HE4u2: a project to integrate cultural diversity into HE – "inclusiveness (…) is a matter of the heart"

Isabel Menezes U.PORTO

Final Symposium of the HE4u2 project

Barcelona, 15 November 2018

What were we aiming to?
From research and practice to policy ...

▶ perform a **meta-analysis of existing literature and good practices** on **teaching and learning** strategies for **culturally inclusive education** in higher education

▶ **survey of M&M students** and **develop innovative pedagogic interventions** in 21 different curricula and a set of guidelines for developing such curricula

▶ create a **Continuing Professional Development** course for **HE staff**

▶ produce a set of **policy recommendations for HEIs** and national and European **policy makers**

WP1 Stocktaking phase
- Desk research
- Transversal analysis

WP2 Curriculum development
- Draft design
- Survey
- Testing
- Guidelines
- Finalisation and translation

WP3 Course Design
- Draft design
- Survey
- Course
- Finalisation and transition

WP4 Policy dimension
- Desk research and analysis
- Draft paper and on-line consultation
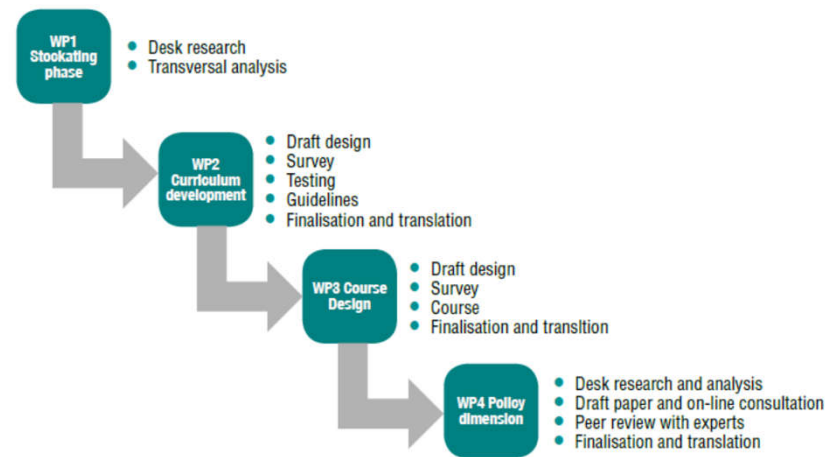- Peer review with experts
- Finalisation and translation

Figure 1: Work package (WP) structure and related deliverables of HE4u2 (Royo, Uras 2016)

Review of existing literature

Menezes, I, Lopes, A, Azevedo, CN, Amorim, JP, Pais, SC & Neves, T (2016). Literature review. In Menezes, I, Lopes, A, Amorim, JP, Neves, T, Pais, SC & Soeiro, A on behalf of the HE4u2 consortium (Ed.), WP1 Stocktaking, Final report.
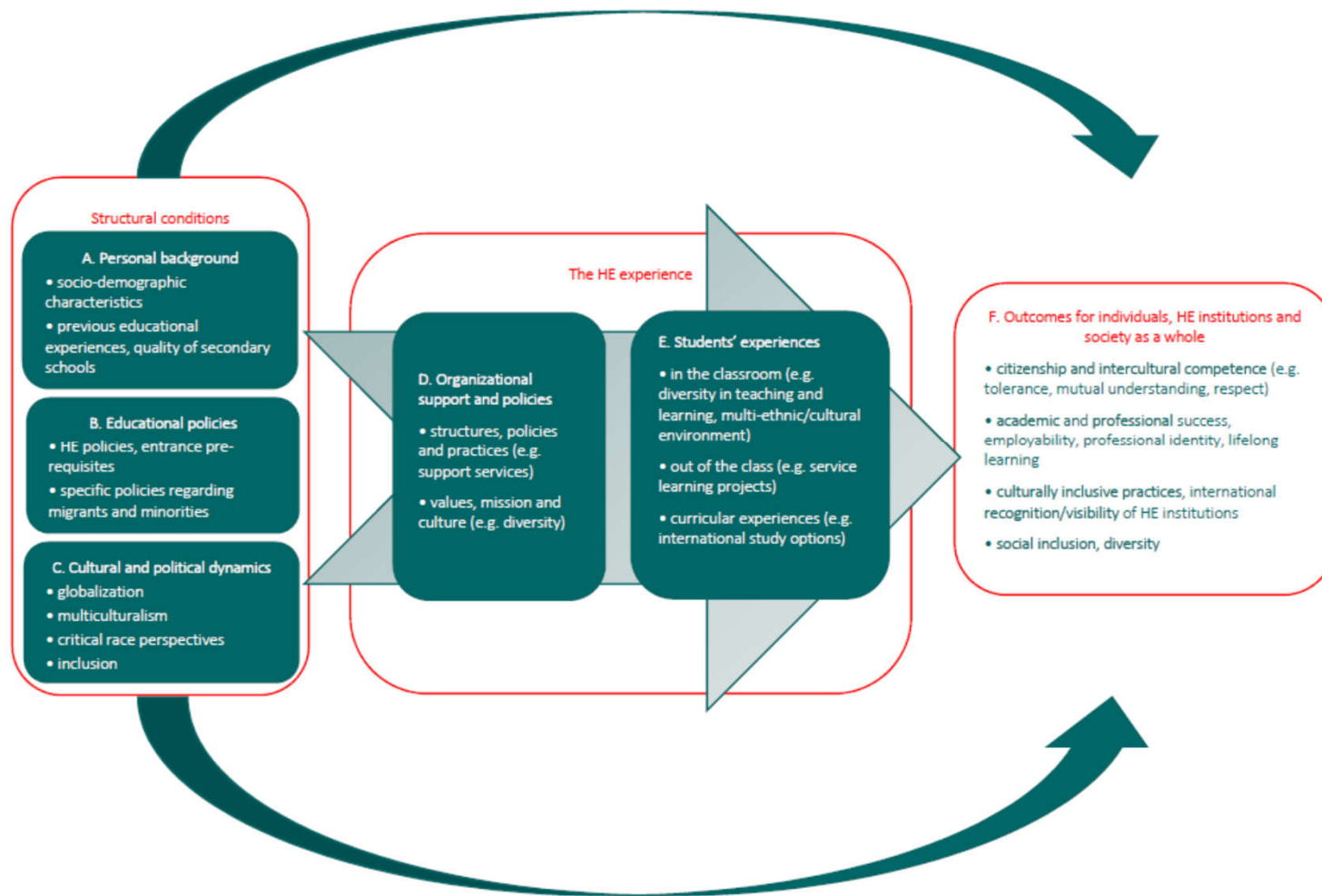
Review of existing good practices

Pais, SC, Amorim, JP, Soeiro, A & Lopes, A (2016). Good Practice collection. In Menezes, I, Lopes, A, Amorim, JP, Neves, T, Pais, SC & Soeiro, A on behalf of the HE4u2 consortium (Ed.), WP1 Stocktaking, Final report.

▶ **Research** about M&M students and their experiences, concerns and goals

▶ **Disseminating useful information**: about job opportunities, but also manuals/tutorials to promote knowledge and competences relevant for students, teachers, staff and other stakeholders on issues of diversity and migration

▶ **Language and intercultural training**

▶ Intervention projects: **peer mentoring**, **intercultural get together**, **support groups**, **multidisciplinary and multicultural study groups**

▶ Policies: **scholarships**, combination of **financial support with language training**, **recognition of prior learning** and **skills development**

Survey of students on their experience in HE i.

Fitzsimons, C, Grummell, B & Noone, M with input from Partners of HE4u2 (2017). Integrating Cultural diversity in Higher Education. Summary report from Work Package 2

- **from omission to a 'single [negative] story' of the 'other'**
  - "I am not represented in any place"
  - "In lecture scripts and curricula events are being looked at and analysed with a Eurocentric view, for example the conquest of America where the mass murder or native literature is not being dealt with. It is not about my cultural background, but it affects everyone else."
  - "I feel like the lecturers and modules content keeps talking about the 'Third World', and every disease or disasters seems to be coming from there"
  - "Merely based on where I come from (X), people allow themselves to assume they know who I am … What is challenging is the expectation of me (as a mere example of an "other") to accommodate their presuppositions about myself."
  - "They tend to consider all Asians as a group, even though they distinguish Europeans from different countries."
- **from undercover identities to not feeling "exotic"**
  - "I've learned to go through it as a "NATIONAL of the country" even if I do not feel like one. So far I have had no inclusiveness difficulties."
  - "for me was the feeling of belonging to XXX University without constantly highlighting my ethnic background, diversity and being exotic"

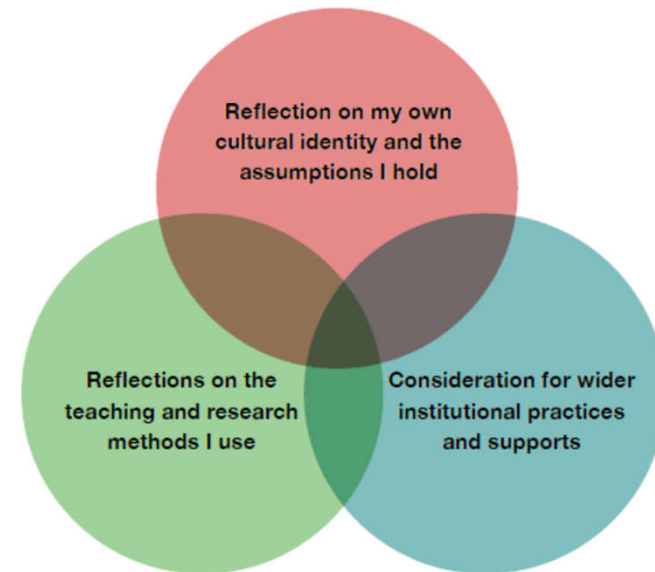# Survey of students on their experience in HE ii.

Fitzsimons, C, Grummell, B & Noone, M with input from Partners of HE4u2 (2017). Integrating Cultural diversity in Higher Education. Summary report from Work Package 2

▶ "**Consult** with all the ethnic minority groups in the institution and draw up a road map on how best to integrate their culture and ethnic programme into the main stream curriculum in order to address any short falls"

▶ "A **deep analysis of racism** from the perspective of black people directly …"

▶ "Lessons could also be structured with **compulsory group work** that mandates working with at least one "minority" member."

▶ "Only with more people living together and expressing the tensions of everyday life it would be possible to better know what to do. **Without differences, it's hard to think about the changes.**"

▶ "This **inclusiveness is not a matter of a university program, it is a matter of heart, of resident's hospitality.** It is not a value that can theorize, (…) [these] are behaviours, attitudes, and ways of treating the foreigner more than we treat ourselves, even if we retain in our culture that to treat well the other"

▶ "… **each person was able to tell about their own cultural background.** The teacher as well as the students were **very open towards the cultural diversity** of all participants, each was **understanding** of and **interested** in the others. That made me feel **welcome.**"

Guidelines for creating intercultural learning environments

Fitzsimons C., Finn J., Grummell B., on behalf of the HE4u2 consortium (Ed.) (2017): *Creating intercultural learning environments – Guidelines for staff within Higher Education Institutions*

- **[self]** : "reflection on **own cultural identity and assumptions**"

- **[teaching]** : "**use of language; participatory teaching methods; AND curricular change - inclusion** of relevant information about ethnic and racial groups, **question** racialized stereotyping, include literature and research **beyond the Global North**, reflect **diversity**"

- **[institutional level]** : "**institutional reforms and adoption of policies** that **value integration** and **confront racism and discrimination,** recognize **international qualifications and prior learning** AND foster the creation of **spaces where M&M students feel represented, recognized and listened to**"

Reflection on my own cultural identity and the assumptions I hold

Reflections on the teaching and research methods I use

Consideration for wider institutional practices and supports

Principles underpinning the CPD course

Halttunen, T, Lundqvist, K, Acquah, E on behalf of the HE4u2 consortium (Ed.) (2018): *Integrating Cultural Diversity in Higher Education - A Generic Structure for a Continuing Professional Development course*.

- "awareness of one's **own cultural background and interest for other cultures**, as well as cultural diversity

- **shift of cultural frames of reference**

- **change in attitude and propositions** towards e.g. minorities

- use of the cultural heritages, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students as resources to **facilitate and enrich the learning process of all students**"

- **Intercultural Competences in Learning and Teaching**
  - *Omission, underrepresentation or distortion of discriminated groups, including from an historical perspective*
  - *Stereotyping*
  - *Language bias*

- **Teaching and Learning Strategies**
  - *Active and collaborative learning*
  - *Reflective practice*
  - *Dialogic learning and teaching*
  - *Inclusiveness*

Policy recommendations

Bernal Gonzalez, A; de Viron, F; Souto Lopez, M; on behalf of the HE4u2 consortium (Ed.) (2018): *Policy recommendations on better integrating cultural diversity in Higher Education-Full report*)

▶ "Promoting the integration of cultural diversity into HE: Celebrate human **diversity**; Commit to **active diversity management;**

▶ Integrating cultural diversity into HE: Promote **open access** to and **success** in HE; Integrate **diversity into curricula**; **Train diversity skills** (pedagogical approaches); **Collaborate** to solve intercultural questions

▶ Sustainability for integration of cultural diversity into HE: Ensure **sustainability**; **Embed diversity** in **strategy** papers and **quality** plans; Provide **incentives and (financial) resources**; **Monitor the impact** of diversity policy"

"Con mi viaje a Europa – en mi caso en 1957, cruzando el Atlántico en barco -, **nos descubríamos "latinoamericanos" o no ya "europeos", desde que desembarcamos en Lisboa o Barcelona. Las diferencias saltaban a la vista y eran inocultables.** Por ello, el problema cultural se me presentó como obsesivo, humana, filosófica y existencialmente: "¿Quiénes somos culturalmente? ¿Cuál es nuestra identidad histórica?". No era una pregunta sobre la posibilidad de describir objetivamente dicha "identidad"; era algo anterior. **Era saber quién es uno mismo como angustia existencial.**"

Enrique Dussel, 2005

Ways forward ... towards a pluriversity where we are all exotic selves?

▶ for various social and political reasons, M&M students **still experience a strong structural disadvantages in terms of access and progression in HE** –resulting in weakening the intercultural leaning climate for ALL students

▶ need to recognize that **racism and discrimination are still huge problems** in HEI that must be actively fought

▶ **need for a dialogical perspective BUT beware of the illusion of symmetry** – there are significant asymmetries of power between the diverse groups that occupy HEI : 'diversity within diversity' (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, nationality...)

*"By pluriversity, many understand **a process of knowledge production that is open to epistemic diversity**. It is a process that does not necessarily abandon the notion of universal knowledge for humanity, but which embraces it via a horizontal strategy of openness to dialogue among different epistemic traditions. **To decolonize the university is to therefore to reform it with the aim of creating a less provincial and more open critical cosmopolitan pluriversalism** – a task that involves the radical refounding of our ways of thinking and a transcendence of our disciplinary divisions."* (Mbembe, 2016, pp. 36-7)

Thank you!

HE4u2: a project to integrate cultural diversity into HE –
"inclusiveness (…) is a matter of the heart"

Isabel Menezes WITH José Pedro Amorim, Johnny Baltzersen, Amandine Bernal, Sofia Castanheira Pais, Pat Davies, Françoise de Viron, Josephine Finn, Camilla Fitzsimons, Bernie Grummell, Timo Halttunen, Barbara Hermans, Beate Hörr, Amelia Lopes, Kia Lundqvist,Tiago Neves, Agnes Raschauer, Katharina Resch, Carme Royo, Alfredo Soeiro, Iris Thimm, Francesca Uras, Leena Vanhakyla and Georgios Zarifis