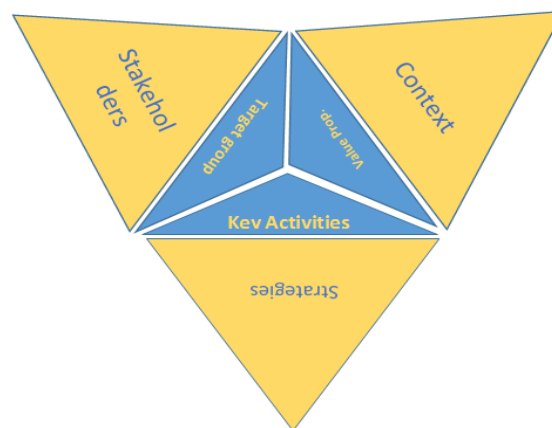


I04: ACCESS4ALL Strategy Planning - The Pyramid Inclusion Model



BACKGROUND

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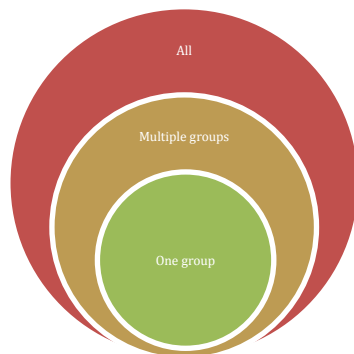
There are a myriad of policies and practices in relation to widening participation to under-represented groups in higher education institutions across Europe and in many parts of the world. These are enacted cross-nationally (EU), nationally such as the UK Education Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and at the institutional level. There is much that can be learned from shared practice, although the particular context, both national and institutional needs to be considered. Strategising – or understanding strategy process - as bridging environments and organisations, highlighting that what is important is not just the influence of the environment but also the active agency of individual organisations (Frolich et al, 2013). Furthermore, Adserias et al (2017) argue that a ‘full-range’ style of leadership is required and also a recognition of the importance of ‘grass-roots leadership’ at different levels of the organisation and call for a better understanding of how “institutional leaders might best align the efforts of faculty, staff and students to advance the diversity agenda” (p.328). Similar arguments are made by Frolich et al (2013), in their concept of ‘strategising’, which has been influential in the development of the A4A ‘Pyramid Inclusion Model’. They emphasise the “the complex and multi-level processes with strong intra-organisational bottom up and horizontal process, involving a broad group of intra-organisational members” (p.85) and see strategising as a *process*

rather than a focus on the content of strategy documents and plans. These ideas were influential in informing the A4A ‘Pyramid Inclusion Model’, which aimed to depart from the idea of laying of a fixed set of strategies and instead encourage reflection and planning through a dynamic interaction of stakeholders located within specific environmental and cultural organisations.

There is a range of terms used to understand the idea of widening participation of under-represented groups to higher education and in recent years there has been a move away from a focus solely on access to considering the development of more inclusive cultures within higher education, as indicated by Wray (2013) who states;

“One way of looking at these definitions is to suggest that the focus has moved away from identifying specific sub-groups of students and towards the structure, processes and practices within the institution which create barriers to equitable experiences”

It is possible, therefore, to think about inclusion as a nested process (adapted from Wray, 2013) as follows;



Further ideas about inclusive cultures within universities is explored by the UK Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and their concept of ‘inclusive environments’, where they provide tools “to design inclusive support services, develop accessible campus environments and make everyone feel welcome at your institution”.

A4A ‘PYRAMID INCLUSION MODEL’

The A4A ‘Pyramid Inclusion Model’ has been constructed to help key stakeholders within higher education institutions (HEIs) develop strategies and plans for widening access to higher education for students from under-represented groups, increasing

inclusive practices and ensuring success for all students. It is an interactive and dynamic model that allows institutional stakeholders to consider their current context and circumstances in relation to inclusion and provides helpful prompts for reflection on key development goals and positive action that can be taken. The ‘Pyramid Inclusion Model’ is linked to the Bank of Good Practices (IO2), where a myriad of examples from institutions across all the countries are explained in detail. It is also linked to the A4A Self-Assessment Tool (IO3), which enables institutions to complete an audit of the institutional culture and current practices. The model encourages diverse groups of individuals from across the university to meet and discussion key questions and strategic ideas in relation to a number of questions. The model is intended to be dynamic and a cut-out version is shown in Appendix 1 and how it can be utilised when constructed is shown in Appendix 2a and 2b. Each institutional group is encouraged to use the model to explore the questions and how they relate to their own university and to use it to develop new strategic ideas and plans.

There are key questions which guide the model for all HEIs to consider as follows;

1. **Environment** - what do we have (including context, policies, practices, stakeholders and resources)?
2. **Aspirations** - what do we want (what are our aspirations as an HEI for inclusion)?
3. **Evaluation** - how will we evaluate our activities and practices?

Environment – what do we have?

Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the European Policy context to inform the development goals? • Are there any laws and legislation relating to equality for all? • What is the National Policy Context relating to widening access? • How can these enable or constrain the development goals? • How do these development goals align with any European, National Policy and legislation? • What social justice principles inform practices and
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	<p>strategies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What relevant institutional organisational aspects exist? • What relevant institutional cultural dimensions exist? • What institutional resources, infrastructure and funding are available?
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the key stakeholders that might inform the development goals? • Who are these stakeholders and how can these stakeholders be involved? e.g. students, academic staff, university leaders and policy makers etc. • Internal and External stakeholders (within and outwith the university) e.g. health services, counselling etc...potentially lots of stakeholders depending on the development goals.
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional strategies for widening access to higher education for under-represented groups. • Institutional inclusive practices. • Use of technology to improve access and inclusion within the institution. • Evaluation of institutional practices of inclusion and widening access. • Examples of good practices to inform change.

Aspiration – what do we want?

Development Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the development goals? • What issues or problems need to be considered? • What might the challenges of achieving these goals?
Target Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main target group or groups? • How will the activities change things for the target group or wider group? • Are we considering the needs of all students (or university actors/agents) regardless of whether they are

	classified as being at a disadvantage currently?
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What key activities for your development goals are required? • How can these activities be actioned? • How can these be aligned, embedded within current activities? • What resources are needed for these activities?

Evaluation

Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information needs to be collected? What do you need to know? What is required by the HEI and stakeholders? (e.g. participants, diversity among participants, variety of services and activities, satisfaction, meet of stated objectives, etc.) • How will you know what has been achieved (criteria, indicators, standards)? • Who is going to take part in the evaluation plan? • How will relevant information/data be collected? (e.g., institutional records or indicators, survey, interviews, etc.) • When will the evaluation be developed? When do feedback and reports need to be provided? How are the evaluation results going to be shared with stakeholders?
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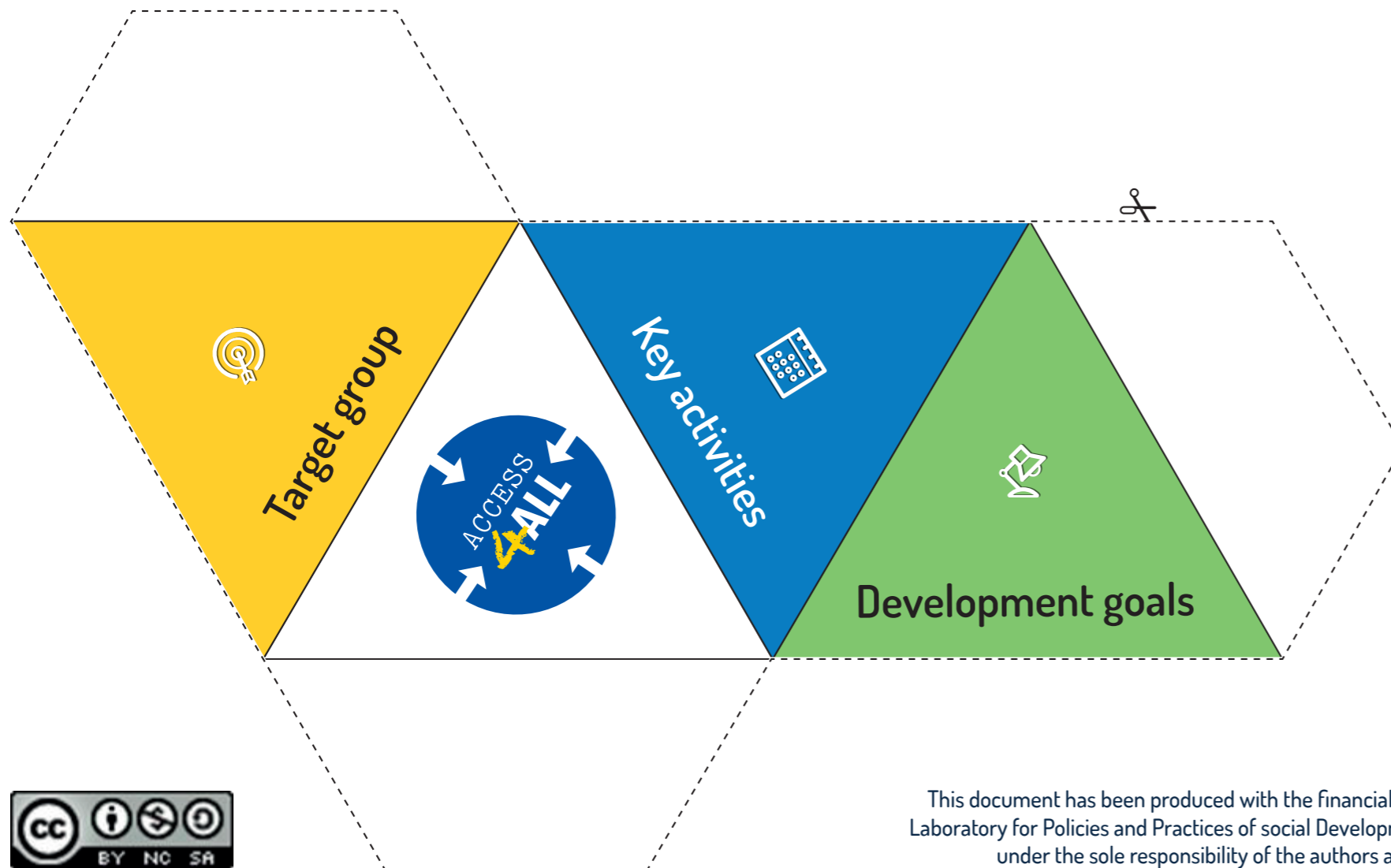
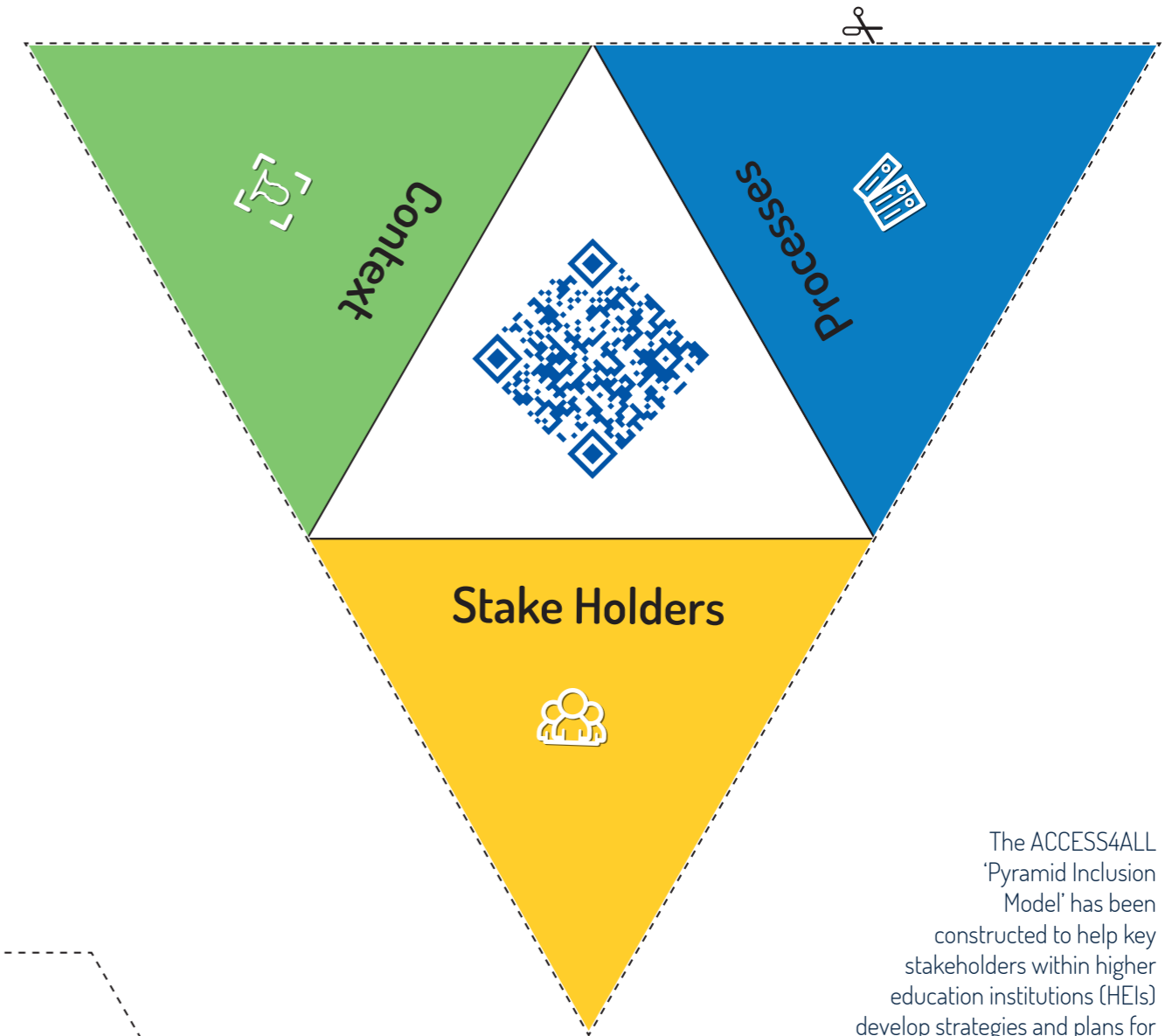


Erasmus+

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- 1. Environment** - what do we have (including context, policies, practices, stakeholders and resources)?
- 2. Aspirations** - what do we want (what are our aspirations as an HEI for inclusion -development Goals, target groups and key activities-)?
- 3. Evaluation** - how will be evaluate our activities and practices?



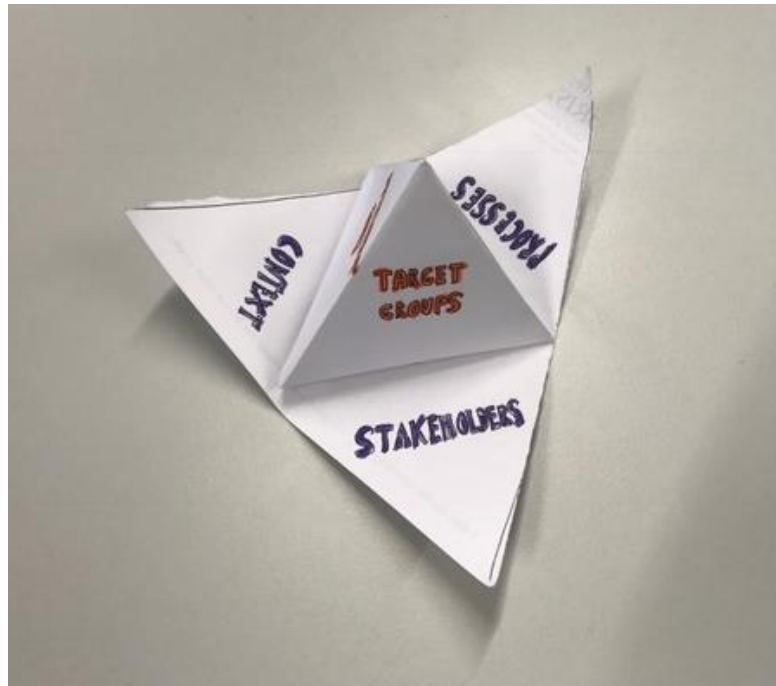
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Appendix 2a – Dynamic Interaction with the Pyramid Inclusion Model

The photographs below depict the 3D modelling of the ACCESS4ALL Pyramid Inclusion model to demonstrate how its use should be dynamic and interactive.



Appendix 2b – Dynamic Interaction with the Pyramid Inclusion Model

