

# Inclusion Training in Higher Education

## Guidelines for Trainers



*I membri del team IDEM che lavorano insieme in gruppi durante la formazione sull'inclusione presso Grenoble INP - UGA*



## Introduzione

La formazione sull'inclusione rappresenta il fulcro fondamentale per superare gli ostacoli che gli studenti affrontano a causa delle barriere strutturali nei programmi di mobilità. Il progetto IDEM enfatizza l'importanza di una comunicazione efficace, di una maggiore consapevolezza e della creazione di modelli di mobilità attraverso l'applicazione della metodologia del Design Thinking.

Questa guida completa fornisce un quadro sistematico per la pianificazione di workshop formativi inclusivi. Seguendo attentamente i passaggi e le raccomandazioni indicate, i futuri formatori saranno in grado di affrontare con competenza le sfide della mobilità e promuovere l'inclusione nei programmi di scambio internazionali. Il documento è stato elaborato dal team IDEM sulla base dell'esperienza maturata durante la formazione sull'inclusione tenutasi nell'ambito del progetto europeo IDEM presso l'INP UGA di Grenoble, in Francia, nel giugno 2022.

## Il progetto

"IDEM - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity in Mobility" è un progetto finanziato da Erasmus+ che si propone di offrire soluzioni agli studenti e agli amministratori che affrontano barriere strutturali, al fine di favorire la mobilità in conformità con le raccomandazioni della Carta Erasmus, le priorità della Commissione e l'obiettivo del 50% di mobilità per i partenariati universitari europei.

Gli studenti con disabilità, i rifugiati e gli studenti di prima generazione sono particolarmente sotto-rappresentati nei programmi di mobilità fisica convenzionali come Erasmus+. Quando considerano di intraprendere un'esperienza internazionale, questi studenti spesso si trovano di fronte a ostacoli e vincoli strutturali che compromettono la realizzazione di un'esperienza veramente arricchente. Di conseguenza, molti studenti scartano l'idea di partecipare a tali programmi di mobilità a causa di tali difficoltà. In alcuni casi, nonostante gli ostacoli che gli studenti possono incontrare, la mobilità è necessaria per completare il proprio percorso di studi, rendendo questa fase un momento particolarmente stressante nell'esperienza universitaria degli studenti.

I principali risultati del progetto IDEM comprendono il modello di mobilità, la formazione sull'inclusione, i corsi di addestramento e lo sviluppo di strumenti. Per ulteriori informazioni sul progetto, è possibile consultare il sito web: <https://www.idem-project.eu/>

## Consigli per promuovere l'organizzazione di corsi di formazione inclusivi

Di seguito troverete la guida IDEM su come organizzare eventi formativi volti a promuovere l'inclusività e favorire una cultura della diversità. Che si tratti di ambienti lavorativi, istituti educativi o comunità, creare contesti in cui tutti si sentano apprezzati e rispettati è cruciale per la crescita e lo sviluppo sia a livello individuale che istituzionale.

Questa guida offre consigli e strategie pratiche per progettare e condurre una formazione che trasmetta conoscenze e ispiri un cambiamento significativo. Dalla comprensione del pubblico alla valutazione dell'impatto della formazione, ogni passaggio è fondamentale per garantire che i tuoi sforzi contribuiscano a costruire una società più inclusiva.

- 1. Conoscere il pubblico:** Comprendere gli individui che partecipano alla formazione rappresenta un punto cruciale per un'insegnamento efficace. Approfondendo il loro background, le esperienze passate e il livello attuale di conoscenza, è possibile adattare la formazione alle loro esigenze specifiche e agli obiettivi di apprendimento.
- 2. Selezione della metodologia appropriata:** La scelta della metodologia di insegnamento giusta gioca un ruolo determinante nel successo di qualsiasi programma formativo. Selezionando attentamente le metodologie didattiche più adatte e pianificando il tempo di conseguenza, è possibile massimizzare il coinvolgimento e agevolare esperienze di apprendimento più profonde.
- 3. Coinvolgimento dei partecipanti:** Creare un ambiente di apprendimento accogliente e interattivo favorisce la collaborazione e la partecipazione. Attività per rompere il ghiaccio, dialogo aperto e l'uso di strumenti interattivi coinvolgono efficacemente i partecipanti e incoraggiano il loro coinvolgimento attivo nel processo di formazione.
- 4. Creare un ambiente di apprendimento positivo:** Un ambiente di apprendimento positivo è caratterizzato da una comunicazione aperta, dal rispetto delle diverse prospettive e dall'uso di strumenti interattivi per facilitare l'apprendimento. Promuovendo un'atmosfera di rispetto reciproco e di collaborazione, si può creare uno spazio in cui tutti si sentano valorizzati e autorizzati a contribuire.
- 5. Promuovere l'apprendimento continuo:** L'impatto di un programma di formazione si estende oltre la singola sessione formativa. Incoraggiando i partecipanti ad applicare le loro conoscenze e competenze in contesti reali e a sostenere l'inclusività nelle loro

comunità, si può creare un cambiamento duraturo che va oltre i confini della sala di formazione.

- 6. Valutazione e miglioramento costante:** La valutazione è essenziale per valutare l'efficacia del programma formativo e identificare aree di miglioramento. Pianificando in anticipo i metodi di valutazione e raccogliendo il feedback dei partecipanti, è possibile garantire che la formazione abbia un impatto significativo e si evolva continuamente per soddisfare le esigenze del pubblico.

Prima di esaminare i consigli pratici e le strategie per organizzare una formazione efficace, è essenziale comprendere il lavoro svolto dalla Commissione Europea in materia di inclusione. Esplorando domande come chi costituisce il pubblico di riferimento, quali sono i suoi livelli attuali di conoscenza e quali risultati di apprendimento si mira a raggiungere, è possibile assicurare che la formazione sia allineata agli obiettivi più ampi di promozione dell'inclusività e della diversità.

## Workshop 1: Comunicazione e consapevolezza

Il primo workshop è una sessione interattiva progettata per aumentare la consapevolezza riguardo alle sfide che impediscono la partecipazione degli studenti ai programmi di mobilità e per favorire la collaborazione tra le parti interessate coinvolte in tali scambi. È stato ideato per fornire ai partecipanti le conoscenze, le competenze e le strategie necessarie per affrontare efficacemente le barriere della mobilità e promuovere una maggiore inclusività.

### Obiettivo del workshop:

L'obiettivo principale di questo workshop è quello di aumentare la consapevolezza riguardo alle barriere alla mobilità e facilitare la comunicazione e la collaborazione tra gli stakeholder coinvolti negli scambi di mobilità. Illuminando le diverse sfide che gli studenti affrontano nell'accesso ai programmi di mobilità e incoraggiando la risoluzione collaborativa dei problemi, questo workshop mira a creare un ambiente più inclusivo e accessibile per tutti i partecipanti.

### Considerazioni sui tempi:

Durante il workshop, verrà dedicata particolare attenzione alla gestione del tempo, garantendo che ciascuna fase sia pianificata in modo tale da massimizzare il coinvolgimento e l'interazione dei partecipanti. Tenendo conto della vasta gamma di esperienze e prospettive dei partecipanti, il workshop sarà strutturato in modo flessibile per adattarsi a gruppi di dimensioni diverse, facilitando discussioni e scambi significativi.

### **FASE 1: Identificazione delle varie barriere**

In questo modulo, il training si propone di fornire ai partecipanti una comprensione delle molteplici barriere che ostacolano la partecipazione degli studenti ai programmi di mobilità. Attingendo alle indicazioni del Progetto SIEM, che ha ampiamente indagato e documentato queste barriere, i partecipanti otterranno preziose informazioni sulle sfide che gli studenti affrontano.

### **FASE 2: Discussione in piccoli gruppi**

I partecipanti saranno suddivisi in gruppi più piccoli e intimi per favorire un ambiente che faciliti la condivisione di esperienze e idee. Riunire coetanei provenienti da diverse università consente di accedere a una varietà di prospettive ed esperienze. L'obiettivo principale di questo segmento è impegnarsi in sessioni di brainstorming collaborativo per ideare soluzioni pratiche per mitigare le barriere identificate. I partecipanti sono incoraggiati a esplorare approcci innovativi e a fare affidamento sulla loro esperienza collettiva per rispondere alla domanda centrale: Come possiamo ridurre efficacemente le barriere che ostacolano la partecipazione degli studenti ai programmi di mobilità?

Fasi secondarie ampliate:

**Formazione dei gruppi:** I partecipanti vengono raggruppati in base a criteri prestabiliti per garantire la diversità e la rappresentanza di contesti e istituzioni differenti.

**Moderazione delle discussioni:** Un moderatore qualificato facilita ciascun sottogruppo, garantendo discussioni produttive e inclusive. Il moderatore stimola la partecipazione attiva, assicura un contributo equo da parte di tutti i membri e guida la conversazione verso la generazione di soluzioni attuabili.

**Sessione di brainstorming:** I partecipanti si impegnano in una dinamica sessione di brainstorming, sfruttando le loro conoscenze ed esperienze combinate per identificare potenziali soluzioni. Si mette l'accento sulla creatività e sull'apertura mentale, incoraggiando i partecipanti a pensare al di là degli approcci convenzionali.

**Documentazione:** Le intuizioni chiave e le soluzioni proposte vengono documentate in tempo reale per catturare la ricchezza delle discussioni e servire come prezioso materiale di riferimento per gli sforzi futuri.

### **FASE 3: Scambio collettivo**

Dopo le discussioni dei sottogruppi, i partecipanti si riuniscono in un'assemblea più ampia per condividere collettivamente le loro riflessioni e intuizioni. Ogni sottogruppo ha l'opportunità di presentare i propri risultati, mettendo in luce le soluzioni più promettenti e le idee innovative generate durante la sessione di brainstorming. Questo segmento favorisce lo scambio di idee e incoraggia la risoluzione collaborativa dei problemi, mentre i partecipanti si impegnano nell'ascolto attivo e nel feedback costruttivo. Il scambio collettivo rafforza il senso di comunità e il proposito condiviso tra i partecipanti, che lavorano insieme

per affrontare le barriere della mobilità e promuovere una maggiore inclusività negli scambi di mobilità.

## Workshop 2: Prototyping the Mobility Model

Design-Based Thinking (DBT) is a method that systematically extracts, teaches, learns, and applies human-centred techniques to address challenges creatively and innovatively. DBT offers a structured framework for developing practical and innovative solutions to complex issues, making it particularly well-suited for prototyping inclusive and accessible student mobility models. A short introduction video can be viewed [here](#). The essence of DBT lies in its **structured process and collaborative nature, which engages participants in a collective exercise to develop innovative solutions**. By following an iterative approach, DBT encourages open-mindedness and empowers individuals to explore different perspectives, ultimately creating comprehensive solutions. This method fosters a culture of creativity and innovation, enabling participants to address the diverse and evolving challenges inherent in student mobility. DBT **allows for a more in-depth exploration of the barriers** students face in their international mobility projects, **providing a solid foundation for building prototypes**. Through a combination of empathy, ideation, and iteration, participants gain insights into the lived experiences of students encountering mobility challenges. These insights serve as the basis for designing prototype models that address issues related to inclusion, diversity, and equity in student mobility. The primary learning objectives are to use the DBT method to design prototype models for identified issues in student mobility. By leveraging the principles of DBT, participants will develop innovative solutions that promote inclusivity, diversity, and equity in mobility exchanges. Through interactive workshops and collaborative exercises, participants will gain practical skills and insights into the application of DBT in real-world contexts.

### Phase 1: Empathise

The journey begins with Phase 1: Empathise, where participants immerse themselves in the experiences of students facing mobility barriers. Participants explore the students' thoughts, actions, words, and emotions through a scenario-based exercise, gaining valuable insights into their lived experiences. This exercise fosters empathy and compassion, laying the groundwork for developing solutions that address students' needs.

The workgroup is presented with a scenario where a student faces challenges. Utilising a sheet of paper divided into four sections, they are prompted to explore various aspects of the student's experience:

1. The words expressed by the student.
2. The actions taken by the student.
3. The thoughts running through the student's mind.
4. The emotions experienced by the student.

### **Phase 2: Define**

Building on the insights gained from Phase 1, Phase 2: Define focuses on articulating a clear and focused problem statement. Participants identify students' key challenges and break down the problem into manageable parts. By defining the problem statement, participants set the stage for the subsequent phases of the Design Thinking Process, guiding the development of innovative solutions.

### **Phase 3: Ideate**

Phase 3: Ideate allows participants to exchange ideas and generate various possibilities. Through brainstorming sessions, participants explore diverse perspectives and propose creative solutions to address the identified challenges. Emphasising quantity over quality, this phase encourages participants to think outside the box and explore innovative approaches to problem-solving. To achieve this, each group member should introduce their concept by starting with the phrase 'How could we...' and write it down on Post-it notes. This phase can produce as many as a hundred ideas. At the end of this exercise, each group must select the best idea for the prototype.

### **Phase 4: Prototype**

The final phase of the process, Phase 4: Prototype, focuses on bringing the chosen solution to life. Participants work collaboratively to create a tangible prototype, such as a poster or mind map, that encapsulates the problem statement and central idea. This prototype concretely represents the proposed solution, enabling participants to visualise and communicate their ideas effectively. The prototype should contain a concrete case study, a problem statement, and a central idea. The groups have approximately 30 minutes to create their prototypes before presenting them.

By following DBT's structured approach and engaging in each phase of the process, participants can develop inclusive and accessible models for student mobility that empower students to pursue their academic aspirations confidently. Through collaboration, creativity, and a commitment to human-centred design, DBT offers a pathway to creating a more equitable and inclusive future for student mobility.



### Prototype Questions:

- Initiate problem-solving by framing inquiries with "How might we...?" This prompts exploration and creativity in addressing challenges.
- Define the prototype's identity by naming it and identifying the primary users or beneficiaries of the solution. This fosters clarity and alignment in understanding the solution's purpose and audience.
- Illustrate how the prototype enhances student mobility by emphasizing its inclusivity, accessibility, and diversity. Identify three main points to showcase the solution's transformative impact.
- Outline the prototype's capabilities by delineating three main functionalities that empower students. This highlights the practical benefits and opportunities enabled by the solution.
- Identify the necessary changes required to realise the proposed solutions or prototype. Consider aspects such as personnel, funding, cultural shifts, and policy adjustments, ensuring comprehensive planning for implementation and sustainability.

**Practical Tips:** In the appendix, you will find persona cases featuring diverse students confronting mobility barriers. Among them are Joel, an engineering student navigating life in a wheelchair, and Saleha, a refugee student grappling with anxiety. These personas vividly portray individuals' multifaceted challenges when pursuing mobility opportunities. By delving into these personal narratives, participants gain profound insights into the nuanced complexities involved. Armed with this deeper understanding, they're better poised to craft effective inclusive strategies tailored to address these challenges.

## Persona Cases

Joel, 23

Hello! My name is Joel, I'm 23 years old. I study at the School of Chemical Engineering at Aalto University.

I'm active in the student union and a basketball player. I like outdoor activities and thus wheel frequently to campus. In bad weather or heavy snow, I prefer to commute by metro.

I plan to end my BSc studies with an exchange in a German STEM university because I want to polish my German and like to network with German professionals in chemical research. I aim to graduate with an MSc and want to enrol in a doctoral program.

I have had quite a good experience during my studies at the Aalto University campus. Some nuisance and minor issues have occurred, e.g., in workshops and laboratories due to fitted units and thresholds, but the staff has solved these. Thus, I'm a bit worried about how the exchange will work at the receiving university: with whom can I solve issues related to accessibility, commuting and laboratory work?

Also, before applying, I would like to find preliminary information about accommodation, campus accessibility, commuting, and language studies. Contacts for wheelchair repair and maintenance are essential, as well as information about how to get a replacement wheelchair during the repair time. Naturally, I would like to find a basketball team.

Aleksandra

Hi, I'm Aleksandra, 21. I am studying for my second year in an industrial engineering and management bachelor's program.

I stress my studies a lot. I always feel like I don't know enough, but I get good numbers. I always try to do my best. I don't like new or unexpected situations. It stresses me if, for example, changes are made to the course schedule or requirements. Nothing spontaneous is right for me. I need routines. I love clear rules, and I always follow them. Sometimes, my friends claim I'm not flexible. But you can always count on my word.

I have sensitive senses, and I am particularly sound-sensitive. Also, a lot of information overwhelms me in a short time. A couple of times, I've had a panic attack in a cafeteria; so many people are out there! We had a lot of mass lectures, and the noise and echo in the

large lecture hall prevented me from concentrating. It helps me concentrate if I stimulate myself by doing something with my hands.

Sometimes, it is difficult for me to understand the assignment. It feels like instructions are vague and not precise. I will think about the question and over-analyse it for a long time. I have thought about it for a long time because I always want to do everything perfectly and make the best choices. It may take many minutes at the café before I decide which bun to take.

I have a few friends, but I would like more of them. However, social contacts are hard for me. I feel like I can't communicate with others. Even if I understand the words, I don't always know what the words or gestures mean. I have been told that I have difficulties in social interaction. You can imagine, it would be a horror for me if I had to give a presentation on a course. Teamwork can also be challenging for me.

Even though I like to meet friends, it takes a lot of energy from me. Social contact is tiring, and there is this constant strain of what others mean. Even shopping is stressful. Maybe that's why I have a greater need for sleep than others.

I'm precise and pay attention to detail. In my free time, I do yoga and paint. When painting, I try to bring out important details. Sometimes, I also do abstract paintings. Colours are important to me, and I can paint for hours.

I would like to do an exchange for one semester. At my university, I have many individual study arrangements. However, I am worried about how I will get similar arrangements at the exchange university. During the exchange, it would also be nice if I could continue my painting hobby.

Zaida

Hello, my name is Zaida. I'm 32 and a second-year International Business student at Aalto University.

I moved to Finland from Syria around seven years ago, in 2015, together with thousands of other refugees fleeing their homes due to the crisis in our country. I had my two little children with me, and soon after our arrival, I gave birth to the third one. Now, my children are 10, 8 and 7 years old; the oldest and youngest are in a local school very close to our house, and the middle one goes by taxi to a special school because of his ASD. All speak fluent Finnish and have good friends with whom to play.

One of my biggest dreams came true two years ago when I was finally accepted to study at Aalto University. I have always been very good at school and enjoyed studying, but the first year in university surprised me in many ways. Even though I study in an English

programme and know Finnish quite well, I realised how difficult it was to have spontaneous discussions and small talks with my fellow students in the Finnish language. Also, my age was very different from that of other students, who were mainly coming straight from high school, meaning I was at least ten years older than them. Maybe those two things were the reasons why I found it quite challenging to make friends with the local students. However, students who don't fall into the "usual" category have been easier to approach, such as those with an immigrant background or children or who are a bit older than most students.

What I have recently learned is that all Aalto students have an opportunity to study abroad in an Erasmus exchange programme. Oh, how great it would be to spend one semester, for example, in France! I'd love to build my global competence and broaden my perspectives at another European university. I believe this experience would greatly benefit my personal and professional life. I would also like to belong to a group of exchange students, feel the togetherness with those who are all in a new country and university, and join the activities to make us feel welcomed and included. This time, it would not be only me who's different; it's an entire group that shares the same experience of not belonging to the majority.

But after getting enthusiastic and inspired by this idea, I started having second thoughts – what about my children? As a single mother, I am responsible for all of them. I don't have any other family members in Finland; they are either dead or living in different countries all around the world. And even if I had some of them here, I would not leave my children to live with someone else for half a year! So, they should all move to France with me. But how about their school, especially the middle one, which needs special support? They also don't know English yet, so in which school and language could they even study? And who will take care of them if I want to join some student events in the evening?

And how on earth could I even afford to pay for the flights, accommodation, and everything for four of us, and then also feed my family there? Could I get scholarships or other economic support from the Finnish Social Insurance Institution? Or are there any other solutions to fund my family's stay in France?

When thinking about all these challenges, I'm also becoming hesitant about my psychological capabilities and ability to survive and overcome them and make the experience in France.

Saleha, 23

Hello! My name is Saleh, and I'm a 29-year-old student from Afghanistan with a ten-year-valid refugee residence permit in France. I am studying at the Graduate Schools of Engineering and Management.

I would like to go on a mobility trip next year to Portugal to study economics and management. I love studying, but sometimes the rhythm of the teaching is too rapid, and I get lost. I had to take exams twice last year. I did not pass all the exams and had to take some twice. The war in Afghanistan has just started, and the teacher told me it might be for that reason. It's true that at that time, my priority was to help my sister to immigrate to France. It takes so much time. I'm still working on the administrative process for her. Regarding my studies, I go to the university from Monday to Thursday. I have a refugee residence permit that allows me to work. This is very important because neither my government nor my family supports me in my studies. Thus, I must work to finance my studies. I work in a small fast-food restaurant in Grenoble on Friday and the weekend.

I'm very interested in a mobility experience in Portugal as the university has a solid international reputation, and ethical values and social responsibility seem to be the university's priorities. However, I have no experience in mobility other than in France, which slightly worries me. The period was quite difficult when I moved to France and felt very alone. I'm not in any club or student community because I have to work during the weekend and also because I feel that my culture is too far from the European one. I don't feel very at ease with European students. Sometimes, I have the impression of being far more different. Recently, I had some medical issues (a lot of stomach aches). I also have a lot of nightmares. I shout at night, and the students in the same residence hall sometimes complain about it. My doctor says it's due to my anxiety, which I have some difficulties admitting. I have had a specific treatment for six months. I'd love to travel next year, but I am unsure if it is possible due to my financial concerns and health situation.

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