

## Together for an inclusive society Aware and active students against discrimination

### 1. Context

**University of Bucharest (UB)**, through its institutional development and research strategies (2020-2023), through the creation of the new Office for Inclusion, Equity and Equal Opportunities, and through the adoption of the Gender Equality Plan, has set itself several development objectives such as the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups and individuals, objectives to which the project **"Together for an inclusive society. Aware and active students against discrimination"** will contribute in a sustained way by **carrying out research in the field of discrimination** and **by developing a practical guide** for the institution's students.

In 2022, the feminist NGO FILIA Center published a report on harassment and gender discrimination in the university environment from which the need to build a safer space for female and male students emerges, but it does not cover the area of discrimination against migrant or minority students. Guidelines and recommendations for secondary and secondary education for teachers, or for the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace for employees, have been drawn up following research in the academic or voluntary sector which has revealed multiple and intersectional discriminatory situations. The few guides on gender equality in the Romanian academic sphere are too little addressed to students.

Since the start of the **UNDETERRED** project of the Horizon Europe program, we have launched **a survey among students to identify inequalities of treatment affecting young people at the UB** in the training, employment, health and housing sectors. Informal discussions with some of the students and student associations revealed a lack of awareness of the issue, with discrimination being understood only as unequal treatment between women and men or discrimination against ethnic groups. Comparing with the situation in the other countries of the project where the survey was launched at the same time and had a higher success rate (Bordeaux, Lausanne), we realize that the existence of **a friendly guide for Romanian students** would lead to a real understanding of the phenomenon and their active involvement in preventing and combating discrimination.

### 2. Objectives of the project

**The project has two clear objectives.**

- Through the conducted research, we will contribute to the documentation and diagnosis of the phenomenon of discrimination in the university and thus to the development of appropriate and relevant strategies and methodologies, thus developing university policies in terms of diversity and equal opportunities.
- The **guide for students** will represent an **institutional tool** for informing and supporting students in identifying discrimination and taking action to eliminate the phenomenon. The University of Bucharest, through the IncluUB project, has realized training modules for employees on social inclusion and access to quality education, but it does not have such a tool created for students and covering all types of discrimination, as such the project will contribute to the development of institutional capacity for the elimination of unequal treatment.

Identifying the content that responds to the needs and behaviours of students will fundament a guide that will be available in Romanian, French and English and accessible to foreign students. The research and the guide can be further adapted by all Romanian universities according to the problems faced by their students. The guide will be an awareness-raising, learning and action tool for students who do not know how to detect situations of discrimination in which they find themselves or to which they may unconsciously subject others.

The guide will include essential elements to prevent and eliminate discrimination. First we will define all types of everyday discrimination. After that, we will give examples of common contexts of discrimination so that students do not associate discrimination only with certain characteristics (ethnic, sexual, physical, etc.). The technique will be *Appendix Probi*. We will add tools to combat discrimination and propose solutions (behaviors and steps to follow) in case of discrimination, as well as methods to eliminate traditional stereotypes that lead to intentional or unintentional discrimination. Last but not least, we will add free and easily accessible online information resources (in particular videos), as well as a list of national actors who can be contacted in case discrimination situations are not resolved through the guide. The guide, which will be regularly updated, will be available in digital format by accessing a QR code which will be distributed through the University's platform and tuition services to all students upon enrolment. We will create pages dedicated to the project on all social networks.

**The guide will be developed following qualitative research and discussions with students,** project partner associations (Foundations of Modern Thought (FME) Research Centre, Center for the study of equal opportunity policies (CPES), FILIA Center, Carusel Association, Romanian Center for Comparative Migration Studies (CSCM) in Cluj), university services responsible for the elimination of discrimination **and consultation with similar services in the universities participating in the UNDETERRED project.** As for students, we will organize focus groups and exploratory interviews, the main objective being to understand what knowledge they have about discrimination, what information they would need, what tools and services could help them and, subsequently, to develop further projects at UB to support students.

The research includes the possibility of researchers to travel to partner universities. Among the team members involved there will be: one master's student, two postdoctoral fellows, together with two scientific researchers and a university professor, specialist in gender studies and coordinator of the only professional master's degree in Romania in this field (who will provide methodological and practical expertise of the research).

Regular meetings will be organized with UB student associations, as well as with the project's partner associations and UB administrative services in order to test the ideas resulting from the documentation and to translate the online guide into an accessible and user-friendly format.

**The international visits** are designed as working and fact-finding visits to UNDETERRED partner universities and dissemination of the results at international conferences. The working visits will be aimed at consulting colleagues from member universities (researchers, administrative staff etc.), some of which already **have or apply different useful tools** for preventing or combating discrimination among students.