to support institutions in putting the IncluDE tools into practice.

EADTU, as project coordinator, continues to connect and support these developments across the partnership, alongside its work on quality assurance, communication and dissemination. The focus is increasingly shifting towards practical application, testing and use of the IncluDE tools.



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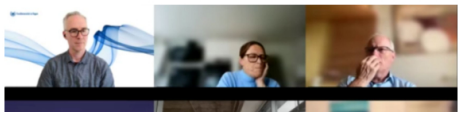
Expert validation of the IncluDE tools

As part of this transition towards practical application, the IncluDE Advisory Board recently reviewed and validated the Inclusion Reference Framework and Inclusivity Evaluation Instrument, while providing expert feedback to guide their further refinement.

An important focus was how the tools will work in practice. The experts highlighted the need for flexible self-assessment across different roles and institutional levels, recognising that no single person has a complete view of the student journey. The discussion also considered course-level assessment as a useful way of bringing together different perspectives, while retaining flexibility for individual and institutional use.

This validation provides an important basis for the next stage of development, linking the evaluation instrument with the Inclusion Monitor and Resources Portal. Rather than stopping at assessment, the aim is to connect results with relevant resources and practical guidance, helping users identify concrete actions to strengthen inclusion.

The Advisory Board feedback will now feed directly into the transition from the framework and evaluation instrument to their practical implementation and testing.



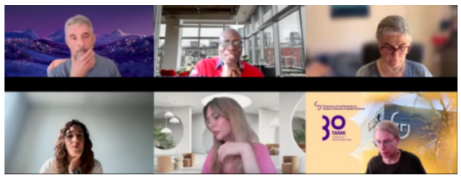


Image credit: EADTU

An AI Assistant for Inclusive Higher Education

IncluDE is now moving from developing frameworks and assessment tools towards practical digital resources that can support higher education institutions in their inclusion efforts.

As part of this work, FernUniversität in Hagen is developing the Inclusion Monitor, which will help institutions assess their current level of inclusivity, identify priorities and develop concrete action plans. Alongside this, the Inclusive Higher Education Resources Portal will bring together practical guidance for managers, lecturers, support staff, inclusion officers and students, covering different stages of the student journey.

The portal will also incorporate an AI Assistant, helping users navigate the available resources and find guidance relevant to their role and specific needs. Together, these tools aim to make inclusion more actionable by connecting assessment, guidance and practical steps for improvement.



Image credit: AI modified

Inclusive Education in Focus

From Inclusive Higher Education to Inclusive Management

Our partner, the **DAISSy Research Group of the Hellenic Open University (HOU)**, is contributing to more inclusive education and professional environments through two complementary initiatives: **XENIA** and **EDIFY EDU**.

The XENIA project focused on supporting higher education institutions in creating more inclusive environments for LGBT+ students and staff. Its **HEI Inclusiveness Index** enables institutions to assess their inclusiveness, understand the experiences of students and staff, and identify areas for improvement. The project engaged **2,500 students and 200 staff members** and developed practical resources in five languages.

Building on the broader goal of strengthening Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), **EDIFY EDU** explored how EDI competencies can be developed among current and future managers. Its work resulted in a European research report, an EDI-focused curriculum, a MOOC, specialisation courses and work-based learning opportunities.

Together, these initiatives highlight the importance of combining **institutional self-assessment, practical resources and skills development** to advance inclusion in higher education and the workplace.

Learn more about XENIA | Learn more about EDIFY EDU



Image credit: AI modified

IncluDE Takes the Stage at I-HE2026

IncluDE is heading to **I-HE2026**! From 28-30 October 2026, the project will be represented at the conference, bringing its work on digital tools for more inclusive higher education to an international audience.

On Thursday 29 October, Eric Addae-Kyeremeh from the Open University UK (OUUK) will present IncluDE's work on ***developing a digital self-assessment instrument to support higher education institutions in strengthening inclusion across the student journey***. The presentation will showcase the instrument's framework and how it can help institutions reflect on current practices, identify areas for improvement and develop targeted actions. The presentation is co-authored by Eric, Jane Doka and Farnais Rais, all from OUUK, and supported by EADTU.

Come join us at I-HE2026 to discover how IncluDE is turning its work on inclusion into practical digital tools for higher education institutions!



Image credit: EADTU

European Commission strengthens focus on disability inclusion

On 6 May 2026, the European Commission strengthened its Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, placing renewed emphasis on implementation and concrete improvements in the lives of people with disabilities. Inclusive education across different stages of life is among its key priorities.

The figures highlight the importance of this focus: in 2024, 20.3% of people with disabilities aged 25-74 had attained a tertiary degree, compared with 36.5% of people without disabilities.

For the IncluDE community, the renewed European strategy provides a valuable wider context. Its focus on accessibility, inclusion and equal opportunities in education closely resonates with the project's work towards more inclusive higher education.

As Europe continues to strengthen its commitment to disability rights, initiatives such as IncluDE can contribute to translating these priorities into practice across higher education.

Read the full article here



Image credit: European Commission - "On promoting the rights of persons with disabilities across the EU" (2026)

Contacts

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