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# HEDforALL – Holistic Approach to Higher Education for All

https://hedforall.eu/

# Newsletter No. 2

Welcome to the second issue of the **HEDforALL project** newsletter, a pivotal resource dedicated to fostering advancements in Accessibility in Higher Education. This edition reaffirms our unwavering dedication to disseminating innovative insights and collaborative efforts that are crucial in enriching the educational landscape.

In this issue, we are excited to introduce **Prof. Konstantinos Papadopoulos**, the esteemed Project Coordinator, whose visionary leadership is steering the HEDforALL project towards groundbreaking achievements. Engage with an exclusive interview where Prof. Papadopoulos addresses three pressing questions, offering profound reflections and forward-looking perspectives on the future of Accessibility in Higher Education.

Furthermore, we delve into the latest milestones achieved by the HEDforALL project, spotlighting the main results produced thus far, which are instrumental in shaping a more inclusive educational framework:

- **RES1**: Needs and Requirements of Students with Disabilities.
- **RES2**: Study: Knowledge and experience and skills of Teaching staff and Accessibility Advisors.
- **RES7**: Electronic Index.

Your engagement with the content is invaluable. We encourage you to immerse yourself in the insights presented, share your viewpoints, and actively participate in the ongoing dialogue. Your contributions are essential in our collective endeavor to cultivate a more inclusive, effective, and progressive educational ecosystem.

The **HEDforALL project** is supported by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action "Partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices", Action Type "Cooperation partnerships in higher education". Its duration is 36 months, from 01-02-2022 to 31-01-2025.

## Meet the HEDforALL Project Coordinator

Dr Konstantinos Papadopoulos is a full Professor in "Education of Individuals with Visual Impairments" at the Department of Educational and Social Policy of the University of Macedonia (https://www.uom.gr/en/kpapado). His PhD thesis concerned the Tactile Cartography and Tactile Maps for individuals with blindness. Dr. Papadopoulos has participated in 24 funded research projects. He was the project coordinator in 10 of them. His research interests focus on a range of vital subjects of education and rehabilitation of individuals with visual impairments, such as accessibility, assistive technology, tactile pictures and maps, audio-tactile material, orientation and mobility, spatial skills, adaptive behavior, social inclusion, social support, and transition assessment. Prof. Papadopoulos is the author or the co-author of 67 articles indexed in Scopus. Most articles are published in prestigious international scientific journals.

## Three questions to Dr. Konstantinos Papadopoulos

**What is the rationale behind the HEDforALL project?**

*"Today, accessibility to higher education is at the forefront of discussions at the international level and constitutes a key objective of policies that need to be implemented at the European level. However, in some cases, there is no accessibility to higher education or, when it exists, it is limited to specific fields and is not comprehensive. That is, it does not cover every case of a student with a disability and their every need. There is still a significant amount of work to be done, both at the level of research concerning the needs of students with disabilities and the staff of Higher Education Institutes, as well as in the development of skills for personnel to support holistic accessibility. This includes the production of any form of accessible educational material for every student with a disability."*

**What is the overall aim of the project?**

*"The HEDforALL project aims at improving the inclusion of students with disabilities (i.e., visual, hearing, physical, mobility impairments and learning difficulties) in Higher Education Institutes and support academic personnel to develop digital competences in order to cope with the students' needs on accessible resources and the shift to Digital Education (DE) and e-Learning. The ultimate aim of HEDforALL is the development of a set of educational material, development practices and DE/e-Learning methodologies for the implementation of digital education in higher education."*

**How does HEDforALL plan to achieve its objectives?**

*"The HEDforALL project aims to achieve its objectives by:*
*a) Taking into consideration the findings of ongoing research conducted for the first time within the project's framework.*
*b) Designing and developing educational materials that meet the needs of students with disabilities.*
*c) Evaluating the accessible educational materials to be developed.*
*d) Implementing training programs.*
*e) Establishing a repository of accessible educational materials.*
*f) Disseminating the findings to stakeholders."*

## RES1. Needs and Requirements of Students with Disabilities

The report details the activities and outcomes of the "Project Result 1 (RES1)" focusing on identifying the specific needs and requirements of Students with Disabilities (SwD) in higher education. It encompasses the types of adapted educational materials, necessary equipment, and awareness and usage of different material formats by SwD. The research was conducted in two phases: initial interviews to gather qualitative data, followed by questionnaires for quantitative insights. The report is structured into two sections, addressing the qualitative and quantitative findings respectively.

> ➢ Read the [RES1: Needs and requirements of Students with Disabilities](#).

## RES2. Study: Knowledge and experience and skills of Teaching staff and Accessibility Advisors

The report outlines "Project Result 2 (RES2)" which assesses the knowledge and skills of Teaching Staff and Accessibility Advisors in creating and utilizing adapted educational materials for Students with Disabilities (SwD). It explores their familiarity with assistive technologies, their involvement in distance education, and their capacity to produce and adapt materials for SwD. Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the educational support provided to SwD. The report is divided into two sections, detailing the qualitative and quantitative findings.

> ➢ Read the [RES2. Study: Knowledge and experience and skills of Teaching staff and Accessibility Advisors](#).

## RES7. Index of Accessibility Units

RES7 was crucial in establishing an "Accessibility Network" to connect various entities involved in HEI accessibility for SwD. It leveraged pre-existing end-user indexes from past projects, enhancing and broadening them to include a wider array of EU organizations and experts in accessible material production. The project aimed to compile a comprehensive, GDPR-compliant database of end-users, fostering a European "Accessibility Network" and facilitating international collaboration and information exchange on disability support.

> ➢ Navigate through the [Electronic Index](#).

## Project Partners

There are four partner organizations from four EU countries working together inside the HEDforALL project. All of them bring a different perspective to the project according to their profile.

**[University of Macedonia](#) (Greece)**
*COORDINATOR*

**[University of Alicante](#) (Spain)**

**[University of Cologne](#) (Germany)**

**National Research Council of Italy**
[Institute for Educational Technology (CNR-ITD)](#) (Italy)