D5.1.7 Individual social engagement plan for State University of Novi Pazar

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TABLE OF CONTENT

FIGURES

1. Introduction

1.1 About the project

ERASMUS+ project "*Institutional framework for development of the third mission of universities in Serbia*" (IF4TM) is intended to enable development of the third mission 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 engagement dimension, 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 and second mission of universities or HEIs. These two missions have been naturally grown, bearing in mind that HEIs 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).
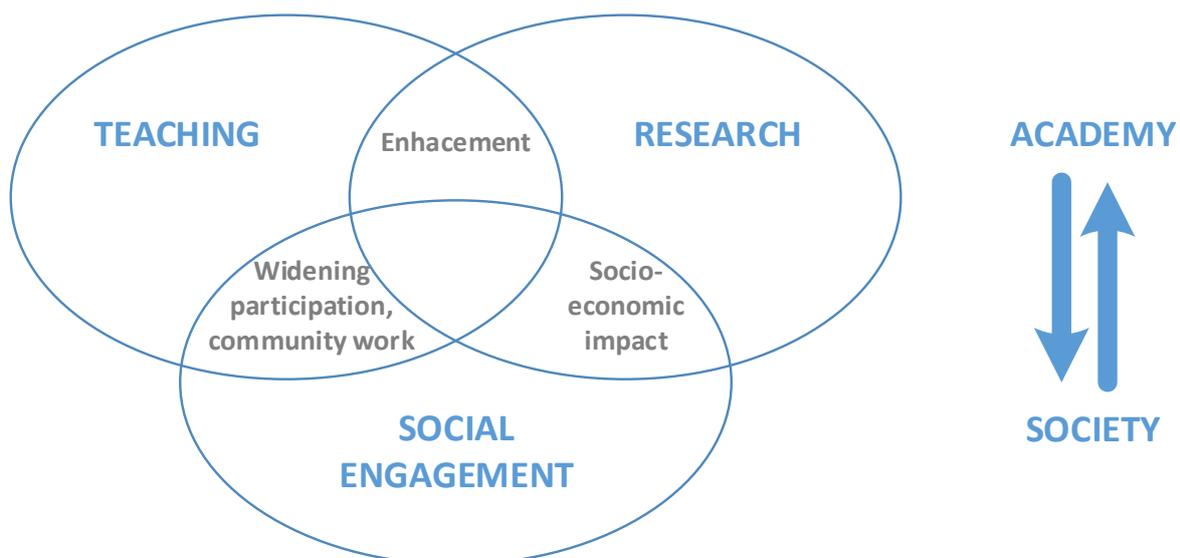
Figure 1 Three missions of HEIs

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 approach considers 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 of 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].
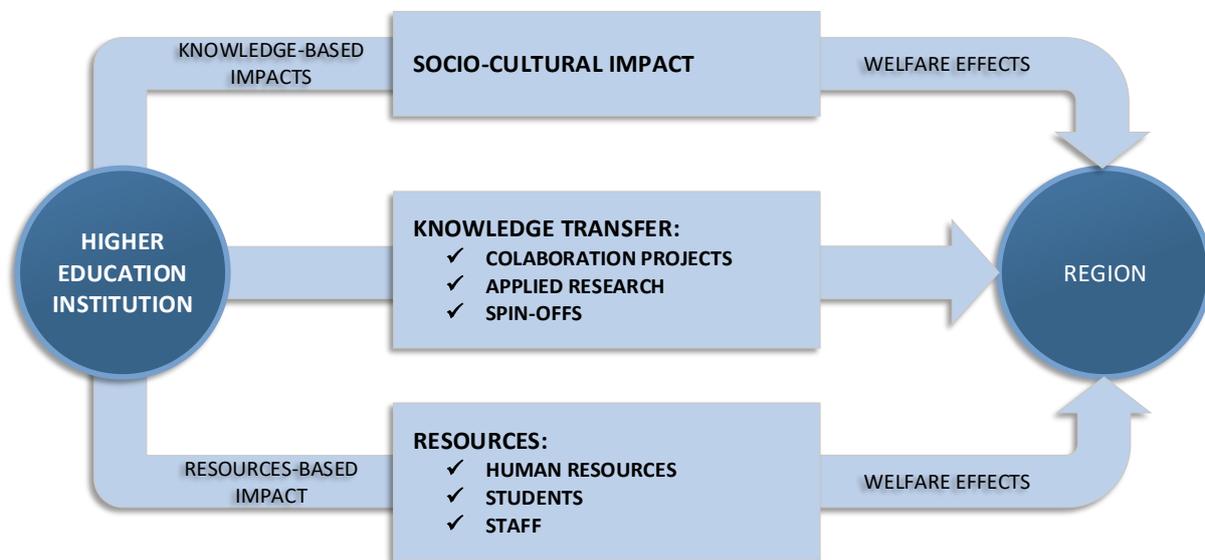
Figure 2 Regional effects from higher education institutions

1.3 SUNP an glance

The Sate University of Novi Pazar was established by a decree of the Government of Serbia of 26th October 2006, as the seventh state university in Serbia, with the aim of contributing to more even regional development, the greater productivity of young scientists and professionals, the timely and adequate choice of necessary professions and the definition of priorities of the region's development based on scientific grounds.

The State University of Novi Pazar is the first integrated officially accredited university in Serbia. Its original department model of organization of teaching and dynamic study programs, in keeping with the demands of the Bologna Declaration, provide the possibility for continuously creating new and modern profiles of university educated professionals important for the region's development, as well as profiles competitive on the market of qualification, both in Serbia and and abroad. For the performance of all its activities related to the curriculum and study programs, the State University in Novi Pazar uses four different locations: SUNP have 10 departments and 55 accredited study programs. Student population of 4000 students attend our institution.

Main Building situated in Vuk KaradzicStreet bb, is owned by the university.

Multifunctional building, area of 4000 m2, is located in the near of the main university building.

Special Hospital for Muscular and Neuromuscular Diseases. The building and its premises are being used pursuant to a Cooperation Agreement, and based on Ministry of Health approval for the students on the study program rehabilitation.

Sport Center Novi Pazar, pool, sports hall and sport courts, used based on basis of a Cooperation Agreement between SUNP and this center.

2. Engaged research

"*Community engaged research is a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community. Community engaged research identifies the assets of all stakeholders and incorporates them in the design and conduct of the different phases of the research process.*

It promotes better research and translation of findings. Other benefits of community engaged research include development of research that is responsive to community need, increased capacity built through partnerships, expanded funding opportunities and greater opportunities to translate findings into practice." (http://www.community.vcu.edu/faculty-support-/cenr-support-at-vcu/what-is-community-engaged-research/)

From these definitions we can conclude that universities and employed staff should be aware that research can not be concluded just forsake of science but also need to be for society sake. The research activities carried out at the SUNP should be more directed towards solving the social needs rather than towards the research itself. For this purpose, this kind of activities should be promoted and researchers encouraged to engage more in socially responsible research.

The research resources should be used more for the disadvantaged, sustainable development, and social justice. On this way we create climate for sustainable role of university on community based socio-economic development.

The examples of this practice now exist at University, but are not sufficiently promoted and declared as socially responsible. Such research activities at the SUNP like research on topics of ICT implementation on different economical and social systems. Research on interaction of different radiation effects on biological systems and research on biochemical environment pollution and minimization of the corresponding effects. Research on biomedical engineering in clinical practice. Development of new methods for following environment quality.

All these benefits are not necessarily categorized as successful based solely on its financial benefits but rather on achievement of socially useful outcomes. This means that ordinary people and community have benefits and some societal challenges related to public health, environment, etc. are solved using the SUNP resources both human and technical.

Promote multidisciplinary collaborative development projects

The SUNP constantly develops and improves the quality and level of research striving to include industrial and economic stakeholders both as partners in research and end users of research results, taking in this way the part in resolving the societal challenges and needs.

This kind of engaged research which can be implemented on SUNP:

- **Joint projects** that can be mainly realized through national and international research projects and/or pilot projects with enterprises. The industrial entities can be engaged in these projects both as partners and end users.

- **Services for enterprises** were SUNP resources can be offered to local enterprises helping them in this way to improve their development processes, optimization of new and existing products and processes, etc. This kind of services are especially characteristic for the
  - University centers
  - Laboratories and
  - Research groups.

  In the process of mapping of research and innovation potential of the university and its faculties (within IF4TM project), university research entities will be mapped. Resources of SUNP of their field of expertise, resources, activities and achievements will be presented in the catalogue of research and innovation potential of SUNP. This catalogue will be in form of the catalogues developed on other Universities in Serbia.

Transfer technology in a commercially responsible way

To transfer technology from the university centers and laboratories to industry should be one of the priorities of the University and this should be clearly stated in official documents. This important part of the University role will be challenging tasks for SUNP, are which this University cover is underdeveloped and with serious social and economical challenges. SUNP need to support community to create positive climate for establishing background for development of the industry.

Cooperation with wider socio-economic community

Universities have important positive impact on society at large, if they are connected closely with socio-economic stakeholders in the society. In order to promote this cooperation links with Regional economical developmental agencies, local self-governments and clusters of different SME in the region is established.

One of the joint activities was the support provided to the participants of Competition for the best student idea which will be organised the within IF4TM project. The students of SUNP had the opportunity to develop their business ideas with the support of Regional economic developmental agencies in terms of trainings and consultancy services to prepare application for national or international grants for starting of business for Competition winners.

Also, any kind of joint initiatives taken so far was due to individual efforts and enthusiasm of both institutions staff, rather than institutional cooperation. This is why this successful cooperation should be formalized and brought to institutional level.

Present research topics from HEIs to ordinary people

The community needs to be informed and aware of the efforts made at University units for solving their everyday challenges and problems not only for the sake of public visibility but also for the purpose of getting the useful feedback and active participation of the community in creative the research policy of University faculties. This is why the promotion of research activities need to be intensified in terms of organization of larger number of events, public debates, discussions, public promotions, etc.

There are several examples of good practice in terms of outreach activities of the University, but they seem to be sporadic and insufficient.

- **Open door days** – Every year, the SUNP organizes the Open Door Day as an event where students and pupils have an opportunity to learn more about the faculties within the university. The representatives of all university departments assist pupils in choosing their future careers and students in continuing their professional development and research career in any of the research groups or centers.
- **Competition for best student idea** - Competition for best student idea was launched in 2017 within IF4TM project and this will be first activity of this type on SUNP.

These events can gather a large number of primarily young people outside the university and in this way impact the employability in the region. Also, they attract the representatives of industrial sector and social institutions fortifying the links and providing the opportunities for transfer of research results and knowhow to wider community.

Public access to facilities

Until now, there have been very few opportunities for wider community to access the facilities of the University's faculties, centers, laboratories, etc.

This is especially important for business and industrial sector who due to the lack of resources (equipment-wise and space-wise) could find the support in the University faculties and units. Until now, the access to these resources have been mainly during the trainings and consultancy services.

Spill-over effects

The surrounding region also profit from the spill-over effects of the research activities and projects conducted at the University. This especially refers to the networking or organization of events such as conferences, summer schools, workshops, seminars, etc.

Since SUNP is currently about active EU funded projects, the events organized at the University gather significant numbers of foreign researchers, professors, managers, entrepreneurs, etc. This has a significant aspect on development of touristic, transportation or other sectors of the city and the region, as well as the promotion of Serbian and local culture, history and tradition.

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 globalized world [5].

HEIs should educate and build graduates who are well suited to participate in professional life, and are aware of their social context and environment [6]. Today knowledge learned during study is usually outdated, as result of fast development and changes in to economy. Unable to adapt to this changes causes lose of jobs, and on larger scales all industries can fall in serious crisis.

Address labor market and community needs

The stagnation in industrial and economic development in the previous period led to the insufficient linkage between the industrial and academic community in terms of creation of new curricula to fit the labor market needs.

Provide flexible study programmes in the context of lifelong-learning, continuing education, distance learning, etc.

The University plays an active role in providing the wider community with the lifelong learning and continuing education opportunity in order to make an impact on employment opportunities.

Lifelong Learning Centre should involved in forming of organizational and institutional conditions for inclusion of the SUNP in the area of lifelong learning. The Centre should organizes round tables, conferences and similar events, initiates the social dialogue and analyses the employers' needs for new knowledge and skills at the labor market. Through organization of courses, workshops and trainings, it motivates the individuals to constantly improve at professional level and gain new applicable knowledge. Through SE plan SUNP plan to engage this center and to make it fully operational.

The Career Centre is very active in providing the consultancy services related to the career development and employment of University's students and graduates. It organizes a set of workshops for writing a CV, motivational letters, active job search, interviews with employers, communicational and presentational skills, etc.

Center organizes job practices in cooperation with 79 SME and local administration for university students in cooperation with local socio economic partners

In spite of the numerous activities related to the socially engaged education both formal and informal, there is still a lack of involvement of wider community in creation of courses and trainings, and most importantly study programmes.

Another aspect that should be considered more in the following period is formalization of this kind of University's role in the socially engaged education and its more active and wider promotion.

Table 1: Examples of engaged education

No.	Activity	Illustrations
1.	Practical placements	Job practices in 79 SME
3.	Career centre trainings	CV writing trainings Writing o motivation letter Mock up interviews

No.			Trainings on entrepreneurship basics and start up
4.		Long Life Learning Centre trainings	Trainings for the workers of regional TV and radio stations on new and modern technologies
			Trainings in pedagogy requirements for teachers of history, physics and mathematics.
			Application of statistical tools for local governments
			Environment education trainings for preschool teachers

4. Social engagement

Social engagement is usually related to links and activities of mutual benefit between university members and communities within its home city, region and country.

Community engagement should be one of the main responsibilities of the University since it is essential for economic and social future of each country. This is why the University and its students are engaged in many initiatives, volunteering activities, sports, cultural and other type of events for the wider community, etc.

Engaging in the cultural development of local society

"*Culture has the power to transform entire societies, strengthen local communities and forge a sense of identity and belonging for people of all ages. As a vector for youth development and civic engagement, culture plays an essential role in promoting sustainable social and economic development for future generations.*"

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-cultureasavector.pdf].

Having this in mind, the SUNP takes a very active part in the cultural development of the local society, which is the practice that should be kept at the same level in the following period.

Events

Apart from the cultural events, the University participates in many other manifestations, charity and volunteering events, trying to include as many students as possible:

Sports events –

Humanitarian actions – students of the SUNO were active volunteering during the floods in Serbia in 2014, provided active support in flooding in regions on 2016., provided support to migrants in the Centre for refugees in Sjenica in cooperation with local NGOs..

Community activism – teachers and students of SUNP are involved in community activism in Novi Payar regarding preservation and promotion of cultural and socio economic resources of the area.

Table 1: Examples of social engagement

No.	Description	Illustrations

1.	Sport events	
2	Cultural student Fest	
3	Humanitarian actions	
4	Public tribunes	
5	Social activities	

5. Measuring "social engagement" - Indicators

In terms of social engagement performance, it is necessary that University adopts a set of measurable indicators, to monitor its success in this context. A list of indicators should respect specificity of the university and wider ecosystem in which the university works. Some indicators which can be implemented are shown in Table 4.

Table 2: The list of possible indicators for measuring of social engagement progress or success

No.	Type	Indicators

		No. of projects for the benefits of wider society
1.	Engaged research	No. of people covered/influenced by these projects
		No. of SUNP contracts with public bodies
		No of SUNP centers/labs/resources mapped and presented to wider community
		No. of people who used SUNP facilities/resources
		No. of open-innovation (OI) campaigns
		No. of students/researchers involved in OI projects
		No. of participants on Open door days
2.	Engaged education	No. of Continual education (CE) programs mapped and promoted
		No. of CE programs organized in current year
		No. of round tables organized and No. of people participated
		No. of people participated in LLL courses
		No. of students passed practical placement program
3.	Social engagement	No. of participants outside of SUNP who used facilities for organization of conferences, meetings, events, etc.
		No. of SUNP students/professors volunteering for benefits of wider community
		No. of competition organized
		No. of competitors
		No of 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

University should demonstrate its strong commitment to our local community by developing the social engagement strategy which defines the short, medium and long term priorities. This document gives a preview of the existing social engagement activities taking into account the gaps yet to be filled.

Generally speaking in terms of social engagement of the University and its member faculties, short terms priorities are following:

- Social engagement plan should be developed and adopted as a kind of guidelines for socially responsible and engaged research, education and participation in the local community.
- Accompanying the social engagement plan (or guidelines), the tentative action needs to be developed

- In order to monitor the rate of success of University's social engagement, a set of indicators need to be developed and adopted (the recommendations are provided in the previous chapter).
- In accordance with the developed monitoring indicators, a Report on social engagement activities should be prepared at least once a year (at faculties' level).
- University should promote more distinctively and more actively the social engagement activities (page on University website)

Based on the current state and the level of realization of socially engaged activities at the SUNP shown above, a set of medium-term recommendations can be listed:

Engaged research

- More support and encouragement needs to be provided for the researchers who are dealing with the research with high impact on the society
- A system for monitoring of socially engaged research projects needs to be introduced in order to measure the impact of the University on society research-wise.
- A set of incentives and encouragements need to be introduced in order to animate the researchers to engage in collaborative development projects and joint projects with the industrial and business entities, particularly those which solve the societal challenges.
- Services for enterprises should be more actively promoted and accessible to the enterprises
- The Catalogue of the innovation and research potential of the University should be updated regularly at least once a year
- Transfer of technology should be encouraged and supported by the University
- Legislative background needs to be provided to support the technology transfer (guidelines, regulations, bylaws, procedures, IPR definition, etc.)
- Cooperation with other institutions such as innovation centers needs to be formalized (Memorandum on cooperation, Letter of Support, etc.)
- Participation in outreach activities should be one of the priorities in communication with the society
- Database of HEIs expertise needs to be maintained, updated and expanded
- University's and faculties' facilities needs to be made more open and accessible to the society by organizing events such as open door days, etc.

Engaged education and teaching

- University's and faculties' management need to be advised to listen more to the needs of the current labor market when introducing new study programmes. Those programmes also need to include the aspects related to the creation of ready-to-work labor force through inclusion of more practical elements into education system.
- Lifelong learning activities need to be more promoted to the external users (both employed and unemployed)
- Researchers and professors need to be more actively engaged in giving *pro-bono* lectures and trainings
- University and its faculties should put more efforts to include business and social partners in the development of both formal study programmes and lifelong learning courses.

Social engagement

- University should keep the same level in terms of organization of culture events (exhibitions, concerts, literary events, lectures, etc.). However, it should strive to invite more people from outside the university.
- Although we can say that the University is involved in various social, charity and volunteering events, this has mainly been based on the individual engagement of its students and staff. Participation in this kind of events need to be formalizes, that is organized by the University or its faculties.
- University and its faculties should organize more volunteering opportunities and actions for their students and staff in cooperation with the local organizations
- University should formalize the cooperation with institutions that offer volunteering opportunities for students.
- University should formalize the cooperation with social institutions such as Red Cross, charity organizations, NGOs, etc. in order to provide the ground for continuous and long-lasting engagement of students and staff

As long term priority, the SUNP needs to work towards becoming the driver of the cultural and economic development of the region by taking an active part in the life of the local community.

7. Next steps

The next steps in the realization of the strategic planning of social engagement activities at the University of Kragujevac will be as follow:

- To finalize the recommended Individual Social Engagement Plan for the SUNP
- To present the Individual Social Engagement Plan to the university management
- To finalize the Social Engagement Plan of the SUNP
- To adopt SE plan
- To implement plan by Rectorate
- To monitor recommended SE indicators
- To elaborate report on SE plan realization on yearly bases (2017, 2018 etc.)

8. References

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