D5.1.3 Elaboration of guidelines for development of individual social engagement plans for Serbian HEIs

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Abstract	Elaboration of guidelines for development of individual social engagement plans for Serbian Higher Education Institutions

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Introduction

1.1 About the project

ERASMUS+ projectentitled "*Institutional framework for development of the third mission of universities in Serbia*" with acronym IF4TM is intended to enable development of the third mission or third dimension at higher education institutions (HEIs) from Republic of Serbia, members of the project consortium.Workpackage 5 (WP5) „*Social engagement dimension*", within this project, is focused on social engagementdimension, social involvement and responsibility as well as closer interaction of Universities with wider community. The aim of activity 5.1 "Defining universities' social engagement plans" is to suggest guidelines and recommendations for development of individual social engagement plans for Serbian Higher Education Institutions.

1.2 Missions of modern universities

From their establishment,universities have been the centers of education and research. These two fields are known as first mission and second mission of universities or HEIs. These two missions have been naturally grown, bearing in mind thatHEIs represent the extraordinary concentration of human resources, but also impressive infrastructural resources such as libraries, laboratories, sports facilities, etc., which should be open for wider community. Consequently, in recent period universities have adapted and articulated its role in the social, cultural and economic development of the wider society[1] and have tried to improve the visibility of university activities focused on services to society and industry. This is called the "third mission" of universities and this activity is a vitally important component of any university's role. The "third mission" is not a separate mission, it is more synergically connected with two others in order to improve HEIs' contribution to society (Figure 1).
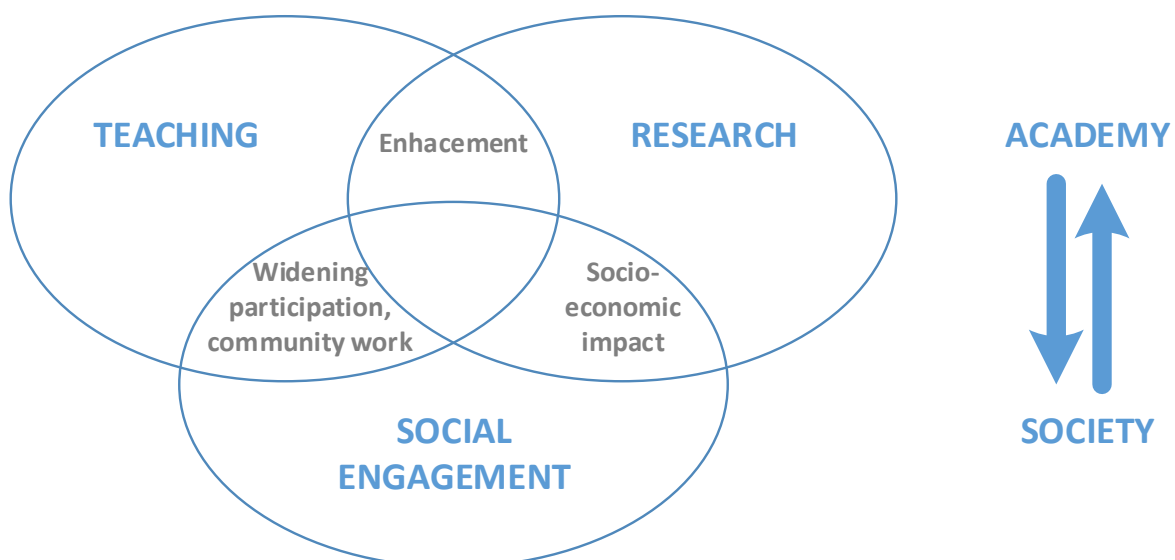

Figure 1. Three missions of HEIs

This "third mission" can be classified/summarized into following activities: (a) engaged research (technology transfer and innovation, etc.); (b) engaged education (lifelong learning/continuing education, public training, etc.); enabling studying to vulnerable

groups;creation of the open society and support to the cultural diversity and broader horizons through participation in mobility schemes (c) social engagement (public access lectures or concerts,initiating public debates on important social issues, voluntary work and consultancy by university staff and/or students, etc.). This approachconsiders a university as a social organism which is connected in many ways with wider social ecosystems of its city and its region (Figure 2) as well as nation state and for some universities, other national communities and supra-national institutions [1]. Universities are expected to assume a more active role in regional and national economic development while facing competition from other public and private higher education and research institutions [2]. As economies are becoming increasingly knowledge-based, great expectations have been established for universities as drivers for knowledge, value creation [3] and shaping innovation system, especially at regional level. Additionally, the social impact of higher education is also high on the European agenda because the European Commission expects higher education to support societal development through continuing education [4].
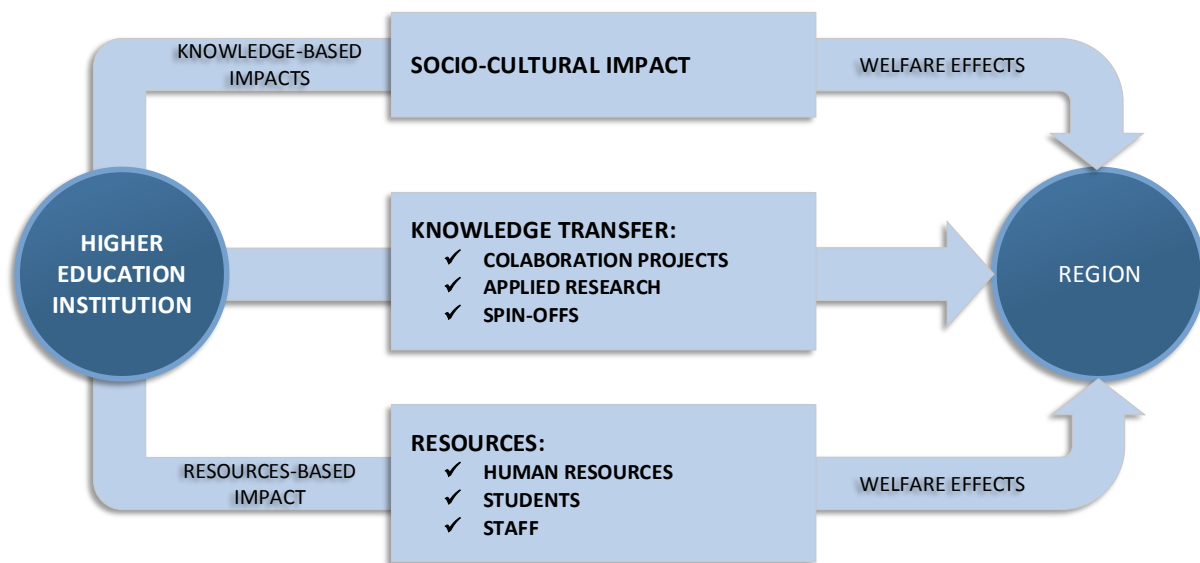

Figure 2. Regional effects from higher education institutions

2. Engaged research

One of the main components and activities of university staff is dealing with research, usually formally organized in the framework of some project. However, in recent period, the research should not be for the science sake, but for the society sake. This means that from experiments and research conducted at university laboratories, ordinary people (or tax payers) should have benefits as well as societal challenges need to be solved. HEIs have to promote collaborative development projects that link the university with communities to share knowledge and to encourage the use of knowledge held within the university, for social progress. Today, more than ever, there is a necessity toengage HEIs in interaction with the rest of society and to promote the social impactof their research findings.The university should transfer technology in a commercially responsible way, to serve society, and to encourage solving problems of wider population.That means that applied research have to be more adapted towards social needs.However, in order to reach this aim, it is necessary to

present research topics from HEIs to ordinary people. Manifestations such as: science festivals, researchers' nights, open door days, Campus visits, etc. are excellent events to fulfill this goal (Table 1).Furthermore, these events can gather usually more than thousands of primarily young people (provide additional education), andcan be a good opportunity of university staff and particul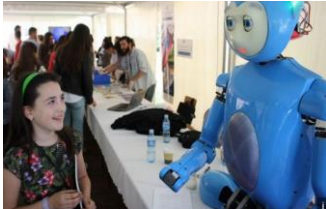arly students for personal development through volunteering. Constant collaboration between academic and media representatives fosters better education of public in general. Several HEIs have recently opened positions for PR experts who will write scientific news in the ways appropriate for public, which corroborate their responsible role in the society. Additionally, important component of engaged research is transferring technology and innovation to useful products and services on the market as well as fostering the links between academic sector and industrial sector. Various entities established at HEIs, such as technology transfer centers, business support offices, etc. can contribute significantly to further develop of this component.In this context, connection with social enterprises is especially important as well as making links of students and future employers (for example through scholarship or students practical placements, etc.). An important bridge in the connection of academic sector and industrial sector can be publically accessible database of HEIs expertise, such as business support offices web sites, which are already developed at some Serbian HEIs. Moreover, freely available electronic libraries of PhD dissertations and Master thesis serve as the important and unique database for business professionals. Universities should be a driver for promoting and establishing contacts and more importantly contracts with industry or with public bodies as well as establishing new spin-off and start-up, shaping all regional ecosystem (even work places market). HEIsshould fit teaching contents and methods to regional industry needs, which will increase chances of graduates in accomplishing their career entry into the regional labor.Furthermore, a good fit between educational fields at the HEI and regional economy might simplify part-time work and internships of students in regional companies, final theses that are written for and supported by local firms, and study projects that are organized cooperatively by academic and private industry staff [5]. Accordingly, textbooks should include examples from the local economy, explaining the local constellation of the factors and ways of operating within domestic system. Certain HEIs have made significant breakthrough in this field, organizing also sponsored case study challenges, meet-ups, etc. In this context, intellectual property rights issue should be pay a special attention.Universities have a higher positive impact on society at large, if they are connected closely with business incubators and science parks [6].

The surrounding region may profit from the spill-over effect of the distinguished research efforts of HEIs, their high public investments for research projects in future-oriented branches, and their international network connections which enable contacts with global knowledge flows for regional industry [5]. One of the components in EU funded projects (Horizon 2020, ERASMUS+, COST, EUREKA, IPA, etc.) is networking or organization of events such as conferences, summer schools, workshops, seminars, etc. These events are a good opportunity that cities where HEIs are located can be visited by other researchers, professors, managers, entrepreneurials, etc. and to have some excursions which can further develop touristic, transportation or other sectors at regional level – this is interesting examples how HEIs can have influence on local or regional society, indirectly.

HEIs should be key partners for regional authorities in formulating and implementing their strategies or programmes, and the most important one is Smart Specialization Strategy (S3).

Table 1. Examples of engaged research or interesting events

No.	Description	Illustrations
Collaborative engaged research projects		
1.	Research of humanoid robots which can solve problems of autistic children	
2.	Measuring the level of noises and vibrations in cities	
3.	Protection of water, air and soil in the region	
4.	Measuring blood pressure and other vital parameters of aged population by students of Faculty of Medicine, on volunteering base	
Engaged research events		
1.	Festival of sciences	
2.	Researchers' night	

3.		Open door day	

3. Engaged education/teaching

Engaged education/teaching and learning address community labor market needs as well as helping students to become knowledgeable and active citizens of their city, their region, their nation and the globalizedworld [7]. In other words, HEIs should educate and build graduates who are well suited to participate in professional life, and are aware of their social context [1]. In modern society, where industrial sector suffers from losses caused by economic crises, many people lose their job. In addition to this, we are witness of dramatically changes in technology, thus knowledge we have learnt during our study are usually out of date now. Consequently, HEIs should be ready to follow these needs and to provide flexible study programmes in the context of lifelong-learning, continuing education, distance learning, etc. to fulfill various demands for changing qualifications and expertise during the working career.In this way, universities can help to social ecosystem in the city, regions, country, etc. The continuing education activities are targeted at students, specialists or technicians who are working in different fields of science, teachers, tourism brokers, university administrative personnel and public sector staff. Some examples of the programmes which can be offered are: accountancy, secretary and archivist, family tourism management, writing and journalism, programming and information technology expert, etc. [8]. Recognizing above-mentioned role, many universities already run a wide range of programmes and events such as: work-based and experiential learning; programmes aimed at extending educational access to targeted disadvantaged groups; programmes aimed at engaging university members and local residents in informed debate about matters of common and current interest; public lectures, etc. From the other side, representatives of local communities, enterprises, NGOs, etc. should be incorporated in the development of curricula and the delivery of learning and teaching [9]. It is of the crucial importance to develop and encourage inter-disciplinary studies at all levels of education, so to promote collaboration among various faculties, coming from different scientific disciplines and equip the students with the set of skills and knowledge necessary for the modern work. Important aspects in the context of engaged learning is that HEIs should have open access of teaching materials (open sciences concept) such as: dissertations, scientific papers, electronic books, etc.Students can be engaged for example to deliver practical exercises of sport activities (Table 2) in order to promote healthy life in general or to help/supportthesocially or physically challenged people. Furthermore, professor and students can be engaged to give a blood on volunteering base for blood reserve in hospitals in order to help and save lives of other people. Keeping in mind that many HEIs have already done and put a lot of efforts in volunteering activities (e.g. law clinic, asylum for animals, research of public opinion on social topic, etc.), it is important to create mechanism to formalize these initiatives and furtherly promote them in the public. HEIs can provide students engagement intointernational institutions,giving them opportunities to develop their careersand to have awareness of their role into local society.

Table 2. Examples of engaged education

No.	Description	Illustrations
1.	Providing sports facilities for a wider community (to practice sport, yoga, thi-chi, etc.)	
2.	Round tables and public debates	
3.	Lifelong learning/ continuing education	

4. Social engagement

Social engagement is usually related to links and activities of mutual benefitbetween university members and communities within its home city, region and country.We use the word external communities to cover all levels of human organization outside the university itself, such as business, industry, schools, governments, non-governmental organizations, associations, indigenous and ethnic communities, and the general public[9]. Community engagement is one of the mainresponsibilities of HEIs.Nowadays, engaged universities are essential for economic and social future of each country. HEIs should align their strengths into community contexts, engagingthem in the cultural and economic development of their host societies. Universities should develop long term partnerships with local schools, colleges, firms, NGOs, etc. HEIs need to open their facilities (in some time slots) such as libraries, computer facilities, amphitheaters, etc. for interested parties from local or regional community. Five sophistication levels for university social engagement areshown in Table 3 [10].

Table 3. A developmental model of modes of university/society engagement with external communities [10]

Mode of engagement	Objective of engagement	HEIs aim	Typical examples
1. Providing information	Informing society of university's plans, projects, opportunities and problems	Providing a positive image for HE in society, and being open about activities	News bulletins, press releases, commentaries, media announcements
2. Public relations	Providing information; developing community rapport; shared events	Achieve acceptance of university as active social partner	University representatives in cultural and arts groups; informal discussions
3. Dissemination of academic findings	Dissemination of university knowledge base in teaching & research	Shape public opinion, build and strengthen a critical learning society	Conferences, round-tables, congresses, symposia, seminars, exhibitions
4. University as a cultural influence	Improve academic thinking & discussions with critical societal perspectives	Promote reflexive attitudes in community and desire to evolve	Capacity-building courses, technical assistance, advisory services, free chair
5. Critical engagement	Enriching societal development fed back into university practices	Forming a transformatory societal coalition based on reflective principles	Participatory social change in social/economic/environmental fields

The core of the social engagement activities is volunteering. For example, HEIs representatives can provide: (a) social consultancy – using expertise to solve problems pro bono (for example through law shops); (b) educational outreach - running the more informal kind of learning programmes (for example summer camps for pupils); (c) services and facilities – putting resources to work for society (Table 4). Universities should develop joint actions for benefits of society, in which professors and students can participate together. For example, they can: paint together some buildings, collect financial or material help for poor people or children without parents, provide classes for pupils and disabled people, etc. It will be very useful to start organizing a 2 day conference within the HEIs to bring together those involved in social engagement [9] to share knowledge and to adopt measures for increasing this dimension of the universities activities. This event as well as other ones should strongly promote corporate social responsibility [11] and to act to reduce/stop corruption, criminality and violence (at all levels – among pupils, in the family, at working place, etc.). It is important to note that there are different styles and different levels of social engagement. We should not just focus on institutional connections; there is also personal engagement into communities. Whatever a university's approach, there will always be staff and students who get involved in their locality (computer science students can design a website for a local charity; students can provide mentoring or sports coaching in local schools, students can organize fund-raising actions for people on low incomes, for homeless people or for disabled people, etc.). Some of that involvement will be with disadvantaged and marginalized communities. Those connections are often individual commitments - people volunteering with

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thirdsectororganizationsorgettinginvolvedinlocal'causes'.The presence of a university can thus be a resource impacting on a locality in positive ways [10].

Table 4. Examples of social engagement:

No.	Description	Illustrations
1.	Access to HEIs libraries	
2.	Access to HEIs facilities (conferences, meetings, events, etc.)	
3.	(Re)Decoration of public surfaces	

5. Measuring "third mission" - Indicators

In terms of their "third mission" performance, it is necessary that HEIs adopt a set of measurable indicators, to monitor their success in this context. A list of indicators should respect specificity of each university and wider ecosystem in which the university works. Some indicators which can be implemented are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The list of possible indicators for measuring of "third mission" progress or success

No.	Type	Indicators
1.	Engaged research	No. of projects for the benefits of wider society
		No. of people covered/influenced by these projects
		No. of HEIs' contracts with industry
		No. of HEIs' contracts with public bodies
		No. of participants on Festival of sciences
		No. of participants on Researchers' nights
		No. of participants on Open door days

2.	Engaged education	No. of people who used HEIs facilities/resources
		No. of round tables organized and No. of people participated
		No. of people participated in lifelong learning courses
		No. of students practical placement
		Number of pro-bono classes outside of HEIs
3.	Social engagement	No. of people outside of HEIs who used libraries space/services
		No. of participants outside of HEIs who used facilities for organization of conferences, meetings, events, etc.
		No. of students/professors volunteering for benefits of wider community
		Initiating public debates on important social issues

Besides these quantitative indicators, qualitative indicators are very much important as well. These could include: satisfaction of the target groups (business community, journalists, NGOs, etc., investigated in polls); tradition of certain good practices (e.g. whether some events are organized in constant time periods); tone of the media articles on certain matter (positive, negative, taking into account experts' opinion or not, etc.), etc.

6. Recommendations

Successful "third mission" development requires mutual trust and commitment between the HEIsand its leadership from one side, and local/regional/national authorities, enterprises and the community in general, on the other side. Set of recommendations for successful implementation of the "third mission" can be as follow:

- HEIs should develop and adopt social engagement strategy;
- "Third mission" should be stated in the university's Mission statement (that HEI commits itself to engagement with and service to society);
- HEIs should promote engagement and linkage with society and need to include this in their strategic documents;
- Social engagement or participation in the "third mission" should be included in the criteria for university staff promotion;
- Social engagement or participation in the "third mission" should be valued as a students practice (obligatory during study according to actual accredited curricula), and valued as extra credits (expressed in ECTS);
- HEIs may appoint a vice-Rector for "third mission" promotion or HEIs can open office for "third mission" development (for relationship and services for wider society);
- HEIs should open their infrastructure and other resources for benefits of wider community;
- HEIs should promote more general collaborative development projects that link the university with community, for social benefit;
- Establishing a Serbian network of third mission activities for promoting these activities;
- Establishing alumni centres or mechanisms to improve the interaction with the social and business regional environment;
- Formalizing certain aspects of the range of the Third mission activities that staff and students have already done, but do not keep a track on them

- HEIs' websites need to provide public information on various topics and should promote "third mission" and volunteering work;
- HEI should together with representative of community found body for implementation of the third mission
- "Third mission" need to be one of public relations or media relations priorities.

7. Next steps

After careful reading through the complete document next steps in its development will be as follow:

- Comments on the first draft of this document;
- Final version of the document;
- Forming teams at HEIs level for elaboration of individuals social engagement (SE) plans;
- Development of 7 individual SE plans by Serbian HEIs;
- Quality control and improvements of SE plan at the level of HEI;
- Final version of 7 individual SE plans and their adoption by HEIs.

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