Innovation in Policy and Practice: Student-engaged and Student-led initiatives to Improve Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in Dutch Higher Education

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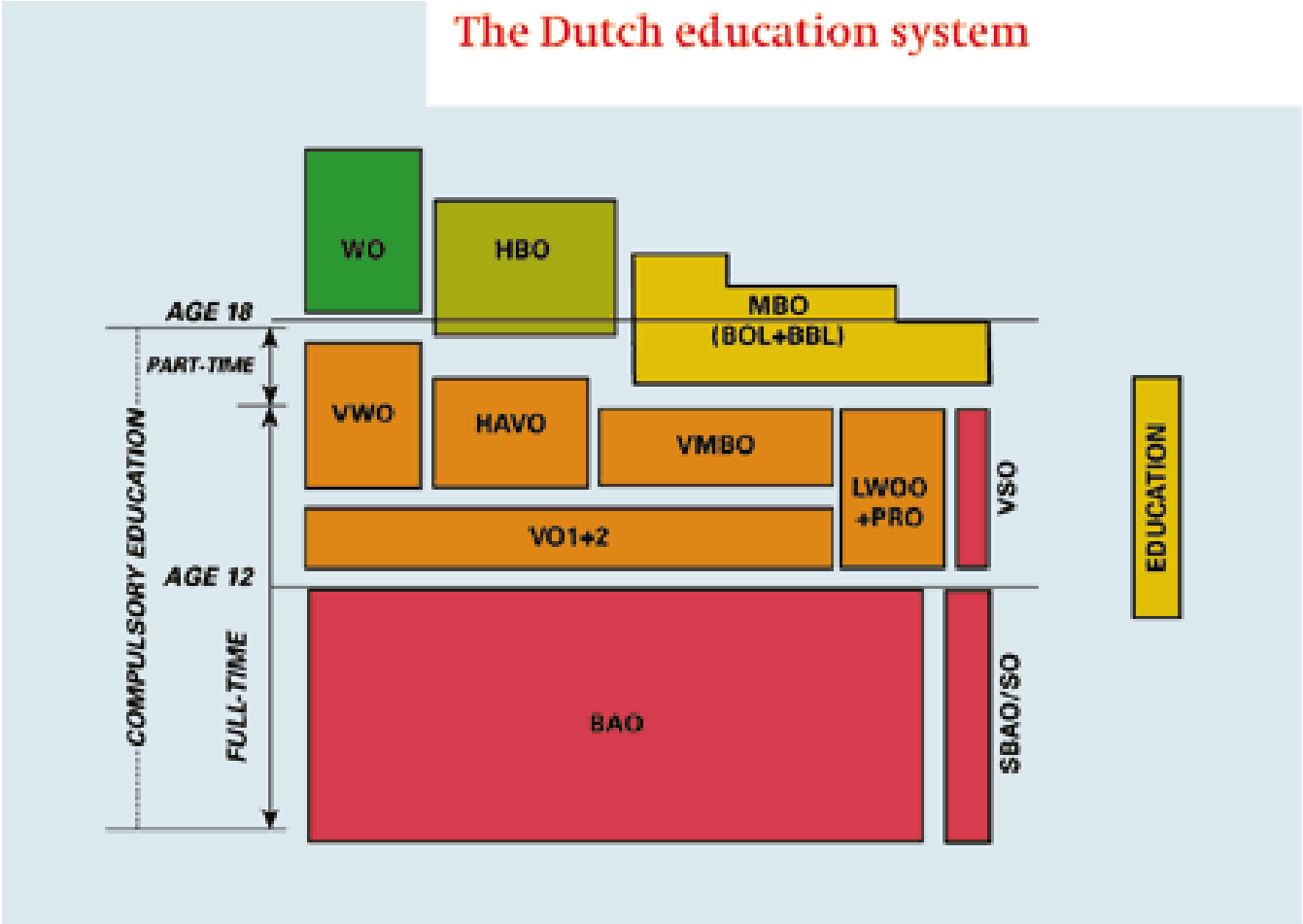
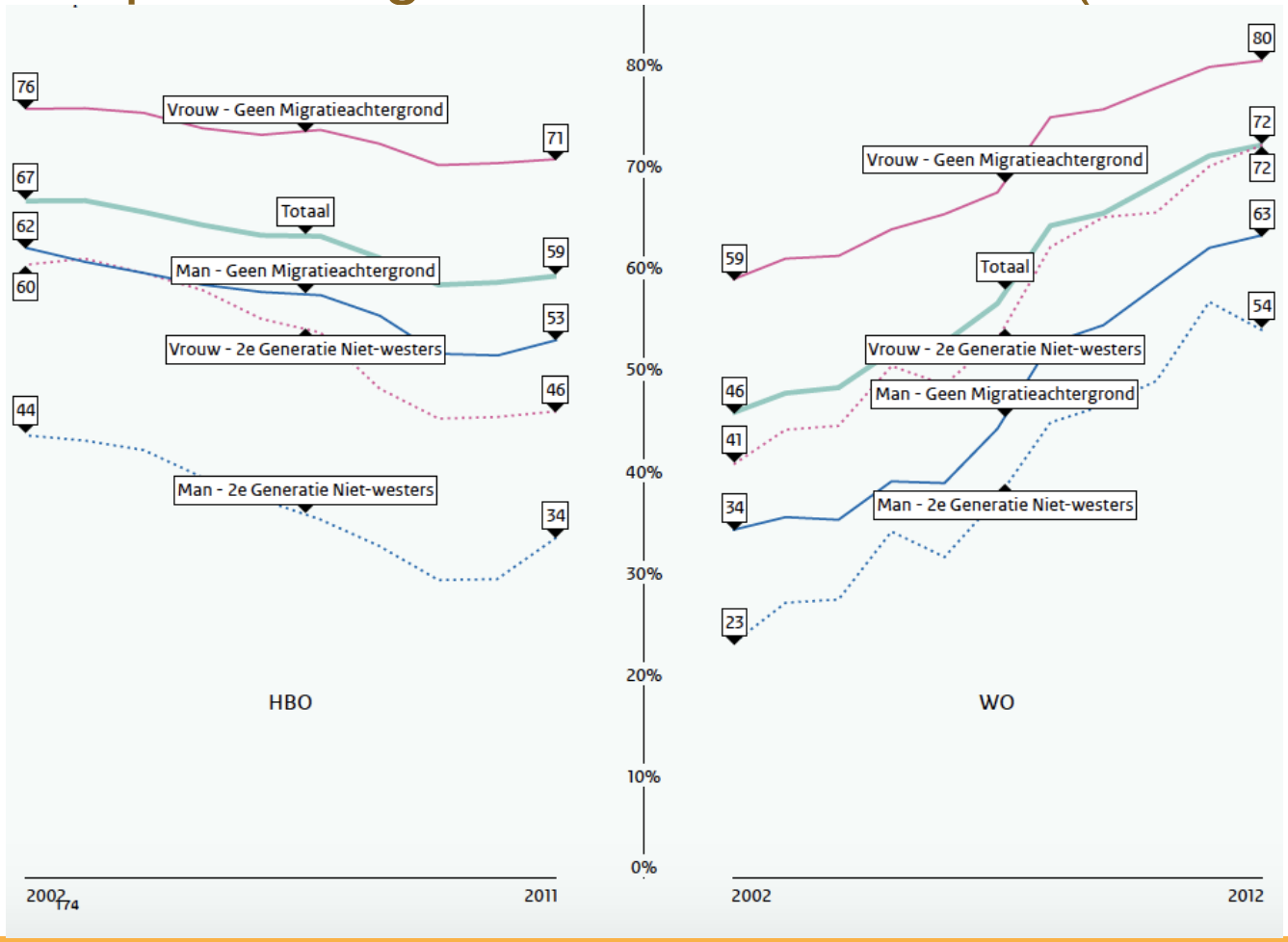
Dutch Education System



Why: Inequities in graduation rates in HE (2002-2012)



Policy on Inclusion

National Policy Agenda

Increasing urgency of Inclusion and Equity in (transition to) HE

1. National Quality Agreements (2019-2024)
2. Policy letter on Inclusion and Equity (October 2018)
3. National Strategic Policy Agenda for HE (in preparation) (2020-2025)

Focus inclusion and equity on different stages in students study paths:

- Trajectories before entering HE
- Trajectories within HE (Bachelor phase)
- Trajectories toward Master studies

Moving toward *Individual* student success

Minister Van Engelshoven:

"Student success should foremost focus on the student: students who enter HE should be enabled to succesfully complete their educational program"

- Breaks with past policy focus on performance output of HEI's.
- Question is how to capture this in quality assurance with HEI's as policy partners.
- Trilemma : How to balance: wide accessibility & high quality of education & high completion rates

Policy & incentives

- **Binding study advise (BSA)**
  - Minimum ECT's completion requirement in first year bachelor
  - How to avoid high drop out rate of underprivileged students
- **Selection before entering**
  - Only part of the programs
  - How to make selection methods lead to more inclusive results
- **Social lending system**
  - Low socio-economic status receive scholarship as gift
  - All students can lend against low interest rate
  - Concern: lending fear among 1st gen students. Ministry provides information
- **Coalition Agreement on improving student well-being**
  - Aim: improve over all well being for students.
- **Yearly Conference on Inclusive HE**
  - Collaboration between ministry, ECHO and HEIs
- **Regional collaborations VET & HE**
  - VET Institutes and Universities of Applied Sciences collaborate on a regional scale to improve successful transitions for their students.
- **Comenius Grants**
  - Grants focus on teaching innovation
  - Teaching, Senior & Leadership grants

Diversity & Inclusion within the Ministry

Bottum up initiative

- Staff initiative of Ministry of Education, Culture & Science.
- Programme is supported by the Minister and the Secretary General

Aim:

- Practice what we preach: create awareness about the impact of implicit bias in the organization
- creating awareness on cultural diversity in our organisation
- **Color blind → Color brave**
- Innovate processes concerning recruitment and staff-selection

Activities

- Network of Ambassadors within our organisation
- Mentoring programs: staff become mentor of students and (youngh) professionals with bi-cultural backgrounds
- Focus group research into sense of belonging of diverse groups in the organisation
- Innovate HRM processes on recruitment and staff-selection
- Support (top) management to develop inclusive leadership

Innovations empowering students

Student Labs

- The ministry initiated and organized these Student Labs.
- VET & HE Students developed project proposals for improving transition to HE in *Student Labs*
- HEI's were eligible for funding to implement these student proposals.

Students-4-Students

- Peer role-modeling projects improving transition, retention and inclusion.
- Collaboration of Ministry and ECHO.
- Four year period (2018-2021)
- Students and HEIs can apply

Innovation in policy to enhance equity and inclusion in Dutch Higher Education:

Students-4-Students

How can students play an important role in making HE more accessible and inclusive

Superdiversity in society → Inclusion in HE

Inclusion

Graduation

Peer Learning

Equity

Sense of belonging

Innovation

Inspiration

Students-4-Students Campagne

Students

Digital platform

HE institutions

Role models

Peer learning

Projects

echo expertisecentrum diversiteitsbeleid

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap

How?

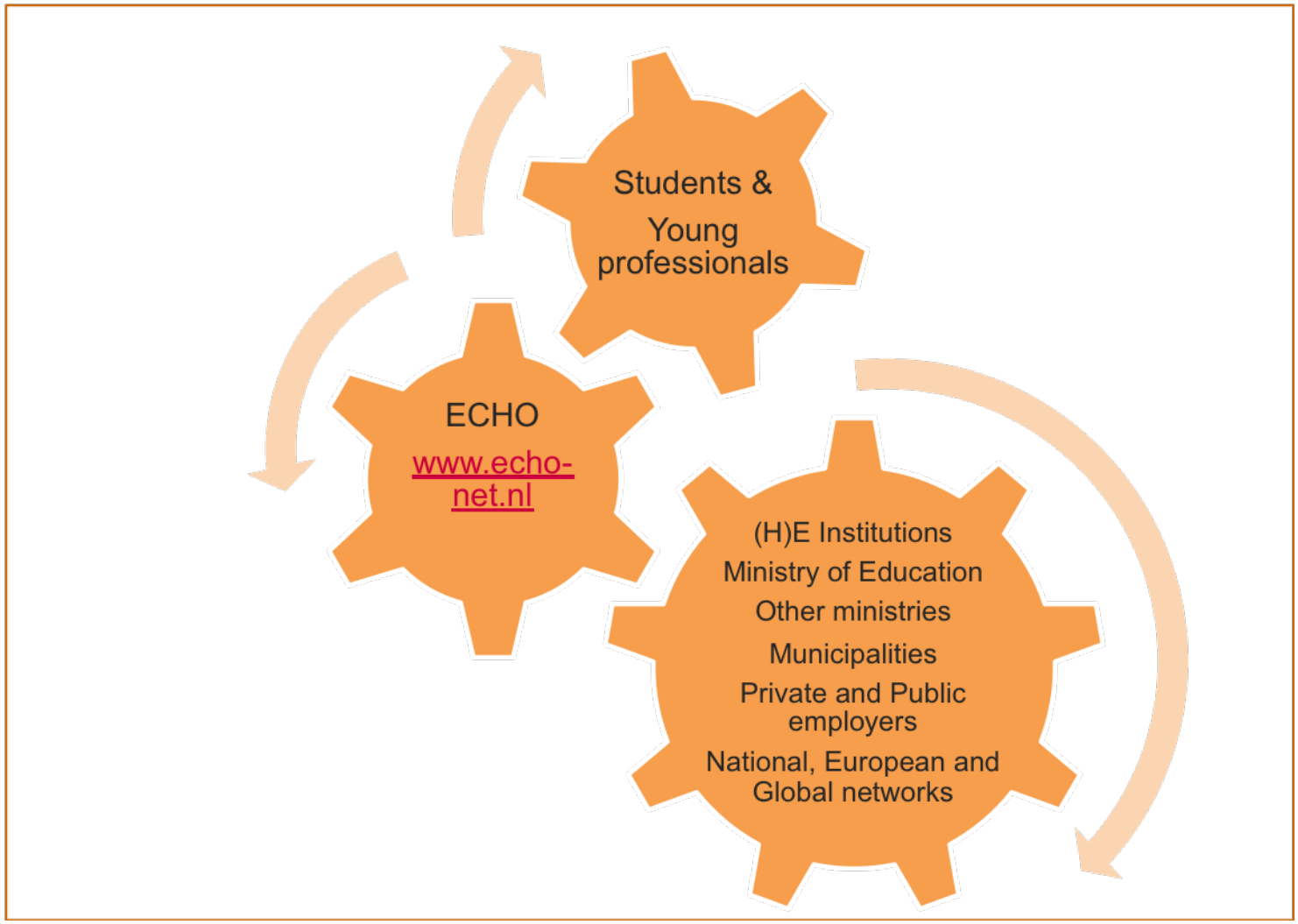
- Funding from the Ministry of Education. Students and institutions can apply for funding to improve inequities based on an zero base analysis
- Proposals from institutions have to be developed in collaboration with students
- Students play a role in developing content, as volunteer or within the project management. Funding is also meant to pay students
- Programs of institutions and students have to be: innovative, enhancing inclusion, closing the achievement gap, creating sense of belonging and leading to sustainability
- Programs of students have to be embedded in institutions
- ECHO coordinates peer learning activities for student and institutional program coordinators
- In total 16 institutional and 11 students projects (4 mln euro in total)

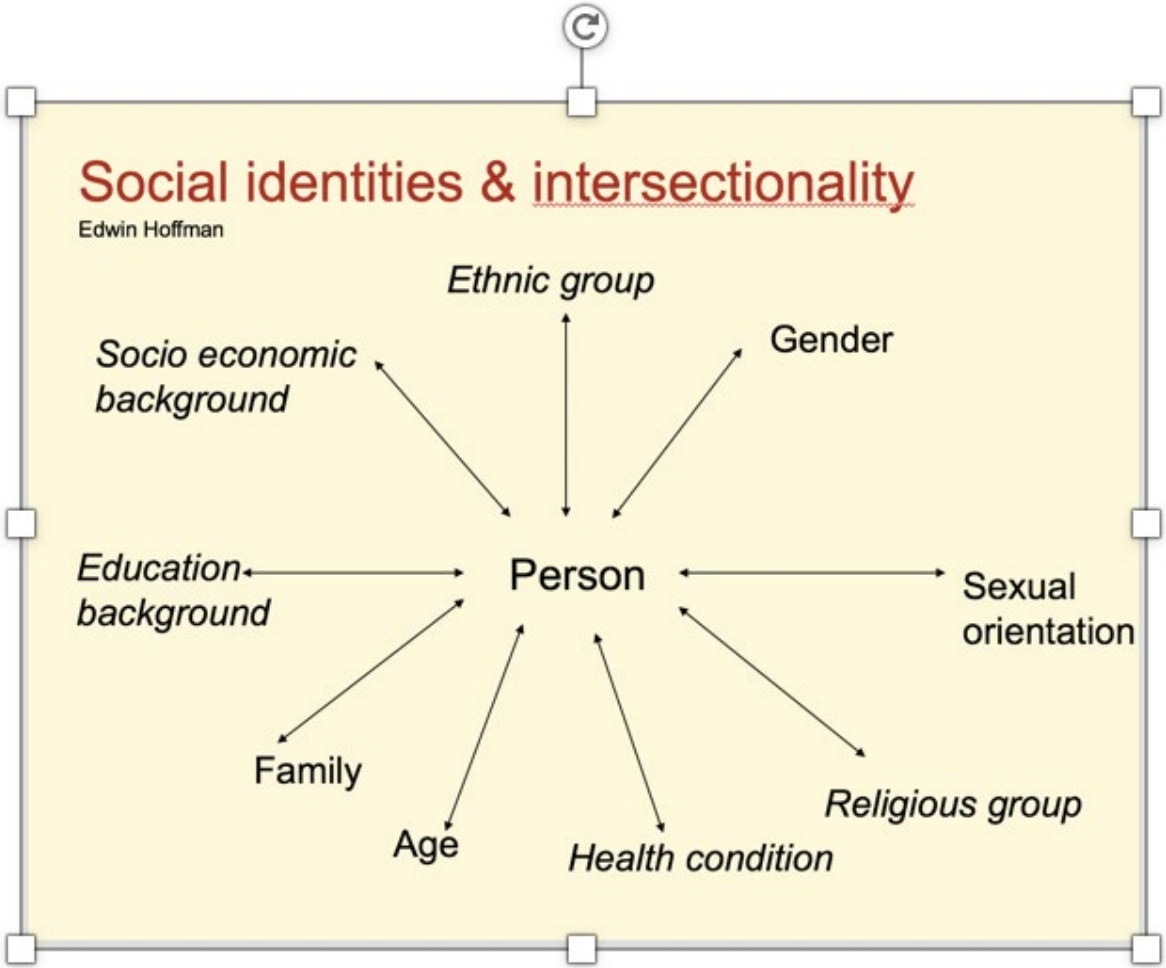
Criteria for funding

- **None!**
- Invitation to fill in a questionnaire → leads to a baseline analysis
- A proposal that is in fact an answer to the issues raised from the baseline analysis

→ Awarded proposals were selected by an independant committee of experts

ECHO
Center for Diversity Policy




Social identities & intersectionality
Edwin Hoffman
Ethnic group
Socio economic background
Gender
Education background
Person
Sexual orientation
Family
Age
Health condition
Religious group

Pathways to success

Programmes

- ECHO Junior Academy
- Erasmus Pre Academic Program

- ECHO Award/ ECHO Foundation
- Masterclass on Inclusive Excellence
- Mentor program for almost graduated students
- Outreach and mentor programs to increase diversity in PhD and academia
- Leadership development through Community Meetups

➢Target groups

➢Children in primary school

➢First year students Erasmus University (1st generation)

➢Students with a migrant background

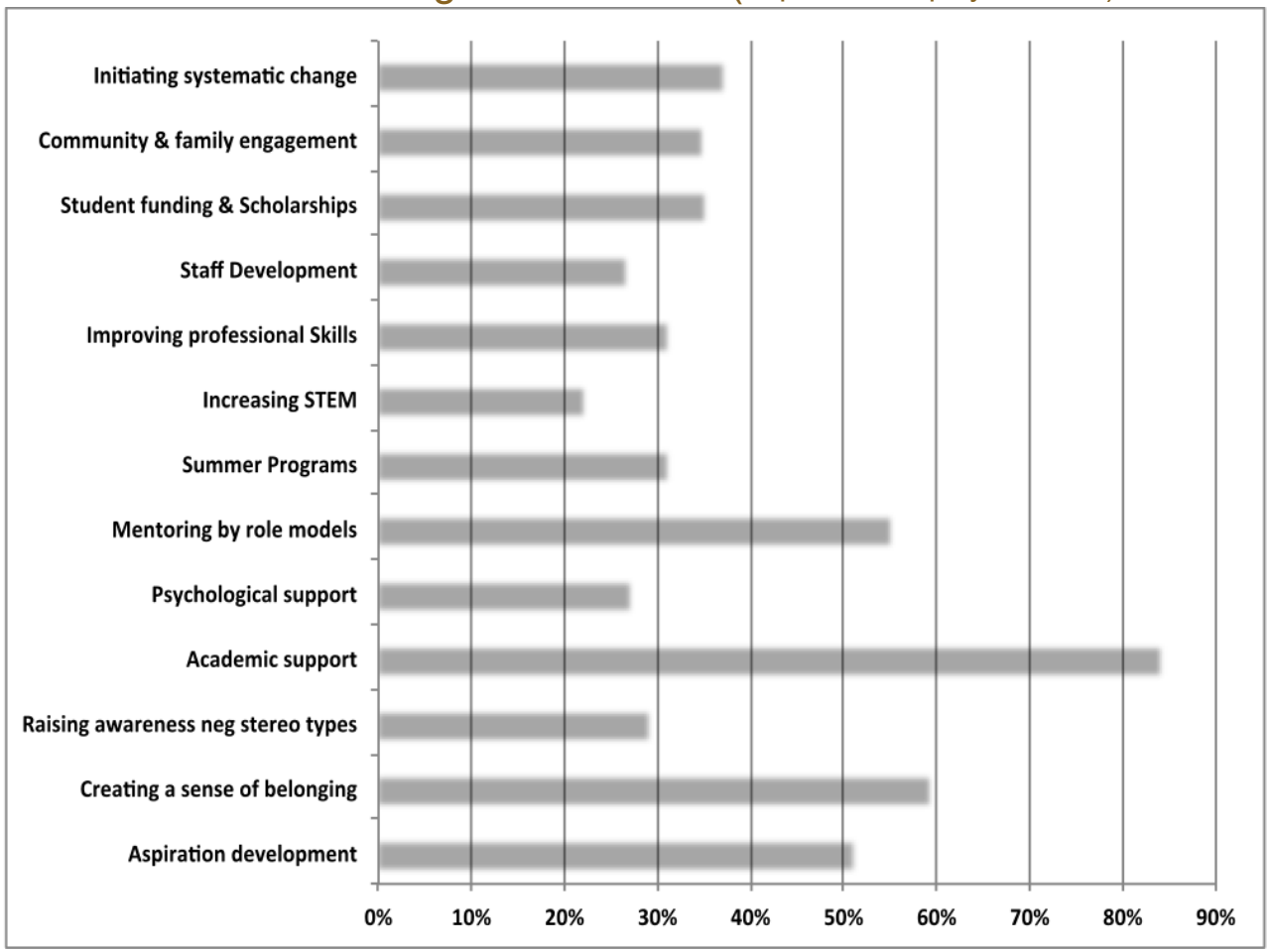
➢Professionals in higher education

➢Students with a migrant background

➢MA students, PhD's, post docs etc.

➢Students and young professionals

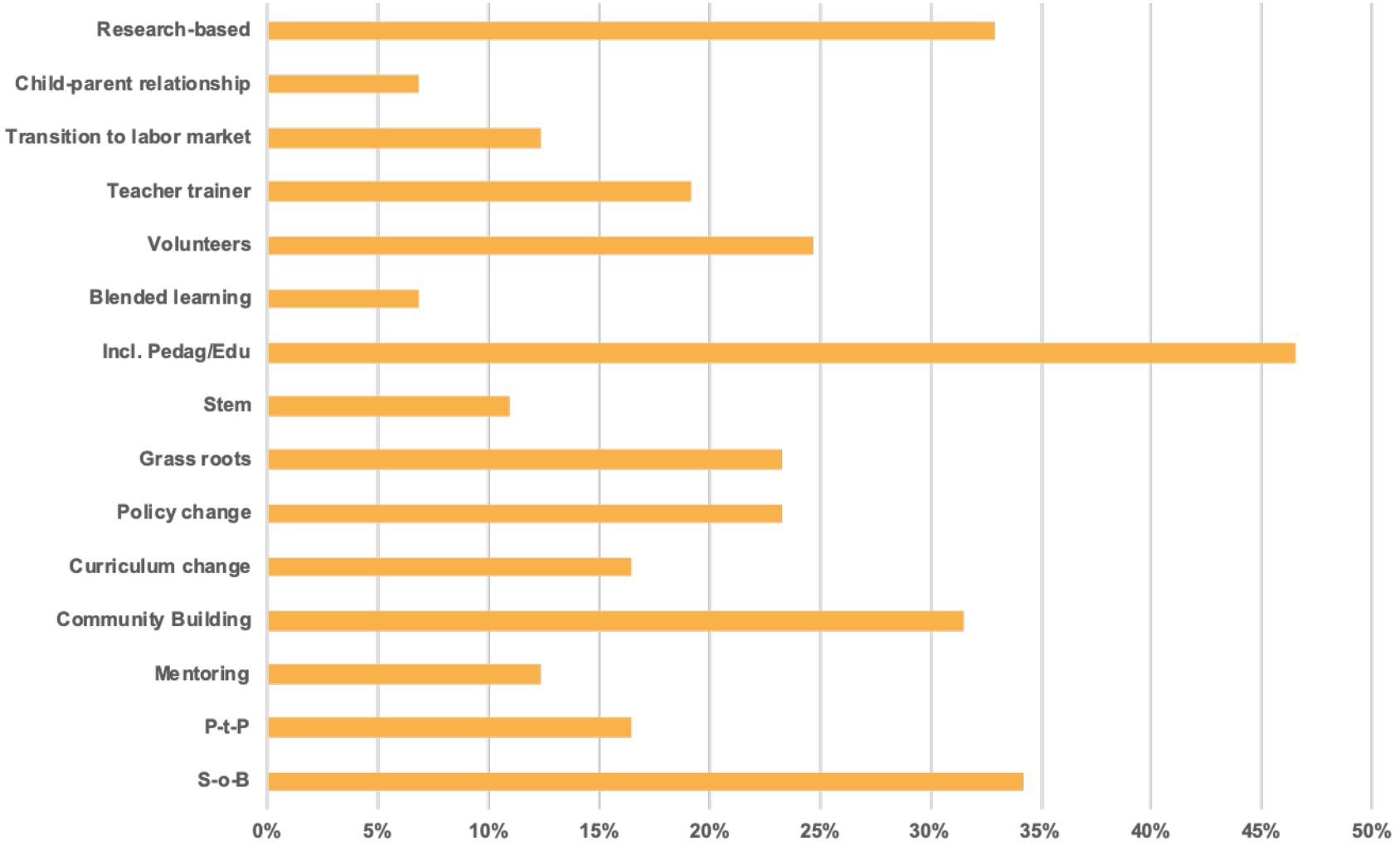
Why: EU funded project IDEAS Identifying effective approaches to enhancing the social dimension in Higher Education (http://www.equityideas.eu)



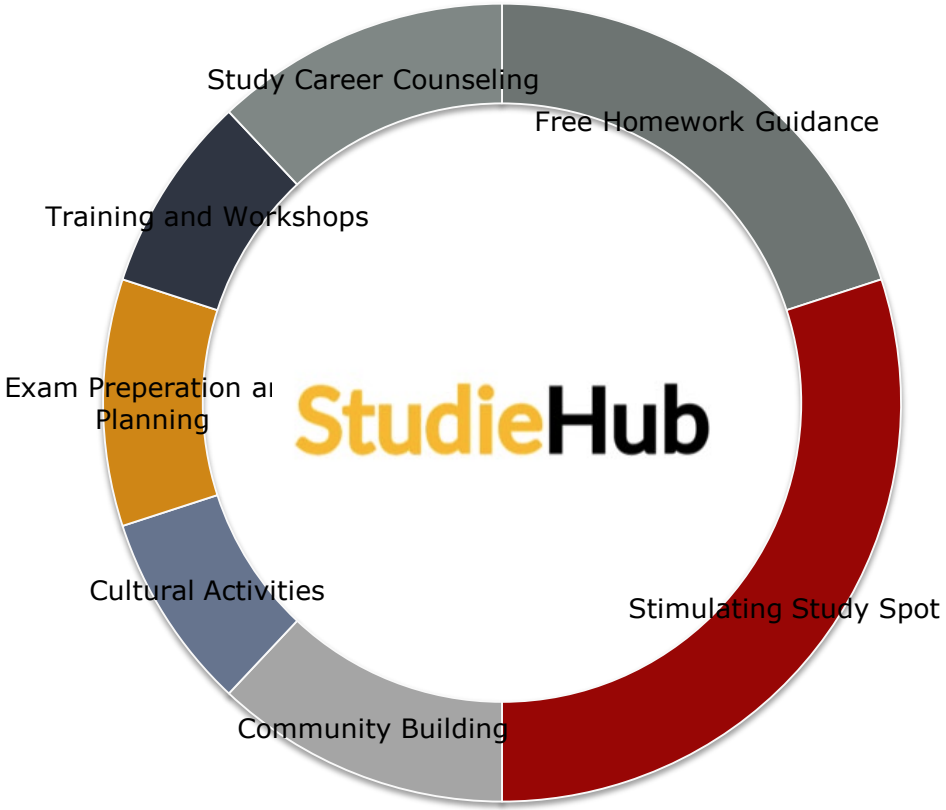
#MULT!INCLUDE
IDEAS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

echo
expertisecentrum diversiteitsbeleid

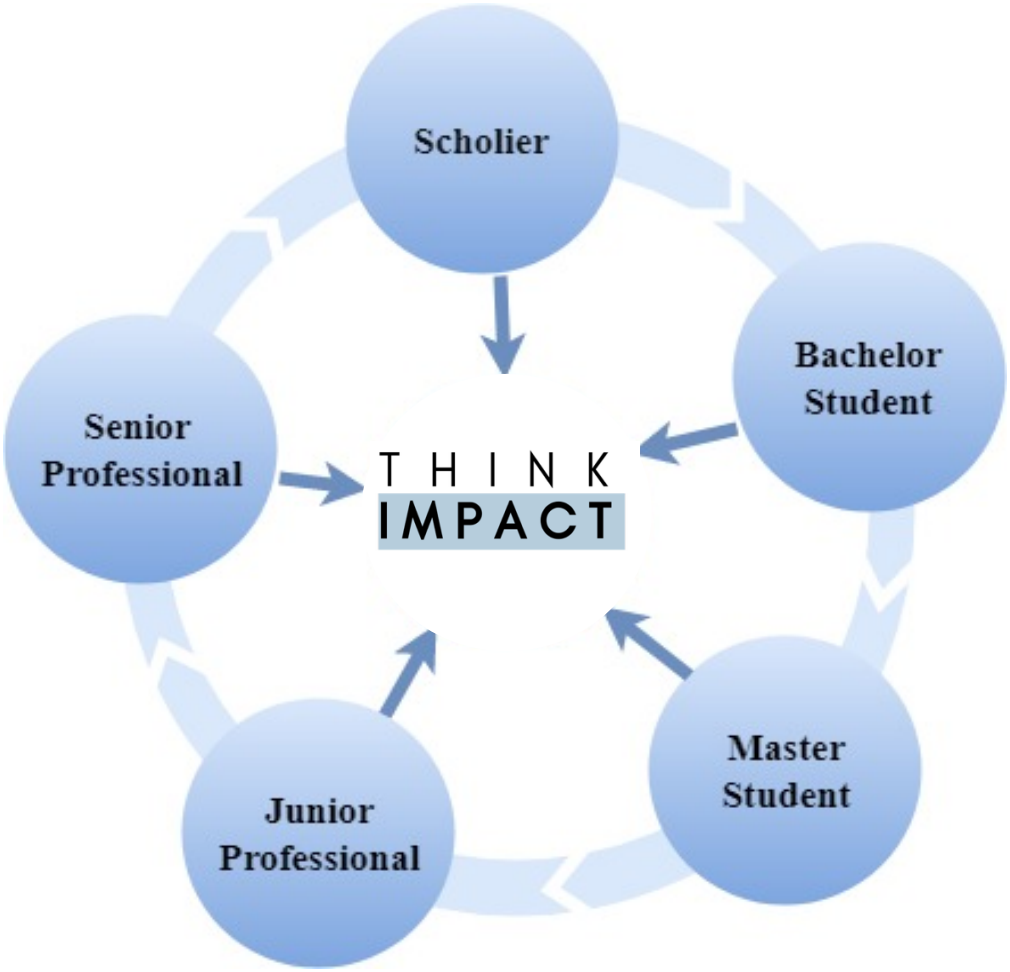
DIVERSITY TALKS



Having Needs **Addressed**



Having Needs **Raised**



Comprehensive Approach

- Does not take role of pedagogue, but puts marginalized voices central in problems ánd solutions
- Subjugated knowledge —> Epistemic knowledge
- Creates and fosters leadership qualities and development (and role modeling!)
- Stimulates (HEI) social responsibility and active citizenship
- Uses (human-)capital to create platforms of exposure
- Project managers —> frameworks & guidelines; Participants —> concrete interpretations
- Improved reach and retention of target group through agency
- Addressed both Individuals (<—StudieHub) as well as Institutional (<—Think Impact) needs
- Sustainability
- Pipeline trajectories
- NB: Interesting unintended outcomes!

Contact details

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Thank you!