

Activity 1: SWOT analysis

Topic assessed: e.g. cooperation between practitioners and researchers at local level		
	Helpful in achieving the objective	Harmful in achieving the objective
	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal Factors	<p>Good communication processes due to the training sessions for the teachers in HE, during 2011-2012 academic year.</p> <p>Researchers- practitioners` mutual interest - Both, researchers and practitioners are interested in the successful implementation of the project.</p> <p>Interesting practical experiences offered by the experts who trained the teachers in HE – acting as personal development.</p> <p>Sensitizing/convincing the university teachers to adapt their curriculum to the special needs of the students with disabilities.</p> <p>Material facilities offered to the disabled students: social scholarships, accommodation in campuses</p> <p>IT resources and equipment adapted to the special needs of the disabled students</p>	<p>The multiplicity of the professional tasks and projects for a teacher in HE in Romania- teaching for several academic programs, researching, writing, implication in national and international projects.</p> <p>The difficulty in selecting the disabled students in the target group (LBUS found initially only 70% of disabled students in its target group)</p> <p>Incredulity of the disabled people they could attend HE.</p> <p>The disabled students` distrust in the good intentions of those who try to change mentalities and prejudices related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in HE.</p> <p>A disabled student`s sense of inferiority that makes them hide their disability to their colleagues.</p> <p>Superficial treatment of the difficulties facing people with disabilities.</p> <p>Some teachers` stiffness in adapting their evaluation methods to the type of disability and to the intellectual or physical potential of the disabled students.</p> <p>Mismanagement of the time for the teachers and students involved in the project.</p> <p>Less developed research skills at some of the practitioners involved in the project</p>
External Factors	<p>Opportunities</p> <p>The Romanian National Strategy related with social inclusion of people with disabilities.</p> <p>The new Law of National Education (2011): Both scientific research and teaching practice are professional duties for the teachers in HE</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>The gaps of the legislative provisions</p> <p>Economical context (the financial crisis reduces the funds for such experiments)</p> <p>The maturity exam high level of difficulty has drastically reduced the number of the High school graduates who can attend HE.</p>

<p>The most important concepts (such as LLL , Scientific Research) and the procedures to implement them in practice are defined by law.</p> <p>The project products (theoretical materials posted on the project site, the adapted ICT tools to be used with the disabled students) could be used to extend the implementation of the project.</p> <p>The project team (the researchers) asked the practitioners to express their opinions regarding the development of HE for the disabled students, to be transmitted to the policy makers in the field.</p> <p>Availability of specialised institutions for collaboration by facilitating route graduation for the students in the target group.</p>	<p>Initial difficulties in communication with the manager of the project who is not a member of LUBS, or of the other two partner universities.</p> <p>Poor sustainability of the project after the financing completion from European funds.</p> <p>Social barriers that sometimes occur in the personal and professional development the students in the target group.</p> <p>The low number of jobs, especially for the disabled persons, at local or national level.</p> <p>The non-cooperative attitude of some university employees who are not involved in the project are nor interested to facilitate communication between the project participants.</p> <p>Lack of a unique system of registration of the disabled persons at regional or national level.</p> <p>The great number of disabled people who are not considered in any specific database.</p>
---	--

2. Can the hindering factors (weaknesses and threats) be generalised and applied at national level? Which other hindering factors can be identified?

The most numerous hindering factors identified above can be generalised at national level. The communication between researchers and practitioners is facilitated only at the project, local and regional level. Links with other universities or HE institutions haven` t been established yet. The project dissemination is quite limited, due to a lack of interest of the participants. The legal procedures and methodologies regarding Higher Education are too general, giving little attention to specific issues such as ULLL or Access and Progression.

3. Once you have identified the general hindering factors, please try to analyse their reasons to find out how these factors are embedded in your respective learning and research culture.

- e.g.
- Insufficient network X
 - Different backgrounds
 - Organisation structure
 - Organisation of work
 - Different language
 - Narrow task description X
 - Funding X
 - Acceptance of LLL X
 - Polemical character of LLL

4. Actions that could be carried out to overcome these identified reasons for barriers and hindering factors to cooperation between ULLL researchers and practitioners or solutions

Please identify and explain possible solutions for the identified reasons of barriers.

The research we have made proved that an effective network is working **at the local level**, (“Lucian Blaga” University level) between researchers, practitioners and learners who are implied in the project “Development and Implementation of an Integrated Pilot Program for Increasing the Access to Higher Education for People with Disabilities”, which is the subject of our case study. However, the respondents consider that *a better distribution of tasks or a better management of time* might improve the communication between the actors involved in the project. According to the National Education Law since 2011, the same university teacher must simultaneously be a researcher and a practitioner in his specialty. Yet, these roles are rarely played on the realm of ULLL or Access and Progression. *The theme* of our case study, „ Higher Education for Students with Disabilities” could be *extended to other disadvantaged groups*, such as Roma, rural people or ethnic minorities. Trans-disciplinarily, social issues or ULLL are still less studied by the Romanian scientific research.

A *direct communication* between teachers (researchers or practitioners) and the students in the target group could reduce barriers by improving the disabled students` trust, both in their own intellectual potential and in the good intentions of the society towards them. This direct communication could also help the researchers-practitioners to understand the specific problems of their students.

The actions that could overcome the identified barriers and hindering factors to cooperation between ULLL researchers and practitioners have to be more related with **the regional or the national levels**. Thus, *effective networks have to be established between the researchers acting in local or national research institutes and researchers-practitioners teachers working in universities*.

The civil society (associations, organisations, cultural foundations) should be more involved in *lobbying* the coverage of the youth becoming form the disadvantaged groups to Higher Education. Therefore *a network between these organisations (al local, regional or national level) and the universities* interested in extending Higher Education to the disadvantaged groups could be useful. A better system of registration of the disabled persons at local and national level could offer more information about the youth who could attend Higher Education. Thus, *a national network between The Romanian National Authority for Disabled People and Higher Education system* could also be useful in this respect.

Then, the Romanian *policy makers* at national level *should adapt their decisions to the findings of the project* we have analysed. The beginning of the process is going to be done, as the researchers involved in the project team intend to communicate these findings to the Ministry of National Education as a data base for further decisions in the field. At this level the network seems to be effective. *New resources of funding* have to be identified to continue the inclusion of the disadvantaged groups in Higher Education and *more numerous working places* for the Higher Education graduates have to be assured by our national policy makers related with education and market places.

5. Actors which (could) play a role in carrying out these actions (based on the network analysis of activity 2 and 3) and reason:

Please reflect on how the identified actors of the network analysis could help to overcome identified barriers and constraints.

Actors	Reason
1. The Ministry of National Education.	It is the most important institution in the educational field, it states the legal provisions regarding LLL and Access and Progression. It is the major beneficiary of the national or international projects related with the issues of LLL and Access and Progression. It could adapt its policy regarding the inclusion of the disabled students in HE, taking into account the findings of the project. (Policy makers)
2. The Romanian National Authority for Disabled People	It manages the personal development for disabled people, and provides legal measures for implementation of the human rights for the disabled people. A better evidence of the disabled people in Romania could help to stimulate those who are interested to continue their studies in Higher Education. (Lobby for the inclusion of the disabled persons in Higher Education).
3. The National Council of the University Scientific Research	Approves and funds the university scientific research in Romania. It should find new financial resources after the project funding ceases the EU funds. (Financial resources and support, policy makers).
4. The Romanian Institute for Adult Education (RIAE)	It developed a lot of international projects and published studies and scientific materials regarding Adult Learning or the inclusion of the disabled people in High Schools and in Higher Education. It could continue its research activity in the field, could disseminate its findings. (Reserachers)
5. The Institute of Educational Sciences in Bucharest	The findings of the projects conducted under this institute activity have influenced the policy makers in formulating the provisions of the new Law of Education. The theoretical studies edited at this institute influences the educational practices in Adult Education. (Researchers)
6. The National Agency for Roma	Although its activity has been well funded during the last years the efficiency of the activity developed in the field of adult education or inclusion in learning activities is reduced. It could stimulate youth Roma to attend Higher Education (Community environment - society).
7. Teachers (practitioners & researchers) in local universities	Teachers in universities are simultaneously researchers and practitioners, as these are important professional duties for them. They are teaching in adult learning and in continuous training programmes, applying the findings of the research during their teaching activities as practitioners. (Practitioners and researchers)
8. Researchers in local institutes	Are less interested in researching the issues of adult learning, U LLL or in Access and Progression. Their projects are linked with pure specialties such as literature, history, engineering, economics, etc. They could develop research projects related with the special needs of the disabled persons and their inclusion LLL and in HE. (Researchers)
9. School inspectors	Influence the adult learning process, the inclusion of the youth with special needs in high schools or in HE and professional training. They organize LLL activities at pre-

	<p>university level through the County Teacher Houses. They should lobby the inclusion of the disabled high school graduates in Higher Education. Regional education institution- (Lobby for the disabled high school graduates regarding their inclusion in Higher Education)</p>
<p>10. The Learners (disabled students in the target group)</p>	<p>Are the beneficiaries of the research and the teaching activities developed in high schools and in universities. Their potential to influence the LLL agenda is at the minimal level, but it could be more important if the university would ask about their knowledge interests and needs of education. (The learners)</p>
<p>11. The volunteer students or people implied in adult learning.</p>	<p>They support their disabled colleagues, acting as their advisors or as link persons between those students, their teachers or their mentors, or the administrative employees in the university. (The learners) .</p>