NIILS

New Approaches for Inclusive Informal Learning Spaces

INFORMAL LEARNING SPACES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

KEY FINDINGS

Objectives:

- provide data on informal and non-conventional physical and hybrid learning spaces available for and used by higher education students from different social groups in different European countries and regions.
- develop recommendations and guidelines for learners, lecturers and university administration to mitigate existing inequalities and promote technologically enhanced inclusive informal learning environments in HE.

Within the NIILS Project:

1. Focus groups were conducted with stakeholders, lecturers and students to learn more about ILSs at our universities.
2. Student survey was conducted to investigate the relationship between ILSs and various student factors (satisfaction with campus, sense of belonging, interpersonal relationships, and well-being).
3. An online platform providing information and photos about ILSs at our universities was developed.
4. Walking interviews were conducted to develop and receive feedback about the online platform.
5. Workshops were organized to start learning communities about ILSs.
6. Guidance materials were prepared to promote inclusive ILSs.

NIILS web page

PROJECT CONSORTIUM:

University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria (Coordination)

Hochschule für Technick und Wirtschaft, Germany

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy

Akdeniz University, Türkiye

DONAU UNIVERSITÄT KREMS

htw Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin — ity of Applied Sciences

AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY 1982 ANTALYA

SAPIENZA Università di Roma

MRU MYKOLAS ROMERIS UNIVERSITY

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Let's improve INFORMAL LEARNING SPACES!

Key findings of the NIILS project
New Approaches for Inclusive Informal Learning Spaces (NIILS)

PLACES	PEOPLE	STRATEGIES
ILS* support social integration, well-being, satisfaction and commitment of students.	Stakeholder must be aware of the relevance and impact of ILS on students.	University strategies to promote ILS must overcome predominantly organizational barriers

PLACES

Empirical evidence shows that availability and accessibility of ILS crucial to support students:

Availability and accessibility of ILS promote social integration of students.

Social integration is a relevant aspect to **establish networks and mutual support** among students (Berger & Milem, 1999).

The better the availability and accessibility of ILS, the greater social integration and well-being of students.

Social integration **decreases dropout rates and increases commitment and satisfaction** of students (Tinto, 1975).

Students with fewer opportunities (SWFO) perceive ILS as significantly less available and accessible.

SWFO face additional **challenges caused by exclusion factors**, which represents disadvantage (Salto-Youth Inclusion Resource Centre, 2014)

PEOPLE

Multiple stakeholder assure and improve the availability and accessibility of ILS:

executives / decision makers

Executives, like university board, university management, third-party funder, policy leader, policy maker, have a crucial role to play when dealing with limitations and in **creating a sense of urgency** within the university (Ninnemann et al. 2020)

enabler / practitioners

Practitioners, like student services, student council, educational development, library, ICT management, facility managment, communication and public relation, can be viewed as **change agents**, since they often know who to involve and where resistance is likely to arise (Ninnemann et al. 2020).

user / contributers

The contributors' history, of students, lecturer, researcher, faculty staff and administration staff, might be long or short in the university, but it is their experiences and engagement which are **invaluable for change creation** and for informing executives and practitioners (Ninnemann et al. 2020).

STRATEGIES

Divers organizational strategies ensure the availability and accessibility of ILS:

Providing information and transparency to support the availability and accessibility of ILS.

A **mapping platform** provides an **overview of ILS** and can also provide furher data (e.g. preferences, occupancy rates, etc.)

Strengthening communication and networks to enhance the availability and accessibility of ILS.

Establising a learning community to integrate all stakeholder groups to discuss innovative and sustainable activities and measurements.

Activating multiple places as ILS to support the usability of the campus as a learning environment.

To develop the **university campus as a learning environment for students** it is needed a variety of ILS, an appropriate number of ILS as well as a decent quality of ILS.

LS - informal learning spaces / **More information and detailed research insights you can find on the project webpage:** 🌐 NIILS web page