



## Exploring inclusivity in entrepreneurship education provision: A European study

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores inclusivity in entrepreneurship education (EE) provision. This is an important area of research given the growth in EE provision globally and the intention for it to be a discipline and a competence accessible to everyone. Drawing on data from nine European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their respective entrepreneurship programs, our core research question asks: *how inclusive are European entrepreneurship education programs, and how might their inclusivity be enhanced?* Answering this question could help raise awareness of the need for inclusive EE, identify specific student cohorts who are potentially excluded and help widen EE participation generally. We contribute to the existing body of literature in this field by underscoring the significance of inclusivity in EE programs, proposing an adapted version of an existing inclusivity-proofing tool as a first step for HEIs on their inclusivity journey and offering insights designed to bolster HEIs' EE inclusivity efforts.

### 1. Introduction

Academic literatures highlight the diversity of entrepreneurship, likening it to a 'rich and multi-coloured tapestry' (Henry et al., 2021, p.609). Diversity adds an important dimension to entrepreneurial endeavours, enriching entrepreneurial teams, ensuring a wider spectrum of perspectives and enhancing entrepreneurial outputs. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the diversity of entrepreneurial actors (Birthing et al., 2022) resulting in entrepreneurship programs often exhibiting biases that marginalise groups such as women and ethnic minorities (Jones and Warhuus, 2018; Orser et al., 2023). This is also true of entrepreneurship policies which have excluded certain individuals due to a privileging of entrepreneurial types, sectors, or growth trajectories, or because they assume all entrepreneurs have the same experiences, challenges, and access to resources regardless of their context (OECD/European Commission, 2021, OECD-GWEP, 2021; Henry and Lewis, 2023). Such realisations have prompted increasing calls for inclusivity in entrepreneurship education, in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) (NUBS, 2022; OECD/European Commission, 2021; Orser and Elliott, 2022). This paper responds to these calls.

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Essential to this agenda is the systematic inclusivity-proofing of programs to ensure universal access to entrepreneurship education (EE) irrespective of personal characteristics (OECD/European Commission, 2021). Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategies are pivotal to such efforts. These strategies are designed to dismantle discrimination based on protected characteristics such as age, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation (Equality and Human Rights Commission<sup>1</sup>). Incorporating EDI principles into EE not only addresses unconscious biases but also mirrors the true diversity of entrepreneurship, thereby enhancing economic competitiveness and social impact. However, despite its importance, save for a few exceptions (see Jones and Warhuus, 2018; Orser et al., 2023; Bakker and McMullen, 2023), EE inclusivity is still relatively under-researched. In this paper, we aim to bridge this gap. Drawing on data from an EU-funded project, TANDEM+,<sup>2,2</sup> we employ scoring grids adapted from a Canadian EE inclusivity framework (Orser and Elliott, 2022) and interviews to assess the current state of inclusivity in EE within a selection of European HEIs. Our core research question asks: *how inclusive are European entrepreneurship education programs, and how might their inclusivity be enhanced?* In addressing this question, we contribute to the existing body of literature in this field by underscoring the significance of inclusivity in entrepreneurship programs, proposing an adapted method for inclusivity-proofing and offering insights to bolster HEIs' inclusivity efforts.

Addressing the complex and intersectional challenges of the inclusivity agenda, our study resonates with the call for a 'shared theoretical conversation about unconventional entrepreneurs' (Bakker and McMullen, 2023), crucial for aligning daily operations with the UN SDGs. We support the argument for collective learning and knowledge transfer to avoid silos and redundancy (Bakker and McMullen, 2023). To advance this dialogue, we adopt a pragmatic discursive approach triangulating insights from experienced entrepreneurship educators and researchers. Our author team is diverse, comprising mixed genders, cultures, ethnicities, and experiences drawn from six different countries and seven different nationalities, including an ethnic minority female entrepreneurship educator and an academic living with disabilities. Such diversity of perspective is critical, as empathy and understanding of 'hidden' marginalized learners are key to a serious EDI agenda (Morriña, 2019), as are a growth mindset and positive attitude towards entrepreneurial learning (Toding et al., 2023).

By adapting the Canadian inclusivity framework to the European context, we acknowledge historical cultural ties and distinct legal, educational, and psychological differences. This research thus pioneers thinking in this emergent area, offering novel insights and evidence to advance both theoretical and practical dimensions of the field.

## 2. Theoretical considerations and conceptual framework

Entrepreneurship has increasingly been seen as a positive phenomenon, a catalyst for economic growth and a necessary addition to educational curricula worldwide (Kuratko, 2005; Raposo et al., 2011). It is often viewed as a panacea for economic downturns, high unemployment rates, and thus continues to be promoted by most governments around the world (Bridge et al., 2023). Consequently, EE has increased in popularity in recent decades, as evidenced by the significant growth in the number of programs, PhDs, professorships, and EE centres, especially within Europe and the USA (Johannisson, 2016; Neck and Greene, 2021; Rogers-Draycott et al., 2024). While not entirely absent at the primary and secondary level, the growth of EE has been more prominent within the third level education sector (Jardim and Sousa, 2023) where EE provision has expanded across faculties, especially within in non-business disciplines such as science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths (STEAM) (Henry, 2023). As a result, as attested by influential scholarship, entrepreneurship educators have become acutely aware of the diversity of their student base. They realize that EE needs to be "designed through a thorough understanding of the profile and background of their audience" (Fayolle and Gailly, 2015, p.577), and they recognise the need to attend to different learner needs to ensure EE is 'open to everyone' (Bakker and McMullen, 2023; Orser et al., 2023).

EE scholarship has also grown in recent decades. To date, EE scholars have explored a range of topics relating to the theory and practice of entrepreneurs and how they learn (Jardim and Sousa, 2023), including EE curriculum frameworks (Blenker et al., 2008); entrepreneurial intention (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2023); social venturing as an EE context (Johannisson, 2016), and educators' attitudes (Toding et al., 2023). EE topics researched specifically within the EDI agenda include gender (Jones and Warhuus, 2018); youth (Agarwal et al., 2020); disability (Rolle et al., 2020); ethnicity (Gherardi and Perrotta, 2014); identity (Elliott et al., 2021); pedagogy and teacher training (Oksanen et al., 2023), and teaching unconventional entrepreneurs (Bakker and McMullen, 2023). At the policy level, the EE EDI agenda has been gaining momentum also, especially in the UK (AdvanceHE, 2020) and Europe (EU/OECD, 2022). However, despite this activity, little is known about how HEIs operationalize their EDI agendas within EE and whether their EE programs really are inclusive. Furthermore, integrating EDI principles into the education system is not easy; it requires dedication from relevant stakeholders, specialist expertise and structured support, as well as commitment from senior management in the form of EDI strategies and plans. Currently, there is a dearth of EDI evaluation tools and frameworks to aid the process. In Europe, the OECD/EU (2022) have recently developed a valuable inclusivity assessment tool to enhance entrepreneurship policy making for marginalized groups such as women, youth, migrants, senior and the unemployed. However, this tool is designed for use by policy makers and reg-

<sup>1</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, available at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics> (last accessed 7th December 2021).

<sup>2</sup> TANDEM + - "Transformation, Acceleration, Networking, Development, Entrepreneurship Education and Mentoring+" - is an EU funded project under the EIT HEI Initiative. It is an open entrepreneurship alliance for societal impact preparing individual talents and teams for entrepreneurial thinking and start-up. It promotes international exchange and creates a network of European universities and HEIs. TANDEM+ is part of the Start-for-Future (SFF) consortium, one of the fastest growing HEI/university entrepreneurship education consortiums in Europe (startforfuture.eu). Please note that in this paper we use the term 'HEI' to incorporate both universities and higher education institutions delivering education at third level.

ulatory bodies at local, regional, and national level, rather than individuals or HEIs.<sup>3,3</sup> In the UK, AdvanceHE - a major educational support body promoting excellence in higher education - has developed a range of accessibility tools to help HEIs create a more inclusive environment for their students. However, currently, these are offered in the form of advice via workshops or as best practice examples rather than self-assessment/reflection mechanisms (AdvanceHE, 2020). We contend that HEIs starting out on their EDI journey would benefit from reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses before attempting to apply any EDI learning to their own organisation. Accordingly, we posit that there is a need for a 'first step' EDI self-assessment/reflection tool that HEIs can easily apply to their own setting to get them started on their EDI journey.

We decided to use the Gender-Smart Entrepreneurship Education & Training Plus (GEET+) tool designed by Orser and Elliott, 2022 as our frame of reference. GEET+ is a comprehensive toolkit of resources developed to support the design of inclusive entrepreneurship education and training. We selected it because it is designed specifically for entrepreneurship programs and education & training providers and has a strong focus on gender. Furthermore, despite being relatively new, GEET + has also undergone some degree of testing and revision, which aids reliability. However, we felt it might be too complex for those HEIs at the early stages of their EDI journey and that the volume of score grids (7) and self-reflection statements (50) might deter new users. Also, given that our TANDEM + project focused on inclusive and sustainable EE, we wanted to incorporate ethnicity and the SDGs. We also needed to adapt some of the wording to the European context. Accordingly, we made several adaptations to the GEET + tool, which we explain and rationalize in Table 1.

### 3. Methodological approach

Consistent with the required deliverables of TANDEM+ , we created a Literature Review Repository (LRR) by performing a key word search ('inclusivity', 'gender', 'ethnicity', 'entrepreneurship education') of the relevant literature. This comprised academic articles, reports, websites, and assessment frameworks. We adopted a discursive approach amongst our author team to critically discuss the materials and triangulate insights, which helped lay the foundation for our empirical work and inform our draft framework. We also sought feedback from an international Expert Advisory Board (IEAB) prior to finalizing and applying our framework. This highly structured approach was necessary given our commitment to engaging relevant stakeholders and the tight project delivery schedule. Fig. 1 summarises our methodological approach.

While our resulting framework is informed by multiple literatures and tools, as we explain in section 2 above, it is mainly adapted from the Canadian GEET + framework but with a focus on the gender and ethnicity dimensions of entrepreneurship programs, as well as selected SDGs relative to the TANDEM + project. Our adapted version comprises two score grids - one institutional and one program - with detailed scoring guidelines (see Appendix I and II). Our Institutional Score Grid comprises 17 self-reflection statements categorised across four layers (Strategy, Expertise, Supports, Action), and our Program Grid comprises 20 self-reflection statements categorised across two dimensions (gender and ethnicity) and across four layers (Design, Promotion, Delivery and Assessment). We added the *Promotion* and *Assessment* layers because we recognised that promotional pathways influence the recruitment of diverse participant populations. We also acknowledge that a 'one size fits all' assessment approach does not suit all learner groups.

#### 3.1. Empirical study

To address our research question, we administered our *SFF GEF Institutional* and *Program Grids* to nine HEIs within our project consortium. Each *Institutional Grid* was completed by an academic manager ( $n = 9$ ) (at department head, faculty head or registrar level). Most of these managers indicated that, in completing the grid, they consulted with other colleagues across various departments within their HEI. Each *Program Grid* was completed by an entrepreneurship educator and was followed up with a semi-structured interview. Ten program grids and ten interviews were conducted in total, one per HEI and two for the Spanish HEI. The interviewees (six female and four male) were all experienced entrepreneurship educators and researchers at lecturer, assistant/associate professor, full professor, or subject manager level. The purpose of these interviews was to check the educators' understanding of the grids and to gain deeper insights into how they had assigned scores. Educators' perspectives were deemed particularly important in this study because they had the closest contact with EE learners. The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 min and covered eight questions exploring the perceived value of the grid, educators' perception of the relevance of question topics, their understanding of the terminology and scoring, the rationale behind their scores and their suggestions for improvement.

The nine HEIs were selected because they were part of the same EU consortium (TANDEM+/SFF), were familiar with the project, described themselves as 'entrepreneurial universities', and were willing participants. They were from the following countries: Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, and Spain. Data were collected in spring 2023. Table 2 summarises the profiles of the HEIs and the interviewees.

### 4. Findings

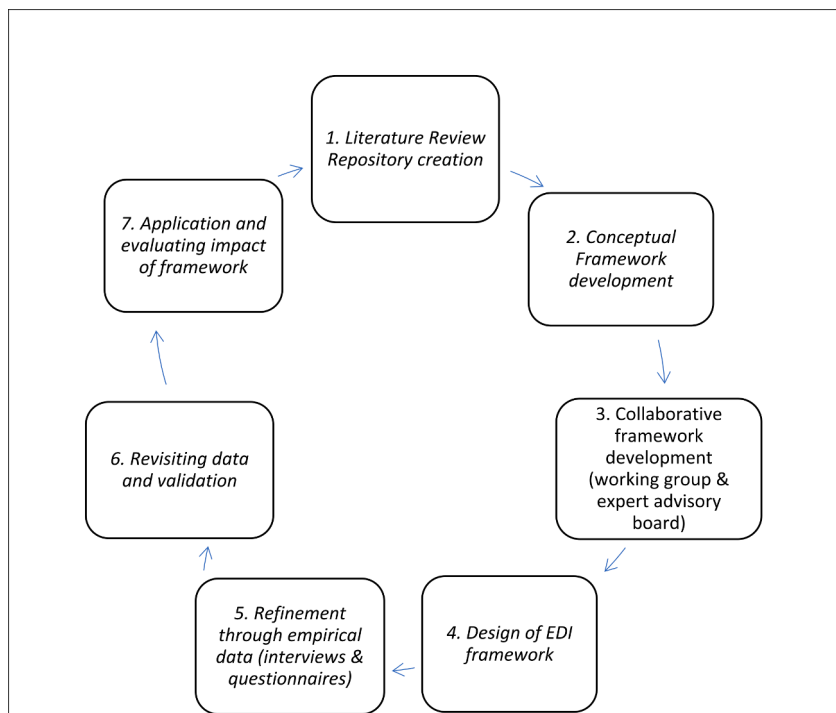
This section is structured into three parts: the first (4.1) presents our conceptual framework, as derived from the LRR findings; the second (4.2) presents the Institutional Perspective - findings related to the Institutional Score Grids, and the third (4.3) presents the Program Perspective - findings related to the Program Score Grids. The sub-headings used reflect the various sections/self-reflection statements of the grids and the interview question areas.

<sup>3</sup> The Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool comprises 37 self-reflection statements across six score grids focusing on culture, strategies, regulations, skills, finance and networks.

**Table 1**  
Adaptations made to the *GEET +* framework to create the *SFF GEF*.

| <i>GEET +</i> Framework   | Adapted Version - <i>SFF GEF</i>  | Justification for the Adaptation   |
|---|---|--|
| Seven different grids and 50 statements                           | Two grids and 38 statements   | We reduced the number of grids and statements to offer a more streamlined tool as we felt <i>GEET +</i> might be too comprehensive and time consuming for the European context where many HEIs are at the early stage of their EDI journey.  |
| Addresses program assessment in terms of 'evaluation and impact.' | Addresses program assessment in terms of 'mechanisms for assessing participants' course work' | 'Assessment' in the European educational context is synonymous with how participants' coursework (rather than the program) is evaluated. We wanted to focus on the extent to which program assessment mechanisms are inclusive and to encourage HEIs to reflect on how these are impacted by participants' gender and ethnicity. We felt that focusing on overall program effectiveness would potentially require a separate tool/framework. |
| No strategy focus   | Includes a focus on 'strategy.'   | We included 'strategy' because there is growing recognition of the importance of including EDI in HEIs' strategic plans.   |
| No SDG focus  | Includes a focus on specific SDGs   | We included the SDGs because there was a specific focus on these within the <i>TANDEM +</i> project and <i>Start for Future</i> consortium, and we wanted to tool to reflect this given the growing importance of the SDG agenda and its link to EDI.  |
| No 'Evidence' column  | Includes an 'Evidence' column   | We included an 'evidence' column to encourage institutions and program managers to go beyond 'box ticking' and provide evidence for their chosen score. This is an important addition to the tool when applying it in a European context specifically in view of the move by EU and national funding bodies to request gender equality plans (GEPs) as part of their criteria.   |
| No 'Remedial Action' column                                       | A 'Remedial Action' column was added  | We included a 'remedial action' column to encourage users to start thinking about the actions they might take to improve their institutions'/programs' EDI focus   |
| Robust scoring legend   | <i>GEET +</i> scoring legend used but adapted with different descriptors                      | We adapted the scoring legend to reflect the HEIs' potential early-stage inclusivity journey and the European context.   |

(Source: Authors)



**Fig. 1.** Seven step methodological approach. (Source: Authors)

#### 4.1. Conceptual framework

From our literature review repository, we identified the following key areas of EDI consideration in relation to entrepreneurship education, and incorporate these into our conceptual framework, as illustrated in Figure 2:

*Program Design:* it is important that marginalized entrepreneurs have access to supportive and tailored entrepreneurship programs that address the multifaceted challenges and complexities they face, such as access to resources, networks, and markets (Harrison, 2022; (Churchill and Bygrave, 1989); (Churchill and Bygrave, 1990); (Wickert et al., 2021)). To be effective, learning outcomes and content need to be adaptive, evidence-based and informed by research, policy, and practical insights from multiple participative stakeholders. The goal is to empower these entrepreneurs by systematically reducing barriers and fostering inclusivity in entrepre-

**Table 2**  
HEIs included in the study - entrepreneurship activities and interviewee details.

| HEIs<br>(n = 9) | Country                 | Year<br>established/number<br>of students | Entrepreneurship<br>education & related<br>activities  | Entrepreneurship<br>Educator interviewed<br>(level) (n = 10) | Entrepreneurship Educators'<br>Department/School/Faculty   | Specific program to<br>which the EE program<br>grid was applied by the<br>educator (n = 10) |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| HEI #1          | Bosnia &<br>Herzegovina | 2008/<3000                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business &amp; Management degrees with entrepreneurial components</li> <li>- Business Incubator</li> <li>- Business Development Club</li> <li>- E/pship conferences &amp; events</li> </ul>                             | Professor  | Dept. of Management  | TANDEM+/SFF E/pship program delivered at the HEI  |
| HEI #2          | Bulgaria                | 1920/11,000                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business &amp; Management program with e/pship stream</li> <li>- P/G Business/Finance programs with e/pship and innovation modules</li> <li>- Careers, E/pship &amp; Marketing Centre</li> <li>- Accelerator</li> </ul> | Assist. Professor  | Dept. of Management & Administration                       | E/pship Business Modelling  |
| HEI #3          | Croatia                 | 1975/15,000                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specialist program in entrepreneurship (Masters level)</li> <li>- Doctoral Studies in Entrepreneurship &amp; Innovativeness</li> <li>- International Centre for Entrepreneurship Studies</li> </ul>                     | Professor  | Faculty of Economics                                       | Entrepreneurship program  |
| HEI #4          | Germany                 | 1971/18,500                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E/pship education programs</li> <li>- E/pship start-up training</li> <li>- International e/p activities</li> <li>- Dedicated E/pship Centre</li> </ul>  | Professor  | Entrepreneurship Centre                                    | 'Real Projects' Entrepreneurship  |
| HEI #5          | Greece                  | 1920/11,000                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business &amp; Management degrees with e/pship components</li> <li>- E/pship education programs</li> <li>- Start-up Career Days</li> <li>- Accelerator/Centre for E/pship &amp; Innovation</li> </ul>                   | Entrepreneurship Education Manager                           | Centre for Entrepreneurship & Innovation                   | Innovation Design & Entrepreneurial Action (IDEAS)  |
| HEI #6          | Ireland                 | 1970/5000                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E/pship education programs (P/G)</li> <li>- E/pship start-up training</li> <li>- E/pship Research Group</li> <li>- On-campus Incubator</li> </ul>   | Lecturer   | Dept. of Business Studies                                  | Entrepreneurship for the Creative Industries  |
| HEI #7          | Italy                   | 1343/45,000                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E/pship education programs</li> <li>- E/pship start-up training</li> <li>- PhD Plus program with e/pship</li> <li>- On-campus Incubator</li> </ul>  | Professor  | Dept. of Agriculture                                       | Contamination Lab support program   |
| HEI #8          | Scotland                | 1964/15,000+                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E/pship education programs</li> <li>- E/pship start-up training</li> <li>- On campus start-up studio</li> <li>- Innovation hub</li> </ul>   | Assoc. Professor   | School of Management                                       | BA Business Management with Entrepreneurship  |
| HEI #9          | Spain                   | 2010/3650                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E/pship education programs</li> <li>- E/pship start-up training</li> <li>- Incubator</li> <li>- Business Park</li> <li>- Technological Centres</li> </ul>   | Interviewee #1<br>Professor<br>Interviewee #2<br>Professor   | Entrepreneurship competencies & occupations research group | Entrepreneurship & Innovation<br>Entrepreneurship   |

neurial ecosystems across the entire engagement/delivery process. A well-balanced diverse program team is critical to ensure an inclusive approach.

**Participant Diversity:** programs must inclusively attract diverse participants, ensuring no one is left behind (Rolle et al., 2020). Effective promotional strategies should utilize diverse imagery and language across digital platforms and engage community organizations to enhance reach (Smith & Jones, 2017; Moríña, 2019).

**Delivery Adaptation:** tailoring delivery to accommodate various learning styles is essential, incorporating methods like blended learning and ensuring facilitators and guest lecturers represent diverse backgrounds. Mentorship and support tailored to specific needs significantly enrich the learning experience (Blenker et al., 2008; Powell, 2013; Do Nguyen and Nguyen, 2023; Elliott et al., 2020).

**Inclusive Assessment:** assessment should fairly reflect diverse skills and include various formats to accommodate all learners (Smith et al., 2017), with feedback that is culturally sensitive (Meletiadou, 2022; Marchesani and Adams, 1992) (Fig. 2)

#### 4.2. Institutional Perspective

Several respondents commented that they had difficulty finding the right people within their organisation with the relevant knowledge to complete the Institutional Score Grid. This suggests that EDI responsibility might be spread across several functional areas within the organisation. Table 3 summarises the collective score frequencies for the Institutional Grids across the four areas of strategy, expertise, support, and actions. (See Appendix IV for additional key data related to participant responses).

##### 4.2.1. Strategy and SDGs

The self-reflection statements on strategy received the highest evaluations, with scores ranging up to 4 (average 3.22), underlining the recognition of EDI as pivotal to organizational strategies. This trend reflects an increasing global emphasis on EDI concerns (OECD/European Commission, 2021). Notably, institutions scoring 3 or 4 indicated that EDI is integral to their strategic development, evidenced by existing diversity policies or specific EDI strategies in countries like Bulgaria, Germany, Scotland, and Italy. Additionally, the Irish partner institution has appointed a Vice President dedicated to Diversity & Inclusion.

HEIs with lower strategy scores, such as those in Greece and Croatia, acknowledge the importance of EDI but have not yet fully integrated it into their broader strategies. Although these HEIs operate some EDI initiatives, there is recognition of the need for more comprehensive efforts. Notably, the alignment with the UN's SDGs in Learning & Teaching strategies received a low mean score of 2 across the nine institutions. Specific to SDG5 (Gender Equality), a relatively higher score of 3.2 was observed, reflecting substantial regional efforts to promote gender equality in higher education (NUBS, 2023).

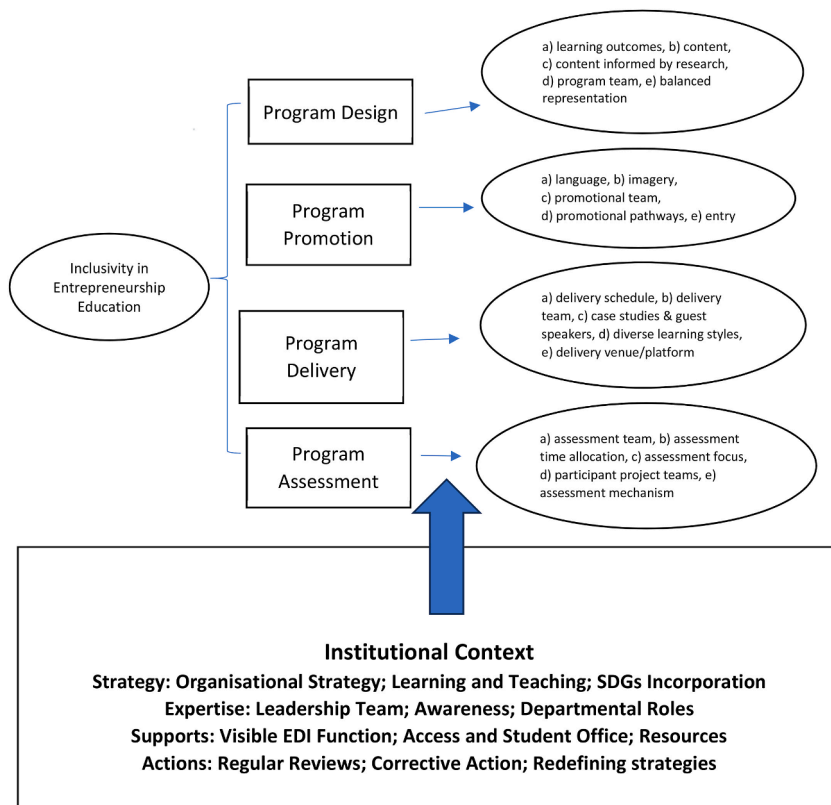


Fig. 2. Conceptual framework. (Source: Authors, 2023)



**Table 3**  
Summary of collective scores for SFF GEF institutional grids (n = 9).

| Institutional Score Grid: Reflection Statements |  | <u>Name of Person Completing the Grid:</u> |   |   |   |     |      |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|-----|------|
|   |  | Score Frequencies                          |   |   |   |     |      |
| <i>The HEI:</i>                                 |  | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A | Mean |
| <b>Strategy</b>                                 | recognises the importance of Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity (EDI) in its overarching Organisational Strategy  | 0  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0   | 3.22 |
|   | reflects the general ethos of the UNs' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its Learning & Teaching Strategy  | 1  | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1   | 2    |
|   | pays particular attention to the following SDGs (in both its Organisational and Learning & Teaching Strategies):   |  |   |   |   |     |      |
|   | - SDG4: Quality Education  | 0  | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1   | 2.78 |
|   | - SDG5: Gender Equality  | 0  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0   | 3.2  |
|   | - SDG8: Decent Work & Economic Growth  | 0  | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1   | 2.56 |
|   | - SDG9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure  | 1  | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1   | 2.89 |
|   | - SDG10: Reduced Inequalities  | 0  | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1   | 2.33 |
|   | - SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals (Collaboration)  | 1  | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1   | 2.22 |
| <b>Expertise</b>                                | has EDI experts on its senior management/leadership team   | 3  | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0   | 2    |
|   | organises staff training programs in EDI awareness   | 3  | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0   | 2.33 |
|   | positions trained EDI staff across HEI departments   | 2  | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0   | 1.89 |
| <b>Supports</b>                                 | has a dedicated, visible and accessible EDI Office/function  | 2  | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0   | 2.44 |
|   | has dedicated Access and Student Learning Support Offices  | 2  | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0   | 3.11 |
|   | makes resources available to academic departments, educators and support staff as required to ensure programs are gender & ethnicity-proofed (including human, financial and IT based resources) | 2  | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0   | 2.56 |
| <b>Action</b>                                   | regularly reviews its programs with an EDI lens  | 3  | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0   | 2.33 |
|   | regularly takes corrective action when needed  | 2  | 1 | 5 | 1 | 0   | 2.56 |
|   | regularly assesses if EDI goals are being promoted and (re)defines its Organisational and Teaching & Learning Strategies   | 3  | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0   | 2.22 |

Conversely, SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities) received lower mean scores of 2.22 and 2.33, respectively. This indicates that while there have been significant advancements in gender equality, other EDI areas like ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic disadvantage are lagging, suggesting a need for broader institutional commitment to these goals.

#### 4.2.2. Expertise, support and action

Most HEIs in our study had designated EDI roles, yet only two (Bulgaria and Greece) reported no dedicated personnel, indicating varied levels of EDI engagement. Although some institutions had centralized EDI roles, departmental support was often lacking, as evidenced by the Croatian HEI's Committee for Gender Equality. Despite these structures, EDI expertise within institutions appeared insufficient, with scores indicating gaps: the presence of EDI experts in senior management received a mean score of 2, and trained EDI staff across departments scored even lower at 1.9.

Support functions fared better; the highest support score was for dedicated Access and Student Learning Support Offices, averaging 3.11. However, the effectiveness of these offices was sometimes undermined by poor coordination, as one HEI noted considerable challenges in integrating these services at departmental level. The lowest scores related to the visibility/accessibility of EDI offices (mean 2.44), highlighting significant implementation challenges, especially in contexts where institutional funding models restrict operational flexibility (e.g., Bosnia & Herzegovina, Greece).

Reflective statements in the Action section also revealed low scores, particularly regarding the assessment and redefinition of EDI goals (average 2.22). While some institutions like the HEI in Bosnia & Herzegovina actively engaged with these issues, receiving the highest scores, others viewed EDI considerations as secondary, influenced heavily by state regulations.

#### 4.2.3. Institutional profiles

Drawing on the data collected, we developed a set of institutional profiles to categorise the stage of each institution's EDI journey (see Appendix III). The mean overall score for the nine HEIs was 43.2, making the typical institutional profile in our sample *The Developer* (5 x HEIs). We view this as a positive finding, illustrating the increased awareness and importance of EDI, as well as the diversity of EDI efforts being made within academic institutions. Table 4 illustrates the spread of institutional SFF GEF profiles according to partner country.

#### 4.3. Program Perspective

The Spanish HEI completed two program score grids for two different programs, hence a total of ten grids and ten entrepreneurship educator interviews were available for analysis. Educators were asked to fill in and return their score grids prior to being interviewed (see Tables 5 and 6).

In some cases, respondents left sections blank. In the interviews that followed, respondents revealed that they did so because - in their role as entrepreneurship educators - they felt they did not have the relevant information to provide an accurate score and would have to seek advice from colleagues in a different department. Again, this suggests that inclusivity considerations and efforts are not confined to just one person, even at the program level.

**Table 4**  
Institutional SFF GEF Profiles (based on the nine HEIs' overall scores).

| <i>The Nascent</i>  | <i>The Developer</i>   | <i>The Progressive</i>  | <i>The Expert</i>   |
|---|--|---|---|
| Score: ≤30  | Score: ≤31-48  | Score: ≤49-53   | Score: ≤54+   |
| <b>Very early stages</b> of the EDI journey. Only beginning to consider the EDI strategy. Significant room for improvement. | <b>Developmental stage</b> of the EDI journey. Has a long way to go. More improvements and actions needed to move forward. | <b>Well-progressed</b> on the EDI/SDG journey. A lot of work done on an EDI strategy. Needs to continually review EDI actions and monitor impact. | <b>Advanced stage</b> of the EDI journey. Considerable work done. Could consider itself an expert. Must regularly review and update its strategy. Must identify further actions for continuous improvement. |
| <i>Countries &amp; Mean Total Scores</i><br>Croatia (25)  | Bulgaria (45)<br>Greece (33)<br>Ireland (39)<br>Spain (40)<br>Italy (43)   | Scotland (53)   | Germany (57)<br>Bosnia & Herzegovina (54)   |

**Table 5**  
Summary of collective scores for the SFF GEF program grids - 'design' & 'promotion' dimensions (n = 10).

| <i>Gender &amp; Ethnicity-Proofing Framework (GEF) Entrepreneurship Program Score Grid: Reflection Statements</i> |   | <i>Gender scores (frequencies)</i> |   |   |   |     | <i>Ethnicity scores (frequencies)</i> |   |   |   |   |     |                   |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|---|-----|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----|-------------------|
|   |   | 1                                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A | Mean                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A | Mean              |
| <b>Design</b>   | a) The <b>learning outcomes</b> acknowledge embedded gender and ethnicity biases within entrepreneurship  | 2                                  | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0   | 2.5                                   | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1   | 2.11 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | b) <b>Content</b> acknowledges the diversity of entrepreneurship and the influence of different contexts with specific regard to gender and ethnicity | 1                                  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0   | 2.6                                   | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1   | 2.22 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | c) <b>Content</b> is informed by research regarding the influences of gender and ethnicity on entrepreneurial motivation                              | 2                                  | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1   | 2.5 <sup>a</sup>                      | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1   | 2.44 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | d) The <b>program team</b> is gender and ethnically balanced and reflects the needs and interests of the target audience                              | 1                                  | 0 | 5 | 4 | 0   | 3.2                                   | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1   | 2.22 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | e) A balanced representation – in terms of gender and ethnicity - from the target audience was consulted on <b>program design</b>                     | 3                                  | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1   | 2.22 <sup>a</sup>                     | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1   | 2.0 <sup>a</sup>  |
| <b>Promotion</b>  | a) <b>Language</b> used in promotional literature and media platforms is not gender or ethnically biased (whether implicitly or explicitly)           | 0                                  | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0   | 3.4                                   | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 2   | 3.63 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | b) <b>Imagery</b> used in promotional literature and media platforms is not gender or ethnically biased (whether implicitly or explicitly)            | 0                                  | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0   | 3.3                                   | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2   | 3.25 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | c) The <b>promotional team</b> is balanced – in terms of gender and ethnicity - and reflects the interests of the target audience                     | 0                                  | 2 | 6 | 2 | 0   | 3.0                                   | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1   | 2.55 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | d) <b>Promotional pathways</b> are capable of reaching a gender and ethnically balanced audience  | 1                                  | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1   | 2.77 <sup>a</sup>                     | 1 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1   | 2.77 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | e) <b>Entry criteria</b> reflect the different gendered and ethnicity contexts of the target audience   | 1                                  | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4   | 3.16 <sup>a</sup>                     | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4   | 3 <sup>a</sup>    |

**Scoring Key:** 1 = Really needs improvement; 2 = Not optimal; 3 = Sufficient but can be improved; 4 = Almost as good as it gets.  
<sup>a</sup> mean score based on lower number of responses due to some respondents not providing or not feeling able to provide a score (see 'N/A' column).

4.3.1. *Design and promotion*

Educators reflected on gender and ethnicity in their programs across five areas: learning outcomes, content, program team balance, and target audience consultation. The highest scores were for gender and ethnicity balance in the program team (statement d) with a mean of 3.2, while the lowest scores were for balanced representation from the target audience (statement e; mean score 2.22), and the rest ranged between 2.5 and 2.6. A Spanish HEI, using a Human Centered Design approach to minimize biases, notably scored high.

Generally, low scores stemmed from a lack of explicit mention of gender or ethnicity in learning outcomes, insufficient consultation with target audiences, and a pervasive lack of understanding among staff regarding these issues. However, some programs were seen to implicitly consider these factors, with the presence of female guest speakers and the diversity of student registration viewed as indicators of balance or proxies for a gender/ethnicity focus.

Promotion of programs showed disconnects, indicated by numerous 'blank' scores in the 'Promotion' section, highlighting a gap in linking program delivery with outreach efforts, which is critical for broadening participation in entrepreneurship. The highest score within this section was for Language (3.4), with a German HEI noting their use of gender-adjusted and diverse communication practices. In contrast, the lowest score (2.77) for Promotional Pathways suggested a lack of awareness among educators about how their programs are marketed, pointing to a need for better integration of promotional strategies to ensure inclusivity.

4.3.2. *Delivery and Assessment*

The highest scores for Delivery were for the Delivery Venue/Platform (statement e) with a mean of 3.8, indicating educators felt their programs were highly accessible. As one educator noted, "We have a diverse program (day, evening, weekend training, on- & off-



**Table 6**  
Summary of collective scores for SFF GEF program grids - 'delivery' & 'assessment' dimensions (n = 10).

| Gender & Ethnicity-Proofing Framework (GEF) Entrepreneurship Program Score Grid:<br>Reflection Statements |  | Gender scores<br>(frequencies) |   |   |   |     | Ethnicity scores<br>(frequencies) |   |   |   |   |     |                   |
|---|--|--------------------------------|---|---|---|-----|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----|-------------------|
|   |  | 1                              | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A | Mean                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A | Mean              |
| <b>Delivery</b>   | a) <i>The delivery schedule</i> accommodates participants with caring and schooling responsibilities, and those with special responsibilities/beliefs due to their ethnicity                               | 1                              | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0   | 2.9                               | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2   | 3 <sup>a</sup>    |
|   | b) The program <i>delivery team</i> is gender and ethnically balanced  | 0                              | 0 | 6 | 4 | 0   | 3.4                               | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1   | 2.88 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | c) <i>Case studies and guest speakers</i> are gender and ethnically balanced, and include role models/sectors/businesses with women and ethnic minorities  | 0                              | 1 | 2 | 7 | 0   | 3.6                               | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1   | 3 <sup>a</sup>    |
|   | d) Participants' <i>diverse learning styles</i> based on their gender and ethnicity are accommodated   | 2                              | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1   | 2.88 <sup>a</sup>                 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1   | 2.88 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | e) <i>The delivery venue/platform</i> is accessible by all members of the target audience regardless of their gender or ethnicity  | 0                              | 0 | 2 | 8 | 0   | 3.8                               | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 1   | 3.77 <sup>a</sup> |
| <b>Assessment</b>   | a) <i>Assessment teams</i> are balanced in terms of gender and ethnicity   | 0                              | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0   | 3.3                               | 0 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1   | 2.66 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | b) <i>Assessment</i> is <i>timed</i> to accommodate participants with caring and schooling responsibilities as well as those with special responsibilities, commitments, or beliefs due to their ethnicity | 2                              | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1   | 2.77 <sup>a</sup>                 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1   | 2.77 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | c) <i>Assessment focus</i> is <i>diversified</i> and is based on balanced entrepreneur case examples in terms of gender and ethnicity  | 1                              | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0   | 2.8                               | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1   | 2.66 <sup>a</sup> |
|   | d) <i>Participant project teams</i> are balanced in terms of gender and ethnicity  | 0                              | 2 | 4 | 4 | 0   | 3.2                               | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3   | 3 <sup>a</sup>    |
|   | e) <i>Assessment mechanisms</i> accommodate participants' <i>diverse assessment preferences</i>  | 1                              | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0   | 2.5                               | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2   | 2.38 <sup>a</sup> |

**Scoring Key:** 1 = Really needs improvement; 2 = Not optimal; 3 = Sufficient but can be improved; 4 = Almost as good as it gets.

<sup>a</sup> mean score based on lower number of responses due to some respondents not providing or not feeling able to provide a score (see 'N/A' column).

fline), many educators are female and from a different country. Also, here – Asia and South Africa is underrepresented" (German educator).

Conversely, the lowest scores focused on Accommodating Diverse Learning Styles and Delivery Schedule Accommodating Caring/Cultural Responsibilities, with means of 2.88 and 2.9 respectively. The lack of organizational consensus on accommodating diverse needs was highlighted by comments suggesting these considerations were often left to individual educators. A Spanish educator explained, "Adaptation to learning styles is costly and we don't have enough information/resources to accommodate this. Schedules are not considering caring or schooling responsibilities."

In Assessment, the highest scores went to the Balance of Assessment Team (mean 3.3), with feedback indicating the area was satisfactory but could improve. The Spanish educator mentioned, "Assessment teams are gender balanced," suggesting a natural gender balance due to the higher proportion of female educators. The lowest score was for Accommodating Assessment Preferences (mean 2.5), with comments indicating that this area needed more attention, such as the German educator's note on the absence of a gender focus in assessments, prioritizing entrepreneurial skills instead.

Overall, our findings underscore the varying levels of EDI integration across different countries and institutions. While there has been significant progress in some areas, particularly gender equality, challenges persist in achieving broader inclusivity. In the context of entrepreneurship education (EE), our findings highlight several gaps: a) programme designs in some countries are notably misaligned with SDG goals; b) there is a distinct lack of dedicated personnel with expertise in both EDI and EE; c) there is insufficient representation of EDI champions in outreach efforts, and inadequate institutional support and resources; and d) gender-focused assessments are notably absent.

## 5. Discussion

An inclusive approach to entrepreneurship education (EE) is essential to ensure it remains a discipline accessible to all (Rolle et al., 2020). Our study indicates that while European HEIs are increasingly recognizing the importance of EDI, its integration into strategies, expertise, and program implementation is still lacking. Many institutions incorporate SDGs into their activities but fail to embed these principles deeply within organizational strategies or in program design, delivery, promotion, and assessment.

In terms of institutional inclusivity, despite recognition of the EDI agenda (OECD/European Commission, 2021), our study shows a disconnect in cascading these values into concrete educational strategies. Many HEIs still struggle with proper EDI implementation, from strategic planning to day-to-day operations. Common challenges include finding suitable personnel for EDI roles and a general lack of proactive inclusivity measures.

At the program level, EDI considerations like gender and ethnicity often remain unmentioned in objectives and learning outcomes, suggesting a strategic disconnect and a lack of awareness among educators. Promotion efforts also reveal a stark disconnect, with many educators unaware of how or to whom their programs are marketed.

Recommendations to enhance EE inclusivity emphasize strategic visibility, comprehensive training, improved communication across departments, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation (see Table 7). A top-down approach is advocated to fully embed inclusivity into organizational strategies and practices.

Conclusively, while awareness exists, a substantial gap remains in translating EDI principles into effective educational practices. HEIs need to enhance their approaches significantly to foster true inclusivity in EE, ensuring it caters comprehensively to diverse student needs and backgrounds.

**Table 7**  
Recommendations for improvement.

| Strategy  | Training & Expertise   | Communication, Collaboration & Consultation   | Monitoring & Evaluation  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Make the SDGs recognizable among 100% of the academic and administrative staff allowing them to be implemented in student education and in initiatives with partners. Incorporate an SDG and EDI focus into program objectives and learning outcomes.</p> <p>Increase visibility of the HEI's EDI/SDG strategy to enhance engagement and effectiveness.</p> <p>Operationalize SDG17 across the HEI to ensure everyone is working in partnership regarding inclusivity and SDG issues.</p> <p>Expand the HEIs' inclusivity agenda beyond that of gender toward ethnicity, disability, age, cultural diversity, and socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Create more visibility of EDI roles.</p> | <p>Organize training for staff with the participation of external EDI experts.</p> <p>Co-ordinate department heads to promote EDI actions in their jurisdiction.</p> <p>Make available more financial resources for EDI intervention.</p> <p>Employ more staff in this area.</p> <p>Have a dedicated EDI/SDG role at senior level within individual HEIs.</p> <p>This role must be accessible and highly visible within the organization.</p> <p>Train and make available EDI/SDG deputies/officers across departments within HEIs to spread expertise and make it more visible and accessible.</p> <p>Hire a combined HR/EDI officer.</p> | <p>Promote collaboration internally and externally to exchange experiences and learn from good practices elsewhere.</p> <p>Promote collaboration and sharing of knowledge and practices across entrepreneurship programs so that entrepreneurship educators on the ground have a more holistic view of their program's inclusivity reach.</p> <p>Have more dialogue with the ecosystem and wider community of innovation actors.</p> <p>Regularly communicate the EDI and SDG strategy throughout the whole HEI.</p> <p>Establish more effective communication of available tools and resources.</p> <p>Consult with a wide range of individuals from the target audience and ensure they are represented on the program design team for a fairer EDI approach.</p> | <p>Establish annual planning and reporting of EDI indicators to assess the quality of processes.</p> <p>Define indicators, perform regular monitoring, and communicate the results to staff to increase awareness and engagement.</p> <p>Institutionalize the responsibility for EDI through action plans, indicators, and regular overview of progress.</p> <p>Continuously monitor and evaluate EDI and SDG progress, recognizing and rewarding staff efforts.</p> |

Our study reveals significant variability in the adoption of inclusivity practices among HEIs. Key insights include.

1. Strategic Gaps: most institutions lack a cohesive strategy that integrates EDI goals comprehensively within their operational and educational frameworks.
2. Resource Allocation: there is a critical need for more dedicated resources towards EDI initiatives, highlighting a disconnect between stated commitments and practical implementations.
3. Impact of Inclusivity on Program Design: programs frequently fail to incorporate EDI principles explicitly, resulting in missed opportunities for addressing the diverse needs of all student demographics.
4. Evaluation and Monitoring: continuous assessment of inclusivity measures is sporadic, with many institutions lacking robust mechanisms to track progress and outcomes effectively.

#### CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Colette Henry:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Wendy Wu:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Kare Moberg:** Writing – original draft, Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Slavica Singer:** Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Barbara Gabriel:** Writing – original draft, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Robertt Valente:** Writing – original draft, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Carolina Carlos:** Methodology, Investigation, Data curation. **Nick Fannin:** Methodology, Investigation, Data curation.

#### Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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#### Appendix I. – User Guidelines

The *SFF GEF* was not designed to be a complete and perfect solution to inclusivity for institutions and their entrepreneurship programs. Our intention was to design a 'first step' in the EDI process - a tool that would help HEIs *begin* the process of self-reflection with a view to moving toward more inclusive entrepreneurship program offerings. Following a review of the literature and existing tools

related to entrepreneurship education, we adapted the *Canadian GEET +* tool and focused on two key EDI dimensions – gender and ethnicity. We use two reflective score grids; the first is more holistic and is designed for institutional use (i.e., to be completed by one of the senior managers/leaders at the HEI), and the second is designed for program use (i.e., to be completed by the entrepreneurship program manager or designer). In adopting this approach, we are mindful that we have not included a particularly critical dimension – that of disability. While we acknowledge this omission, we also acknowledge that incorporating disability into the SFF GEF would have highly required specialist expertise. This omission should not prevent users from incorporating as much diversity as possible into their institutional and program management teams so that awareness is raised in relation to such missing dimensions from the outset.

**When:** The tool can be used at any time. For new programs, the tool should be applied at the design stage.

**Who:** The Institutional Score Grid should be completed by HEI managers/leaders. The Program Score Grid should be completed by program managers or designers.

**How:** The tool is best used in a small team rather than in an individual setting. That is, while a designated individual might take responsibility for completing the grid, they should do so following discussion and consultation with others to arrive at a consensus. This approach will ensure that a more balanced and holistic perspective is adopted and result in fairer assessment and more realistic scoring.

Users are asked to read and reflect on a series of statements (**Reflection Statements**) in each grid, and then arrive at a score by circling the relevant number. Our research suggests that self-assessment tools of this nature are often scored on a scale of 1–5, where 1 = Disagrees completely and 5 = Agrees completely. This type of categorization can sometimes be difficult for respondents to purposefully answer (especially if they are at a very early stage in their EDI journey) since they are abstract and will be viewed differently by different individuals. When applied in a group setting, individual respondents often opt for the mid-point response to avoid provoking disagreement. Accordingly, consensus discussions often result in the selection of the middle score, which may not always prompt action. Since the purpose of the SFF GEF is not only to prompt reflection but also to prompt action, we have opted for a four-point scoring scale. For both grids, the following four scoring options are used: 1 = *Really needs improvement*; 2 = *Not optimal*; 3- Sufficient but can be improved, and 4 = *Almost as good as it gets*.

**Scoring:** In deciding on their scores, based on the above 1–4 scale, users should summarise (using bullet points) evidence to back up their choices (**Summary Evidence**). Where scores are low, users are also asked to summarise (using bullet points) some of the actions they intend taking to help improve the situation (**Remedial Action**). Working in small teams will facilitate this process, identifying areas where improvements need to be made and generating ideas for appropriate actions that might be taken. Upon completion of the grids, users can compare the supporting evidence for each category and re-evaluate their scores. It is important to be specific and to stay as true as possible to the supporting evidence. Once users are satisfied with their scores, they should then total these at the bottom of each column and arrive at a total overall score for each of the two grids and compare these with the score sheets below.

The score sheets are designed to give users an indication of their performance. The Institutional Score Grid places the HEI in a profile category, giving an indication of the stage it has reached in its EDI journey. The Program Score Grid indicates the stage of the individual program in terms of its gender and ethnicity focus. Finally, consistent with the ethos of *HEInnovate*, the *SFF GEF* framework is not intended as a benchmarking tool. Institutions should not use their scores to compare EDI performance with other universities/HEIs.

## Appendix II. Program Score Sheet Explanations (20–80)

| <i>Program has little or no gender/ethnicity focus</i>  | <i>Program has some gender/ethnicity focus</i>   | <i>Program has a very good gender/ethnicity focus</i>  | <i>Program has an excellent gender/ethnicity focus</i>  |
|---|--|--|---|
| Score: ≤32  | Score: ≤33-50  | Score: ≤51-63  | Score: ≤64+   |
| The program does not yet reflect the gender and ethnicity aspects of entrepreneurship.  | The program has made moderate progress in terms of gender and ethnicity-proofing. It acknowledges some aspects of gender and ethnicity in the context of entrepreneurship. | The program has made very good progress in terms of gender and ethnicity-proofing. It acknowledges several aspects of gender and ethnicity in the context of entrepreneurship.                     | The program has made excellent progress in terms of gender and ethnicity-proofing. It acknowledges multiple aspects of gender and ethnicity in the context of entrepreneurship. |
| Reflecting on the statements and completing the score grid – noting evidence and intended actions – is an important first step in the process of gender and ethnicity-proofing the program. | Completing the score grid should help the program team identify areas of weakness, as well as prompting some key actions that should be taken.                             | Completing the score grid should help the program team identify areas for further improvement and prompt some actions by way of next steps to enhance this level of gender and ethnicity-proofing. | Completing the score grid should help the program team identify specific actions to sustain this level of gender and ethnicity-proofing   |

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| <i>Program has little or no gender/ethnicity focus</i> | <i>Program has some gender/ethnicity focus</i>  | <i>Program has a very good gender/ethnicity focus</i>                   | <i>Program has an excellent gender/ethnicity focus</i>  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Score: ≤32   | Score: ≤33-50   | Score: ≤51-63   | Score: ≤64+   |
| A lot of work needs to be done.                        | More improvements and actions are needed before the program could be considered 'gender and ethnicity proofed.' | It is important to continually review actions and monitor their impact. | The program team must now regularly review and update its gender-proofing efforts so that further actions can be identified, implemented, and assessed by way of continuous improvement |

**Appendix III. Institutional Score Sheet – Profile Category Explanations (17–68)**

| <i>The Nascent</i>   | <i>The Developer</i>  | <i>The Progressive</i>  | <i>The Expert</i>   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Score: ≤30   | Score: ≤31-48   | Score: ≤49-53   | Score: ≤54+   |
| The Institution is at the very early stages of its EDI journey (or has not yet started) and is only beginning to develop its EDI strategy.         | The Institution is at the developmental stage of its EDI journey and may have done some initial or basic work on its EDI strategy but has a long way to go. | The Institution is well-progressed on its EDI journey and has done a lot of work on its EDI strategy.   | The Institution is now at an advanced stage in its EDI journey and has done considerable work on its EDI strategy. It has made significant progress and is now in a position where it could consider itself expert in EDI issues. |
| Reflecting on the statements and completing the score grid – noting evidence and intended actions – is an important first step on the EDI journey. | Completing the score grid should help identify areas of weakness, as well as prompting some key actions that should be taken.                               | Completing the score grid should help identify areas for further improvement and prompt some actions to help the institution improve on its EDI work. | Completing the score grid should help the institution identify specific actions to sustain this position.   |
| There is significant room for improvement.   | More improvements and actions are needed to move forward.   | It is important to continually review EDI actions and monitor their impact so that areas for further improvement are identified.                      | The institution must now regularly review and update its strategy so that further actions can be identified, implemented, and assessed by way of continuous improvement.  |

**Appendix IV. Key Data Display in the Results Session**

| <i>Key Data Display in the Results Section</i>  | <i>Reference from Data (Quotation)</i>   |
|---|--|
| Section 3.22  | "Recognises the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) in its overarching Organisational Strategy"  |
| <b>4.1.2 Expertise, Support and Action</b>  | '[the institution] has EDI experts on its senior management/leadership team'   |
| The highest mean score within the Support section of the grid was attributed to the statement: "has dedicated Access and Student Learning Support Offices" (mean score 3.11). One HEI explained how, while support was present, it was often insufficient or uncoordinated: | "The University has coordination offices and commissions on cross-cutting issues, and this demonstrates a willingness at the governance level to focus on the ethical aspects of research. However, these structures are not always known at the departmental level and researchers rarely refer to them to reciprocally coordinate their own activities."                                       |
| The lowest mean score was attributed to the statement: "has a dedicated, visible and accessible EDI Office/function" (2.44). The following were among the explanations provided:  | [In our HEI, there is] only a recent focus and hiring for this position is not complete (Bosnia & Herzegovina). This is very hard to achieve .... Each department has its own strategy .... Close to impossible given the way public universities are funded [in this country] (Greek educator).   |
| The remaining statements attracted scores in the 2.5 to 2.6 range. One of the highest scoring grids in this section provided the following explanation for their score:   | "Using a Human Centered Design approach (HCD) with stakeholders who participate not only in design process but also in previous design research we try to avoid all kind of biases, also ethnicity and gender biases." (Germany)   |
| The mean score was 3.4.   | "We are trying to be inclusive and integrative. In Germany, in written communications at the University, gender-adjusted language is required anyway. Due to our international programs, also from the pictures and language we are diverse. Regarding the team – we have a full-time communication team of 2 white, German men who are managing this topic very sensitively." (German educator) |

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## Key Data Display in the Results Section

## Reference from Data (Quotation)

The highest scores for Delivery were attributed to statement (e) relating to the Delivery Venue/Platform, with a mean score of 3.8. This suggested that entrepreneurship educators were confident that their programs were widely accessible, with some respondents offering comments such as “no issues here” or “virtual and hybrid works well.” Insights are provided from an informant (an educator).

“We have a diverse program (day, evening, weekend training, on- & offline), many educators are female and from a different country. Also, here – Asia and South Africa are underrepresented (German educator).”  
 “Adaptation to learning styles is costly and we don’t have enough information/resources to accommodate this. Schedules are not considering caring or schooling responsibilities (this is embedded in a bachelor’s degree, where most of the participants are between 18-22 years old).”  
 “Assessment teams are gender balanced (maybe because in education, there is a higher percentage of female educators than in other professions, for example when compared with female founders).”

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