



**InComm**  
Feel at Home

# Handbook

“Creating an inclusive welcome  
for all newcomers at your  
university”

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# Handbook

for

## InComm Project Feel at Home

The comprehensive guide to create an inclusive welcome for all newcomers at your university, with a specific focus on all incoming Master students and PhD candidates.

### Partners:

Instituto Superior Técnico (PT)  
Kungliga Tekniska högskolan (SE)  
Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (NL)  
Technische Universität Darmstadt (DE)  
Technische Universität Graz (AT)  
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (ES)

Author: InComm Project Team  
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# Management Summary (EN)

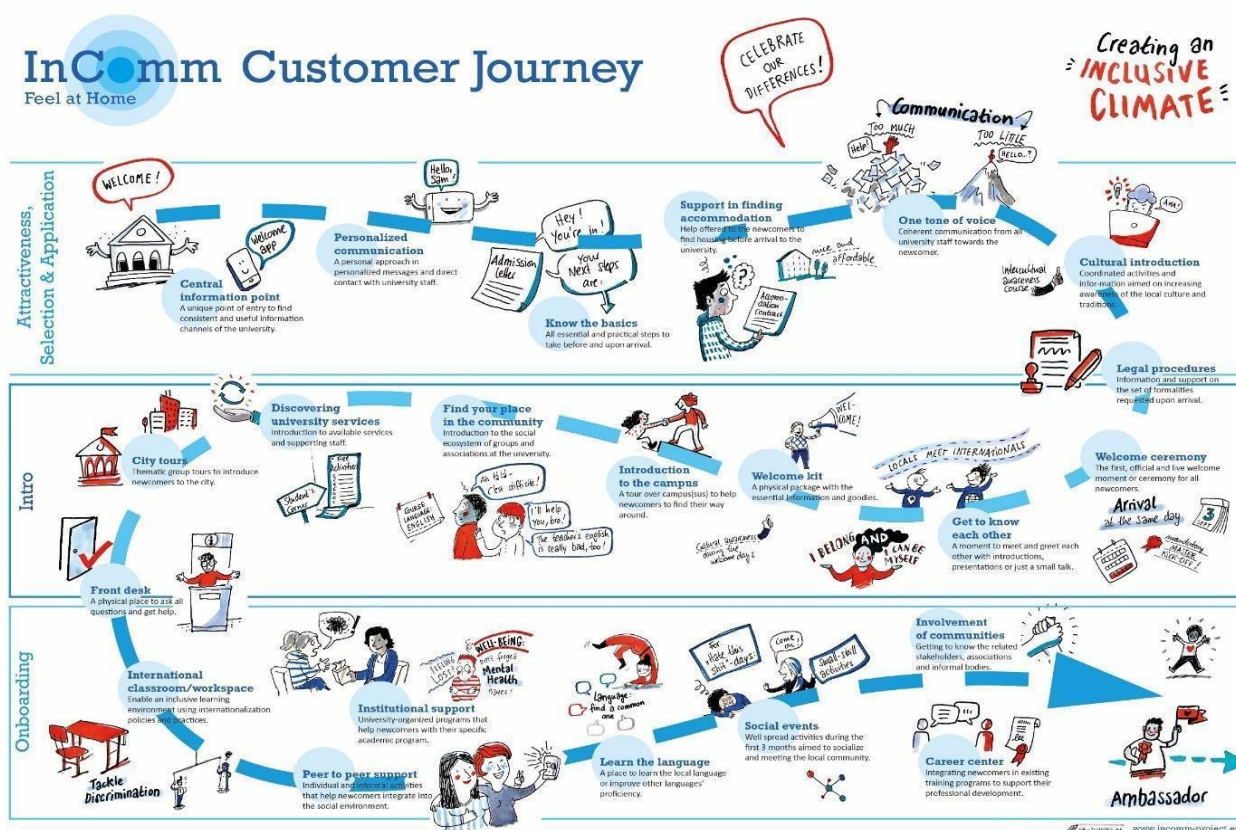
The InComm project developed a **more inclusive welcome process** at the partners universities, where students and staff from all backgrounds feel welcome in one international identity, **to become truly international universities**.

Scope of the InComm project is the welcoming process, from roughly 100 days before enrollment till 100 days after enrollment. There is the **Interaction phase** after application, about 3 months before arrival, the **Introduction** at the local institution, generally a week and the **Onboarding phase**, the first 3 months at the university in various programmes (education, workspace, professional training, social activities). We call this our 'InComm Customer Journey'.

The InComm Customer Journey is made of a **set of elements**, together forming a complete welcome process for **incoming Master students and PhD's**. It was written from the Newcomers perspective, with no differences in nationality, by 6 universities. **By filling in the different elements, a fitting journey can be made** for your institution.

This **InComm Handbook** tells you everything about how to improve your own welcome process and how to use the tools we developed to help you. Furthermore, it provides various best practices from the project partners, background information on the process and much, much more.

Instituto Superior Técnico, Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Technische Universität Graz and Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya created this Handbook in the joint InComm Project. Feel free to share this with everyone!



"The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

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*...drafting the ideal customer journey...*

# 1

## The Customer Journey

Understanding the principles of a welcome process,  
including all elements that make a newcomer feel  
welcome at your institution.

# InComm Ideal Journey

The Customer Journey Model is made of a set of elements, together forming a complete welcome process for incoming Master's students and PhDs. It was written from the newcomers perspective, with no differences in nationality. When all elements are taken into account, this could be perceived as 'the ideal welcome journey'. By choosing different elements, a fitting welcome journey can be made for your institution.

## The welcome process

The InComm Team identified the welcoming process, from roughly 100 days before enrollment till 100 days after enrollment. There are 3 phases in that time span:

- The **Attractiveness, selection & application phase** after application, about 3 months before arrival
- The **Introduction phase** at the local institution, generally for a maximum of one week
- The **Onboarding phase**, the first 3 months at the university in various programmes (education, workspace, professional training, social activities)

We call this our 'InComm Customer Journey'. Within this Customer Journey, there are several elements identified. When all elements are filled in, it should lead to the Community phase, when people are on board in your international community. Note that we do not consider recruitment a part of the process. We start our journey as soon as the newcomer decided to come to the university.

## Repeating the journey!

By implementing, measuring and improving the welcome process we believe that one could influence the international culture at

your institution. Every year, a new generation of students and PhDs will arrive and leave our universities. By improving the welcoming process, one could create a more inclusive climate at the university.

## For Master's and PhDs

InComm focusses on all new incoming Master's students and PhDs, both national and international. We decided to put a special focus on Master's students and PhDs, because those were the groups at our institutions that needed extra attention. Also, it was easier to compare those groups, since most of the partners offer their Master and PhD tracks in English. Of course, lessons learned can be used for other target groups as well.

## About the creation of this model

The model developed is based on the InComm Collective Intelligence Conference held in February 2021. Over 100 professionals, teachers, students and PhDs from the six project partners joined online in an 8-day conference to create an image of the perfect welcome. The InComm team drafted this into the InComm Customer Journey. The team took a lot of time to create wording and sentences that are precise, short and easy to understand.

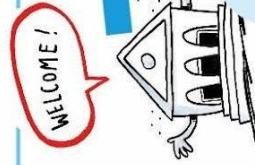


# InComm Customer Journey

Feel at Home

Creating an  
INCLUSIVE  
CLIMATE

Attractiveness,  
Selection & Application



**Central information point**  
A unique point of entry to find consistent and useful information channels of the university.



**Personalized communication**  
A personal approach in personalized messages and direct contact with university staff.



**Know the basics**  
All essential and practical steps to take before and upon arrival.



**Support in finding accommodation**  
Help offered to the newcomers to find housing before arrival to the university.



**One tone of voice**  
Coherent communication from all university staff towards the newcomer.



**Cultural introduction**  
Coordinated activities and information aimed at increasing awareness of the local culture and traditions.



Intro



**Discovering university services**  
Introduction to available services and supporting staff.



**Find your place in the community**  
Introduction to the social ecosystem of groups and associations at the university.



**Introduction to the campus**  
A tour over campus(es) to help newcomers to find their way around.



**Welcome kit**  
A physical package with the essential information and goodies.



**Get to know each other**  
A moment to meet and greet each other with introductions, presentations or just a small talk.



**Welcome ceremony**  
The first, official and live welcome moment or ceremony for all newcomers.



**Arrival at the same day**  
A moment to meet and greet each other with introductions, presentations or just a small talk.



**Legal procedures**  
Information and support on the set of formalities requested upon arrival.



**Locals meet internationals**  
A moment to meet and greet each other with introductions, presentations or just a small talk.



**Belong and I can be myself**  
A moment to meet and greet each other with introductions, presentations or just a small talk.



**Involvement of communities**  
Getting to know the related stakeholders, associations and informal bodies.



**Career center**  
Integrating newcomers in existing training programs to support their professional development.



**Social events**  
Well spread activities during the first 3 months aimed to socialize and meeting the local community.



**Learn the language**  
A place to learn the local language or improve other languages' proficiency.



**Institutional support**  
University-organized programs that help newcomers with their specific academic program.



**Peer to peer support**  
Individual and informal activities that help newcomers integrate into the social environment.



**International classroom/workspace**  
Enable an inclusive learning environment using internationalization policies and practices.



**Front desk**  
A physical place to ask all questions and get help.



**City tours**  
Thematic group tours to introduce newcomers to the city.



**Tackle Discrimination**  
A physical place to ask all questions and get help.



**Ambassador**  
A physical place to ask all questions and get help.



**Onboarding**  
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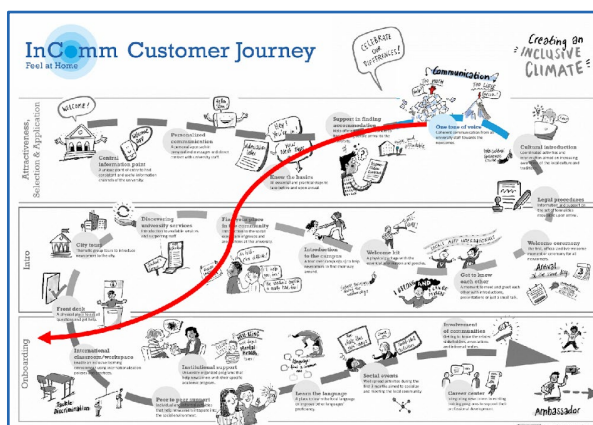
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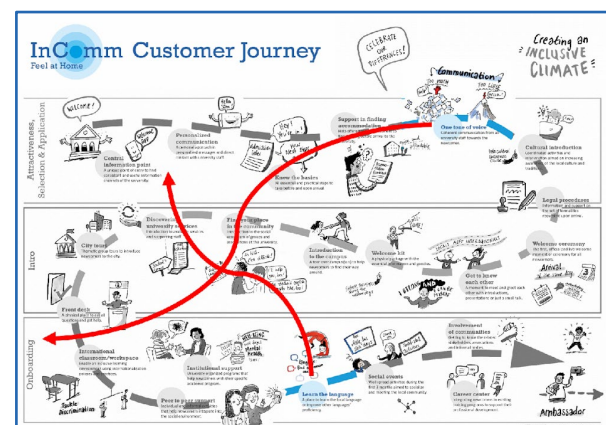


# Using the InComm Journey Model

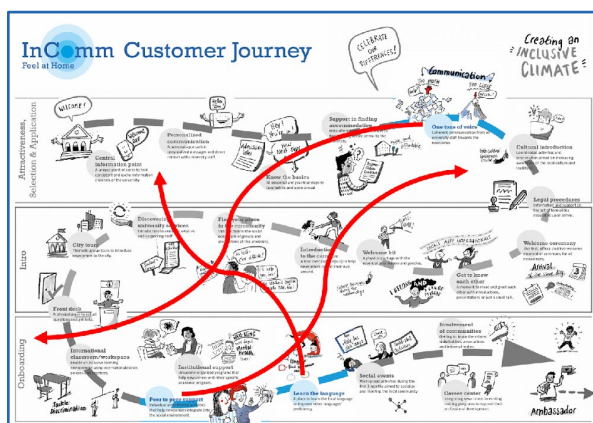
Welcoming is not a static process. It is constantly under development. You might find that some elements overlap or are close to each other. For example, peer to peer support could be organised as institutional support. Also, elements can be used in different phases. Take a City Tour. That could be held during the intro week, but also organised as a pub-crawl 2 weeks later. Some elements could be used more often. Think about a language training that could be held prior to arrival, or as part of an onboarding training. It is important to use the model as a basis to develop your own customer journey.



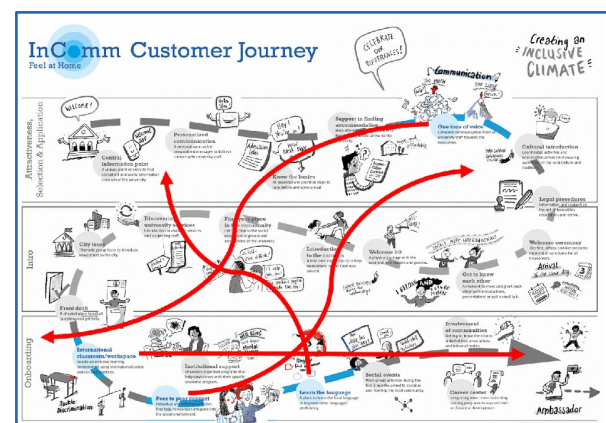
One tone of voice is of importance when a newcomer is entering the university. But why not continue that into the first 2-4 weeks of the onboarding for a smooth transition?



Language training is a very good way to get people on board, but it could also be used as a nice way to introduce one's culture, prior to arrival.



Another good example are peer-to-peer programmes, like a buddy programme. How nice would it be if your buddy greets you the week before travelling?



And of course, some of the elements may continue into the year. An international classroom or workspace is beneficial for the full academic year.

# Description of all Elements

Below you can find a full description of all the elements in the Customer Journey. Important to note is that this is a description of all elements in the InComm Customer Journey in 'the best possible order' as drafted by the InComm team. Feel free to choose your own order, to combine elements, to add elements, etc. when using the elements.

Element	Description	Further detailing and recommendations
<b>Central information point</b>	<b>A unique point of entry to find consistent and useful information channels of the university.</b>	This point of entry shall be easily recognizable and placed high up on the website of the institution, preferably on the main page. The web address should be simple and reflect content behind it. It is important to respect the diversity of the instruments the students use in order to collect information about the institution and enable access to these information channels from a single place/page. General rules for accessibility shall be respected making possible access for students with special needs.
<b>Personalised communication</b>	<b>A personal approach in personalised messages and direct contact with university staff.</b>	With this we mean that communication from general or functional address shall be avoided. The student shall be contacted using his/her name and family name.
<b>Know the basics</b>	<b>All essential and practical steps to take before and upon arrival.</b>	All necessary steps to be taken in order to successfully arrive in the new home institution shall be listed and described. If particular steps imply communication with a stakeholder outside the university, the ways to reach this stakeholder shall be described in detail. This, for example, can be related to obtaining the residence permit, registering for language courses or transfer from the airport.
<b>Support in finding accommodation</b>	<b>Help offered to the newcomers to find housing before arrival to the university.</b>	Finding accommodation in a foreign country can be a tricky and stressful experience for the students. It is essential to offer support to students to find a place to stay upon arrival. Access to the accommodation shall be provided taking into account the unpredictable arrival schedule of the international students – students shall be able to enter the accommodation if they arrive outside of the office hours of responsible staff.
<b>One tone of voice</b>	<b>Coherent communication from all university staff towards the newcomer.</b>	A new student usually receives information from various university officers, for example: central admission office, programme coordinator, international coordinator, accommodation coordinator, etc. All these parties shall communicate



		with the new student by sending coordinated messages contributing to the creation of an attractive university image as well as a clear picture of the processes and services.
<b>Cultural introduction</b>	<b>Coordinated activities and information aimed on increasing awareness of the local culture and traditions.</b>	While arriving at the new place of study in a different country, the new student shall be able to orient in the society, understand basic rules and traditions. An efficient cultural introduction shall stimulate the student to get deeper knowledge of the local language and culture during the entire period of stay.
<b>Legal procedures</b>	<b>Information and support on the set of formalities requested upon arrival.</b>	The new student shall receive support in completing important formalities. He/she shall receive clear information on what steps shall be done, at which point of time and which third parties are involved in the process. This usually includes obtaining a social security number, opening a bank account, understanding routines for health issues, rules for renting accommodation, etc.
<b>Welcome ceremony</b>	<b>The first, official and live welcome moment or ceremony for all newcomers.</b>	The official welcoming ceremony shall be organised for all new students. This welcome ceremony shall be organised in live format and include activities dedicated to introduction to the university culture and environment. It is also an opportunity for students to get to know each other as well as contact persons in the university.
<b>Get to know each other</b>	<b>A moment to meet and greet each other with introductions, presentations or just small talk.</b>	The new students shall be provided opportunities for getting to know each other and establishing social contacts. Such events can be organised on the level of study programme for the Master students or at the school or faculty level. Students from the previous year(s) can also play an important role in such events sharing practical experience with the newcomers.
<b>Welcome kit</b>	<b>A physical package with the essential information and goodies.</b>	It is important that this package is physical as the new students have made a decision and travelled to study physically in a different country. This package shall be valuable and contain both information materials and useful items. This is also an opportunity to reach out to the new students with the marketing materials.
<b>Introduction to the campus</b>	<b>A tour over campus(es) to help newcomers to find their way around.</b>	Such a tour will make it easier for the new students to orient themselves on the territory of the university, find places for lectures, laboratories as well as recreational and leisure activities. Involvement of the students from previous years in such tours is very much appreciated by the newcomers.

<b>Find your place in the community</b>	<b>Introduction to the social ecosystem of groups and associations at the university.</b>	The newcomers shall be integrated in the social canvas of the university. Together with the learning activities, they shall be able to pursue their interests outside university and become a part of a broader community at the university and in the city.
<b>Discovering university services</b>	<b>Introduction to available services and supporting staff.</b>	The newcomers shall be introduced to the essential services offered by the university, including IT-support, library, registration for the courses, carrier services, etc. The ways to discover the university services can include distribution of information materials, meetings with the staff who provide support to the students, and information letters.
<b>City tours</b>	<b>Thematic group tours to introduce newcomers to the city.</b>	The newcomers shall be offered a possibility to get to know the city where their university is located. As students have different backgrounds and interests, it is essential to offer different thematic tours in order to reach out to a broader student community.
<b>Front desk</b>	<b>A physical place to ask all questions and get help.</b>	A single place, where students can come with their problems and either have the issues solved or redirected to a correct person or unit. Such a place shall be easily accessible, employ qualified staff and have suitable open hours. This physical place shall be extensively advertised to the newcomers during digital channels as well as during all events.
<b>International classroom or workspace</b>	<b>Enable an inclusive learning environment using internationalisation policies and practices.</b>	The university shall have in place a clear policy for the international classroom. This policy shall be communicated to both academic and non-academic staff of the university. The university shall also have a policy for inclusiveness and implement tools and approaches for enabling equal learning opportunities for all students and provide support for students with special needs.
<b>Peer to peer support</b>	<b>Individual and informal activities that help newcomers integrate into the social environment.</b>	The university shall have in place a structure for peer-to-peer support and communication between students. It is important that such programmes include training of the staff and students acting as buddies, they shall be prepared to meet newcomers with various problems and needs.
<b>Institutional support</b>	<b>University-organised programmes that help newcomers with their specific academic program.</b>	The university shall have in place support infrastructure which help the students with their learning process. As new students come from various countries with different traditions in higher education, it is very important to provide newcomers with the support on how to integrate into the learning environment. This can include online materials,

		recorded training sessions, lunch seminars and meetings.
<b>Learn the language</b>	<b>A place to learn the local language or improve other languages' proficiency.</b>	The newcomers shall be provided opportunities to learn the local language. They can be provided either by the university itself or with the involvement of external actors. One of the approaches could be to offer a very basic course online before the arrival followed by more intensive courses on site.
<b>Social events</b>	<b>Well spread activities during the first 3 months aimed to socialise and meet the local community.</b>	During the first 3 months of the studies the newcomers shall be offered a possibility to attend a variety of social events with different content. This will help the newcomers from one side to learn about the social canvas of their new place and from the other side establish and develop a network of peers for the years to come.
<b>Career center</b>	<b>Integrating newcomers in existing training programmes to support their professional development.</b>	The Career center shall employ highly qualified staff, which can provide necessary guidance to the students and contribute to a better understanding of their career path upon completion of the studies. This also contributes to confidence building among the students.
<b>Involvement of communities</b>	<b>Getting to know the related stakeholders, associations and informal bodies.</b>	As each university is a part of the community, it is essential that the partners outside the university are involved in welcoming and integrating new students. Such actors could be local authorities, sport clubs, cultural associations, and, of course, student organisations.



## Best Practice: PhD Open Days

At IST there is the annual PhD Open Days. It combines Key-Note Lectures by top professors from IST with a social program around poster sessions by the PhD Candidates themselves. In addition, several training programs are offered to work on the professional development of the PhD candidates. The program lasts for 3 days.



# Further reading on how to use the Customer Journey

The InComm project brings together 6 universities from different European countries, having different traditions and operating under different national frameworks. At the same time all of the partner institutions are active internationally, attracting annually thousands of Master and PhD students from other countries to study and pursue academic careers in Europe. Together with the large number of incoming students comes the understanding that these young professionals shall feel welcomed at every stage of their studies. This includes being integrated into the social environments at their respective universities as well as the socioeconomic environment that the institution is a part of - legal framework, culture, accommodation, leisure – everything which makes life bright, meaningful and enjoyable. The ultimate goal is that international students coming to our institutions are able to carry out their studies from day one and become part of the social life of our cities, regions and countries.

## Development of the journey

In order to develop an ideal model for a journey taken by a student, from the moment they are accepted at an institution all the way to the moment they leave the institution as a graduate (which will further be referred to as their customer journey) we decided that first of all it is important to look at ourselves – what we do and how we do it, identify our strengths as well as areas for improvement. One of the first results of this project was understanding that we need to start speaking the same language when it comes to activities, support structures and, first of all, information we provide to our students at various time points and different locations of our organisations. This work resulted in the elaboration of the InComm Customer Journey Model Elements – the list of definitions and descriptions which makes it possible to apply a more formal approach, take a closer look at each component of the customer journey at the institutions and identify areas which need special attention.

The elements are subdivided in the 3 distinctive periods that we identified for our student incoming process and which became part of our vocabulary:

1. Attractiveness, Selection & Application: the period after being accepted to a study programme at a university and prior to the arrival at the host institution
2. Intro: the arrival and the first week upon arrival
3. Onboarding: the first 100 days after arriving at the university

Of course, there are no distinct borders between these periods, they smoothly and naturally go into one another, reflecting the structure of a particular university as well as the partnerships inside and outside the university.

By understanding these transitions, we come to the next important lesson that we have learned from the self-study process - that each of the elements is related to a different set of stakeholders at each university. This includes

both internal as well as external stakeholders, as every institution has its own unique structure, rules, regulations, routines, traditions and people which define how the customer journey is developed and implemented at the particular institution at a specific point of time.

### Using the journey

When you decide to improve the experience of international students coming to your university, we recommend that you start by examining the current situation at your institution, using the InComm Customer Journey Model Elements as a reference table. Try to answer questions such as:

- Do we have one person who is responsible for the entire customer journey?
- What is the current state of coordination and cooperation between different levels of the university – central administration, faculties/schools, a study programme?
- Who are the stakeholders internally – units, divisions, people? Who else inside the institution could contribute to a particular operation?
- Who are the stakeholders externally – student and/or employer organisations, public institutions (City Council, Regional Councils, etc.), national agencies? How could they become part of the process?

### Involve your students & PhD's!

It is important to highlight current students, who comprise a very important and competent resource and have a very big

potential to make the customer journey for the new students smoother and more efficient. They were in the focus of the customer journey a year ago and now they can share their experience and provide valuable support to the newcomers. Young students usually are more open to communicate with the students from previous years, they speak the same language and recommendations from older students reach younger students in a much more efficient way than the words from administrative personnel at the universities. Reason being that their communication happens not only in study rooms and laboratories but also in dormitories, kitchens, groceries, sport facilities and pubs. Therefore, we strongly recommend involving older students in a wide range of activities for newcomers.

### Monitoring & improving

Once you understand your present customer journey and have identified current stakeholders, both internal and external, you can start identifying which elements need special attention. Of course, input from students would be very useful in this process. You can find questionnaires for students in the appendix to these guidelines. We recommend carrying out surveys among students on a regular basis, with surveys every 2nd or 3rd year being a good frequency.

While identifying the projects for improvement, try to look at the entire lifecycle of the activity: if the institutional welcome event takes place in September each year, preparation work starts much earlier and includes updating and elaborating information materials, developing scripts and scenarios of the events, selecting locations for the activities; and, most importantly, training of the staff.



Prepared and well-trained staff is an essential part of each activity and successful implementation largely depends on having the staff well prepared to meet the students, and problems and challenges coming together with them. This applies both for permanent university employees, contributors from the external stakeholders as well as students. It is very important to establish a well-functioning framework for the preparation of the students involved in all activities of the customer journey, as they are the ambassadors of the institution 24/7 and are always the first ones who meet the newcomers, whether in the rooms of the university, laboratories, libraries, during events or in the kitchens and recreational areas of the student dormitories. The training and preparation will make students more professional and confident in communication with the newcomers and will contribute to the success of the welcoming activities.

## Resources

Finally, the resources. In order to ensure successful implementation of the new customer journey, it is important to have necessary resources at your disposal – staff and students, premises and equipment and, of course, funding. Introduction of new routines and activities always require more funding at the initial stage, as this stage requires a lot of development and planning, and contributions from many staff members. We recommend establishing a priority list of the elements which will be in the focus. Securing funding for

the new activities is always a result of negotiations with the university management and requires a clear and efficient presentation of costs and benefits. Lack of resources can jeopardise the implementation, affect results of the work and undermine the trust from the management.

## The main steps summarised

Summarising all that was said above, here are the main steps which will help you to implement an efficient and successful customer journey which will be appreciated by your students:

- Make an inventory of your current customer journey
- Identify internal and external stakeholders involved in the customer journey
- Use the InComm Customer Journey Model Elements as a reference list
- Identify areas/components which need attention, set priorities on them
- Elaborate a yearly timeline for each selected element
- Identify resources which will be needed to develop, implement and run the element
- Make sure that the resources are available
- And, finally, students: listen to them, empower them and involve them in a broader range of activities



## Best Practice: Connect with my Culture

Organized at TU/e, Connect with my Culture is a bottom up organized, top down supported event where all students and staffs are invited to share their own culture. The aim is to connect people by sharing differences and by sharing your culture!

All cultures receive a small amount of funding (€250,-) to cook or bake something for the visitors to taste. Besides that, tables and power is arranged. Two student assistants are helping the university in organising this very fun and very international event!



# 2

## Best Practices & Impact

A selection of new best practices developed and implemented at our institutions to use as inspiration or to copy at your institution.



## New implemented projects

**Part of the project was to implement new projects at our universities to improve the welcome process at our own institutions. We will present several of the best practices developed during the InComm project.**

### Multiple elements addressed for improvement

The advantage of being part of the InComm team was that the partner universities could directly use the input of the project for their own Masters and PhDs. The questionnaires were used to identify the priority areas to work on. The various meetings of the InComm project brought inspiration for the projects. Based on the customer journey, the partners identified 3 projects per master programme, and 3 projects per PhD programme to be improved or implemented. In the handbook we present the best results in chapter 2. Some of our Best Practices have been spread out through the booklet.

### Measuring impact of new projects

The partners of the consortium addressed the incoming students for the 2020/21 cohort with a set of questions on their perception of the welcoming services and available tools at the hosting universities. Responses have been collected and analysed through a specific survey that allowed us to identify weaknesses and strengths for each partner and for each

phase of the customer journey. In a second phase, each partner of the consortium contacted the same cohort of students at the end of the academic year and checked with them whether their initial perception on the weaknesses in the process was confirmed or whether during the course of their stay they realised that the support they received and the tools available were sufficient for them to get integrated in the campus and feel welcome at the new university. Finally, each partner contacted the students from the 2021/22 cohort and asked the same questions but only about the phase of the on-boarding process for which a new enhanced project had been implemented. These responses were compared with the ones received from the 2020/21 students in order to verify if the newly introduced elements had in some way improved the “customer satisfaction”. It is nevertheless important to keep in mind that the conditions for the two cohorts have been quite different due to the fact that in fall 2020 the new Covid wave prevented some of the partners from running full scale events in presence.

## TU/e Master Mentorate Program

**TU/e improved the onboarding via peer-to-peer support in the master programmes with the Master Mentorate Program. The Master Mentorate is an institutionally supported peer to peer buddy system, offered to all new incoming Masters students.**

### Description of the project

Born in Covid-times, the Master Mentorate was built on the existing TU/e buddy systems in the Bachelor Programmes. As the buddy system in the Bachelor programmes were aiming at preventing drop-outs, the Master Programme took a different approach. As we found that onboarding was hard in an online environment, it was more focused on landing into the community.

The Master Mentorate programme works as follows:

- Selection of mentors in May
- Training programme in June/July
- Start of the programme in August, typically guiding 10-20 students per mentor
- Ending the project in February
- Wrap up in March

Mentors are paid student assistants. Costs are about €500,- per mentor. Each mentor has about 60 hours to spend on their activities.



### Measurement of Impact

Prior to implementing the Master Mentorate Programme, students felt lost at our university. The measurement of belongingness indicated a 4/7. By measuring we found that it increased to 5/7. In a qualitative analysis with students, they indicated that this programme was an excellent way to get to know the university.

The master mentorship program has been improved for the new generation of master students in 2022 in the following aspects: the program is more clear for academic advisors and for student mentors; communication for academic advisors is better designed; student mentors have had better information and training (in week 0 from academic advisors and in week 2 from Education and Student Affairs).

### Lessons Learned

The Master Mentorate is an invaluable tool in making students feel welcome. Besides that, it is a great way to prevent (costly) drop-outs.

The master mentoring program indeed contributed to the feeling of belonging to the university. Therefore we consider this project an improvement of the onboarding process of master's students.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two young women with long dark hair sitting at a bright orange table. They are both looking at a silver HP laptop in front of them. The woman on the left is wearing a brown leather jacket, and the woman on the right is wearing a black jacket over a grey top. Behind them is a wall made of large, colorful geometric panels in shades of blue, orange, yellow, and grey. In the top right corner, there is a light blue rectangular box containing text.

## Best Practice: Communication channels at KTH

KTH has recently worked intensively on the communication towards incoming students. Different channels complete each-other (printed material, website, webinars, newsletter, welcome meetings) so to provide a coherent body of information and avoid overlapping and gaps. The website “New at KTH har” has been improved.



## Welcome brochure & Powerpoint template at KTH

**KTH improved the welcome and onboarding for new students by handing out a welcome brochure and providing students with a KTH Powerpoint template.**

### Welcome brochure for all new students at KTH

Due to the big amount of information that you receive as a new student, the welcome brochure serves as an overview and a checklist of the things that are important to do and know during the first weeks. The brochure is a simplified mirroring of the website 'New at KTH' and contains only information that is common for the new students. This brochure is pocket size, making it easy to bring with you during the first weeks as a new student.

Pilot face: January 2022. The welcome brochure was appreciated by the exchange students, but also by KTH staff that could refer to and use the brochure for help and support at KTH Entré (information desk for new students to collect keys for accommodation and to receive KTH account and access card). Following the pilot face, the brochure was developed and adapted for the incoming group of students starting the autumn semester 2022.

April: the website 'New at KTH' is published

May-June: review of content, images and links in the brochure

July: ordering the print-out of the brochure

August-September: handing out the brochure to new students, especially during the arrival days (mid-August)

The welcome brochure is an appreciated support for new students and works as a checklist during the first weeks. A lesson to learn was that we should not order the print

of the brochure too early, because some updates might still occur on the web and we need to ensure that the references are correct (QR codes).

### KTH Powerpoint template for school introduction meetings

KTH improved the welcome and onboarding for new students by providing the students with the same type and level of information at the school introduction meetings. These meetings are "school focused" (i.e. faculty focused) and offer necessary information and support when starting a course. For example, how to use the learning platform Canvas or where to find contact information to your specific study counsellor and programme director. The aim of this powerpoint template is to provide equivalent service for all students.

The project started with a work group, ensuring what information the new students got at KTH, when they got it and from whom. That work resulted in a new process of communication for new international students. During the communication mapping, a request arose to create a template for the school introduction meetings, making sure that everyone provides the same basic information. Separate meetings were held with staff from different KTH schools to create a good basic information set-up for the template. Then the template was created and published on KTH intranet for school staff free to download and use. The usage of the

template on introduction meetings was not mandatory, but highly recommended.

Autumn 2021: working group (KTH central, KTH schools and student union)

January – April 2022: School specific meetings

June: Finalise and publish the template on KTH intranet

August: School introduction meetings



The templates are a good way to ensure that the students have received the same information on school introduction meetings. They are also valuable support for school staff who are planning and organising the meeting. The standardisation has led to requests for several common solutions.

### Measurement of Impact

The project implemented by KTH in the last year of activity on the student cohort 2022/23 proved that the improvements to the welcome session, standardized presentations, and enhanced info package had a significant impact. In particular, a number of aspects were analysed for which the previous cohorts of students expressed partial dissatisfaction, and all of them recorded a substantial increase for the students who considered the same aspect as good (6/7) or very good (7/7): How satisfied were you with the welcoming activities offered at the start of your study program in general? From 53% to 74%; How helpful was the information you

received during the first days at KTH? From 55% to 68%; The welcome activities during the first days made me feel integrated in the department/faculty. From 35% to 50%; Following your enrollment, how helpful was the information you received from the university to navigate the university as a whole? From 35% to 65%; The information I received regarding the university and its community was good from 53% to 65%; I felt that the welcome activities were helpful in making me feel included within the university community. From 47% to 69%.

The general satisfaction was therefore very high and the information on how to navigate the university was the most appreciated by the newcomers. Some efforts needs still to be made to improve the feeling of integration of the incoming students in the community. When asked how the process could be further improved, the respondents mentioned mainly the following elements:

- More socialization opportunities between international and local students (most recurrent concern)
- Better information on how to interact with the buddies
- More opportunities for online support
- Welcome activities also at decentralized campi
- More online information for the students to be able to prepare in advance
- More welcome activities ad School level
- Special welcoming support for late comers (due to visa issues)
- More information on the academic aspects (teaching methods, course registration, examinations, assessment, et

## Cultural Clash IST

The Cultural Clash is an activity developed by IST Admissions Office at the beginning of each semester in which newly arrived students get together. According to the definition, Cultural Clash is a conflict arising from the interaction of people with different cultural values and beliefs. The aim of this activity is to bring together completely unknown people, with different origins and cultures and give them tools to better understand the culture of the country where they will spend the following months or years.

### Description of the project

This activity was initially developed in a face-to-face model and turned out to work very well even in pandemic times, in a virtual format. During one hour, students are invited to participate actively through group dynamics in which various issues related to everyday Portuguese life are mentioned and concrete examples are presented. It is a workshop on Portuguese culture and traditions where students listen and share the challenges of living abroad and being immersed in a new culture, way of life or a set of attitudes.

Simple questions like money management, time management, going to the supermarket and having to cook and clean are all part of the initial shock and necessary adjustment that usually all relocated students experience during the first 100 days.

Then comes the need to adapt and integrate, and it is necessary to understand the culture in which students are being introduced.

Formal and informal greeting, one kiss, two kisses, three kisses? Being on time to classes or using the academic 15 minutes, how to treat professors? How can it be rude to say no to food and what to bring when invited to a friend's house? Portuguese proverbs and their meaning?



Fado and Saudade, what do they mean and what is their role in Portuguese culture? These are common situations that students will have to face in Portugal or in any other country and culture.

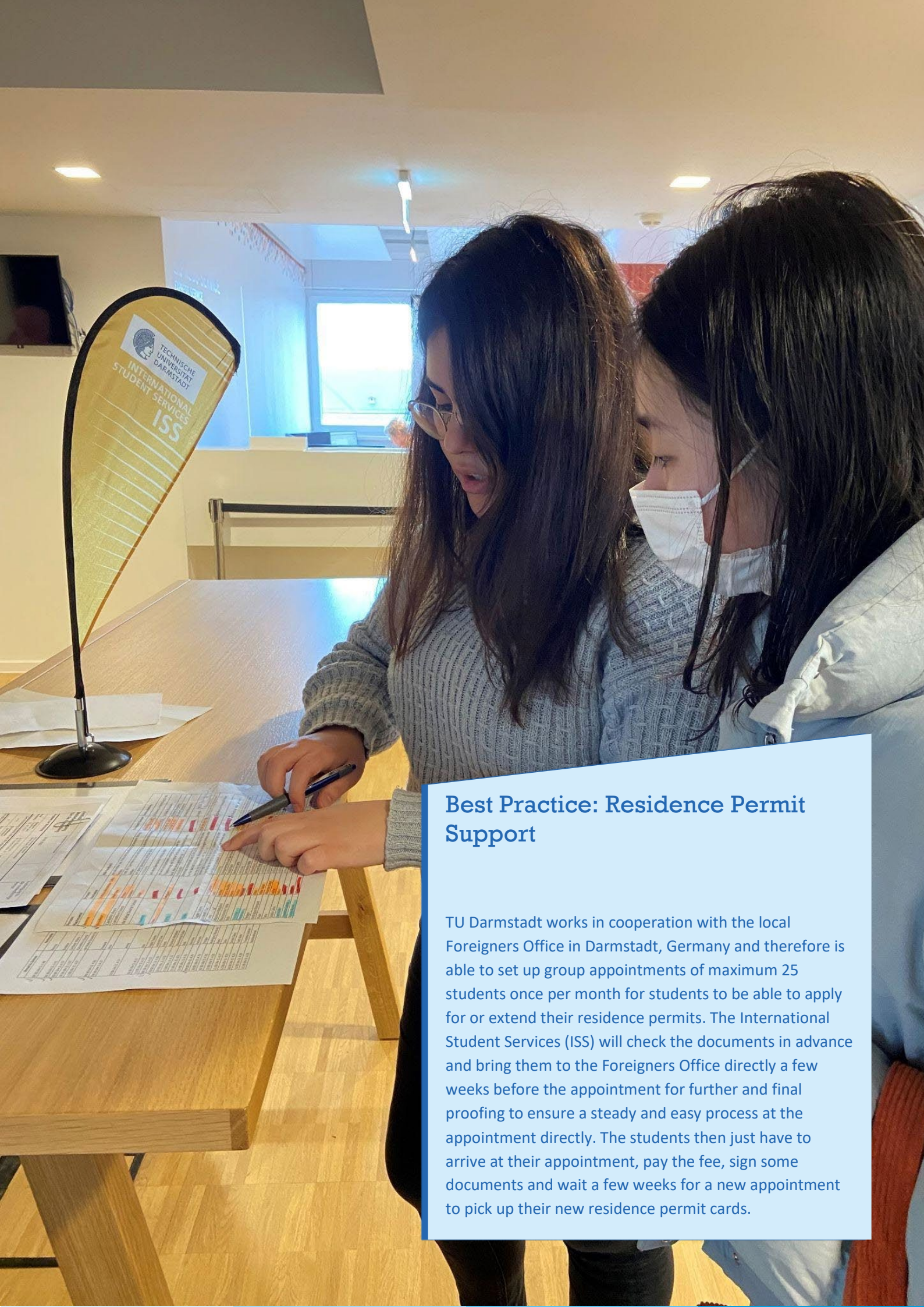
### Measurement of Impact

After participating in this workshop, students feel more at ease, they come into contact with other students in the same situation and, as the whole dynamic is relaxed and fun, students end up absorbing some information and concepts related to the Portuguese language and culture that may be useful in their daily lives.

### Lessons Learned

During the pandemic, this workshop was held online and even in this format there were always many participants, which means that contact with other cultures is one of the young people's concerns. The dynamic of inclusion and sharing experiences is helpful in the integration and feeling of belonging of new students.





## Best Practice: Residence Permit Support

TU Darmstadt works in cooperation with the local Foreigners Office in Darmstadt, Germany and therefore is able to set up group appointments of maximum 25 students once per month for students to be able to apply for or extend their residence permits. The International Student Services (ISS) will check the documents in advance and bring them to the Foreigners Office directly a few weeks before the appointment for further and final proofing to ensure a steady and easy process at the appointment directly. The students then just have to arrive at their appointment, pay the fee, sign some documents and wait a few weeks for a new appointment to pick up their new residence permit cards.

## TUD MasterPlus - Success through Support

The Technical University of Darmstadt has set itself the goal to provide the best learning environment for international master's students in STEM programmes (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), which includes a well-prepared start into the semester and promising opportunities for academic and personal development. This is implemented primarily with the help of peer-to-peer support by buddies who serve as the first point of contact for all questions and who offer guidance to our students throughout the first semester in three different modules.

### WELCOME – Getting started

Within the framework of the MasterPlus WELCOME module, international master's students receive orientation and support from buddies who are master's students in the same department. They are divided into groups so each buddy receives a specific list of students to focus their attention on. Shortly after their admission to TU Darmstadt, students are invited to the MasterPlus programme. Their buddy from their future department will then make the first contact by email 6 weeks before the semester begins and offer a virtual and face-to-face introduction to the university, the study programme, and the department. The first meeting is to show the students they are there to support them and to answer any questions they may have either about their study programme specifically or student life in Darmstadt in general. This ensures that students receive support as early as possible to help with any administrative or enrolment procedures and at this critical time when many students have not yet made a final commitment to a university. This also helps the buddies to assist with any visa problems they may be facing and to encourage an early arrival to work together on successfully completing all bureaucratic

procedures before their study programme begins. The MasterPlus programme helps to establish an early personal connection between students and the university.



### POTENTIALS – Master your Master's

Through targeted support for the development of potentials, strengths and strategies for success, international master's students are to develop resilience and strategies in order to successfully complete their master's studies. In the first master's semester, study-related workshops and application-oriented training in self-management, self-motivation, strategy development, study subject knowledge, etc., are offered by MasterPlus buddies in cooperation with representatives of their department. In the POTENTIALS module, students benefit greatly from the buddies' personal experiences and their tips and tricks.



## OUTREACH – Beyond the Master's

One of the most important factors for successful studies and one's own satisfaction is being connected to other people and achieving a good work-life balance. Cultivating one's own interests and reaching out to others provides relaxation and is a source of strength and helps promote good mental health. The MasterPlus OUTREACH module has set the goal to provide international master's students the opportunity to pursue their interests and hobbies, gain new experiences and connect with other students by offering various activities such as cultural, sportive and

social excursions and events with a technology and sustainability focus. In this module, the International Student Services work closely together with student-led groups, university clubs, with associations in the city of Darmstadt and with the buddies to provide a wide range of events. Whether this entails a visit to our European Space Agency or a bike-ride tour through the surrounding nature, the OUTREACH programme offers a wide range of engaging activities for both the buddies and students of the programme to interact and come together.

[www.tu-darmstadt.de/masterplus](http://www.tu-darmstadt.de/masterplus)



## Best Practice: Orientation Weeks

The UPC-BarcelonaTech organises, each semester, different sessions of a kind of "Orientation Week" (OW). The OW is basically addressed to international students who have to start their studies at the UPC every semester, in September and in February.

The OW includes : an institutional welcome, information on compulsory legal procedures at the arrival and about the main UPC services that can be of interest of the students during their stay, an introductory workshop on Catalan language and culture, and a sports session.

The OWs are organised by the UPC International Relations Bureau in collaboration with diverse UPC services (mainly UPC Language and Terminology Service, UPC Library Service and UPC Sports service).

During the COVID pandèmic the Orientation Week sessions turned to an online mode. After it, the OWs became blended, with a first phase online, in the weeks before the arrival, and a second phase with the presential face-to-face activities, on campus.

The students receive many informations in a more structured way and do networking through some of the activities. The diferent UPC services collaborate among themselves and benefit from giving visibility to their services and receiving later less queries from the students.

You can also watnc our Youtube vídeo about the Orientation Weeks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fd-71-TD7M&t=72s>



## TU Graz Local Language Training and Support

TU Graz introduced two measures to encourage international Master & PhD students to learn and improve their local language skills, namely the German course fee reimbursement as well as a German regulars table.

### Description of the project

At TU Graz, German language courses are not free of charge for international students. Registration numbers from previous years show that students are more reluctant to register if there are costs involved. As we know about the importance of at least rudimentary knowledge of the local language, the Welcome Center aimed to encourage students in English-taught Master and PhD programmes to learn the local language, offering a partial or complete reimbursement of the course fees upon successful completion of the course.

German language course fees for students:

- Semester course: 80€ (as of 2022) – full reimbursement of 80€
- Intensive course: 290€ (as of 2022) – partial reimbursement of 145€

Additionally, a German regulars table was introduced for international staff, among whom most are PhD students. PhD students who are employed at TU Graz mostly speak in English with their colleagues at their institutes. They reported not having many opportunities to practise their language skills outside of their language classes and were therefore reluctant to speak the language. The

monthly regulars table was introduced to help them practise German in a safe environment.



### Measurement of Impact

In the qualitative analysis with Master students, they indicated that the reimbursement of the course fee upon successful completion is an enormous incentive. This is also reflected in the registration numbers - since the start of the refund, the number of registrations has doubled. As the regulars table for PhD students is a fairly new implementation (starting in June 2022), no evaluation was carried out yet.

### Lessons Learned

Learning the local language verifiably adds to the level of belongingness to our university, and moreover also to the country as a whole, as mentioned in the qualitative analysis.



## Best Practice: TU Graz Welcome Center

The three-person team of the TU Graz Welcome Center provides support to international students, staff and guests, as well as their hosting institutes before their arrival, during their stay and up to their departure.

The Welcome Center's central tasks are:

- Organising the International Welcome Days at the beginning of the academic year
- Consulting students, staff and guests in person and online
- Answering questions on visa, entry and residence permits
- Giving advice on accommodation options
- Providing information related to life in Graz, among the top-rated information sheets are: "How to get started as an international student in Graz", "Apply for your student health insurance" and "Convert your foreign driving licence"
- Assisting with networking and integration
- Reimbursing the course fees of German language semester and intensive courses

Integration is core to wellbeing! This is why the Welcome Center organises multiple networking events, encouraging international students to get to know each other and their new home Graz. Two student activities coordinators are employed by the Welcome Center, who host a biweekly regulars table, and various cultural, sportive and social events.

# Discovering existing best practices

**Many projects were already implemented at our universities at the start of the project. By collecting those best practices, we were able to develop both the InComm Customer Journeys and the InComm+ Tool. Through the whole booklet we are sharing best practices as inspiration for you. Here's how we collected the projects.**

## Collecting best practices

A website was designed in order to showcase all the information we collected publicly and in a centralised manner. Here we set up a map where all data inputs could be shown from the location where they took place. The collection of best practices is a way for us to gather all the projects and programmes universities are implementing in their universities. In order to publicise this and make it available to all users and viewers, we set up what is called the “Initiative Repository”. This part of the website was designed specifically for people to easily search one of the many successfully managed projects and programmes being implemented at different universities across the world.

Each university sent out a form to their respective colleagues and administrative staff to fill out. In this form we requested specific information pertaining to the project they had successfully carried out at their institutions. This form entailed long and short responses or brief and detailed descriptions. All these best practices were incorporated in our InComm+ Tool.

We then set up a filtering system where people can specifically search criteria they are most interested in finding, such as country, welcoming stage, characteristics as well as target group. With this filtering system people

can quickly go directly to the source of the information they are looking for, whether this is particular to where this program took place or who was most involved in planning this project. Additionally, we allowed the full overview of all project inputs to show on the main page. This allows viewers to scroll through the page without having to search for one or more specific criteria. The layout of the webpage was created to not only showcase the successful projects or programmes carried out by the universities themselves, but to also make it easy for the viewer to review and pull out from others experiences. It was designed to portray all the information needed without overwhelming the viewer with text.

It gave other universities the opportunity to explore what other universities have in place. After discussing with other internal organisations and offices at one's own university many had also realised that some of these programs were already in place at their own universities, just in different departments. This helped the different departments to also realise that maybe other organisations are doing things where centralised administration is completely unaware of. This helped those departments to get in touch with other departments and broaden and open the line of communication within one university.



# Impact of questionnaires

**InComm was established in order to help ease the onboarding of newly enrolled national and international Master's and PhD students, to improve their feeling of inclusion and to foster the creation of a true international campus. To achieve the proposed objectives we have listened to the students and the stakeholders via questionnaires and surveys.**

We started this project with the advantage of having six institutions from six different countries. Although the partner universities are located in Europe, due to historical ties, different internationalisation strategies, location or prestige, at the end we were able to obtain responses from students from almost all over the world.

The student questionnaire was applied over three consecutive years, covering new Master's and PhD students starting their studies at one of the partner institutions in the academic years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Divided in 5 sections, with a total 23 questions, the questionnaires allow us to ascertain the difficulties felt by the students, from the application stage with all the necessary support before arrival, to the welcome and the different initiatives promoted by each partner, to the integration in the institution and in the classroom. In the analysis we are also able to ascertain the difficulties experienced by the different profiles of students: national, international, master and PhD, as well as identifying the institution and thus being able to work on improvements in accordance with the difficulties identified.

The questionnaires were developed with the participation of all partners, which allowed the inclusion of specificities of all universities involved. As an example, students are asked

whether they participated in the welcome activities and how satisfied they are with them. They can select from a set of 12 different activities in which they participated.

Another relevant indicator has to do with discrimination and its different forms, i.e. religious orientation, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity/nationality, and language. Here again, we were able to identify what needs to be improved in this area for each institution through a series of options and a response with the opportunity for further development.

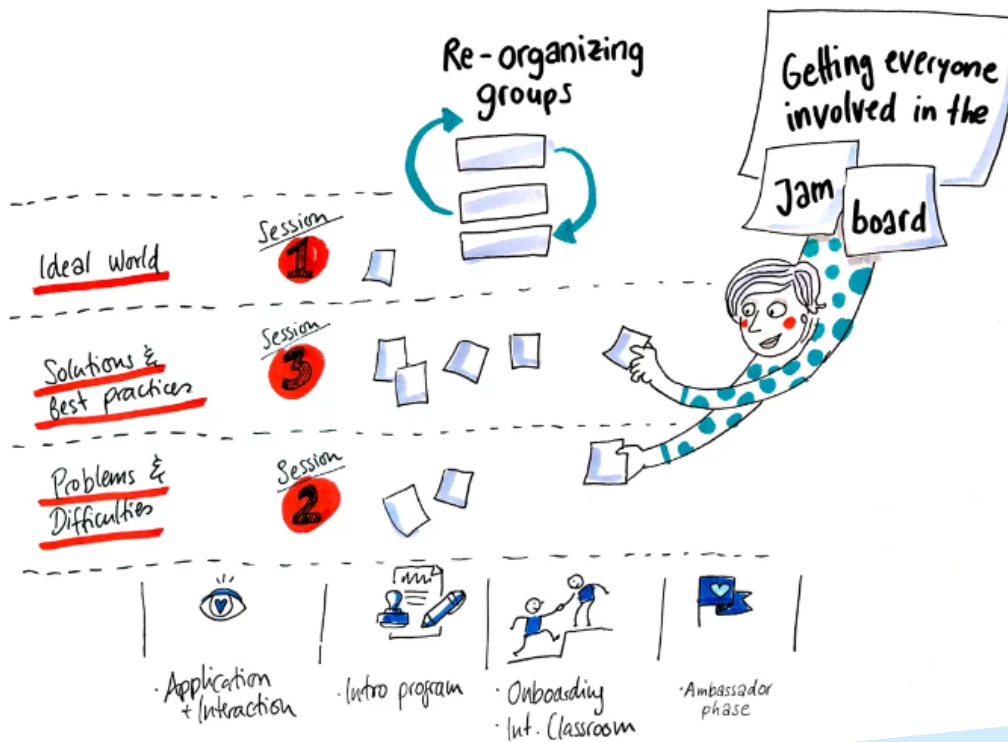
In the last questionnaire it was left to the students whether they wanted to continue to collaborate with the project in order to improve some of the points identified as problematic. This enables us to get in touch with some students directly and keep them as future contacts. It allows the institutions to promote improvements based on the problems identified and to count on the students themselves to re-test the system.

Another mechanism used to achieve the project goals was the stakeholder questionnaire. The questionnaire, launched in September 2020, included university staff and academics, student organisations, governmental and local authorities, private companies, external service providers and non-profit associations. According to the different profiles of respondents and their relation with the students it was possible to

perceive the different levels of engagement and investment from the different institutions/organisations, both financial and strategic.

The stakeholders questionnaire also allowed us to collect suggestions on relevant topics to make new incoming MSc or PhD students feel welcome, and how each stakeholder group would like to improve their services to new students and, in particular, new international students.

In conclusion, the questionnaires used proved to be fundamental tools for the further work within the InComm project, namely the definition of key elements for the design of the ideal welcome journey. These were important tools without which it would be impossible to capture students' perceptions of the process of attracting, welcoming and integrating new students.



# 3

## Tools & Measurement

The essential guide to all the tools to implement a welcome journey at your institution, including those to measure the impact of your actions.

# Tools developed by InComm

Over the time of the project, the InComm Team developed multiple tools for you to use! We describe all the tools we developed in this chapter. Please use them to improve your own welcome process at your university.



## Overview of the tools available:

- The InComm Customer Journey
- The InComm Customer Journey Canvas
- Mini canvas for PhD Supervisors
- Questionnaire & traffic lights
- Stakeholder survey & stakeholder analysis
- InComm+ tool & how to use it
- Website & communication & what to share

## Use our website!

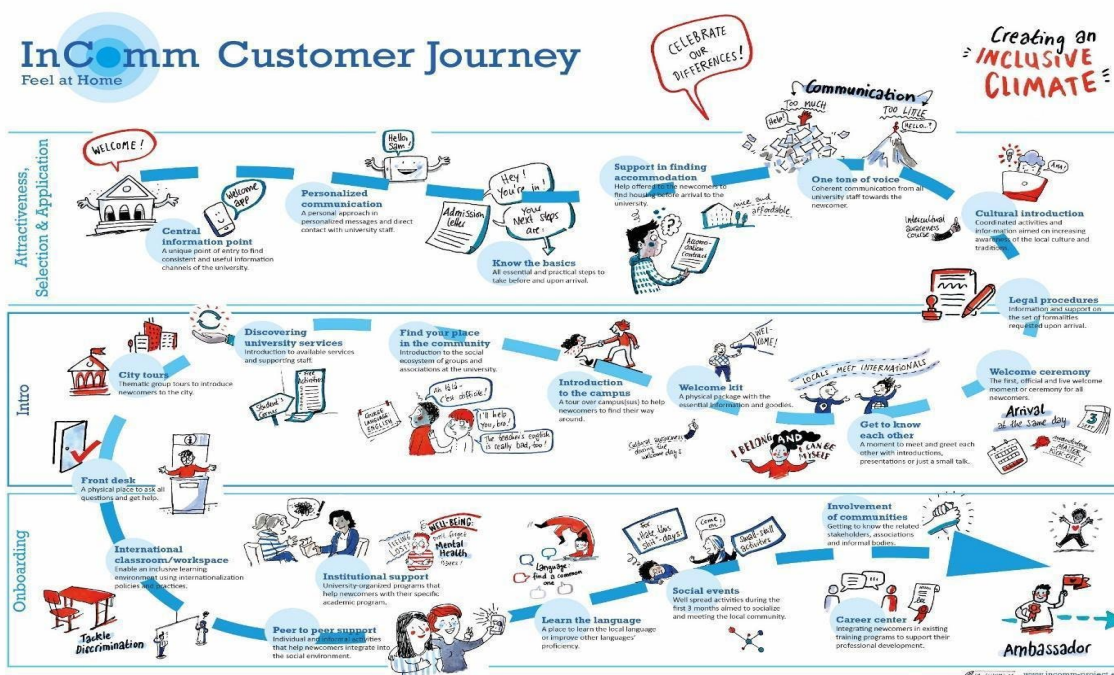
Most tools and results can also be found on our website,  
[www.incomm-project.eu](http://www.incomm-project.eu).





# The InComm Customer Journey

The Customer Journey Model is made of a set of elements, together forming a complete welcome process for incoming Master students and PhD's. It was written from the Newcomers perspective, with no differences in nationality. When all elements are taken into account, this could be perceived as 'the ideal welcome journey'. By choosing different elements, a fitting welcome journey can be made for your institution. A more complete description can be found in chapter 1.



## The welcome process

The InComm Team identified the welcoming process, from roughly 100 days before enrollment till 100 days after enrollment. There are 3 phases in that time span. The Interaction phase after application, about 3 months before arrival. The Introduction at the local institution, generally a week max. The Onboarding phase, the first 3 months at the university in various programs (education, workspace, professional training, social activities). We call this our 'InComm Customer Journey'. Within this Customer Journey, there are several elements identified. When all elements are filled in, it should lead to the Community phase, when people are on board in your international community.

## Using the InComm Journey Model

Welcoming is not a static process. It is constantly under development. You might find that some elements overlap or are close to each other. For example, peer to peer support could be organized as institutional support. Also, elements can be used in different phases. Take a City Tour. That could be held during the intro week, but also organized as a pub-crawl 2 weeks later. Some Elements could be used more often. Think about a language training, that could be held prior to arrival, or as part of an onboarding training. Important is to use the model as a basis to develop your own customer journey.

# The InComm Canvas

The InComm Team developed a canvas to help you in face to face brainstorming with students, PhDs and staff. Aim of the canvas was to create a complete overview of the welcome process that is easily put on a wall or a table, with the possibility to write on it directly or add sticky notes. When used, it is an easy way to create an overview of everything available at your university, with direct suggestions for improvement.

## Describing the canvas

The canvas allows you to identify all the phases and elements in the customer journey by checking out the columns in the above two rows. The top row shows all the phases. The 'Element' row describes all elements of the InComm Customer Journey, with a short description.

Existing programmes can be added directly below the elements. Below that there is space to add thoughts about these programmes. The Emotions row can be used to identify how Master students or PhDs feel about the specific elements. That's more basic with (for example) smileys. The thoughts give more space for writing.

Last but not least, the to improve row allows you to describe programmes, activities or channels to improve or even add.

## Using the canvas

When using the canvas, you can use several rows in order to identify projects or gaps, to see all the elements and phases.

In a session of about 1-1,5h you can quickly create an overview at your university. We suggest the following steps:

1. Prepare the session by adding the projects you have in place on sticky notes in the right columns. That will help you to get acquainted

with the canvas and it will make it easier for participants to interact with the canvas.

2. During the session, the first step is to identify if you are right and if all projects are in place. A colleague might have a wonderful city tour that you forgot to write down!

3. Use the time after this round to check if everything is at the right spot. As the Incomm Customer Journey is easy to understand, it could be difficult to put the right project at the right element. It helps to move elements to the right place, together.

4. As a follow-up question, the students/PhDs could be asked to fill in the emotions they feel, or the thoughts they have about the project. The emotion column is more a 'quick and dirty' column: either happy or not. The thoughts give more room for... thoughts!

5. In the next round, people can write down recommendations and ideas in the 'improvement' row. That is where you find the best ideas for improvement.

6. As a last round, it is strongly suggested to discuss the main findings and to mark the high priority areas.

## Target group

When filling in the canvas, we suggest you mix the target groups. Bring in a couple of students, teachers and staff members for

optimal results. A group of about 10 persons is perfect.

### Writing or sticky notes

The tool is best used in a total overview. It is possible to print it in 1m high and 2,5m long and hang it on a wall, the perfect size for sticky notes. A big advantage is that you can move the notes around and that you can use it for multiple sessions.

Another option is to write on it, by printing it on 3 A3 size pages.

### Focussing on one phase?

That is also a possibility! We used it once for onboarding only. That worked pretty fine, although the participants always want to focus on 'other projects' during the intro too.

### Using the InComm+ Tool or the Canvas?

The InComm+ tool uses a similar setup, but is of course an online tool. The InComm+ tool has the big advantage that it will show gaps automatically and will give you access to

suggestions and best practices. The report will make it way easier to convince management to create time and funding for new projects.


The big advantage of the canvas is that it is much nicer in an brainstorm-session. It will keep people focused and will definitely spark discussions.

We would suggest using both tools. The canvas is the start for discussions and getting the full overview. The InComm+ tool will be the next step to create a full action report.

### Drawing conclusions

When the tool is fully used, the discussions could be used to identify the gaps and to prioritise the next actions at your university. One could for example find out that an existing element is in place, but it is not appreciated. Or one could find that an element is missing, but in your institution that might actually not be a big problem.

The canvas will help you to create a full overview of everything happening at your university and to prioritise your actions for improvement.

 **Customer Journey Model Canvas**  
Feel at Home

	Attractiveness, Selection & Application					Intro					Onboarding				
Element	Concept	Recruitment	Selection	Application	Onboarding	Concept	Recruitment	Selection	Application	Onboarding	Concept	Recruitment	Selection	Application	Onboarding
Target															
Structure															
Design															
Support															
Resources															

# InComm Customer Journey Model

Feel at Home

	Intro					
Element	Legal procedures	Welcome ceremony	Get to know each other	Welcome kit	Introduction to the campus	Final introduction
Short description	Information and support on the set of formalities requested upon arrival.	The first, official and live welcome moment or ceremony for all newcomers.	A moment to meet and greet each other with introductions, presentations or just a small talk.	A physical package with the essential information and goodies.	A tour over campus(sus) to help newcomers to find their way around.	Introduction to the campus
Existing						
Thoughts						
Emotions						
To improve						

Part of the Customer Journey Model Canvas



## Best Practice: Fill in the Canvas with multiple stakeholders

You can use the canvas to collect the best practices already available at your university! By inviting different stakeholders at TU/e to fill in the Canvas, many best practices were identified. We also found the biggest gaps in the process, giving room for follow-up projects and improvements.



# Mini canvas for PhD Supervisors

This canvas is of excellent help when designing a support programme for PhD supervisors. It will help you and your colleagues to think about the essentials, ask the right questions and to put your ideas on paper.

## Description of the tool

The canvas leads you through the brainstorming process. It guides you with the following questions:

- **Whom to involve?** Who are the stakeholders? Who are the decision makers? Who are the ones offering the programme?
- **Where to embed?** Map your university structure to find out: Which service unit will offer the programme? What would be most appealing to your target group? Should the programme be made compulsory somehow?
- **Which topics to address?** Which are the hotspots when supervising PhDs? Which topics can we cover ourselves with? Where would we need support from experts?
- **How to engage the target group?** Which incentives are there to foster participation? Which formats would be appealing for your target group (duration, whole days, shorter sessions, online, in person meetings, counselling, peer-to-peer sessions, ...)? Which material and

methods might be engaging (handbook, infosheets, videos, tutorial, ...)? How can you communicate this support programme successfully to your target group?

## How to use it

In this way the Mini-Canvas can help you to design a support programme for PhD supervisors

- Invite a group of colleagues who you believe to be crucial when designing such a support programme!
- Print the canvas on A3 paper or larger!
- Take time to work on each question in depth!
- Fill your ideas into the canvas!

This will help you to visualise your ideas and show you which steps you need to take next.

## Additional information

Take a look at our presentation that goes along with working on the canvas. It will provide you with additional material and questions!

# InComm Training for PhD-supervisors

Feel at Home



Who to involve?



What topics to address?



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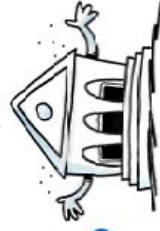


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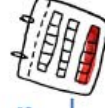
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Where to embed?



Methods



Formats



Materials

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How to engage  
the target group?

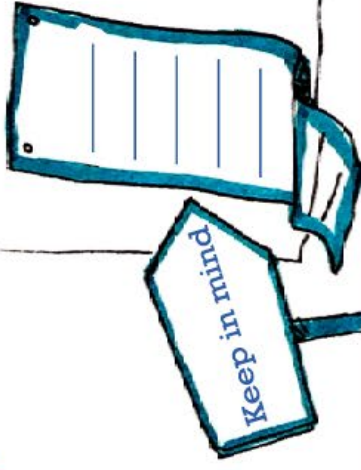
Incentives



Communication



Keep in mind



# Questionnaire & traffic lights

In order to collect information that would allow a more concrete analysis of the students' perception regarding attractiveness, selection and application, first days formalities and onboarding, all partners contributed to create a template of a student questionnaire, ensuring the best suitable options to gather reliable data from each institution and, if necessary, to spread the survey by other institutions outside the consortium.

## The Students Questionnaire to collect data

To measure the situation for each partner and start collecting data for the analysis, a first survey was launched in February 2020 to national and international master and PhD students. In this survey, three main dimensions were assessed: the level of integration in the institution through academic and non-academic activities, the level of integration with the internal and external community, and the feeling of belonging to the community.

The survey results are supported by a statistical analysis of some indicators, collected before and after the developing InComm. These indicators are intended to evaluate the project with regard to ability of each institution to maintain or increase their international attractiveness (e.g. number of international students before and after), significantly increase the international students feeling of belonging to the community and increase the number of activities/collaborations with external entities involved in the society.

A second survey was launched in February 2021 and a third survey was launched in January 2022.

This way we were able to obtain data for analysis from students from three different

academic years: 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.

### Content of the questionnaire

The questionnaire is organised in 5 sections that allow a detailed analysis of the students' perceptions:

**Background information:** allows the identification of the home institution, the study cycle in which the student is enrolled and whether he/she is a national or international student. It also allows tracing the student's previous journey through the nationality and stage of completion of the previous study cycle.

**Pre-arrival information:** allows us to ascertain the student's perception of the services offered by the institution during the application process.

**On arrival and during the first few days at the university:** allows us to understand the student's perception of the services offered when they arrived at the institution and during the first days. Several services and activities are offered and we can evaluate the impact of these services/activities and how the students felt during this period.

**Following the first few days, during the first months:** allows us to understand the student's



perception of the services offered during the first months, corresponding to the first 100 days.

**Overall feeling:** allow us to ascertain students' perceptions of issues such as inclusion in the community and in the university. In general, we give them the opportunity to express their opinion on how they feel at the university.

In order to obtain more concrete results, some improvements were made from the first to the second and third questionnaire. We have reduced the number of questions and rephrased some questions in order to get specific information more efficiently.

All questionnaires are anonymous, which makes it impossible to have direct contact with the respondents. In the last questionnaire, applied in 2022, a final field was included enabling the respondent to show interest in continuing to collaborate with the project, identifying themselves with an email address for future contacts.

The questionnaire was produced in English, which was considered the working language. As one of the project partners was Russian, a version was also produced in that language. All questionnaires were launched through the LimeSurvey application.

The three questionnaires are available for consultation (see appendix).

## Outputs

Through the questionnaires we were able to:

- ascertain the greatest difficulties pointed out by students;
- understand if the difficulties pointed out are applicable to both cycles (master's and PhDs) or if they need to be taken into consideration only in one of the study cycles;
- whether the problems that were mostly identified come from national or international students;
- proceed accordingly in each of the institutions.

## Challenges

The three periods in which the questionnaires were launched were marked by the pandemic and for this reason the answers reflected major challenges related to adapting to this new reality, namely issues of communication and integration in the university and in the community.

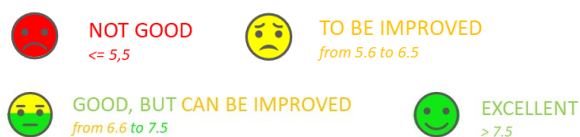
As a result of the analysis and the conclusions drawn, it was necessary to survey the project's partner institutions themselves. For this purpose, a questionnaire was applied to the institutions involved in order to analyse the start-up activities and evolution over the last two years, of the supply of support services, activities and classes, namely to ascertain in each year what took place in an online, face-to-face or hybrid model.

## Traffic lights methodology to communicate the results

In order to better communicate the information drawn from the analysis of the questionnaires, both with the project partners and with students and stakeholders, the analysis of the results is presented through a methodology associated with traffic lights, where green corresponds to an excellent performance, yellow/green corresponds to a good performance that can be improved, yellow corresponds to a performance that needs to be improved and red corresponds to a not good performance.



Taking into consideration aspects such as accessibility, in parallel with the traffic light methodology, an adapted presentation was developed in which, in addition to the colours, there is an association with a sad or happy face, depending on the results.



This methodology is applied through indicators previously mentioned, reflecting the students' perception in each of the phases:

<b>LOCAL LANGUAGE SKILLS</b>	Communication
	Interest
<b>ATTRACTIVENESS, SELECTION AND APPLICATION</b>	Interesting study programme
	University's reputation
	Support and guidance
	Bureaucratic/legal support
	Culture and leisure
<b>FORMALITIES FIRST DAYS</b>	<u>COMMUNITY BELONGING</u>
	Satisfaction Welcome Act
	Bureaucratic/legal support
	Welcome information
<b>ONBOARDING 1ST 100 DAYS</b>	<u>COMMUNITY BELONGING</u>
	Discrimination
	International Classroom Environment
<b>OVERALL FEELING</b>	<u>COMMUNITY BELONGING</u>
	Respect
	Equal treatment

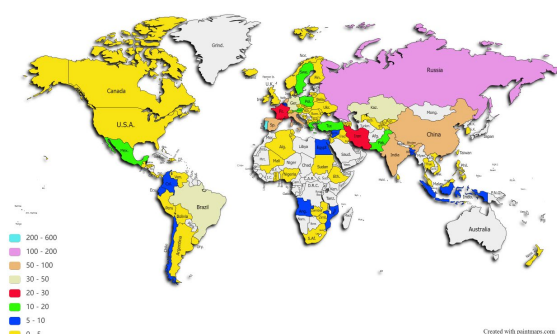
As a result of the data analysis and the application of the traffic light methodology, both the global analysis as well as the analysis by partner allow us to quickly identify the points that require more attention.

## Communication summarised for a quick overview

One of the questions in the questionnaire has to do with the respondents' country of origin. In this way we were able to get a perception of the origin of the students in each institution. The country and culture are aspects to be taken into consideration when it comes to issues related to language, religion, and integration in the university.

For this analysis both global maps and individual maps were created with the tool [paintmaps.com](https://www.paintmaps.com).

InComm\_1st Student Survey\_2019



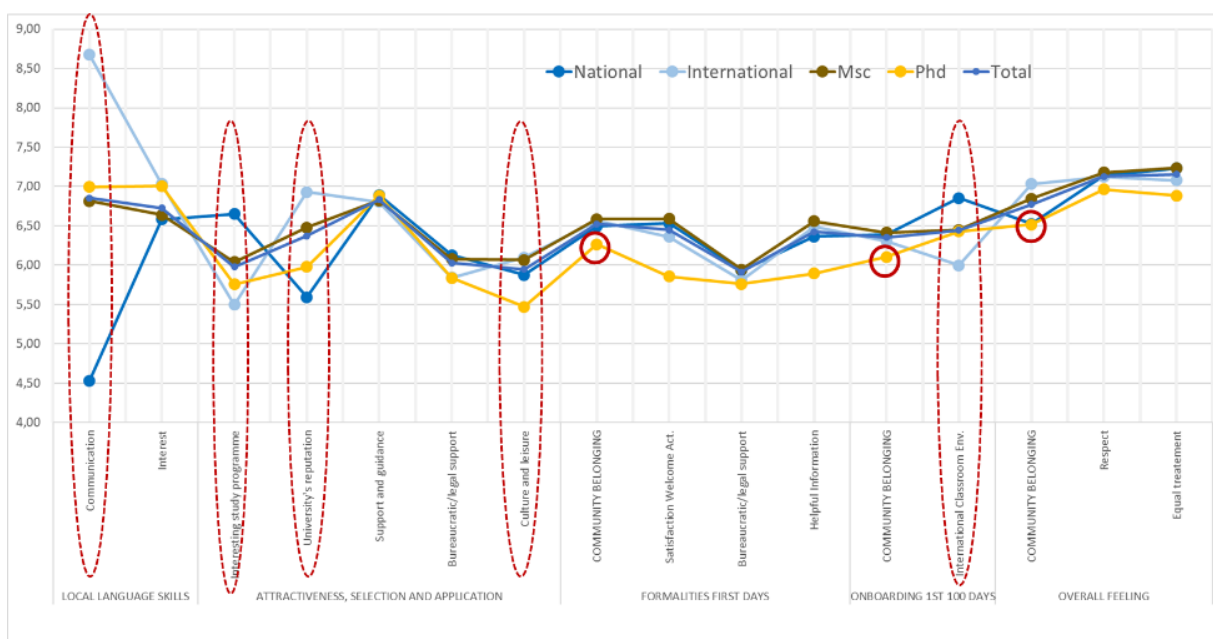
To summarise the communication of the results, we also developed a graph that integrates all the aforementioned indicators

and that we called a customer journey dimension as it represents the three distinctive periods that we identified for our student incoming process:

- **Attractiveness, Selection & Application:** the period after being accepted to a study programme at a university and prior to the arrival at the host institution
- **Intro:** the arrival and the first week upon arrival
- **Onboarding:** the first 100 days after arriving at the university

By reading this chart we can perceive the indicators that need more attention, as well as analyse in each indicator the different perceptions of master's, PhD, national and international students.

Based on the different questions developed in the surveys, a set of elements were identified that end up being the basis for an ideal welcome journey.



## Stakeholder survey & analysis

**At a certain point of the “InComm – Feel at home” project development, the partners felt the need to know and evaluate the impact of the external and internal stakeholders in the customer journey process. For that, and in a similar way to the student’s survey, a survey was created and discussed with the entire team, who agreed on a final version (attachment 1). The main aim was to contribute to the reinforcement and improvement of the activities developed by HEIs to better integrate all international students into local communities.**

Before launching the survey, each partner listed its stakeholders, both internal and external. The survey was then sent out to all stakeholders at the same time.

From the stakeholder participation, a very direct conclusion was drawn: stakeholders work differently with each HEIs and also have different approaches depending on where (country/region) their action takes place.

Of the 132 total completed and submitted responses, stakeholder groups classified by the following categories were represented: non-profit associations, student organisations, university, governmental or local authorities, external services providers and private companies.

Another conclusion that emerged clearly from the responses was that one survey does not fit all stakeholders due to the different circumstances in each HEIs and/or country.

These differences comprise the budgets available, the attention given to national or international students, as well as the topics and areas covered by each stakeholder.

One point that all stakeholders who participated in the process agree on is the need for cultural integration programmes, as language and nationality are among the two most important factors hindering the integration process.

The survey analysis discussed by the project team led to the stakeholders’ invitation to participate in the InComm Collective Intelligence Conference in Barcelona, Spain, as well as at the staff training in Graz, Austria. This allowed the project team to elaborate on the survey results and include them as an essential part in the InComm Tool by combining the target group (students) and stakeholders.



## Best Practice: Bring stakeholders together

Maybe a bit of an open door. But bringing students and staff, or PhD's and supervisors, together helps! Thinking about solutions together is a great way to get started with your own customer journey.



# InComm+ tool

The InComm+ tool is a web-based tool in which the customer journey of the welcome process of master's students and PhD candidates at a university can be analysed. If used annually, the InComm+ Tool can be used to monitor the improvements over the years. The graphical overview per year makes it visible where extra attention is needed.

## Why use the tool?

The tool consists of the following steps:

1. Visualisation of the ideal customer journey (see appendix)
2. University staff fill in which activities they are already doing for each step of the customer journey for masters students / PhD candidates or another target group.
3. Next to that they indicate the customer satisfaction (if already known).
4. Good practices of other universities can be selected as potential options to improve their customer journey.
5. They can add activities which still need to be measured with their target group to their to-do-list.
6. They can also add good practices out of the tool to be looked at for their own university.

## Main use

1. The tool indicates the gaps in the customer journeys in a graphical manner – what items are not in place and which items is the target group not satisfied with?

2. The outcome is made available to the employee as an executive download or an extensive download, including all good practices selected for their university and the list of items they still want to ask the target group for their satisfaction.

## Other uses

3. The browser saves the data, so the user can interrupt the session and continue whenever he/she likes. Next to that the user can download a file when interrupting the session and upload it when continuing or having someone else continue working on his/her file.
4. The user is invited to add good practices to the repository. After the administrator's approval, the new good practices will be added to the tool. This makes the database of good practices more and more complete.

## Where to find the tool?

The tool can be found online on our InComm Website. [www.incomm-project.eu](http://www.incomm-project.eu) is the place to go!

# Website & how to use it

The InComm project's website [www.incomm-project.eu](http://www.incomm-project.eu) is a multi-use tool that is used for both intra-team and public communication. When designing the website, the content and design were created to cater to the two aforementioned target groups, and online accessibility was also of utmost importance. Setting up the website was kept as simple as possible with both hosting and content management, making both steps easily replicable.

## Homepage

This front page of the website is a combined announcement page and landing page for all those wanting to learn more about the project. Project members should be aware of the website and its structure, therefore this page is targeted toward those with less background on the project. As such, the information found here describes the project in a general fashion, as well as listing the important outputs. Announcements were made at the top of the page regarding event sign-ups as well as the publishing of outputs.

## Outputs

While the outputs are listed on the homepage, the outputs themselves can be found under the menu item of the same name. The student surveys are summarised and the data is presented both as tables and charts (using Chart.js). The Catalogue of Best Practices is a custom element (HTML/CSS/JS) in which users can easily use the filter functionality to find those practices which are most relevant to them.

## Contact

The contact menu item includes the contact details of each point person, as well as the

privacy policy and the accessibility statement, all as separate pages. The privacy policy was created using the [Privacy Policy Generator](#).

## Accessibility

While what needs to be communicated is obviously very important, how this content is communicated can significantly impact whether or not a user will be able to get value of what is presented on the website. To maximise this value for each user, the website was crafted with accessibility in mind.

## Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

This website is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard. To achieve this, the [Quick Reference](#) for the WCAG guidelines was particularly useful.

## WAVE Tool

The website is tested regularly using the [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#) to identify and quickly correct accessibility issues.

## Accessibility Statement

Should users want to know more about the commitment to accessibility, details about the accessibility of the website, or want to report a problem related to accessibility, all of this information can be found in the InComm Accessibility Statement. Any deviations from the accessibility guidelines are also listed here. The text was written with guidance from the W3C Tutorial [Developing and Accessibility Statement](#).

## Content Management

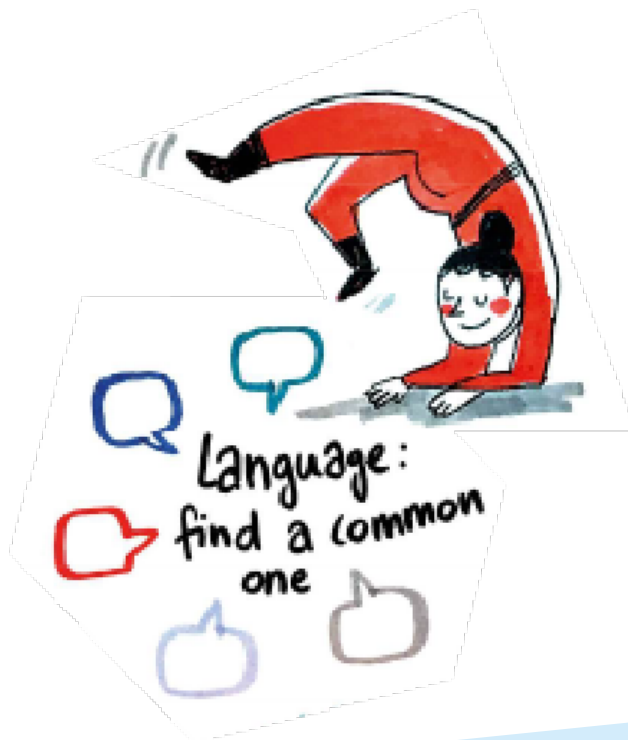
In order to bring the content outlined above online quickly and to ensure easy editing, Wordpress was chosen as a content management system (CMS). The Wordpress built-in editor was used for the bulk of the content, but specific elements (for example, the Catalogue of Best Practices) were written using a combination of HTML/CSS/JS. The following plugins were used, among others:

- Ninja Forms: used for all event registration forms, as well as for the Best Practices survey
- Code Embed: used to be able to add JavaScript to the customised elements
- Performance Cache: makes loading the website faster

## Hosting

When boiled down to its base elements, a website is no more than a set of files, all of which need to be saved on a computer in a place where the visitors of the website can also access them. This computer is called a server, and a company which offers servers for customers to use is called a hosting company. The InComm project website is hosted on [one.com](#), through which the domain name incomm-project.eu was also claimed. Both the reservation of the domain name and the server space are paid for on an annual basis.





# 4

## Training Modules

The InComm Project included a training program to create ambassadors for a warm welcome. This chapter is about how to set up such a training program.

# Training Program: “Building the inclusive university from ideas to implementation”

**Results from our „Collective Intelligence Conference” made it clear: We needed to focus on the onboarding phase in our training event. This is why we composed a program for students, educators and supporting staff looking at hotspots in this phase: communication with the new generation of students, teaching in an international classroom and supervising PhD students.**

## Set-up

Doing a training on onboarding while being onboarded yourself – this was our aim! We started to engage participants even before arrival.

## Pre-arrival activity

To create a sense of community we asked participants to prepare a personal introduction before arrival. These introductions were shared with everyone. So, you have the possibility to get to know your peers even before the training event. Introductions varied from videos to audios, powerpoint presentations or one-pagers reflecting the diversity of the group.

## Intro

Participants were welcomed at our front desk and received a welcome bag. We reserved

time for “Getting to know each other” with activities like the onion of diversity or the lunch lottery. Then there was the official opening by our Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and in the evening, participants were invited to a welcome dinner hosted by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. On the second day we offered a mini-campus tour and on the last day an optional city tour.

## Onboarding

Becoming part of the community by interacting, working together on interesting issues, providing valuable input – this was the way we set up the training event. Rather than offering input after input with presentation after presentation, we decided on an interactive, co-creation approach. Here you will find an overview of the programme.

## DAY 1

11:00 – 11:30	Registration
11:30 – 12:30	<a href="#">Inspirational Talk</a>
	Ice Breaker: Onion of Diversity
12:30 – 13:30	Networking Lunch
13:30 – 17:30	Official Welcome
	<a href="#">Workshop: Communication with the new generation of master and PhD students</a>
19:00	Welcome Dinner

## DAY 2

9:00 – 9:15	<a href="#">Getting started for Day 2</a>
9:15 - 9:30	Energising
9:30 – 12:00	<a href="#">Parallel Workshops: Creating the inclusive community in the international classroom</a>
9:30 – 12:00	<a href="#">Parallel Workshops: Creating an inclusive community by supervising students in their PhD</a>
12:00 – 13:30	Mini Campus Tour & Lunch
13:30 – 17:00	<a href="#">Parallel Workshops continued: Creating the inclusive community in the international classroom</a>
13:30 – 17:00	<a href="#">Parallel Workshops continued: Creating an inclusive community by supervising students in their PhD</a>
17:00	<a href="#">Wrap Up: Sharing what we did in the workshops</a>
18:00	“Meet my Culture” Social Event

## DAY 3

9:30 -9:45	Folk dancing lesson
9:45 – 12:00	<a href="#">Workshop: Building an inclusive community</a>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 16:30	<a href="#">Wrap-up: We do care about colleagues/students/ourselves – so what now? Getting started to implement ideas</a>
17:30	<i>Optional: City Tour &amp; Farewell Drink</i>

A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a dark blazer, is standing and presenting to a group of people seated at tables in a meeting room. He is gesturing with his hands. In the background, a large screen displays a slide with the text 'Welcome to InComm!' and a cartoon illustration of a person holding a megaphone that says 'WELCOME!'. A woman is standing to the right of the presenter, and several people are seated at tables in the foreground, some looking at laptops. The room has a modern feel with a drop ceiling and recessed lighting.

Welcome to  
InComm!

## Best Practice: Training Programme!

The InComm Training Programme is an excellent example on how to involve students, teachers and supporting staff in one session. The InComm Training Programme was:

- Three days of training
- 32 participants from six different universities
- 4 experts composing the training programme and leading the workshops
- Creating a training which is the customer journey in a nutshell



# The workshops/ modules

During the training event several workshops were organised to address specific parts of the welcome journey. We give an insight into the main content of the programmes offered.

## Communication with the new generation of Masters & PhDs

The last twenty years have seen seismic shifts in technology and communication. Social media, public debate, and movements in values have created new paradigms, particularly at universities where new generations are bringing new approaches to interaction and learning. Education professionals, whether teaching, supervising or administrating, are now often faced with these generational differences within their daily interactions with postgraduates or master students. How can we best harness this situation to help build an inclusive university culture? This half-day workshop introduced the key issues and looked at approaches we can adapt in the university world.

Themes included:

- The unique communication needs of postgraduate students
- Issues with how universities communicate with postgraduate or master students
- How do different generations perceive and work within learning environments
- How learning styles can inform communication processes
- How other universities have handled the communication challenges

## Creating the inclusive community in the international classroom

Creating the ideal learning environment at any university requires a multitude of different skills from teaching professionals. As our lecture halls and seminar rooms become more international, awareness of what we need to create the best kind of educational culture becomes paramount. Cultural contexts in learning styles.

Therefore, we worked on the following:

- The dynamics of the international university classroom
- Models and theories that can help us as educators improve our didactic approaches
- Exercises in designing the ideal learning environment for international postgraduates

## Creating an inclusive community by supervising students in their PhD

Striving to become more international, universities are shifting their focus on recruiting international PhD students. But how can these become part of our universities and feel welcome and eventually at home at our institutions? PhD supervisors play a key-role in this process and are often left alone with this important task. As universities, we are obliged to offer support to academics in their role as supervisors and mentors and as key players in creating an inclusive community for PhD students with or without an international background.

In this co-creation workshop we:

- Identified problems in PhD-supervision on the basis of a needs' analysis
- Took a look at possible support we can offer for PhD-supervisors
- Tackled challenges that might be encountered when offering support to PhD-supervisors
- Filled our ideas into a newly developed canvas
- Developed a first strategy for the development and implementation of a workshop for PhD-supervisors at each individual university

## Building an inclusive community

Community management is all about creating involvement from all people at our campuses, students, teachers and staff alike. This workshop used the customer journey as a canvas to draft and implement a community strategy with a first set of projects to implement for proper onboarding.

**We do care about colleagues/students/ourselves – so what now? Getting started on implementing ideas:**

Are you familiar with the feeling after an intensive training programme that you are full of great ideas, but there is no time to sit down and think about the first steps you need to take to implement some of the ideas at your university? This is why time was specifically dedicated to thinking/talking about implementation and drafting a first implementation plan to put in place back at the individual home university.

### Lessons Learned

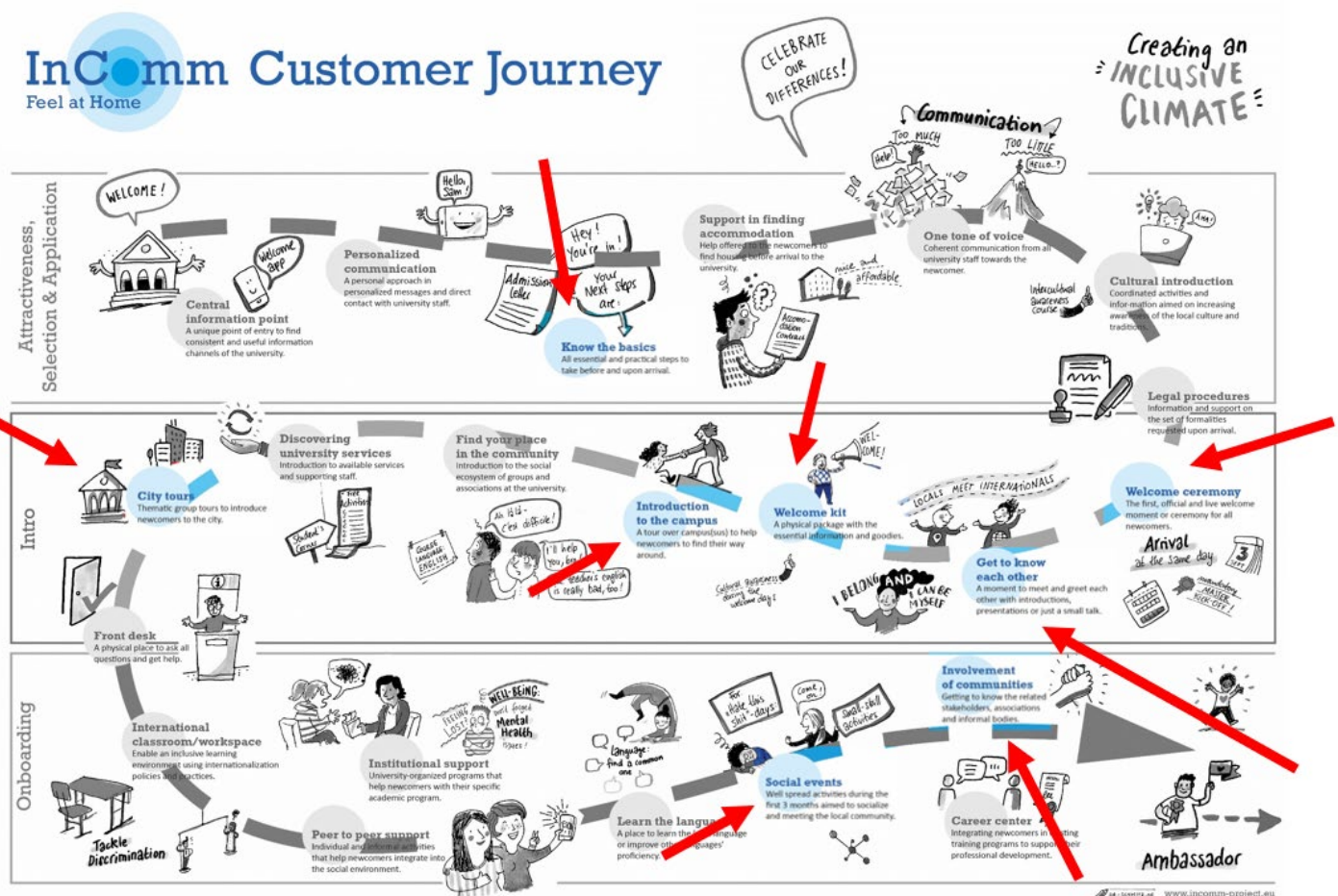
- Combining students, teachers and supporting staff worked out extremely well! The greatest benefit was that we got to know our own institutions and made valuable connections!

- Make sure that there is a critical mass of participants by each university so that they can work on the improvements of their customer journey
- Creating this training with colleagues from different fields and universities was a wonderful experience. We highly recommend to get experts for the different topics 😊
- Inform your participants about the aim of the event – what will be the output?
- Treat your participants with some local culture! Spontaneously, we decided to teach the group an Austrian folk dance. They loved it!
- Keep your participants happy with plenty of local food, coffee and time for discussions!
- We got a lot of great feedback: “It was great! I really enjoyed it and I'm really looking forward to creating an inclusive community.”

## Using the Customer Journey as the basis!

The training programme used the various steps in the Customer Journey to create the full workshop. Of course, the time frame of three days was too short to do a full journey, but overall we managed to incorporate 8 of the 23 elements in the programme!

This included necessary elements of the customer journey: welcome reception, welcome kit, introduction to the campus, city tour, social & cultural events, international classroom/workspace.





# Lessons from a mixed Training Event

**A Training Event for students, teachers and supportive staff – how can this work? This was indeed a challenge – especially since we had to postpone the event due to Covid regulations to March when some of the students and educators were no longer available.**

## Diverse target group

Why did we decide on such a diverse target group? All three target groups play an equally important role in the onboarding process. Educators create an inclusive university culture in their lectures/seminars, supportive staff provide service that fosters onboarding and students are the ones consuming these offers. Their voice was crucial for us in improving the onboarding process.

## Challenges

- Different schedules: educators are very engaged during the semester
- Covering expenses for students
- Hierarchies at some universities: hindering openness as well as the possibility to share criticism
- To keep a balance between the different target groups
- Different status of PhD candidates at some universities: students and/or employees

## Benefits

- Gaining a more complete picture
- Hearing the voice of the ones we are trying to improve the welcome process for
- Seeing onboarding through the eyes of different stakeholders
- Learning about obstacles we didn't know they even existed
- Coming up with new solutions

## Lessons Learned

Get more students and educators involved! When working on improvements for students you need to ask them for their opinion. The problems we foresee are not necessarily the problems they encounter! Take time to listen to the individual stories, but then bring them back on a general level to be able to work on enhancements of your processes and support offers!



# 5

## Tips & Tricks

There really is so much to tell about welcoming people! That is why we collected some tips and tricks over here to help you on the way.

## Tips & tricks

Well. We found out so much when doing this project, that we needed a page to put down obvious recommendations to the university staff when using our models and tools. Here they are.

### Our recommendations



- Welcoming is NOT ONLY about telling what you do. Welcoming is perhaps mostly about ASKING the newcomer who he or she is.
- In order to feel welcome, one has to be welcomed in the organisation and be able to be him- or herself.
- Find a responsible person for the whole Customer Journey. Like a dean or a manager that could guard the whole process.
- Prepare the staff / train the staff to speak in one voice, to welcome appropriately. Well-prepared and dedicated university staff are involved in direct communication with the incoming students. They include persons from different university units, bring those people together with our tools.
- Welcoming is not a static process, it is constantly under development. Also, some elements overlap or are close to each other. Use the model (and this handbook) as a basis to develop your own customer journey.
- Constant monitoring and evaluation of the journey is recommended when using this model. That allows you to slightly change the university culture over the generations of students and PhD's
- Treat internationals and nationals as equals, all are newcomers starting new in a programme.



## Best Practice: 'Hey! Nice to meet you! Who are you?'

Nothing as easy to ask 'who are you?'. But when we have so much to share at the introduction, that's often the first thing we forget when welcoming the newcomer. Schedule some time for that essential step, over a coffee, on the couch, when someone is coming in. They're coming for a reason and they might want to share that information just as much as you do want to share everything about the university!





# Stakeholders and involvement

**When we analyse issues related to the integration of new students, especially international students, we find that it is not always easy to implement mechanisms for internationalisation in our institutions. We know that we need to work with a wide range of stakeholders, including academic and administrative staff, who sometimes find it difficult to communicate in another language or to implement changes in their daily systems.**

Some of the main challenges to internationalisation are the lack of strategic commitment at institutional level (regarding strategy, policies or funding), insufficient staff involvement and limited staff expertise in internationalisation.

Recognising that there are different understandings of internationalisation and that staff motivations to engage in international activities depend on complex intersections of personal, professional and institutional factors, we believe that change must come from the institutions' own internal systems and will come through a strategic decision. It is crucial that institutions analyse their positioning, how they are today and how they want to be in the future. For this analysis it is important to explore the reasons why academic staff are not engaged in internationalisation, both in relation to the curriculum and their wider activities and the role of administrative staff, specially staff from

International Relations as a key driver for staff internationalisation.

We were able to identify the similarities in the way academic and administrative staff engage or disengage with internationalisation. Indeed, both groups face similar challenges and end up sharing challenges in an environment that is increasingly global and competitive.

If we think about the surrounding environment, we identify similar problems, when for example we consider the community of students, who learn in an increasingly diverse environment, with the challenges of being part of classrooms with different cultures. But also the civil society connected to the university, from the residences and their employees; the cafeterias, public transportation, city hall services, etc.. All these stakeholders were invited to participate in the InComm survey and all of them are fundamental for the success of the integration of a new student.

# Collective Intelligence Conference

In the InComm project we intended to draw the ideal customer journey for masters and PhDs. That is why an event with the inputs of all the participants was planned: the “Collective Intelligence Conference”, to be held in March 2020. Unfortunately, the Covid pandemic spread and hit hard in all the world at the end of February 2020, only a few days before the event. After postponing the InComm Collective Intelligence Conference and replanning it many times between spring-winter 2020, the InComm Project team realised that the event had to be done somehow online and it took place between 2nd and 9th February, 2021.

## What was the Collective Intelligence Conference (CIC)?

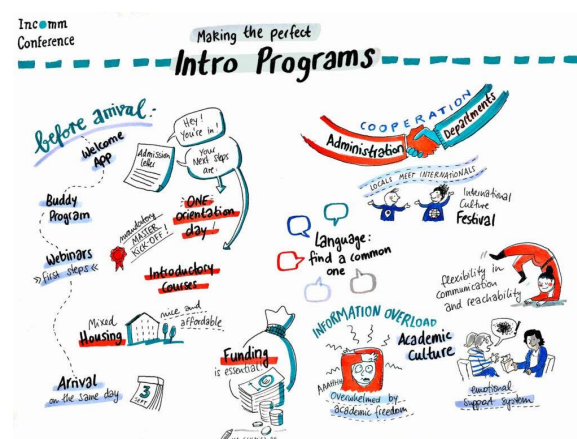
During the Collective Intelligence Conference we drafted the ideal customer journey for masters and PhDs. We used the input of all participants, thus calling it “collective intelligence”. During the event, our moderators, supported by a team of students, collected ideas, best practices and presented them to the entire group. We divided each section of the customer journey by 3 phases: Attractiveness, Selection & Application, Formalities – First Days, and Onboarding – First 100 Days.

We therefore developed two Customer Journeys:

- Master’s Track: The Ideal Welcome Process for Master’s Students
- PhD Track: The Ideal Welcome Process for PhDs

The Collective Intelligence developed the Customer Journey model, with the essential steps in each one of the 3 phases. During the conference, an expert meeting was held on each of the following topics: Admissions, Intro Programmes, the International Classroom, and Onboarding. In [the InComm website of the project](#) you will find illustrated minutes from

what was discussed in each of these meetings, as well as the text outlines of these illustrated minutes.



## Interactive online format

The Collective Intelligence Conference had to take place online. But how to structure it and organise it, so that it could be somehow as interactive as it could have been in its presential, face-to-face, version? And, more importantly, how to make it attractive and enjoyable AND at the same time productive, both for the attendants and for the InComm project team? How to engage the participants during so many days, online, without knowing each other before?

As the event had to take place online, we divided it in sessions of 2 hours on different

days, including a vitality-break, and small scale break-out rooms for enough opportunities to meet, talk and discuss, even though we were working online.

Please find below an overview of the programme of the Collective Intelligence Conference. In the InComm project website you will find [the detailed programme of the event](#).

## Programme

Day	Time		Description	
Tuesday 2 February	09:45	10:00	12:00	13:00
	Check-In	Kick-Off (2h) Moderated by TU/e & UPC General introduction Inspiration Sessions	Project Team Wrap-Up (1h)	Kick-Off day, introducing the topics & principles, inspiring examples by project partners and external experts
Wednesday 3 February	Check-In	Expert Meeting Admissions (2h) Moderated by IST - Agata Nicolau	Project Team Wrap-Up (1h)	* Expert sessions, meeting of the experts, discussing problems, exchanging solutions, bringing in ideas
	Check-In	Expert Meeting Intro Programs (2h) Moderated by TUD - Benedetta Gennaro		
Thursday 4 February	Check-In	Expert Meeting International Classroom (2h) Moderated by TUGraz - Barbara Böttger	Project Team Wrap-Up (1h)	* Expert sessions, meeting of the experts, discussing problems, exchanging solutions, bringing in ideas
	Check-In	Expert Meeting Onboarding (2h) Moderated by TU/e - Erik de Jong		
Friday 5 February	Check-In	Project Team wrap-up day (2h) Project team only		Team wrapping up all problems, solutions and ideas brought in by the Experts
Weekend	09:45	10:00	12:00	13:00
Monday 8 February	Check-In	Masters - drafting the perfect welcome process (2h) Moderated by Tomsk - Evgeniya Sherina	Project Team Wrap-Up (1h)	Drafting the ideal Customer Journey for both Masters and PhD's together with Experts & Representatives. Save the PhD's from their desks & involve the local masters in the international classroom
	Check-In	PhD's - drafting the perfect welcome process (2h) Moderated by KTH - Lotta Rosenfeldt		
Tuesday 9 February	Check-In	Closing & Wrap Up 2h Reflection & interaction with all partners	Project Team follow-up (1h)	Final Wrap-Up! Presenting the ideal Welcoming Process

# Lessons learned for online events

The CIC event of co-creation that was initially set to be face-to-face had to be redesigned to be in an online format; with all the challenges that this implied and, even more, without prior experience. Not all can be run online and there is still a need everywhere for some face to face interactions, but with these Covid times we have learned how to take the most of “the online mode”; its advantages and the opportunities it gives us all. Please find below some Covid lessons learned.

**Before: online OR face to face, few online; now also blended. Choose your mode!**

Before the Covid pandemic, most of the activities (meetings, conferences, workshops, etc.) were presential, face-to-face. During the pandemic we had to move our activities to the online mode, with more or less success. When the pandemic started to decrease, we held blended activities, with participants online and presentially, in order to allow either a higher number of attendants to participate in an activity, or to allow some participants, speakers or activity conductors to be in the room without the need to travel. Each mode has its pros and cons, so think carefully about it when designing an event. As indicated before, an online or blended activity could allow you to have more participants, but at the same time it needs more preparation and technical coordination during it.

**Online also needs to be dynamic, it is not only unidirectional.**

Hosting an online event, even if it's just a presentation, does not mean opening a Zoom session and running your slide show speaking to the screen. Ask some questions to your audience, make a small live poll, divide them into break-out rooms, ask for their feedback! Facilitate that they engage and have fun with, at the same time, a productive activity.

**It is difficult to reproduce the dynamics of face to face in an online event.** (If necessary, re-design the setup of your sessions in the event.)

For example, dividing people in small groups to discuss. Randomly or according to some criteria? This has to be planned and programmed in the tool before the online event.



Nevertheless, there are more and more **tools** available for this. So, the **staff should be trained** for this. Even if the tool seems simple and known by most of our staff. “Where was the button to..?” ... :-)

**Any online or blended event/activity needs much more time to be prepared** than a face to face activity. A rehearsal with staff in charge is also recommended for checking.

**All the staff running the event has to be coordinated. Choose your channels!**

(Whatsapp, Telegram, Slack, telephone, etc.) Also, there has to be a **short debriefing before and after** the activity, every day; about the programme (ICT or time management details) and about the programme (content).

Online activities need to be **shorter, more straight forward and formatted sessions** than the physical, face to face ones.

**If needed, cut the event in pieces to run it on different days**, with shorter sessions. For example, the Collective Intelligence Conference was held during 6 days, in sessions of 2 hours. The dates were not all consecutive, but in two blocks, so that attendants could reflect on the activity done, rest a bit, catch up with their work and duties, etc.

Take into account the **different time zones and working hours**, if you will have participants from different countries. For example, in the InComm Collective Intelligence the sessions took place between 10h and 12h. Our colleagues from Portugal could attend it between 9h and 11h in the Portugal time zone. At 12h, many European participants went for lunch, while others still had time to work a little while more.

Before the event and in order to connect to the sessions, **provide clear information to the attendants**, in one document: links to attend to each session/day, which tools will be used (and some link to a short tutorial for each), contact if needed during the session (e-mail, Whatsapp and/or telephone). Also **send emails with a reminder** about the activity, hour and link to attend, so that people do not forget about it and so that they easily have the link to attend in case they do not remember where they put the previous document or

email with all the information.

**Zoom links to attend the sessions (10h to 12h)**

- Tuesday 2 February (kick-off)

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/98344382251?pwd=U1FZMmtrXkdScKhKNV6M92VlpmQT09>  
Meeting ID: 983 4438 2251. Access code: 243345

- Wednesday 3 February (Parallel Sessions, day 1)

How to create the best **Application & Interaction Processes?**  
<https://zoom.us/j/99439646848?pwd=U1R0YkVYZW5RaGp2SHh1RkxwZU09>  
Meeting ID: 994 3964 6848. Access code: 036563

How to make the perfect **Intro Program?**  
<https://zoom.us/j/98511482580?pwd=U1R0YkVYZW5RaGp2SHh1RkxwZU09>  
Meeting ID: 985 1148 2580. Access code: 797021

Also, if the event has a duration of more than one day, a smaller or longer **warm-up activity** is needed every day and **also when closing** each day session. The activity can be a more playful activity to have fun and wake up and/or improve team building among participants, but it can also be an activity related with the topics to be discussed/presented during the day.

Time is necessary for **teambuilding and introduction to the topic**. Invest in this to make more productive teams! People need to know each other a bit before sharing, exchanging ideas.

We all need to establish and have **more pauses** for stretching out, relaxing, etc. For example, during the Collective Intelligence Conference, there were fit breaks, where a sports trainer gave instructions to all the online participants to have some soft and healthy stretches. This allowed us all to stand up for a few minutes and leave our chairs, after being seated for a while.

**Make staff participate and co-create**; involve them in any little part or task. In the preparation and when running the event. Benefits also for them: reflecting, improving their English, getting new skills, learning new



tools, etc.

**Space for social interaction** is needed: the “coffee corner” is where the “magic” is done: networking, connections, new ideas, etc. In a face-to-face event it is clearer and easier; But how does it go in an online event? We cannot simply say “it’s coffee break time” and imagine that people that don’t know each other will start to speak to others; not even in breakout rooms with smaller groups. That is why the warm-up activities to get to know each other and make teambuilding have to be here and there in the programme, before this “coffee corner”. When running the “coffee corner”, you can provide some time in your breakout rooms and distribute participants around, randomly in iterations of a few minutes; or you can use tools that facilitate participants to “go around the room” themselves and meet informally with others (i.e. Spatial chat, Wonder.me, etc.). Also, even if not formatted and open, you can provide a playful question, sentence, or topic, so that people open up the box and start speaking with each other.

Consequently, **the entire programme should not be stuffed and packed**. Allow informal improvised meetings and also prepared ones! For example, during an InComm training event in TU Graz, in the programme there was a “meet my culture” activity.

Avoid **presenting everything in a “canned” format**, but allowing the protagonists to meet and exchange. This will also allow to avoid stereotypes and/or segregation and even “ghettos”. (People speaking the same language staying together and speaking their local language.)

### Allow interaction and co-creation in subgroups.

You will be amazed by the ideas and results. Important: give clear instructions, limits (time, topic, result expected, etc.) and even supporting staff around. Remember to indicate, in the instructions before the event, the information about the tool(s) that will be used (i.e. Google Jamboard, Miro, etc.) and some links to a small Youtube tutorial about it.

### Need for reporting, wrap-up, closing and feedback. During the online activity and after it.

- During the session:

For example, if people will discuss in groups, will someone in each group take notes? Or will they put post-its on a board? Or when all the groups come back to the main room after the break outs and they give their summary, will someone take notes of what was said?



Image: During the InComm CIC conference, Ka's drawings

Also remember to wrap up each activity in the programme, and after a full day if the event takes place in more than one day. As a closure of the event, give a brief summary of the activities run and the great outcomes achieved, and mention future activities, events, reports, etc. that will be done with this

and where will be available the materials of the event.

A brief feedback about the event can be collected, on the spot, with any simple tool (i.e. voting 1 to 5 with any tool, or a great and visual word cloud with Mentimeter), before asking for a more formal feedback after the event.



Image: example of word cloud feedback, collected on the spot after one of the InComm Collective Intelligence Sessions.

- After the event:

Send the corresponding information (presentations, boards after co-creation activity, reports, links to website, recording of session if available, etc.) as soon as possible to all the participants and ask them, with a formal survey, about their feedback. Indicate a contact email i.e. if they want to be in touch, receive a copy of your future report, or be invited to future activities.

## Way of working

**When working together with different partners across the continent, it is especially important to keep in mind that each university or partner is working in different time zones and speaks different native languages.**

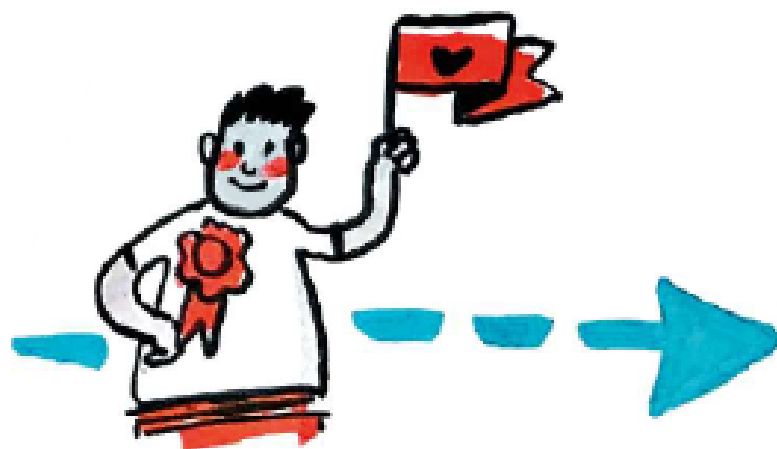
Patience and communication are therefore key. It was especially critical for all partners to find a time, which fits into their busy schedules and where all could attend internal project meetings. As a result, we were able to set up monthly video meetings via skype or other modes of digital communication.

Each internal meeting was catered to a specific Intellectual Output (IO). We were able to focus our programme planning specific to feedback and proposals from the previous meeting and gear the discussion as a lead in for how to manage and plan the next one. Since each university was assigned a specific IO, we were able to meet as a team to assist and give necessary recommendations for a more lucrative cooperation and successful project management. This is where the term “divide and conquer” really came into play. It was fundamental to the project timeline to keep our goals on track and check in with one another to make sure deadlines were met.

When working with such an international team, we had the advantage of bringing in

different perspectives and modes of working to each project task at hand. As many of our individual tasks required peer review from other colleagues, we set up a shared file on Google Drive. This allowed all partners to access all documents and reports to edit simultaneously and at any point in time. It helped all partners to stay organised and on target for our deadlines.

Once we were able to meet in person either for our internal project meetings or for specific events taking place at the time, we were able to successfully conclude the chapter of the project we were working on. Taking the time without distractions from other meetings allowed us to meet face to face and create a more efficient way of working. It was of course also important to get to know each other outside of our work and to form a connection between the partners to help improve the communication, especially when each person came from different countries and spoke different languages.



Ambassador

## Colophon

The full InComm project described, including all universities and staff members working on the InComm project from 2019 to 2022.

# Project description, goals, philosophy

**Name of Project:** InComm, feel at home

**Type of Project:** Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership for Higher Education

**Summary:** The InComm project developed and implemented a more inclusive welcome process at the partners universities, where students and staff from all backgrounds could feel more welcome in one international identity, to become truly international universities.

**Input:** All participating universities are highly experienced in internationalisation. The percentage of international full-degree seeking students is between 15-20 percent of the total population, many of our own students go abroad, many master programmes are on offer in English and many bachelor programmes are also open for international students. In recent years, comprehensive internationalisation took place in our International Offices, with all activities now seen as regular activities.

However, we have multiple indicators that the facilities in place are insufficient to create a truly international university yet. At this moment, internationals do not feel integrated and start their own communities. The International Student Barometer, held at TU/e and Grenoble INP, underlined the good state of our facilities, but when questioned on 'feeling at home' and 'feeling welcome' the scores are very low. Internal questionnaires show the same results: internationals (students and staff) do not feel integrated (Aalto), and that the general feeling of wellbeing of our international guests is lower than our local communities (TU/e).

This is seen by all international offices and within our educational programs. Biases make our students choose for separate ethnic groups in group assignments, internationals and nationals unite in segregated communities.

At the moment, we are good at attracting internationals, but do not yet integrate the internationals at our universities. The next step is to integrate our national and international communities into one university community and to become truly international.

**Activities:** Project InComm is proposing the following actions to integrate internationals and nationals into one university community:

- Defining a welcoming process for full degree seeking masters and PhDs that tackles the full period from application 3 months prior to coming to the university, until the first 3 months at the university, taking into account the 'onboarding' phase.
- Uniting the many stakeholders with various backgrounds involved with welcoming and onboarding at our campuses.
- Uniting and involving the target group (Masters and PhDs) in all our discussions via sounding bodies and working groups.



- Taking into account diversity in all aspects of the project to safeguard inclusion and to avoid biases, whether that is gender, race, ethnicity, religious orientation, sexual orientation, disabilities and avoiding biases.
- Identifying key performance indicators to measure how well our communities are integrated and to continuously monitor the status.
- Identifying, developing and implementing best practices in all phases, also including the curriculum and innovative doctoral training programs.

#### Output:

InComm has the following outputs:

- The welcoming process developed into a 'customer journey' per target group, applicable at universities worldwide
- The InComm+ Tool for administrative staff provides a quick insight into the status of the feeling of belonging among newcomers. The tool gives an insight into the strong and weak points of the institute's welcome process, and links directly to projects that can strengthen the customer journey.
- Training programmes improving integration at home, accessible to universities worldwide, also tackling inclusion and social differences
- United stakeholders per target group, with clearly specified tasks and responsibilities, at all our universities.
- Sounding boards, consisting of a diverse cross-section per target group, in place at all our universities.
- Repository of best practices, including projects developed in the project, directly linked to the InComm+ Tool.
- Statistics about our actual status and progress.

#### Outcome:

InComm has the following outcomes:

- A customer journey process for receiving new people, implemented at the partner's institutions.
- Raised awareness for the international identity of our universities, including the benefits of multicultural and international collaboration skills for students and staff and awareness for (the benefits of) diversity at our campuses.
- An improved integrated International Classroom
- More integrated and inclusive communities (students and staff) with no difference between local and international members
- Best practices described, implemented and used at European and non-European universities
- Foster a maximum of interactions between as big a range of diverse populations as possible: make the local and international population open to interactions; create opportunities for interactions; raise awareness on the benefits of the interactions.
- A toolkit of best-value-for-money feel-at-home solutions that will be described in a user-friendly and visible manner, disseminated during the life of the project and available for a wider academic community and any other interested people after the end of the EU funding (via ERASMUS+ platform, project web-site, regular and associate partners' websites, project publications, etc)

<b>Impact:</b>	Impact of InComm is becoming a truly international university, where students and staff from all backgrounds feel welcome in one international identity.
<b>Start date:</b>	1 September 2019
<b>End date:</b>	31 August 2022
<b>Duration:</b>	36 months + 4 months extra due to Covid19
<b>Partners:</b>	<p>The project is initiated by the CLUSTER Network. CLUSTER was established to increase the interaction between our universities and to prepare our universities for international mobility programmes for over 25 years. The future of Engineering Education remains one of the main focal points of the network nowadays. From the network, the following partners participate in all parts of InComm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden (coordinator application)</li> <li>• Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands (coordinator project)</li> <li>• TU Darmstadt, Germany</li> <li>• Institute Superior Técnico, Portugal</li> <li>• Graz University of Technology, Austria</li> <li>• Universidad Politecnica de Catalunya, Spain</li> </ul>
<b>Dissemination partners:</b>	<p>The full CLUSTER Network will play an essential role in all input from new students and staff members from EU and non-EU countries. They are sparring partners and dissemination partners, helping the project to make a more impact in the EU. Dissemination partners will be asked to participate in surveying and monitoring actions. Furthermore they are involved in the dissemination of results.</p>
<b>Innovative Elements:</b>	<p>The following innovative elements are included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A customer journey process for receiving newcomers</li> <li>• Collective Intelligence Conference</li> <li>• InComm+ Tool to improve the welcoming process</li> </ul>

# Partner universities & Team Members

## (TU Graz) Technische Universität Graz – Graz, Austria

Graz University of Technology is the oldest technical university in Austria. It currently has 13,700 students from over 100 countries and 1,900 researchers whose work encompasses all technological and scientific disciplines. When it comes to research in our five Fields of Expertise, we place a strong emphasis on national and international collaboration. In the course of these activities, we work closely with companies, and are one of the leading universities in this regard. In line with our international outlook, we offer highly attractive English-taught master's programmes. Our outstanding support for students is reflected in the international achievements of TU Graz's student teams. As a pioneering university in the digital transformation, and thanks to our wide-ranging activities and our goal of becoming fully climate-neutral by 2030, we are able to strengthen the surrounding region, which is one of the most innovative and liveable in Europe.

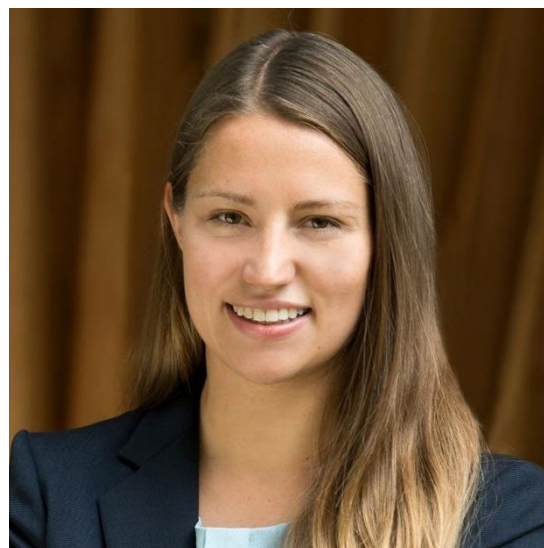
### Barbara Boettger



Barbara Boettger started her professional career as an advisor for student mobility at the University of Graz. This was when she began designing intercultural workshops for University of Graz exchange students to study with a colleague. Over the last 10 years, Barbara Boettger has designed and held many intercultural training sessions for students and university staff at various institutions. Currently, she is working at Graz University of

Technology where she is in charge of intercultural awareness trainings for both incoming and outgoing students, as well as specialised seminars for buddies. In 2015 she became a certified trainer for intercultural trainings. Aside from these intercultural trainings, Barbara Boettger is also responsible for the strategic partnerships the TU Graz holds with different international partners. She serves as the contact person for the Liaison Office in Shanghai.

### Elisabeth Tomaselli



Elisabeth Tomaselli is an advisor at the International Office – Welcome Center and brings experience in the development of welcome services offered to international students and researchers at TU Graz. She is involved in the coordination of introduction programmes offered to international newcomers at the university including aspects of social integration and creating an inclusive international environment. Her work includes furthering internal and external communication with regard to immigration law. Elisabeth Tomaselli holds a degree in law with a focus on administrative law and political sciences.

### Jasmin Hus

Jasmin Hus is an advisor in the International Office - Welcome Centre and is responsible for welcoming and assisting international students, staff and guests at TU Graz. This includes advice before their arrival, during their stay and up to their departure on topics such as entry regulations, living in Graz,

networking and integration. Furthermore, Jasmin Hus is the contact person for Fulbright Austria Scholarships for Teachers and Researchers from the USA, and is additionally in charge of social media and PR. She holds a degree in English and American studies and has been abroad several times during her studies, meaning that she knows from her own experience how internationals feel abroad.



## (KTH) Royal Institute of Technology – Stockholm, Sweden

Since its founding in 1827, KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm has grown to become one of Europe's leading technical and engineering universities, as well as a key centre of intellectual talent and innovation. We are Sweden's largest technical research and learning institution and home to students, researchers and faculty from around the world dedicated to advancing knowledge. KTH is working with industry and society in the pursuit of sustainable solutions to some of humanity's greatest challenges: climate change, future energy supply, urbanisation and quality of life for the rapidly-growing elderly population. We are addressing these with world leading, high-impact research and education in natural sciences and all branches of engineering, as well as in architecture, industrial management, urban planning, history and philosophy.

## Mirko Varano



Mirko Varano graduated with a degree in Political Science with a specialisation in International Relations and European Studies from the University of Turin, Italy. He has been active in the field of internationalisation of higher education since 1992, when he started working as Erasmus Coordinator at the Technical University of Turin (Italy) where he held, over a period of 15 years, different positions including Head of the International Projects Unit within the department of International Affairs. Between 2008 and 2010, he served as Coordinator of the CLUSTER Network and in 2010 he started working as International Officer at KTH Royal Institute of Technology – Stockholm (Sweden), where he served in a number of positions related to internationalisation strategies, university networks and external funding. Between 2013 and 2016 he has been a member of the International Strategy group created ad-hoc by the university management as a consulting unit for all the international cooperation strategic endeavours. As of 2016, he is a member of the Project Support group within the department of international affairs. He is

currently a member of the EAIE leadership and serves as chair of the Network for Joint Programmes.

## Victor Kordas



Victor Kordas graduated 1993 from Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University faculty of Cybernetics with the specialisation in Complex System Simulation. Has experience of working in information technologies both in specialised software development companies and in multinational corporations including Apple Computer and Microsoft. Since 2003 he has worked at KTH Royal Institute of Technology on development, implementation, and support of the international projects with external funding at KTH External Relations. Since 2016 he has been a part of the Project Support unit at KTH International Relation Office. He provides support to the staff at KTH on implementation of international educational projects including financial framework, communication with the funding authorities and reporting. He has experience in successful cooperation with the universities from different regions including China, MEDA, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and in the Caribbean.



## (UPC) Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya Royal Institute of Technology – Barcelona, Spain

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya · BarcelonaTech (UPC) is a public institution of research and higher education in the fields of engineering, architecture, sciences and technology, and one of the leading technical universities in Europe. The UPC of the future is based on three main pillars. The first is our commitment to training competent professionals who can join the productive sector and promote the economic progress of Catalonia and who put people's lives and the sustainability of the planet at the centre. The second is excellence in research and technology transfer, together with training creative, brave and talented young people who will have to face and solve the social and environmental challenges that lie not so far ahead. The third is our territorial embeddedness: we are the Catalan university that is spread over the largest area, and we are proud to be close to the companies and small and large cities that make up Catalonia.

### Bérénice Martin

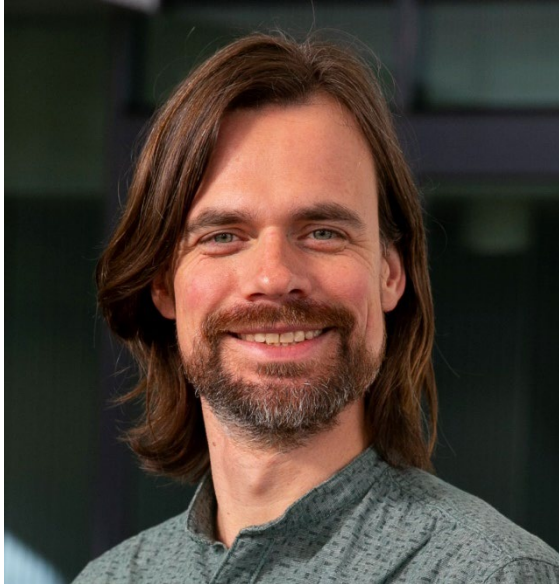
Bérénice Martin works on student mobility at UPC, specifically as UPC's UNITECH Local Coordinator. In addition to InComm, Bérénice is also involved in other European projects which encourage and support student mobility across Europe.



## (TU/e) Eindhoven University of Technology – Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Eindhoven University of Technology is a young university, founded in 1956 by industry, local government and academia. Today, their spirit of collaboration is still at the heart of the university community. We foster an open culture where everyone feels free to exchange ideas and take initiatives. Eindhoven University of Technology offers academic education that is driven by fundamental and applied research. Our educational philosophy is based on personal attention and room for individual ambitions and talents. Our research meets the highest international standards of quality. We push the limits of science, which puts us at the forefront of rapidly emerging areas of research.

## Erik de Jong



Erik de Jong M.Sc. is the Community Manager at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). The main task of the Community Manager at TU/e is to make all students and staff feel welcome at the university and, more specifically, to make international students and guests part of the TU/e community. Working through the whole organisation, the community manager is supported by a steering group and has an annual budget to support the activities. His work includes developing policies, improving procedures, organising community events, providing support to activities and events, improving communication channels and connecting people. As Community Manager, Erik de Jong is TU/e's coordinator for the InComm project.

He is able to collect knowledge and experience from the whole organisation and then directly implement knowledge in the university's infrastructure.

## Nadia Hagen



Nadia Hagen is a project manager at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). In this project she supports her colleague Erik de Jong, Community manager at TU/e in coordinating the project. Her background is national and international student recruitment. She has several years of experience in this field. Therefore, the concerns and needs of incoming master's students and Ph.D. candidates are not new to her. Furthermore, when studying abroad she experienced an exciting time as a new student abroad herself.

## (TUDa) Technische Universität Darmstadt – Darmstadt, Germany

The Technical University of Darmstadt is a synonym for excellent, relevant science. Global transformations – from the energy transition via Industry 4.0 to artificial intelligence – are posing enormous challenges. We are playing a crucial role in helping to shape these far-reaching processes of change with outstanding insights and forward-looking study opportunities.

Our cutting-edge research is pooled in three fields: Energy and Environment, Information and Intelligence, Matter and Materials. Large-scale, problem-based interdisciplinarity involving the engineering sciences, natural sciences, humanities and social sciences is the hallmark of our research and study. We foster intensive, productive interaction with society, business and politics. Such collaborative polyphony generates effective, long-term progress towards sustainable development worldwide.

### Benedetta Gennaro



Benedetta Gennaro, Ph.D., is head of the International Student Services and coordinator for refugee integration at TU Darmstadt. She received her B.A. in the Department of Sociology – Mass Communications at Università degli Studi “La Sapienza” in Rome, an M.A. in Mass Communications from Miami University (Oxford, OH) and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Italian Studies from Brown University (Providence, RI). Her areas of research include gender and sexuality studies, cultural studies and visual

methodologies, women and political violence, masculinity studies, and feminist methodologies. She was a researcher in the Institut für Soziologie at TU Darmstadt and served as acting professor of Sociology at Goethe Universität in Frankfurt.

### Alissa Reinach



Alissa Reinach, M.A. is the advisor for all international students at the International Student Services department of TU Darmstadt. Originally from New York, U.S.A, she received her B.A. in International Relations at Webster University in Leiden, The

Netherlands and moved to Germany in 2014 where she received her M.A. in Social Sciences from Freiburg University in Freiburg, Germany. In 2017 she joined TU Darmstadt to assist other international students in easing

their start into their studies. Her work involves integration, social inclusion, assistance with residence permits and visa inquiries as well as the coordination of orientation programs for new incoming international students.

## (IST) Instituto Superior Técnico – Lisbon, Portugal

**Instituto Superior Técnico aims to contribute to the development of society, promoting excellence in higher education, in the fields of Architecture, Engineering, Science and Technology by developing Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) activities, which are essential to provide an education based on the top international standards. Instituto Superior Técnico, the School of Engineering of University of Lisbon, aims to contribute to the development of society, promoting and sharing excellence in higher education in the fields of Architecture, Engineering, Science and Technology. Created almost 11 decades ago, Técnico currently has approximately 12,000 students of more than 60 different nationalities; it's a school of engineering, science and architecture, highly internationalised, which promotes the relationship between university-business-society and encourages innovation, entrepreneurship, job creation and knowledge. Técnico is a very prestigious school in Portugal and abroad for its academic and scientific excellence. Técnico has three campuses with privileged access to Lisbon's main points of interest. Located in one of Lisbon's most central areas, Alameda campus is surrounded by a wide range of public transportation networks, allowing easy access to all points of the city. There are a wide range of cultural, leisure and sports activities around the campus.**

### Rui Mendes



Rui Mendes is currently the Human Resources Director at Instituto Superior Técnico (IST|Universidade de Lisboa); He's a member

of the Cascais Municipal Parliament in Portugal (5th largest city) with the role of President of the Commission for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports; He's also President of the Parents Association of a Private School and President of the Accounting Board of a Social Institution – "O Companheiro"; During the last 5 years, he was Head of International Affairs at Instituto Superior Técnico, member of advisory committee of T.I.M.E. Association (responsible for the Communication Task Force), member of the Follow-up committee of MAGALHAES Network (with several responsibilities as external funding manager), member of the Task Force in International Cooperation of the CESAER Network and local coordinator for several Erasmus Plus Projects (International Credit Mobility, Strategic



Partnership and Capacity Building for Higher Education).

### Ágata Nicolau



Ágata Nicolau is the head of the Admissions Office at Técnico Lisboa, University of Lisbon. She graduated in Languages and International Relations from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto and Technische Universität Chemnitz (Germany) and postgraduate in Foresight, Strategy and Innovation from the Lisbon School of Economics and Management, University of Lisbon. She has worked at the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, France), at the Ministers' Committee and at Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics. As part of Técnico Lisboa, Nicolau has worked with mobility students for almost 10 years and is responsible for programmes involving students, staff and teaching staff such as: International Credit Mobility, InnoEnergy, Erasmus Mundus GroundwatCH, Vulcanus, IAESTE Portugal and IAESTE A.s.b.l in which she was the Strategic IAESTE Development Coordinator for 2 years. Nicolau has also been part of several international event organisations, and also gave Portuguese classes to foreign students and workshops on

Portuguese culture. Nicolau has represented Técnico Lisboa and University of Lisbon internationally in several fairs, universities, high schools, consulates, embassies and other organisations. She has been responsible for Técnico's Lisboa Admissions Office structure and team since its beginning.

### Denise Matos

Denise Matos has a Post-Graduation degree in International Relations, a M.A. in African Studies and completed her advanced PhD training course in Human Geography, specialisation in European Public Policy. Currently, she coordinates the International Affairs Department at Instituto Superior Técnico ULisboa. She is involved in several European projects with emphasis in communication, internationalisation strategies and entrepreneurship. She is the National representative of IAESTE Portugal, the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience. She has over 15 years of experience in international relations: in and outbound student mobility, international student recruitment, strategic partnerships, innovative academic programmes and student mobility issues.





## Work division

IO1: State of the art & needs of the target group and stakeholders	IST	September 2019 - February 2020
IO2: Collective intelligence and best practices	UPC	December 2019 - June 2020
IO 3: Implementing the customer journey	KTH	April 2020 - April 2022
IO4: Development and implementation of training programs	TU Graz	April 2020 - November 2021
IO5: InComm+ Tool	TU/e	April 2020 - December 2022
Presenting Results (including Dissemination)	TUD	September 2019 - December 2022
Coordination	TU/e + KTH	September 2019 - December 2022







Discovering  
university services  
Introduction to academic services  
and supporting staff

Find your place  
in the community  
Introduction to the social  
structures of groups and  
movements at the university

Introduction  
to the campus  
A clear user companion to help  
newcomers to find their way  
around.

Welcome kit  
A practical package with the  
essential information and guides.

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
Students from different backgrounds  
and cultures

Get to know  
each other  
A moment to meet and greet each  
other with introductions,  
presentations or just a small talk.

Welcome  
the first  
moment of  
newcomers

Academic  
services

Academic  
services

Engagement  
of community  
from the  
university

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# Ledningssammanfattning (SE)

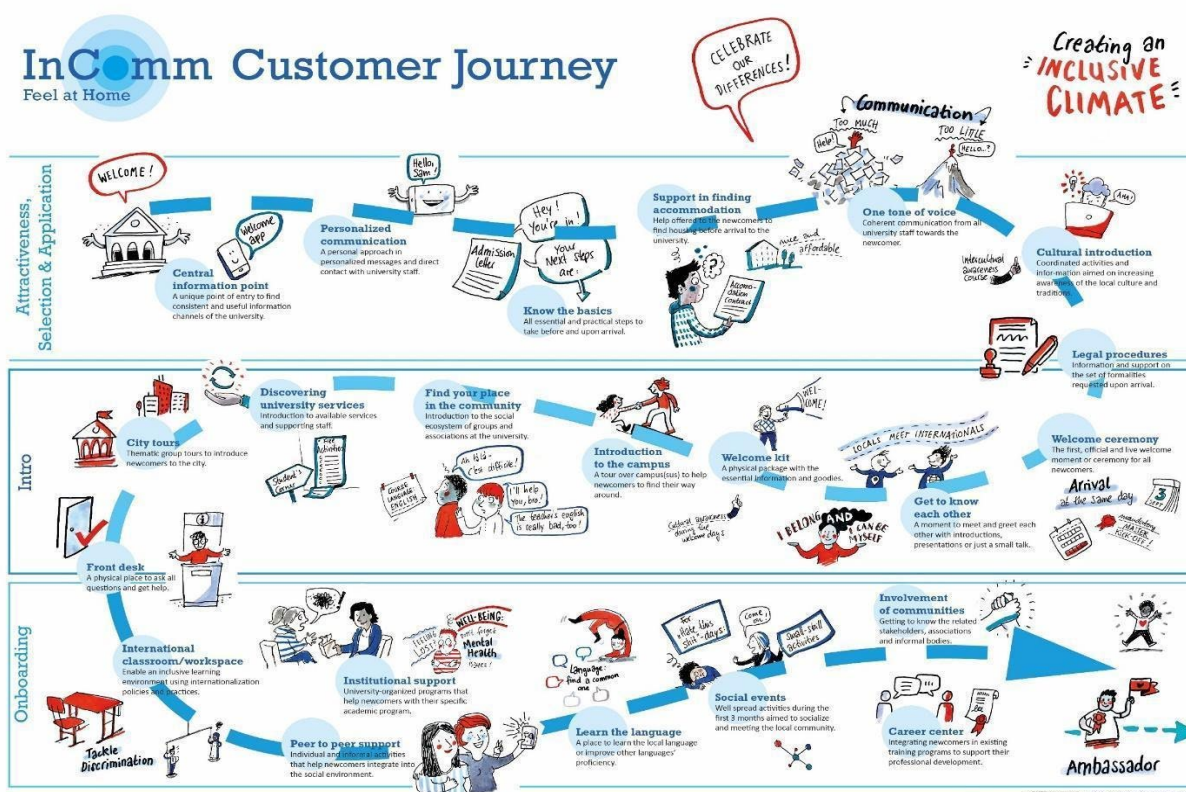
InComm-projektet utvecklade en **mer inkluderande välkomstprocess** vid partneruniversiteten; processen där studenter och personal från alla bakgrunder känner sig välkomna i en internationell identitet - **för att bli riktiga internationella universitet**.

InComm-projektet omfattar den välkomnande processen, från ungefär 100 dagar före registrering till 100 dagar efter registrering vid lärosäte. Det finns **Interaktionsfasen** som börjar efter ansökan, ca 3 månader före ankomst, **Introduktionen** på den lokala institutionen, vanligtvis en vecka efter ankomst och **Onboarding-fasen**, de första 3 månaderna på universitetet i olika program (utbildning, arbetsplats, kompetensutveckling, sociala aktiviteter) . Vi kallar detta vår "InComm Customer Journey".

InComm Customer Journey består av en uppsättning element som tillsammans bildar en komplett välkomstprocess för inkommande masterstudenter och doktorander. Den skrevs från nybörjar perspektiv av 6 universitet, utan skillnader i nationalitet. Genom att fylla i de olika delarna kan en passande resa byggas för just din institution.

Den här InComm-handboken berättar allt om hur du kan förbättra din egen välkomstprocess och hur du använder de verktyg vi utvecklat för att hjälpa dig. Dessutom ger den olika goda exempel från projektpartnererna, bakgrundsinformation om processen och mycket, mycket mer.

Instituto Superior Técnico, Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Technische Universität Graz, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya skapade den här handboken i det gemensamma InComm-projektet. Dela gärna detta med alla!



# Sumário Executivo (PT)

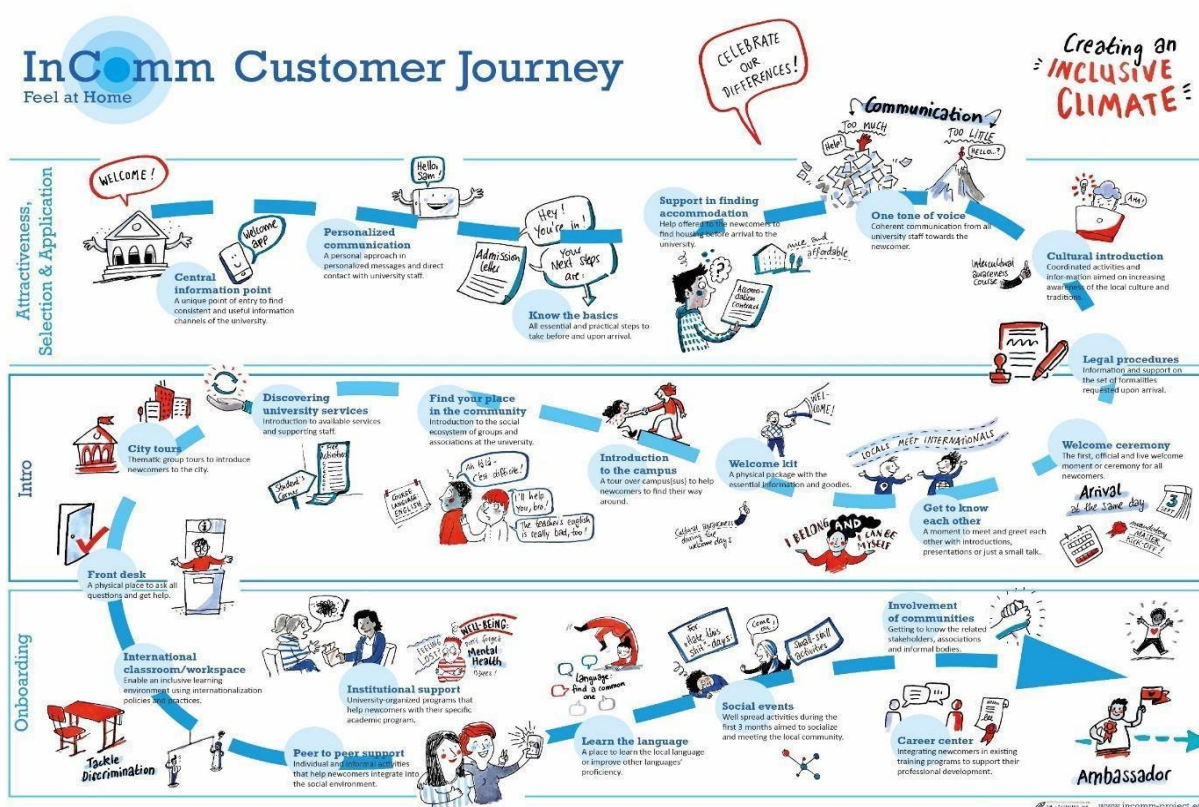
O projeto InComm desenvolveu **um processo de acolhimento mais inclusivo** nas universidades parceiras, onde estudantes e staff, independentemente da sua proveniência, sentem-se bem-vindos num ambiente internacional, **tornando as universidades verdadeiramente internacionais**.

O foco do projeto InComm é o processo de boas-vindas, desde cerca de 100 dias antes da inscrição até 100 dias após a inscrição. Existe a **fase de Interação** após a candidatura, cerca de 3 meses antes da chegada, a **Introdução** à instituição local, geralmente com a duração de uma semana, e a **fase de Embarque**, que corresponde aos primeiros 3 meses na universidade, com integração em vários programas (educação, espaço de trabalho, formação profissional, atividades sociais). A este processo demos o nome de "Viagem do Cliente InComm".

A Viagem do Cliente InComm é feita de **um conjunto de elementos**, que agregados formam um processo completo de boas vindas para os **novos estudantes de Mestrado e Doutorado**. Foi escrita através da perspetiva dos recém-chegados, sem diferenças de nacionalidade, por 6 universidades. **Ao preencher os diferentes elementos, pode obter uma Viagem adequada à sua instituição.**

Este **Manual InComm** diz-lhe tudo o que precisa de saber para melhorar o seu próprio processo de boas-vindas e como utilizar as ferramentas que desenvolvemos para o ajudar. Além disso, fornece várias boas práticas dos parceiros do projeto, informação de base sobre o processo e muito, muito mais.

Instituto Superior Técnico, Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Technische Universität Graz e Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya criaram este Manual no âmbito do projeto InComm. Sinta-se à vontade para partilhar esta informação!



# Management Summary (DE)

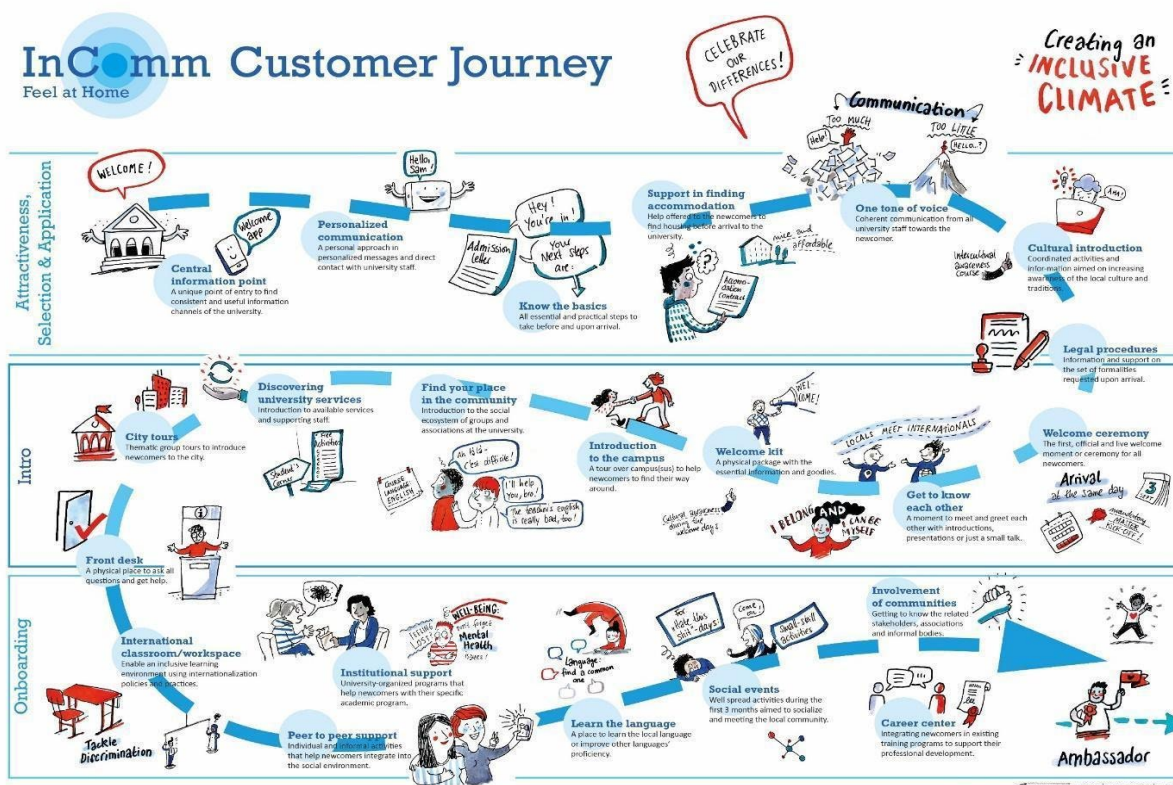
Im Rahmen des InComm-Projekts wurde ein **integrativerer Willkommensprozess** an den Partneruniversitäten entwickelt, bei dem sich Studierende und Mitarbeitende mit unterschiedlichem Hintergrund in einer internationalen Identität willkommen fühlen, **um wirklich internationale Universitäten zu werden**.

Das InComm-Projekt befasst sich mit dem Willkommensprozess, der etwa 100 Tage vor der Immatrikulation beginnt und 100 Tage nach der Immatrikulation endet. Es gibt die **Interaktionsphase** nach der Bewerbung, etwa drei Monate vor der Ankunft, die **Einführungsphase** an der Universität, die in der Regel eine Woche dauert, und die **Onboarding-Phase**, die ersten drei Monate an der Universität mit unterschiedlichen Programmen (Studium, Arbeitsbereich, berufliche Weiterbildung, soziale Aktivitäten). Wir nennen dies unsere "InComm Customer Journey".

Die InComm Customer Journey besteht aus einer **Reihe von Elementen**, die zusammen einen vollständigen Willkommensprozess für **neue Masterstudierende und Doktoranden** bilden. Sie wurde von 6 Universitäten aus der Perspektive der Neuankömmlinge geschrieben, ohne Berücksichtigung von Unterschieden in der Nationalität. **Durch das Ausfüllen der verschiedenen Elemente kann eine passende Wegbeschreibung für Ihre Hochschule erstellt werden**.

In diesem **InComm-Handbuch** erfahren Sie alles darüber, wie Sie Ihren eigenen Willkommensprozess verbessern können und wie Sie die von uns entwickelten Hilfsmittel nutzen können, um Sie zu unterstützen. Darüber hinaus bietet es verschiedene Best Practices der Projektpartner, Hintergrundinformationen zum Prozess und vieles mehr.

Das Instituto Superior Técnico, die Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, die Technische Universität Eindhoven, die Technische Universität Darmstadt, die Technische Universität Graz und die Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya haben dieses Handbuch im Rahmen des gemeinsamen InComm-Projekts erstellt. Sie dürfen es gerne mit allen teilen!





# Projectsamenvatting (NL)

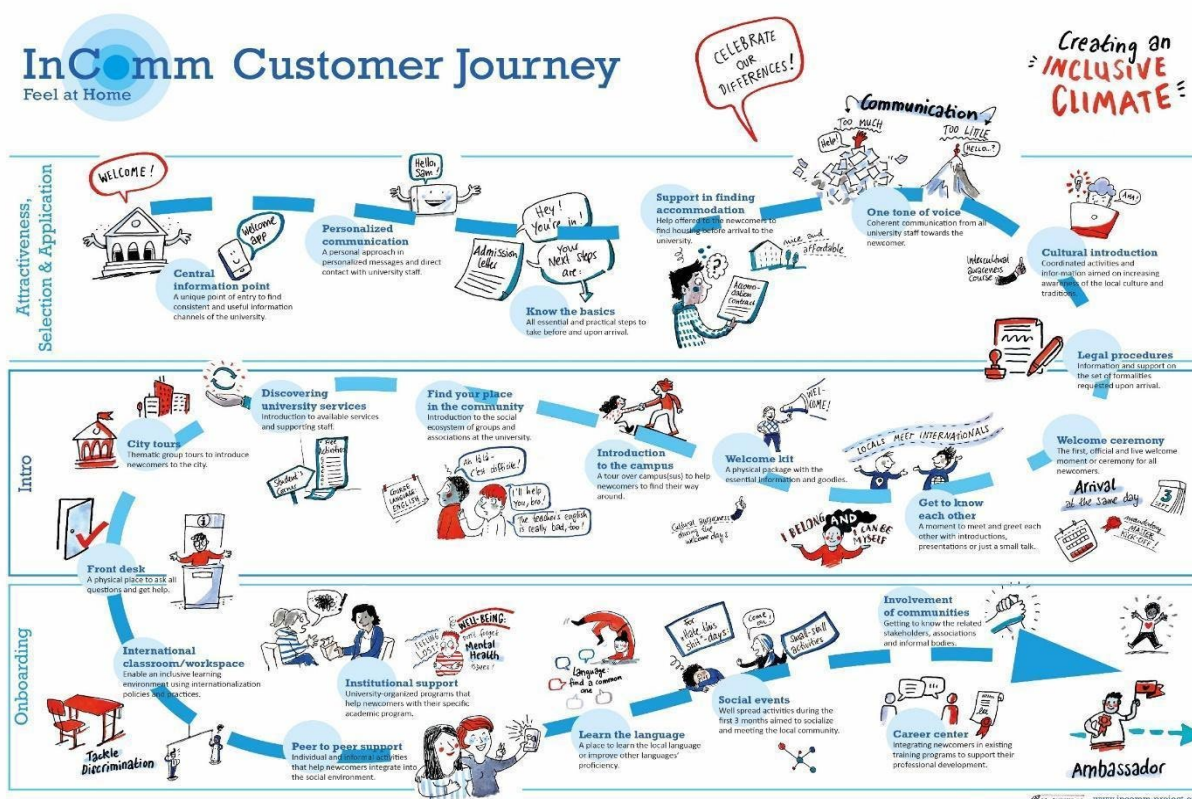
Het InComm project heeft een **meer inclusief welkomstproces** op de partneruniversiteiten ontworpen, waardoor studenten en medewerkers van alle achtergronden zich welkom voelen in één internationale cultuur, **om een écht internationale universiteit te worden**.

De scope van het InComm project was het welkomstproces, van ongeveer 100 dagen voor de start tot 100 dagen na de start. Er is een **interactie fase** na de aanmelding, ongeveer drie maanden voor aankomst, de **introductie** op de lokale instelling (over het algemeen een week), en de **onboarding fase**, de eerste 3 maanden op de universiteit (met onderwerpen als educatie, de werkplek, professionele ontwikkeling, sociale activiteiten). We noemen dit onze 'InComm Customer Journey'.

De InComm Customer Journey is gemaakt rondom een **set van elementen**, tezamen vormen zijn een compleet welkom voor inkomende **Master studenten en Promovendi**. Het is geschreven vanuit het nieuwkomersperspectief, zonder verschil in nationaliteit, door de 6 partners. **Door de verschillende elementen in te vullen, kan een passend welkom worden gemaakt** voor de eigen instelling.

Dit **InComm Handbook** vertelt alles over hoe jij je eigen welkomstproces kunt verbeteren en hoe de tools die wij ontwikkelden zijn te gebruiken. Verder geeft het talloze best practices vanuit onze project partners, achtergrondinformatie over ons project en veel, veel meer.

Instituto Superior Técnico, Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Technische Universität Graz, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya hebben gezamenlijk dit handboek geschreven in het InComm Project. Delen mag met iedereen!



# Resumen Ejecutivo (ES)

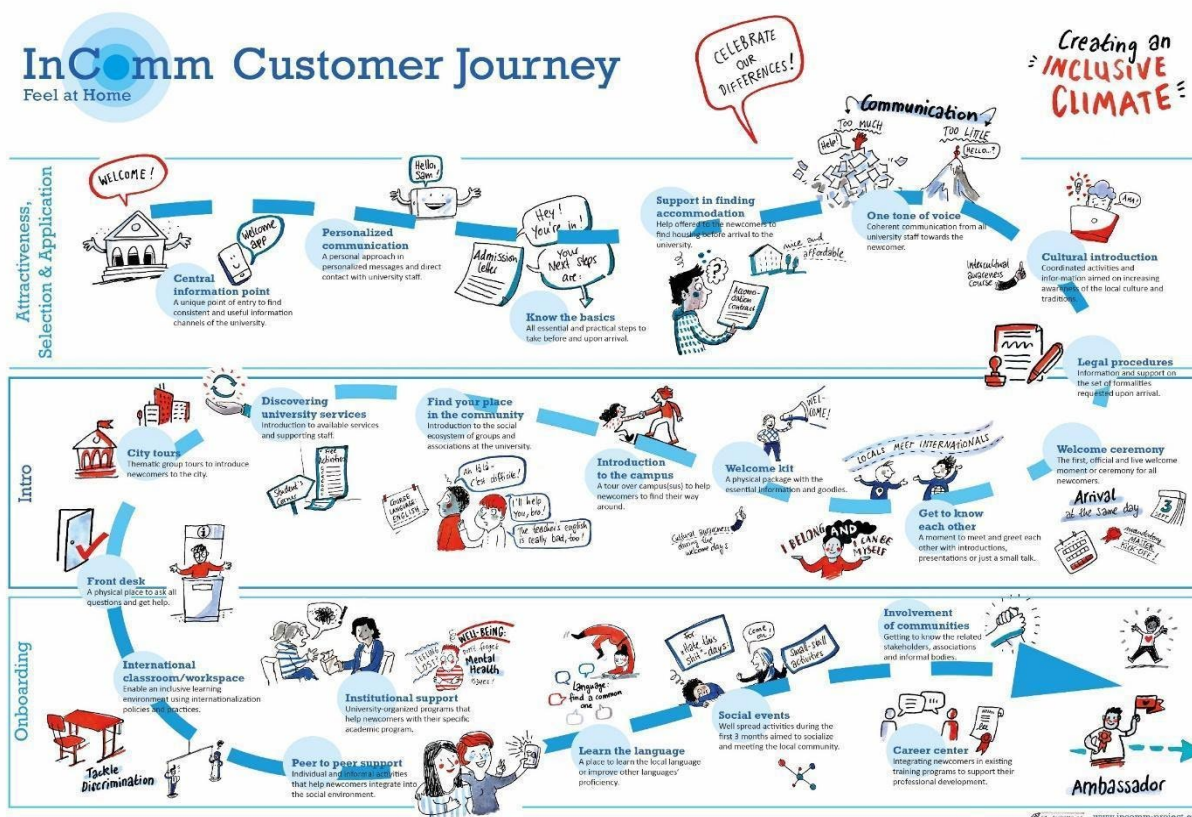
El proyecto InComm ha desarrollado un **proceso de bienvenida más inclusivo** en las universidades socias del proyecto, donde los estudiantes y el personal -independientemente de su origen- se sienten bienvenidos en una única identidad internacional, para **convertirse en universidades realmente internacionales**.

El foco del proyecto InComm es el proceso de bienvenida, desde aproximadamente 100 días antes de la matrícula, hasta 100 días después de ésta. Existe una **fase de interacción** después de la solicitud de admisión, durante los aprox. 3 meses antes de la llegada; después está la fase de la **introducción** en la institución local, que generalmente dura una semana; y la **fase de embarque (onboarding)**, que corresponde a los primeros 3 meses en la universidad, con integración en varios programas (educación, espacio de trabajo, formación profesional, actividades sociales). A este proceso lo llamamos "Recorrido InComm del usuario" (en inglés, "InComm Customer Journey").

El *InComm Customer Journey* está compuesto por un **conjunto de elementos**, que juntos forman un proceso de bienvenida completo para los **estudiantes de maestría y doctorado que llegan**. Fue escrito por 6 universidades, desde la perspectiva de los recién llegados, sin diferenciación por nacionalidad. **Al completar los diferentes pasos, se puede diseñar un recorrido a medida para su institución.**

Este **manual InComm** explica todo lo que debe saber sobre cómo mejorar su propio proceso de bienvenida y cómo utilizar las herramientas que se han desarrollado para ayudarle. Además, proporciona varias buenas prácticas de los socios del proyecto, información de contexto sobre el proceso y mucho, mucho más.

El Instituto Superior Técnico de Lisboa, la Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, la Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, la Technische Universität Darmstadt, la Technische Universität Graz y la Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya crearon este manual en el proyecto conjunto InComm. ¡No dude en compartir esta información con todo el mundo!



# Resum executiu (CAT)

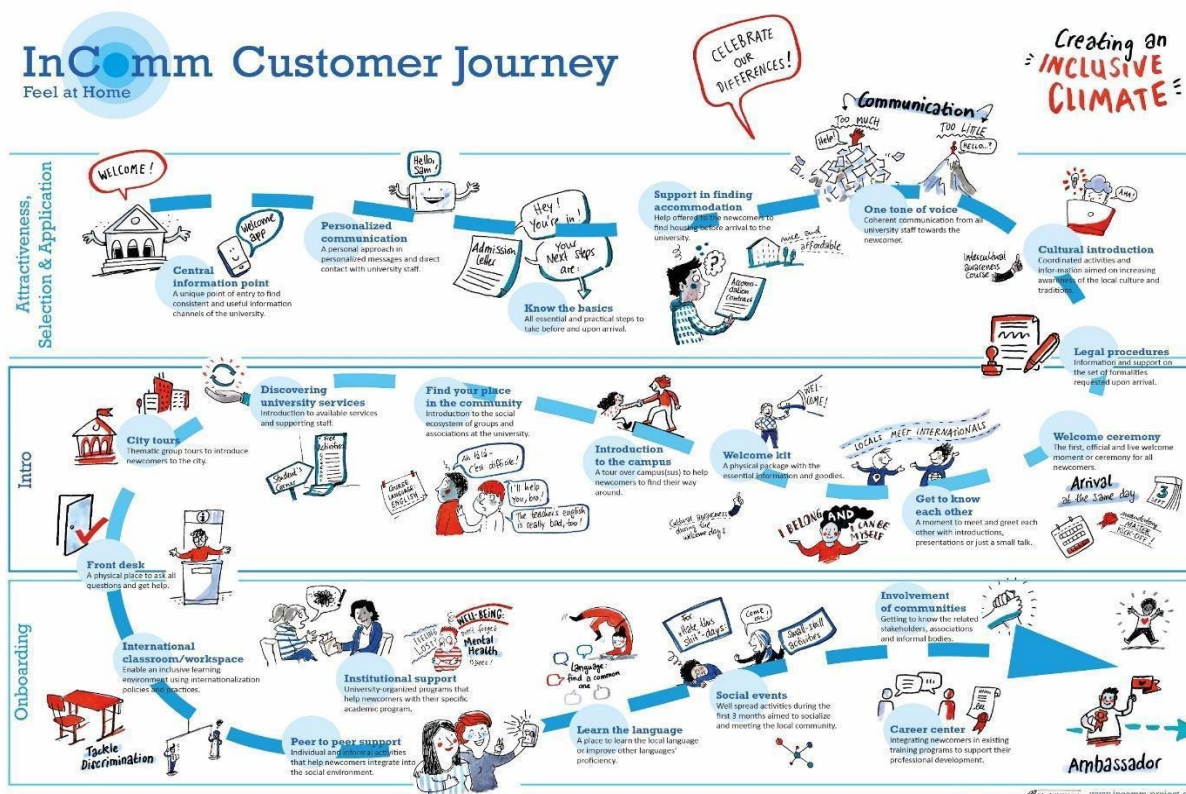
El projecte InComm ha desenvolupat un **procés de benvinguda més inclusiu** a les universitats sòcies del projecte, on estudiants i personal -independentment del seu origen- es senten benvinguts en una única identitat internacional, **per convertir-se realment en universitats internacionals**.

El focus del projecte InComm és el procés de benvinguda, des de gairebé 100 dies abans de la matrícula fins a 100 dies després d'aquesta. Existeix primer una **fase d'interacció** després de la sol·licitud d'admissió, durant uns 3 mesos abans d'arribar; després està la **fase d'introducció** a la institució local, que dura generalment una setmana; i la **fase d'embarcament (onboarding)**, que correspon als primers 3 mesos a la universitat, amb integració en diversos programes (educació, espai de treball, formació professional, activitats socials). A aquest procés l'anomenem "Recorregut InComm de l'usuari" (en anglès, "InComm Customer Journey").

El *InComm Customer Journey* està format per una **sèrie d'elements**, que junts formen un procés de benvinguda complet per **estudiants incoming de Màster i PHD**. Ha estat escrit per 6 universitats, des de la perspectiva d'un nou estudiant, sense diferenciar nacionalitats. **Completant els diferents elements, es pot dissenyar un recorregut a mida** per a la seva institució.

Aquest **manual InComm** explica tot el que necessita saber per millorar el seu propi procés de benvinguda i com utilitzar les eines que s'han desenvolupat per ajudar-li. A més, inclou diverses bones pràctiques dels socis del projecte, informació de context del procés i molt, molt més.

L'Institut Superior Técnico, la Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, la Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, la Technische Universität Darmstadt, la Technische Universität Graz i la Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya han creat aquest manual en el projecte conjunt InComm. No dubti en compartir aquesta informació amb tothom!





# Résumé exécutif (FR)

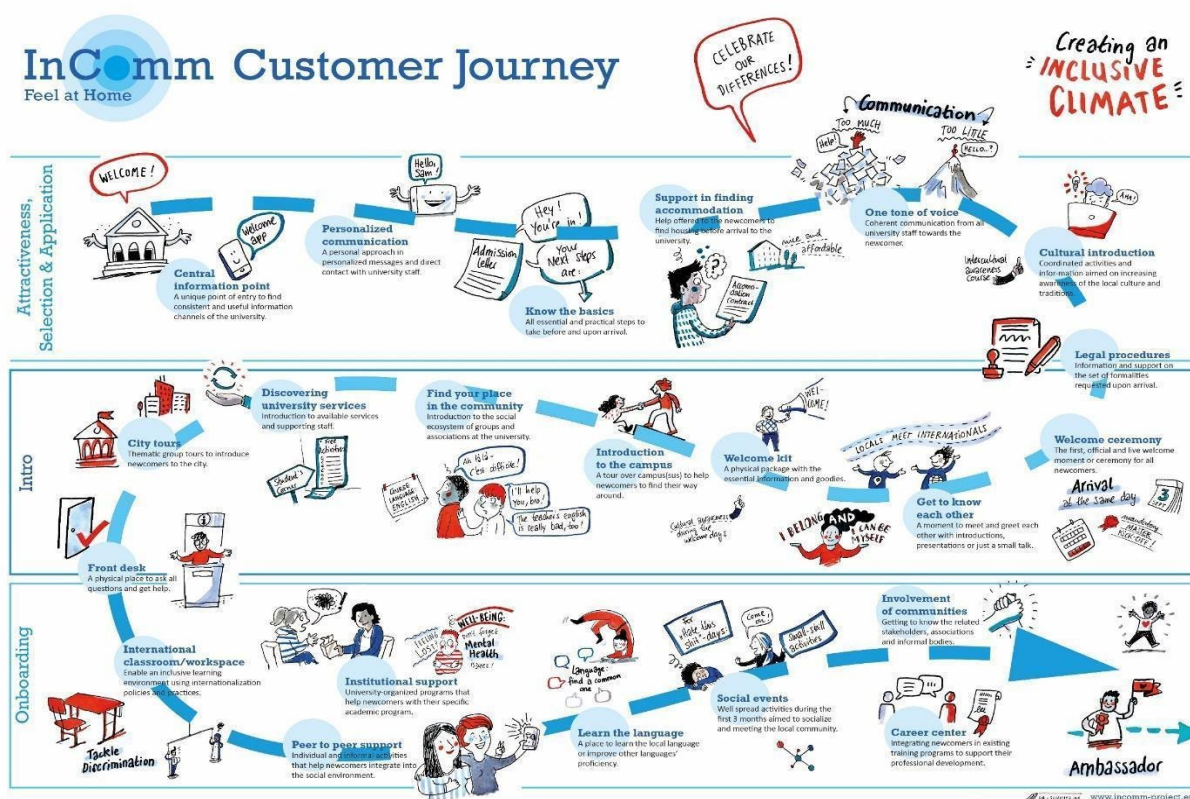
Le projet InComm a développé un **processus d'accueil plus inclusif** dans les universités partenaires du projet, où les étudiants et le personnel (indépendamment de leur origine) se sentent bienvenus dans une identité internationale, **pour devenir ainsi de véritables universités internationales**.

La portée du projet InComm est le processus d'accueil, dès environ 100 jours avant l'inscription jusqu'à 100 jours après celle-ci. Il existe d'abord la **phase d'Interaction** après la demande d'admission, pendant environ 3 mois avant l'arrivée; ensuite la **phase d'Introduction** à l'institution locale, qui en général dure une semaine ; et la **phase d'embarquement (onboarding)**, pendant les 3 premiers mois à l'université, avec l'intégration dans divers programmes (éducation, espace de travail, formation professionnelle, activités sociales) . Nous avons nommé ce processus « parcours client InComm » (en anglais, "InComm Customer Journey").

L'*InComm Customer Journey* est composé d'une **somme d'éléments**, formant tous ensemble un processus d'accueil complet pour les **étudiants entrants (nouveaux) en master et en doctorat**. Il a été rédigé par 6 universités, du point de vue des nouveaux arrivants, sans différence de nationalité. **En complétant les différents éléments, un parcours adapté peut être réalisé** pour votre établissement.

Ce **manuel InComm** vous indique comment améliorer votre propre processus d'accueil et comment utiliser les outils qu'on a développés pour vous aider. En outre, il fournit aussi divers exemples de bonnes pratiques des partenaires du projet, des informations de fonds sur le processus et bien plus encore.

L'Instituto Superior Técnico, la Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, ña Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, la Technische Universität Darmstadt, la Technische Universität Graz et la Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya ont créé ce manuel dans le cadre du projet InComm. N'hésitez pas à partager ces informations avec tout le monde!







This publication was made for the InComm Project in November 2022

Images by Ka Schulz, pictures by Nadia Hagen & project partners



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

