



Incedu

NEWSLETTER



In this issue

- **DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES**
- **TRAINING PROGRAMMES**
- **PARTNER VISITS**
- **AWARENESS SESSIONS**
- **FINAL CONFERENCE**
- **E-BOOK PUBLICATION**

Developing Inclusive Education for students with disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities (IncEdu) is an Erasmus+ capacity building project (Key Action 2) running from 2019-2023.

We are a consortium of 4 universities from Sri Lanka and 4 universities from Europe.



SLTC
Research University



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

MASARYK
UNIVERSITY



Transilvania
University
of Brasov



University of Zagreb

QA Workshop and Connected Events in Brasov

The Faculty of Sociology and Communication recently hosted a series of events from October 31 to November 4, 2022, as part of the Erasmus+ project "Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities." These events included work sessions focused on raising awareness and understanding of the needs of students with disabilities, workshops addressing quality assurance within the project, and debates on the transfer of best practices within the consortium.

These activities brought together representatives from partner universities, including the University of Peradeniya, Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Technological Campus, University of Ruhuna, Uppsala University, University of Zagreb, and Masaryk University. The collaborative efforts of these institutions aim to foster inclusive education for students with disabilities in Sri Lankan universities.

On the first day of activities, following the welcome and opening speeches delivered by Prof. Anoma Abhayaratne, University of Peradeniya, the project coordinator, and Prof. Carmen Buzea, coordinator from Transilvania University of Braşov, a series of three workshops on the concept of community awareness, coordinated by Parisa Rouhi from Uppsala University, took place.

On the second day, Prof. Carmen Buzea of Transilvania University presented an overview of IncEdu Quality Management and provided updates on the WP5 workflow. This was followed by several contributions from project colleagues on the subject of grant quality assurance, highlighting best practices and challenges. In the afternoon, two focus group sessions were conducted for the internal assessment of the IncEdu project's implementation. Topics discussed encompassed communication and transnational collaboration, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on project implementation, partner commitment and motivation, project implementation methodology, hopes and expectations, as well as suggestions for corrective actions and improvements.



QA Workshop and Connected Events in Brasov

On the third day, three parallel sessions on QA tools were held, allowing participants to work in small groups to develop QA tools according to the WPs' activities. A new Quality Board Meeting was then held to conclude the QA Workshop, discuss the next steps for IncEdu QA, and set tasks and timelines for the 3rd QA Internal Annual Report.

On November 3, 2022, the fourth Project Meeting was held. This event was opened by Prof. Anoma Abhayaratne of the University of Peradeniya, who gave an overview of project activities. Based on a pre-established program, each partner then presented updates on project activities at their local partner university. The series of activities ended on November 4, 2022, with a tour of the Transilvania University of Brasov campus and a cultural trip.



Education for Teaching and Non teaching staff at University of Peradeniya

The Education for Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff Workshop, conducted as part of the IncEdu Project, was held from December 12 to 16, 2022, at the University of Peradeniya. The primary purpose of this workshop was to disseminate knowledge gained from transnational training sessions conducted in Croatia and Brasov.

The workshop saw participation from four EU partners representing the University of Zagreb and more than 80 academic and non-academic staff members from Sri Lanka. This collaborative effort highlights the commitment of both local and international institutions to enhancing education and training in the context of the IncEdu Project.



Awareness Session 03 - Interactive Session with Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and Teachers specializing in Teaching SWDs in Schools



On December 5, 2022, an interactive program for students with disabilities (SWDs) at the University of Ruhuna took place at the Dean's Office premises of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The primary objective of this program was to inspire and motivate SWDs in their academic and personal pursuits.

The session featured three school teachers, namely Mr. Gihan Abeywardhana from Walgama Mahanama Vidyalaya, Mr. Sanka Hasintha from Anagarika Dharmapala School in Godagama, and Aradhana Liyanage from Thudawa Primary School. These educators specialize in teaching students with disabilities and served as resource persons for the session.

They emphasized how individuals, despite their disabilities, can empower themselves and achieve personal growth if they possess a genuine desire to do so.



Awareness Session 04 - A guest lecture on Issues and Challenges of Inclusive Education in Contemporary Sri Lanka



On December 28, 2022, the Committee on Students with Disabilities in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences organized a guest lecture focused on "Issues and Challenges of Inclusive Education in Contemporary Sri Lanka."

The guest speaker for the event was Dr. T.D.T.L Dhanapala, a Senior Lecturer (Retired) from the Department of Special Needs Education within the Faculty of Education at the Open University of Sri Lanka.



Training Programme of 'Education of Educators' in University of Zagreb, Croatia, 7th November to 11th November 2022

The training programme 'Education of Educators' organized by the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia was held from the 7th to 11th of November 2022 for the local partner universities of 'Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities (IncEdu). Being a university with an advanced system of support for students with disabilities, the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences of University of Zagreb fulfilled the mission of the programme to the fullest immersing all local project partners in the comprehensive disability support system they have developed for SWDs.

Having designed a programme enriched with both theoretical and hands-on training, the trainers were able to deliver the intricacies of Inclusive Education that the participants too realized the way forward in their own contexts. Ethical issues in working with students with disabilities, University of Zagreb's Office for students with disabilities and the support system for SWDs in the Republic of Croatia, Presentment of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Person with Disabilities and Situation with students with disabilities in higher education and the visit to their Teaching and Clinical Centre for Disability Support in the university premises were only a few of such aspects covered. Each session with a practical garnish provided enlightening inputs to analyze one's own context in terms of Inclusive Education.

The participants were able to witness the culmination of the Croatian system of support for SWDs in the empowerment and autonomy of SWDs displayed in their speeches which sounded very satisfying. The training programme 'Education of Educators' which is to be held in the University of Peradeniya in December 2022 where the trained participants have to train their academic and non-academic staff members along with the said trainers was the last phase of the programme that marked the end of a very satisfying training programme.



Awareness Sessions on Working with Students with Disabilities (SWDs) at University of Peradeniya

The IncEdu Project Team, along with the Faculty Special Needs Students Management Committee and the Faculty IQAC, organized an awareness session on 'Working with Special Needs Students' on July 28, 2023, specifically for non-academic staff members. The speakers for this session included Dr. E.M.P.C.S. Ekanayake, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Prof. Anoma Abhayaratne, Ms. Niroshi Senevirathne, and Prof. Sakunthala Yatigammana.

Second awareness session was conducted on September 8, 2023, once again for non-academic staff. The speakers for this session were Dr. E.M.P.C.S. Ekanayake, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dr. Samanmala Dorabawila, Ms. Niroshi Senevirathne, and Prof. Sakunthala Yatigammana. These sessions aim to promote understanding and support for special needs students within the university community.



Training of the Trainers (TOT) and Knowledge Sharing Practical Sessions at SLTC

Education for teaching and non teaching staff workshop session 2, under the IncEdu Project, was conducted on 28-29 March 2023 at Sri Lanka Technological Campus. The workshop was organized to share the knowledge of transnational training sessions that took place in Croatia and Brasov. Over 80 academic and non academic staff members from Sri Lanka participated in the Workshop. Also Prof. Lelia Kis Glavas and Prof. Martina Feric participated in the Workshop to represent University of Zagreb.



Transilvania University of Brasov visited partner universities in Sri Lanka

A team from Transilvania University of Brasov visited partner universities in Sri Lanka in March 2023 to assess the implementation of IncEdu project activities and centers for students with special needs, and to establish new collaborative agreements and Erasmus-type partnerships.

University of Peradeniya

- The team met with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, the Vice-Chancellor of the university, and staff and students at the center for students with special needs.
- They also discussed establishing an Erasmus agreement in the field of Sociology with the Head of the Department of Sociology and the Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Sri Lanka Technological Campus

- The team met with the Director of Research and International Affairs and the IncEdu project team, and visited the center for students with special needs.

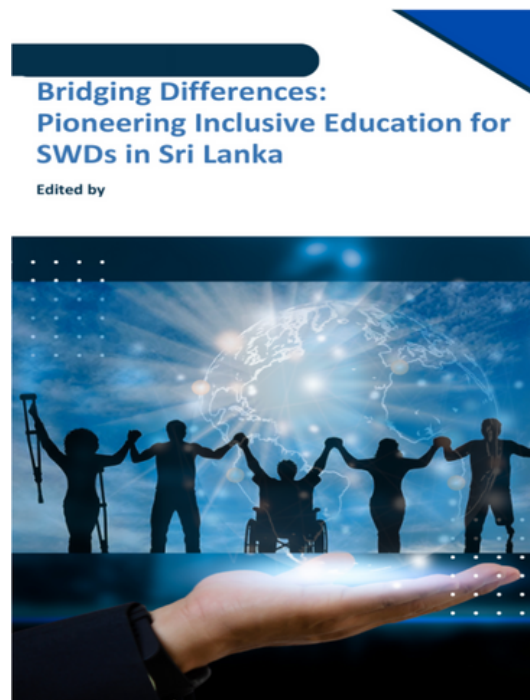
University of Ruhuna

- The team met with the Vice-Chancellor, signed a partnership agreement between the two institutions, and met with the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- They presented the center for students with special needs to staff and students.
- The team also discussed establishing an Erasmus agreement in the field of Sociology with the teaching staff of the Department of Sociology.

The visits were successful in promoting the IncEdu project and its goals to the Sri Lankan education community, and in establishing new collaborative partnerships.



Publication of E-Book: Pioneering Inclusive Education for Students With Disabilities



The IncEdu project is currently editing an eBook titled "Pioneering Inclusive Education for Students With Disabilities." The book will be published at the conclusion of the project and will serve as a valuable guidebook for making education more accessible and breaking down barriers for students with disabilities in Sri Lankan higher education.

The book covers a wide range of topics, including innovative technologies, transformative attitudes, and policies that can be adopted to promote inclusivity. It also delves into the power of assistive technologies, the impact of aesthetics, and the intersection of human rights and aesthetics. Additionally, the book provides insights into diversity and inclusion mechanisms, social identities, and peer support.

"Pioneering Inclusive Education" is a significant step towards creating a world where every student can reach their full potential without any hindrances.

Knowledge Sharing Workshop was organized by Uppsala University

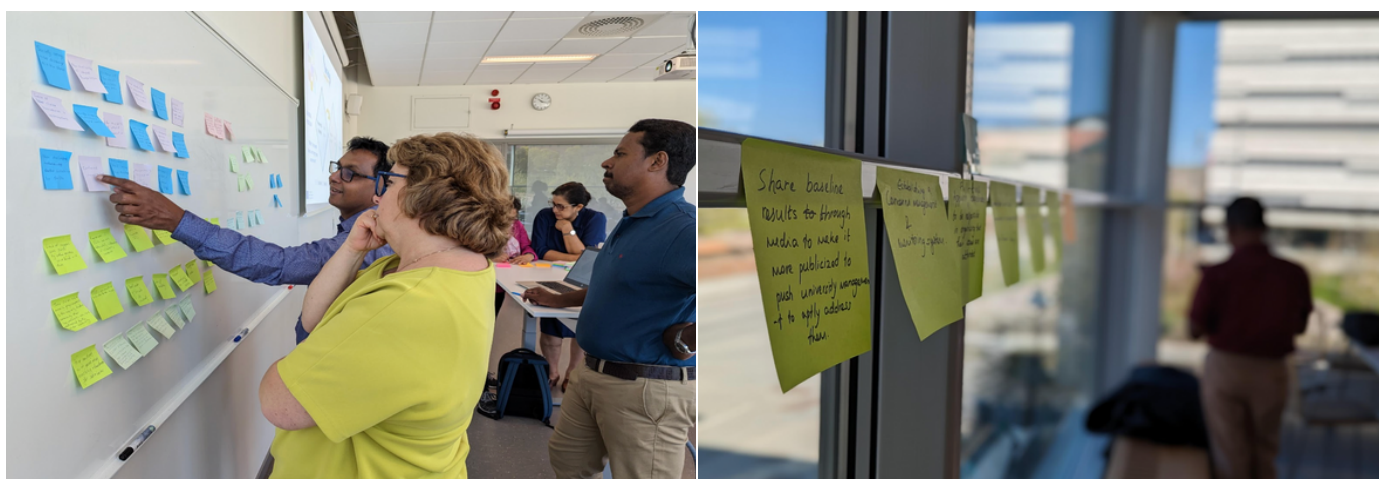
Uppsala University organized the Knowledge Sharing Workshop from May 8 to 12, 2023. The Uppsala program offered two tracks: one for the entire project team and one for Sri Lankan partners. The week-long program had two goals: to deepen participants' understanding of Uppsala University's approach to supporting students with disabilities and to co-create awareness-raising initiatives tailored to the specific local contexts of each Sri Lankan partner.

Unifying Goals and Crafting Solutions in Design Thinking Workshop

From May 10 to 12, 2023, the workshop shifted its focus to project activities involving all partners. The schedule included a project meeting to provide updates and align goals and strategies. An inspiring highlight was the opportunity for project members to participate in segments of the International Staff Week (ISW) program on inclusive education. Professor Anoma Abhayaratne, project coordinator for IncEdu, gave a session on "Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities," contributing to the wider international discourse on inclusive education.

One of the key aspects of the program was a two-day Design Thinking Workshop, geared toward identifying and selecting activities to build awareness for students with disabilities at respective universities.

Participants in the two-day Design Thinking Workshop were guided through the process of identifying challenges, devising solutions, and formulating objectives for activities to build awareness for students with disabilities at their respective universities. This approach ensured that the strategies were tailored to the specific needs of each local context.



Knowledge Sharing Workshop was organized by Uppsala University

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One essential component of the workshop was the keynote presentation by Dr. Åsa Konradsson Geuken, which shed light on the importance of destigmatizing disability in order to create more inclusive universities.

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On the final day of the workshop, Sri Lankan partners reconvened the International Staff Week program, actively engaging in sessions centered around student inclusion in theory and practice, the complexities and potentials of teaching inclusion, and the role of student influence at Uppsala University.



The Knowledge Sharing Workshop in Sweden, a part of the Erasmus+ project IncEdu, has again highlighted the unwavering commitment of all partners towards fostering awareness and promoting a more inclusive education. The collaborative approach, complemented by site visits, discussions, and focused workshops, has not only enriched our joint understanding of inclusive education, but has also equipped us with practical tools, such as design thinking and student engagement strategies, to facilitate transformative changes within our academic domains.

RUICHSS 2023

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna organized International Conference on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education on 14th September 2023.

The guest speaker was Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena(Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna).The keynote speaker was Professor Lelia Kis Glavas(Department of Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb, Croatia)



Peradeniya Training Session: Seminar was titled "Ability and Disability: Human Rights Perspectives"

The IncEdu Project team of the University of Peradeniya organized a seminar on October 25, 2023, at 2:00 PM in the Faculty of Arts. The seminar was titled "Ability and Disability: Human Rights Perspectives" and was conducted in conjunction with the Arts Faculty Seminar Series 2023. Professor Deepika Udagama was the speaker, and Dr. Samanmala Dorabawila moderated the event.

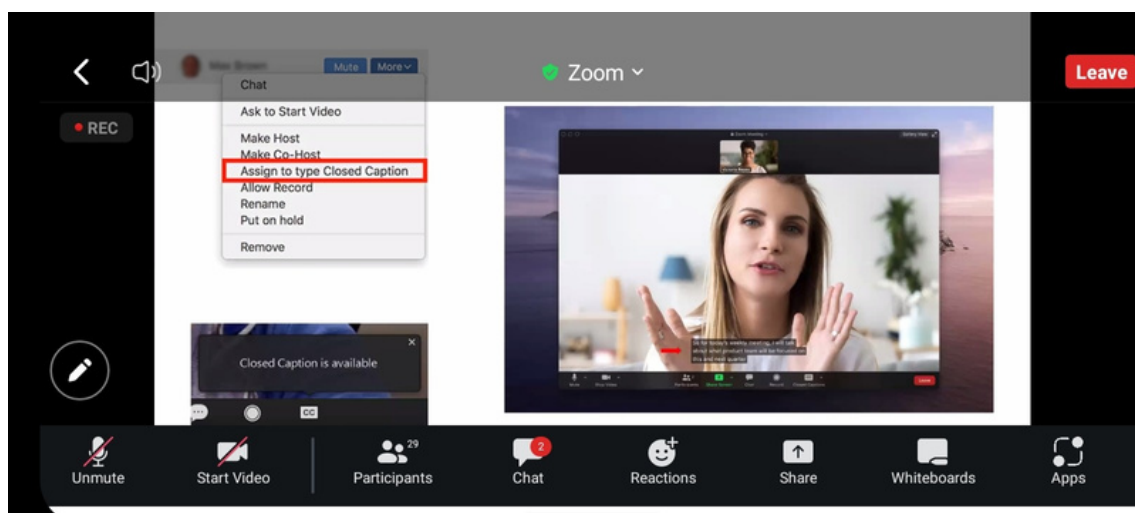
The seminar explored the human rights of people with disabilities from a variety of perspectives, including law, education, and social justice.

Professor Udagama's talk focused on the international legal framework for the protection of the rights of people with disabilities, while Dr. Dorabawila discussed the challenges faced by people with disabilities in Sri Lanka and the need for greater awareness and understanding of their rights.



Sri Lanka Technological Campus (SLTC) Held Training of the Trainers (ToT) and Knowledge Sharing Sessions

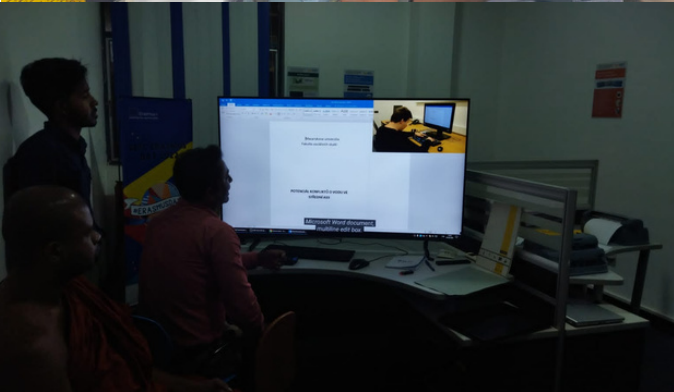
On October 12, 2023, the Sri Lanka Technological Campus (SLTC) held a Training of the Trainers (ToT) and Knowledge Sharing Sessions under the EU ERASMUS + projects IncEdu. The event took place from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM via Zoom.



Training of the Trainers (TOT) and Knowledge Sharing Practical Sessions at SLTC

SLTC hosted two Training of Trainers (TOT) and Knowledge Sharing Practical Sessions on 26 and 27, 2023, as part of the EU Erasmus+ IncEdu project. The sessions were held at the Special Needs Resource Centre (SLTC Meepe) from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. Participants were required to bring their laptops.

The sessions covered a range of topics, including: inclusive education practices, technology-enhanced learning, assessment for learning and Professional development for educators. The sessions were led by experienced trainers from SLTC and other partner organizations. Over 100 educators participated in the two sessions and gained valuable insights into the IncEdu project and its innovative teaching and learning practices.





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