THE WISE PROJECT
Welfare for Improved
Social Dimension of Education

edited by
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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

THE EDUCATIONAL LIFECYCLE: THREE DIFFERENT STAGES

In order to assess student welfare, the students' educational lifecycle needs to consider **three different temporal stages: (1) Entry phase, (2) During studies phase and (3) Exit phase.** Every single stage of the educational lifecycle takes into consideration different needs and different services for students, tailored for each phase.

2

FOCUS ON SPECIAL CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS

Students with disabilities and international students present specific needs and they require additional services.

3

IDENTIFY THE RED ZONE

In order to identify which area needs more investment from higher education institutions (HEIs) and student support services' providers, it is important to identify the most critical areas for students that represent the "Red Zone" area: the area where importance for students is high but satisfaction is low. That area represents the most important area for HEIs' investment.

4

PAN-EUROPEAN PROJECT

The project assessed student welfare at a Pan-European level, involving four European countries: Croatia, Finland, Poland, and Italy. Students from each country identify different "Red Zone" areas, which results from each country's educational context and which requires HEIs and student support service prociders in each country to focus on different priorities.

5

LONG-TERM VIEW NEEDED

Institutions need to take a long-term view: they need to consider the different stages of the educational lifecycle and the time it takes students to become aware of the services. Newly implemented services need time to be recognized. Some services introduce **a cultural change**, which needs additional time to take effect.

INTRODUCTION

Among policies that affect Higher Education Institutions (HEis), the Bologna Process Process (Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning to the BFUG) has as an impact on the face of European Higher Education (HE), defining the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In 1999, the ministers responsible for HE from 29 European countries signed up the Bologna Declaration, which began a process of change of HE, rising the number of official signatory countries from 29 to 47 (European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, 2015, pag. 25).

Theme	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2012
Mobility of students and teachers	Mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff	Social dimension of mobility	Portability of loans and grants improvement of mobility data	Attention to visa and work permits	Challenges of visa and work permits, pension systems and recognition	Benchmark of 20% by 2020 for student mobility	Explore ways to achieve automatic recognition of academic qualifications
A common two-cycle degree system	Easily readable and comparable degrees	Fair recognition development of recognised joint degrees	Inclusion of doctoral level as third cycle	QF-EHEA adopted national qualifications frameworks launched	National qualifications frameworks by 2010	National qualifications frameworks by 2012	New roadmaps for countries that have not established a national qualifications framework
Social dimension		Social dimension	Equal access	Reinforcement of the social dimension	Commitment to produce national action plans with effective monitoring	National targets for the social dimension to be measured by 2020	Strengthen policies of widening access and raising completion rates
Lifelong learning (LLL)		Lifelong learning (LLL)	Alignment of national LLL policies Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Flexible learning paths in higher education	Role of higher education in LLL partnerships to improve employability	LLL as a public responsibility requiring strong partnerships call to work on employability	Enhance employability, lifelong learning and entrepreneurial skills through improved cooperation with employers
Use of credits	A system of credits (ECTS)	ECTS and Diploma Supplement (DS)	ECTS for credit accumulation		Need for coherent use of tools and recognition practices	Continuing implementation of Bologna tools	Ensure that Bologna tools are based on learning outcomes
European cooperation in quality assurance		Cooperation between quality assurance and recognition professionals	Quality assurance at institutional national and European level	European standards and guidelines for quality assurance adopted	Creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)	Quality as an overarching focus for EHEA	Allow EQAR registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA
Europe of knowledge	European dimensions of higher education	Attractiveness of the European higher education area	Links between higher education and research areas	International cooperation on the basis of values and sustainable development	Strategy to improve the global dimension of the Bologna process adopted	Enhance global policy dialogue through Bologna policy Fora	Evaluate implementation of 2007 global dimension strategy with aim to provide guidelines for further developments
1998 Sorbonne Declaration	**1999** Bologna Declaration	**2001** Prague Communiqué	**2003** Berlin Communiqué	**2005** Bergen Communiqué	**2007** London Communiqué	**2009** Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué	**2012** Bucharest Communiqué

Figure 1 – The Bologna Process: from Sorbonne to Bucharest, 1998-2012. Source: (European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, 2015, pag. 25).

Different leading themes emerged among the process: "mobility of students and staff, a common degree system, lifelong learning, a European system of credits, quality assurance, the development of Europe as an attractive knowledge region and the social dimension of HE" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015, pag. 26).

The social dimension, was introduced in the Bologna agenda in 2001, with the Prague Communiqué, where "the social dimension was mainly viewed from the student inclusion and the student mobility perspective" (Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning to the BFUG, pag. 4). That definition was further improved in 2007, through the London Communiqué, suggesting "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations" (Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning to the BFUG, pag. 4; London Communiqué, 2007). That definition was further improved in 2009, with the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué , where Ministers included objectives for "widening overall participation and increasing participation of underrepresented groups" (Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning to the BFUG, pag. 4; Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009). Finally, with the Bucharest Communiqué (2012), Ministers reaffirmed their adhesion in order "to step up their efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the social dimension of higher education, reduce inequalities and provide adequate student support services, counseling and guidance, flexible learning paths and alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning" (European Ministers in charge of Higher Education, 2012; Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning to the BFUG, pag. 5; Bucharest Communiqué (2012)).

Nowadays, HEIs and student support services' providers face different challenges in order to maintain students' rights to education and student welfare, such as the economic crisis that adversely affected the quality and the access to HE and the lack of a "student-centered approach" in HE, focusing on students' needs and satisfaction. The above challenges call for immediate action to empower HEIs to better know their students and anticipate, manage and accommodate students' needs throughout the education cycle from entry into HE to exit into the labor market with suitable orientation and guidance services to ensure students' welfare. For the purpose of this project, student welfare is defined as the answer to the student's needs that goes beyond material needs and includes all personal and social aspects such as learning skills, personal development, psychological support, and relationship building.

Against this background, WISE (Welfare for Improved Social dimension of Education) has developed an innovative multidimensional assessment framework for HEIs to better track students, understand, anticipate their needs, to define and deploy more, and better "student-centered" services and solutions. The WISE project has developed an innovative and pan-European methodology to define, monitor and support student welfare to track students and enhance the social dimension of HE, tracking students along their educational lifecycle. The WISE project originality and innovative character lie in the fact that at present, only simple one-dimensional models are in use in HEIs to assess students' needs. The WISE multidimensional methodology follows students throughout their educational lifecycle, taking into account subjective (i.e. student specific information considering personal, social, emotional viewpoints) and objective (i.e. financial support) elements. In addition to being innovative as a methodology in the field of student welfare and access to education, WISE also offers a demand-driven approach: the methodological approach hinges on the direct involve-

ment of end users and target groups (students and staffers of offices/departments providing support services to students). The methodology has been implemented with the direct involvement of interested target groups ultimately reversing the hitherto approach of supply-driven focused on the provider rather than the end-users. In this context, WISE is based on a student-centered approach, a crucial element for assessing student welfare.

This report is structured as follow: the findings of the first part of the WISE project are presented following the structure of the key takeaways presented above. The second part of the findings come from focus group realized by the international partners involved in the WISE project (please see the appendix for the description of the methodology). Finally, a second part of the project has been conducted, only in Italy for EDUCatt. The second phase of the WISE project was aimed at assessing the impacts of welfare services on the satisfaction of students' welfare needs. To achieve this aim, a quasi-experiment was designed and implemented. EDUCatt implemented a set of welfare services for students on the four campuses (Milano, Roma, Piacenza, and Brescia) of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and assessed the subsequent changes in students' satisfaction.

For the purpose of this report, only the first part of the project which involved all the international partners has been described.

I.
FINDINGS

1. The dimensions of educational experience: the student lifecycle and activity areas

The educational lifecycle of students has been examined according to two important dimensions:

– *The temporal stage of the educational experience*: students' educational lifecycle can be divided into three phases – entry (typically first year), during studies (sub sequential years) and exit (final year).

– *Areas of activities: student welfare has been measured according to six areas*: food, housing, financial support, health and psychological support, study and personal development support, and sport.
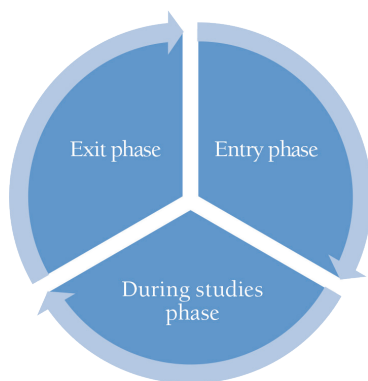
Figure 2 – The educational lifecycle

The educational lifecycle of students in universities is composed of:

1. **The entry phase**: it represents the beginning of students in their academic careers, which signifies typically the first year of study of students at the university. This phase is characterized by three needs and five ser-

vices, which are offered by student service providers during the first-year students are enrolled. The table below describes both the needs and the services that characterize that phase.

NEEDS	DEFINITION	SERVICES
Need to get information about university services	The accuracy of pre-enrollment information, reasons why students choose the school in question, and whether or not the school they are attending was their first choice	Online services and/or helpdesk, Administrative support during admission, Possibility to attend orientation activities before enrolment
Need to be supported in building new relationships	Establish new friendships and relationships through the welcome day or any type of initiatives in order to get the students to know each other's and in order to introduce them to student life of the institution	Counseling activities to encourage interactions with other students
Need for psychometric or psychological support in order to find emotional predisposition towards a particular course of study	Receive support from friends and family, Family/peer encouragement; attend psychological meetings with specialists in order to highlight the emotional predisposition towards a particular course of study	Psychological meeting with specialists in order to highlight the emotional predisposition towards a particular course of study

Table 1 – Needs and services in the entry phase

2. **The during studies phase**: represents the middle phase where students are already enrolled and have completed their first year of study in a university program. This stage is composed of six key areas: (a) food, (b) housing, (c) financial support, (d) health and psychological support, (e) study and personal development support and (f) sport.
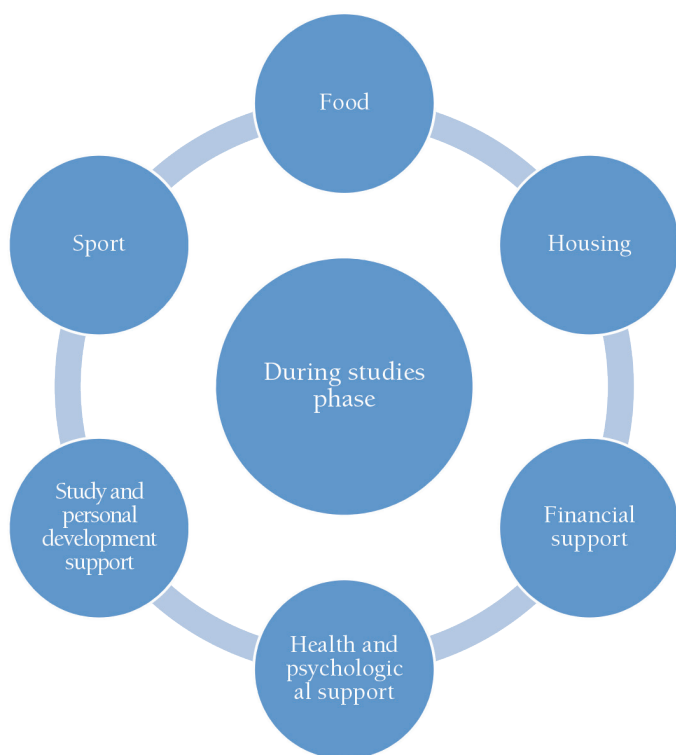
Figure 3 – Focus areas in the during studies phase

The first area analyzed in the during studies phase is the **food** area. The food area covers five needs and seven services that refer to a student's need to be fed. The table below describes both the needs and the services that characterized that part. It mainly covers canteen facilities, menus characteristics and use of alternative food facilities:

FOOD NEEDS	DEFINITION	FOOD SERVICES
To receive a menu with several and genuine choices	The possibility to eat from a menu with different choices	Offer/proposal of menus with seasonal foods
To eat meals based on healthy nutritional aspects	The menus should contain daily calorie consumption	Offer/proposal of menus with healthy choices Menus advised by nutritionists with a healthy nutritional chart
To eat fresh and local food	Possibility to eat special menu with Zero-Km products	Offer/proposal of local foods (purchased from local suppliers.)
Friendly services	Possibility to easily access multiple locations, with flexible opening times	"Friendly" canteen facilities (easily achievable, long opening hours)
To use alternative food facilities	Availability of snack machines and catering services	Availability of snack machines on campus Possibility to use catering service to arrange special events within the university (e.g. graduation party)

Table 2 – Needs and services in the food area

The second area refers to **housing** support. This area is composed of three needs and eighteen services, including housing facilities, the safety of the different housing options provided to students and other services and needs described below:

HOUSING NEEDS	DEFINITION	HOUSING SERVICES
Comfortable housing	The ability to personalize rooms, the minimum level of cleanliness, availability of single rooms or family student housing, possibility to live in a student house with multi-services (IT, shared kitchen, relax room)	Type of housing available: Student housing near the university, availability of single rooms, availability of family apartments. Housing facilities: restaurant hall, shared kitchen, laundry room, IT facilities in the rooms (internal telephone line, Wi-Fi, intranet, pocket radio), cleaning services, study hall, computer hall, relaxation room, prayer room, gym facilities, movie theatre
Housing close to the university	Possibility to live very close to the university, availability of parking	Parking space near housing facility
Secure and safe accommodation	The possibility to provide healthy, safe, and educationally supportive living environments that complement the academic mission of the institution. The possibility to select and supervise the student and professional staff members who live and work in campus residence halls	Safety and security of the housing facilities (locks on doors, adequate lighting, information privacy)

Table 3 – Needs and services in the housing area

The third area concerns **financial** support. This part mainly covers helping students in paying tuition fees and further costs that they might incur. The table below describes the two needs considered and the twelve services offered by the service providers:

FINANCIAL NEEDS	DEFINITION	FINANCIAL SERVICES
Financial support that covers tuition fees	Possibility to receive financial aid to help students offset tuition fees with scholarships. Contributions to the board and/or lodging expenses	Availability of scholarships to cover tuition/enrolment fees Possibility to get degree awards (additional scholarships for students who graduate within recommended study time)
Financial support that covers further costs	Possibility to receive vouchers or subsidies that can be used to cover further costs (e.g. Free-of-charge borrowing of books from the library, Special discounts to use sports facilities, Vouchers or economic help to buy books in off-campus bookshops, Vouchers or economic help for transit passes, to rent a car or to buy gas)	Special benefit/subvention for student canteen, Special benefit/subvention for student housing, Special menu discount price for students who eat in off-campus restaurants/bars, Availability to use restaurant tickets at canteen, Free-of-charge borrowing of books from library, Special discounts to use sports facilities, Vouchers or economic help to buy books in off-campus bookshops, Vouchers or economic help to rent a car or to buy gas, Vouchers or economic help to pay public transportation, Financial coverage for health and mental care

Table 4 – Needs and services in the financial area

The fourth focus in on **health and psychological support**, which refers to a medical or another type of assistance that is provided to students and it includes three needs and four services assessed below.

HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS	DEFINITION	HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
Need to receive primary health assistance	Availability of immediate medical assistance to students who are ill or injured	Primary health care services (general practitioner, nurse)
Need to receive specialist health assistance	Availability of other medical assistance such as nutritionist, gynecologist, dermatologist, physiotherapist, or dentist	Specialist healthcare services (physical medicine specialist, gynecologist, dermatologist, physiotherapist, dentist, a dental hygienist)
Need to receive mental health assistance	Availability of pastoral support and psychological assistance to students	Mental health care services (psychologist, psychiatrist) and Pastoral support (counseling with a priest)

Table 5 – Needs and services in the health and psychological area

The fifth area relates to **study and personal development support**, which covers the social aspects of student life and is more subjective For example, personal growth and the need of building relationships. This section involves six needs and nine services, described below:

STUDY AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS	DEFINITION	STUDY AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Need of cultural enhancement	Possibility to attend educational programs to develop academic and learning skills	Educational programs to develop academic and learning skills
Need for personal growth	Encourage interactions with students, counseling, mentoring	Programs for student exchange and studies abroad (to allow students to broaden their horizons, experience a challenge, and grow as persons)
Need for community	Encourage social integration (degree of the student's integration into the social environment of the institution and her or his perceived personal and social growth)	Cultural activities for students (e.g. guided tours to museums, free tickets or discounts to cultural events like concerts, theatre etc.). Student unions (service center and meeting place for students)
Need for educational planning and monitoring	Encourage course planning/choosing a degree or course of study, monitoring, and follow-up of academic progress, as well as transfer assistance	Availability of tutoring advisors (student tutors, personal student advisor, academic advisor)
Need for personal guidance and counseling	Possibility to attend orientation activities with tutors and academic advising	Counseling for development of personal skills and ambitions
Need to develop extra-curricular experiences	Possibility to attend Erasmus program, placement in part-time jobs	Possibility to be engaged in volunteer jobs, Opportunities for occasional jobs during studies, Publishing activities (student magazine, university blogs)

Table 6 – Needs and services in the study
and personal development area

The last part, in the during studies phase, relates to **sport**. This area refers to the sports activities that students can

participate in on campus and it includes one need and two services:

SPORT NEEDS	DEFINITION	SPORT SERVICES
Need to choose among different athletic initiatives	Possibility to attend f tness programs in order to promote good health and wellness, to teach physical skills, and to encourage positive social interaction among students	Intra and intercollegiate athletics (e.g. sports competitions, sports events, tournaments etc.), Fitness program at a campus-based sports center

Table 7 – Needs and services in the sport area

3. **The exit phase**: this phase relates to the last year of the student in the university. The last year is specifically characterized by student orientation toward the job market and student willingness to finding job opportunities This phase is characterized by four needs and five services:

NEEDS	DEFINITION	SERVICES
Need to get information about job opportunities	Possibility for students to access to digital resources to access to job postings	A database of available jobs and placements to help students in finding work opportunities (internship, part, and full-time jobs)
Need to do job interview simulation	Opportunity for students to test their job talks	Job interview simulations
Need to improve human relationship skills and professional skills	Possibility for students to check their CV building skills and to further improve their CV	CV-development workshop
Career development and planning (career exploration, job search)	Opportunity for students to explore career opportunities with advisors and obtain suggestions from previous alumni	Career orientation meeting with an advisor A meeting with alumni

Table 8 – Needs and services in the exit phase

The identification of the three educational stages and the key main themes allows the WISE project to take into consideration both objective (material needs) and subjective elements (social dimensions). The dual focus makes the project unique, because it not only focuses on the services offered in practices to students but also to students' social aspects, allowing to track also the satisfaction for areas more related to the students' personal needs. Taken together, the material needs and the social elements allow the WISE project to provide a more inclusive definition of student welfare.

Objective elements (material needs)	Subjective elements (social aspects)
☐ Canteen facilities	☐ Psychological support
☐ Housing facilities	☐ Personal Growth
☐ Financial support	☐ Relationship building

Figure 4 – Material needs and social aspects of student welfare

2. Special Categories: international students and students with disabilities

The WISE project has considered two special categories of students that were assessed considering specific needs and services:
– *International students*
– *Students with disabilities*

International students and students with disabilities face different needs and so, different services are required in their educational experience at the university level.

For international students, eight needs and thirteen services were identified below:

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' NEEDS	INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' SERVICES
Support to the student for pre-departure	Mobility program announced on time, information on costs of living in the host country, housing services
Support to the student in finding and understanding information	Website and brochure about offered study programs in the language of the host country (or in English)
Support to the student in improving the level of knowledge of the host country's language	Local language courses
Support to the student through additional economic support either by institutions of the country of origin or by the host institution	Additional scholarships for international students
Support to the students in dealing with administrative procedures	Presence of staff to support students with VISA and residency application requirements
Support the students in dealing with academic tasks	Welcome day for international students, "Buddy" system/tutorship, extra-curricula activities (sports etc.)
Support to the students in looking for internship, part-time or full-time, paid/unpaid job opportunities	Help from university to find an internship, part-time, full-time paid/unpaid job opportunities
Support to the students about health issues	Medical care services, mental health services (psychologist, psychiatrist support)

Table 9 – Needs and services for international students

Regarding students with disabilities, the table below lists four needs identified and four services offered to them:

STUDENTS' WITH DISABILITIES NEEDS	STUDENTS' WITH DISABILITIES SERVICES
Need for physical assistance for disabled students (tutor, coaching)	Availability of tutors for disabled students (individual coaching by fellow students in order to give appropriate support to disabled students)
Need to receive additional assistive tools for disabilities (technology, IT, E-learning, etc.)	Availability of appropriate IT facilities (Wi-Fi, scanner reader, scanner pen, spell check on campus computers, speech synthesis)
Need to use specific facilities to access the campus (for students with mobility impairment)	Availability of accessible facilities (wheelchair adaptation, widened doors, ramps) to provide access on campus
Need to attend sports competitions and fitness programs for disabled students	Sports activities for disabled students

Table 10 – Needs and services for students with disabilities

For the Italian sample, not only students with disabilities were considered, but also students with a specific learning disability. For this specific category of students, different needs and services were assessed in addition to the ones assessed for students with disabilities (please see the appendix).

3. The WISE Matrix: importance, satisfaction and usage grid

The challenge of assessing students' welfare begin by identifying the areas that require the most intervention. The majority of universities and student support services' providers offer different services to students, and with that variability, it was very difficult to understand which areas better-characterize student welfare. Following the temporal educational lifecycle and the areas described above, the WISE survey identified the most important areas, where HEIs and student support services' providers should focus their attention (please see the Appendix for needs' and services' identification and measurement). The study answers the following questions: in which areas are students most satis-

fied and which areas give them the least satisfaction? Which areas are more important and more used by students? In addition, which areas require more investment from HEIs to improve student welfare? The WISE project aims to map all the ten areas that characterize the student welfare based on three variables: importance, satisfaction, and usage rate (for measurement details, please see the appendix).
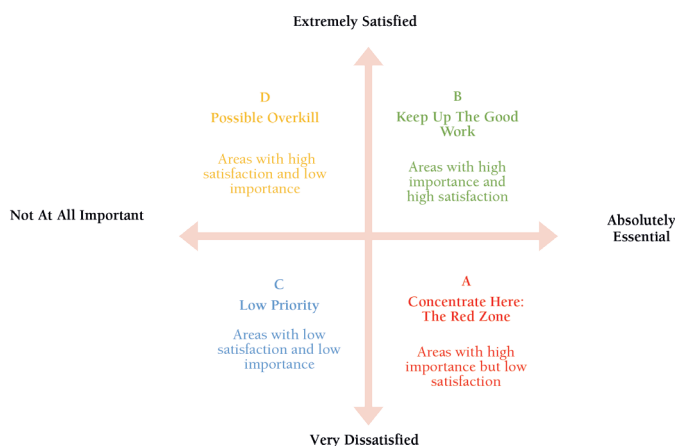
Figure 5 – The Satisfaction-Importance Grid (Matzler et al., 2004),, based on the Importance-Performance Grid source: (Martilla & James, 1977)

Figure 5 illustrates a matrix connecting the degree of satisfaction of services offered to students with the perceived importance of their needs for each of the ten areas above identified, according to the temporal educational lifecycle. The matrix identifies four quadrants placing the ten areas above identified, as high importance and low satisfaction (A), high importance and high satisfaction (B), low importance and low satisfaction (C) and, low importance and high satisfaction (D). This matrix was first used in marketing research by Martilla &James (1977).

From the HEIs and student support services' providers perspective, quadrant A represents the areas that present having high importance but are rated with low satisfaction.

This quadrant refers to the called "Red Zone", which represents the priority areas which need improvement and HEIs and student support services' providers should concentrate there. Quadrant B (high importance, high satisfaction) contains those areas of student welfare that HEIs and student support services' providers should preserve by "keeping up the good work" " (Douglas et al., 2006). Quadrant C refers to areas that are a "low priority" because, they have a the low satisfaction rate, and they have been rated of little importance by students, finally Quadrant D represents a possible "overkill" where the HEIs and student support services' providers may be outperforming, and they should concentrate on other areas (Douglas et al., 2006).

Following the three educational lifecycle stages (entry, during studies and exit) described above, students reported different satisfaction results. According to the whole sample of students involved in the survey (9,041 students from four European countries: Croatia, Finland, Italy and Poland), the Financial and Health and Psychological areas are the ones that present the highest level of satisfaction for students. Regarding the needs' perceived importance, students evaluated seven areas as very important, while health and psychological support, sport and students with disabilities needs were evaluated as moderately important (See Figures 6 and 7).
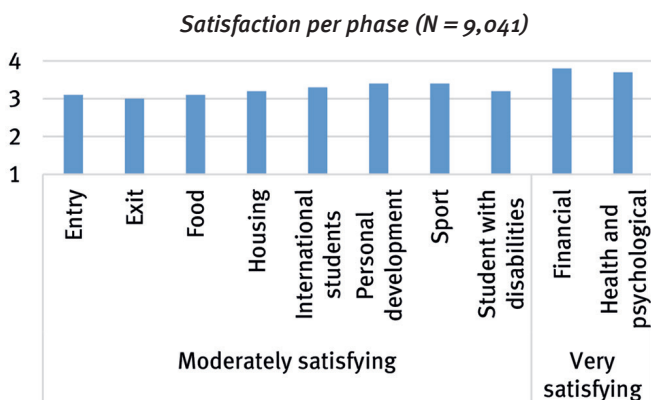
Figure 6 – Satisfaction degree per phase
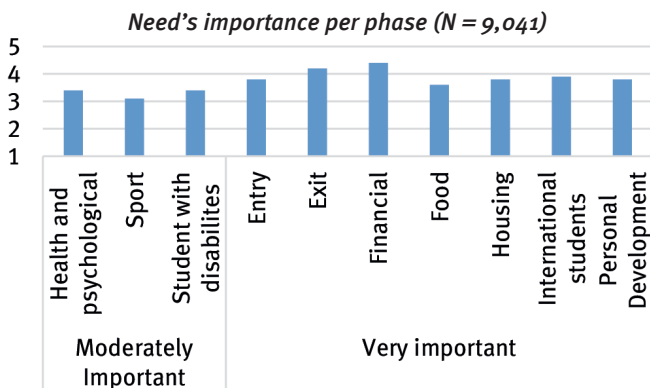
Figure 7 – Needs' importance per phase

Regarding the importance of needs, students evaluated seven categories as very important, while health and psychological support, sport and students with disabilities needs were evaluated as moderately important.

Among the innovativeness of the WISE project, the project adopts a multidimensional approach, taking into consideration not only the two dimensions above described: the degree of satisfaction and the importance perceived by the students but also the usage rate. The usage rate allows the satisfaction-importance grid to become multidimensional, by adding the usage rate as the size of the bubble, as shown in Figure 8. The table 11 below shows the mean of the perceived needs' importance, the mean of the degree of satisfaction and the usage rate for each phase and areas considered. In order to identify the quadrants, referred to figure 5, the intersection between the two axes was calculated; by computing the average levels of the two variables used: the satisfaction mean and the importance's mean of all ten areas was considered.

The areas that require high priority, which refer to quadrant A, are indicated with a big square, the areas that require medium priority, which refer to quadrant D, are indicated with a medium square, and the areas that do

not require actions, are indicated with the smallest square, which refer to quadrant B and C of figure 5.

PHASE/FOCUS AREA	IMPORTANCE	SATISFACTION	USAGE (%)	PRIORITY
Entry	3.8	3.1	40.6	■
Food	3.6	3.1	70.9	▪
Housing	3.8	3.2	72.1	■
Financial	4.4	3.8	38.3	▪
Health and Psychological	3.4	3.7	50.3	■
Study and personal development	3.8	3.4	41.1	▪
Sport	3.1	3.4	60.6	■
Exit	4.2	3.0	20.8	■
International students	3.9	3.3	33.9	▪
Students with disabilities	3.4	3.2	28.6	▪

Table 11 – Importance (mean), satisfaction (mean) and usage rate for each area

The combination of the three variables allows the WISE matrix to be built. Figure 8 shows the WISE Matrix at international level, for the four countries involved in the project. As stated above, the WISE Matrix is multidimensional, taking into consideration the degree of importance and satisfaction, and the usage rate, which is represented by the size of each bubble showed in figure 8. The WISE Matrix maps the areas that characterize the overall student welfare described above, according to four quadrants:

(1) The Red Zone (above average importance and below average satisfaction). This quadrant shows the areas that are more critical for HEIs and the student support services' providers, where they need to invest more and where they should pay attention to the services that they are offering. Entry, exit, and housing belong to this quadrant. These three areas represent the most critical areas where HEIs and the student support services' providers need to concentrate in order to improve their

services. In particular, the housing area is the one that has the highest usage rate (72.1%) thus, it is important that HEIs and the student support services' providers improve that area, as it is also ranked as above the average degree of importance for students.

(2) Areas of "Low Priority" (below average importance and below average satisfaction). This quadrant shows the areas that do not require action from the student support services' providers because the quadrant includes services that have a lower degree of satisfaction and a lower degree of importance for students. The quadrant shows that students with disabilities and the sports' services area enter in this quadrant, which it means that these two areas do not require much more investments from the student support services' providers and HEIs, and so they represent a low priority for them. Within that quadrant, food services, which are the ones with the highest usage rate (70.9%), are placed in the intersection between the two quadrants. Specifically, the food services are below the satisfaction average but also a little below the importance average, that excludes them from the area of priorities by a marginal amount.

(3) Areas of "Possible Overkill" (below average importance and above average satisfaction). This quadrant shows the areas where the student support services' providers and HEIs might be overperforming. Health and psychological services belong to that quadrant, meaning that the services belonging to this area do not require any investment from the HEIs and student support services' providers because the student support services' providers are performing better than students' expectations. In particular, health and psychological services present above satisfaction average but they do not appear to be very important for students, so, not much intervention from HEIs is required. Sports services belong to this quadrant too, but also to the quadrant of low priority. Services in this area do not affect the overall level of

student satisfaction, highlighting a minimum level of concern for HEIs and student support services' providers.

(4) Areas of "Keep Up The Good Work" (above average importance and above average satisfaction). This quadrant shows the areas where the student support services' providers and HEIs are doing well because the quadrant includes areas with a high degree of importance to students but also a high degree of satisfaction. Services in this area have a significant impact on the students' welfare. Particularly, financial services, international students, and study and personal development services belong to this quadrant. Financial support services are the ones that the student support services' providers and HEIs perform as the best and the study and personal development areas are the services which are the most used.
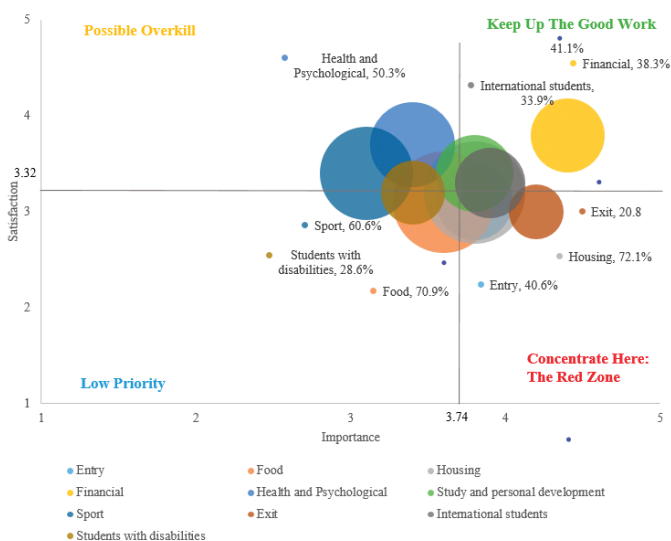
Figure 8 – The WISE matrix at international level

In addition to the description of the four areas, some other observations can be drawn:

- Regarding needs importance, exit and financial support are the two areas, which have obtained an importance rate above the average.
- Financial support is the area where students are more satisfied and it is the area where the needs are perceived as more important in comparison to the other areas.
- The services that are most used are the housing (72.1%) and food (70.9%) areas.

4. A Pan-European project: the WISE matrix in Croatia, Finland, Italy, and Poland

The WISE project has involved four European countries: Croatia, Finland, Italy, and Poland. For each country involved in the project, a WISE matrix has been built:

Figure 9 – The WISE matrix in Croatia
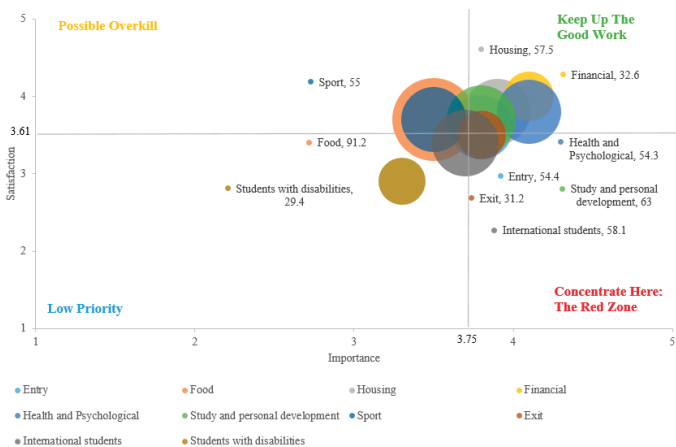
Figure 10 – The WISE matrix in Finland

Quaderni
EDUCatt
Strumenti
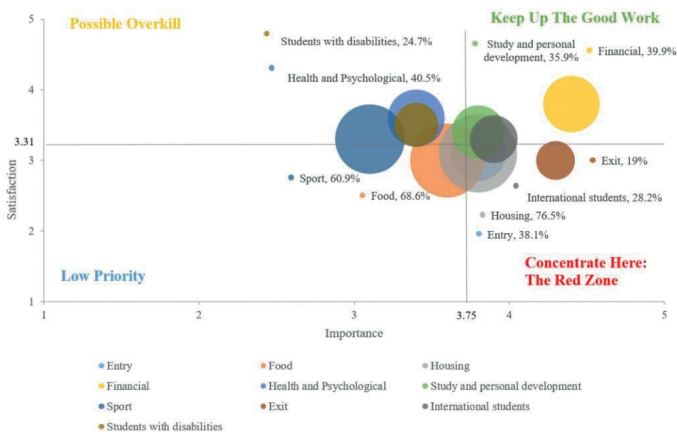
Figure 11 – The WISE matrix in Italy
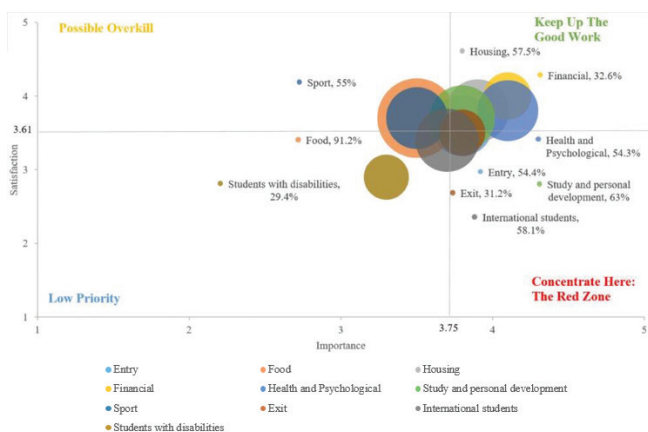
Figure 12 – The WISE matrix in Poland

As figures 09, 10, 11 and 12 showed, each country involved in the project has identified their own Red Zone which allows HEIs and the student support services' providers in that country to identify their own priorities for action (Please see the appendix for the HEIs involved, survey details and sample de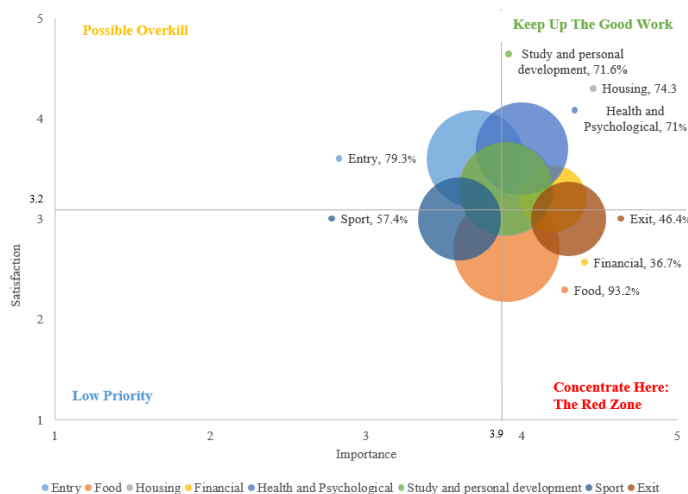scription with some demographic). Across the four countries involved, some differences between countries can be highlighted (the text below might include some information gathered from the focus group):

o WISE Matrix in Croatia: three areas require action – food services, services provided upon the completion of studies (exit) and financial support. In contrast to other countries, financial support services are included in the red zone area. That is different in comparison to the other countries involved, and in comparison to the WISE international matrix, where, financial services are considered strengths and students evaluated them above the average in satisfaction and importance. This is typical of the Catholic University of Croatia, where students, during the academic year 2012/2013, were not eligible to apply for state scholarships and subsidized accommodation in student housing facilities pro-

vided by the state, due to the fact that the university is private. Moreover, a system of tuition fees based (in reverse proportion) on a weighted grade point average has been introduced since the academic year 2015/2016, in order to assist students with financial support. In addition, food services require the attention for the Catholic University of Croatia. This could be because the student canteen is far from the university, and students do not have much time to reach the canteen, during breaks between lectures. An additional difficulty is that the canteen is often overcrowded, which requires even more time for students to have their lunch. Finally, the services provided upon completion of studies requires the attention as well, because there is currently no organized provision of such services by the university.

o WISE Matrix in Finland: among the areas identified in the red zone area, there are five areas – services in the entry and exit phase, health and psychological support, studies and personal development and services for international students. In comparison to the other countries, study and personal development and health and psychological support require attention from Åbo Akademi University. This is the only country involved that includes these two particular areas in the priorities of action needed. It is important to highlight that the services provided within health and psychological support and within studies and personal development are the ones that students use most. Similarly, to the others countries involved in the project, the entry and the exit area are included in the red zone. Within the entry phase, some students expressed concern regarding the difficulty of finding the right person on campus, because the services are scattered and located in different places and, the website can be quite difficult to navigate, in order to find the right information needed. Within the exit services, students called for more internship opportunities, more CV workshops, and ca-

reer orientation meetings with an advisor. Although the services in the exit phase are considered important, a small number of students are using the services offered. Indeed, the exit services are the ones that have the lower usage rate, in comparison to the other services in the same quadrant of the matrix. In conclusion, services toward international students require further attention from Åbo Akademi University.

o WISE Matrix in Italy: the quadrant that requires most attention from the Italian student support services' providers and HEIs involved in the study is composed of four areas – services in the entry and exit phase, the housing support area and the services for international students. Similarly, to the other countries, services in the entry and exit area requires more attention from the Italian HEIs and student support services' providers. Moreover, housing services belong to that area. The WISE matrix shows the lowest satisfaction rate, concerning housing services. Although housing services have obtained a lower satisfaction rate, these services have the highest usage rate, meaning that HEIs and the student support services' providers need to focus on these services in order to increase student satisfaction. In contrast, exit services and services toward international students have a lower usage rate.

o WISE Matrix in Poland: according to the matrix, three areas require attention from the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin – services in the exit and entry phase and housing services. Within the exit phase, students noticed that the academic career center is not well recognized by students. Among entry service, there is a lack of availability of information about services and peer support. In conclusion, the housing services do not offer accommodations for every student, and those that are provided lack facilities such as canteen, and recreation space. This requires students to rent private flats, increasing the risk to encounter problems with

landlords. Finally, also services toward international students and students with disabilities require attention as partly included in the red zone.

5. Long-term view needed: a cultural change

In order to enhance student welfare, HEIs and the student support services' providers need to adopt a long-term view. Most of the time, students are not aware of the services that are offered at the University and students' awareness of the services is an important factor that affects student satisfaction. This requires a cultural change that needs time in order to be perceived by students. Following, there are selected quotes from the focus groups realized by the international partners involved in the WISE project.

> "Approximately **50% of students do not know where the Academic Career Centre (ACC) is located and what it provides to our university**" (S_4, GS1).

> **"I've never been to the ACC**, I know that it is organized within a structure of university but I've never been interested in its services" (S_9, GS2).

> "I know that some people do not even know of their existence" (S_9, GS2), a location in an inconspicuous place and difficult access to its services: "perhaps the main disadvantage is that **their office is located in the building rarely visited by students and with a difficult access to it**" (S_10, GS2).

In order to improve student welfare, HEIs and the student support services' providers need to adopt a long-term view in the implementation of their services: each service adopted need time to be perceived and to be used by students, in order to improve their student welfare. The time needed to be perceived by students could be shortened through the increased advertisement of each service. Following, there are selected quotes from the focus groups realized by the international partners involved in the WISE project.

"The reason why students do not know about ACC may be **obsolete forms of promotion**. More and more information can be found on social networking web sites such as Facebook" (S_10, SG2), and "now we are used to that if we need something to find, we reach for the mobile phone and we get it" (S_1, GS1).

"I think a good solution would be **organizing training at the beginning of the study** within the university structure, which will show what, where and how to deal with" (S_6, GS1).

"It would be good **to increase the visibility of office**: definitely it should be more exposed. Perhaps, it would be better if the office was located in the Knowledge Transfer Centre or the Main Building, where students are passing or having their classes" (S_8, GS2).

In addition to advertising the services that the University can offer, HEIs and the student support services' providers should extend their vision over a long term, stressing the use of existing resources and consolidation of services. As highlighted above, students' awareness of services requires time, and for this reason, HEIs and the student support services' providers need to constantly improve the awareness of their services.

II.
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

The following are recommendations coming from all four countries involved in the project, in order to improve the services identified in the red zone, based from information gathered from the focus group realized by the international partners involved in the WISE project.

1. Entry

– Web pages are an important source for new students to look for information; the university website needs to be well structured and focused on the information most relevant for the different phases of the study, especially regarding the entry phase. Increase availability of information about services and peer support in the entry phase.
– Interactions prior to enrolment should include further improvement on social media by the university, such as creating a forum for questions and answers and interaction between students, both pre-enrolment and during the initial period at the university.
– Orientation period requires that all support resources – administrators, counsellors, student and teacher tutors, teachers, study psychologists – regardless of program and department, have a common strategy and are aware of the whole picture when working towards a common goal in order to facilitate a successful integration of all new students.
– The initial orientation period should mainly focus on the information needed during the first weeks of study; additional information should be put into the program later on during the academic year, adapted to the respective phase of studies.

2. Food

– Lecture schedules need to be organized to ensure longer breaks and at least one break per day during which allow students sufficient time to reach the student canteen, have their meal and return to the University premises in time for the next lecture.
– Introduce student coupons that provide subsidized meals to use in restaurants.
– Introduce hot meals at the coffee shop operating on campus, in order to keep students on campus during breaks.
– Open a canteen near the University.

3. Financial Support

– The state needs to ensure more financial aid, offering additional scholarships to support tuition, books and housing.
– Improving the structure of lecture schedules, such as reducing the number of courses, would allow students more time to take part-time jobs, to cover tuition fees.

4. Health and Psychological Support

– Mental health issues are a growing problem among higher education students, which needs to be addressed, both in order to allow students get a degree, as well as give them the appropriate tools to handle stress and other psychological challenges that undoubtedly will face them both during their studies and as they enter working life.
– The well-being of a student requires the systematic cooperation between the university and the external instances that provide health care for students.
– Other factors that would benefit the mental health of students:
    – sufficient counseling resources;
    – sufficient and affordable health services;

– psychological support services provided within the university.

5. Housing

– Renovate existing housing resources, increasing the number of dormitories and enhancing the housing facilities to enrich the range of services for meals and recreation.
– Develop an online platform to help students to find low-cost private accommodations with guarantees of reliability and quality standards.

6. Study and Personal Development

– The university should offer courses in academic and learning skills that allow the student to practice the skills that need to be developed, either generally or within specific study programs or subjects.
– The university should offer facilities that support the varying working methods used within the study programs, i.e. rooms for both individual and project and group work.
– Student exchange and studies abroad should be made accessible for as many students as possible, e.g. through flexible study planning and sufficient counseling resources both in the home university and the host university.

7. Exit

– Dedicate one lesson for each course to professional skills and orientation.
– Invite experts outside from the University who could be available for consultations with students.
– Organize an informative workshop with experts.
– Career counseling throughout the studies, contextually adapted to each study phase, would help students achieve focus and goal-orientation, which would likely also reduce problems with study motivation.

- Especially within multidisciplinary higher education, more systematic cooperation between subjects and departments would benefit the student by facilitating a more personal study plan and allowing students to create a degree that is attractive, both for themselves and for the labor market.
- Networking makes the working life more concrete, which is why alumni activities and cooperation with associations and business life are important to integrate into higher education courses, e.g. through projects and team work.
- Invite employees from the career center to lectures, to enhance the communication of this service to students.
- Introduce the labor market preparation class as a compulsory course.

8. International Students

- Housing for international students should be made more accessible and affordable.
- Language courses need to be available for international students to improve their level of knowledge of the host country's language – in this way it becomes easier for them to study, find work and adapt to the daily life in the new country.
- International students need support in learning the academic culture of the host country, e.g. through academic intercultural courses, teachers, tutors, counseling etc.

9. Students with disabilities

- Students with disabilities need to get information about the support and assistive tools that are available at the university at an early stage, preferably pre-arrival.
- Personal counseling should be offered at the very beginning of the studies in order to map out the needs of the student in regards to the support that is available.

– Even if physical accessibility is often taken in account, there are often situations where students with disabilities experience obstacles which prevent them from participating in the way as a non-disabled student. Access for all should be the starting point in all planning, and inclusion should be the ultimate goal.

10. Techniques to assess student welfare for student support services' providers and HEIs

– Student feedback: discuss with the students the areas that need more improvements and listen to their feedback to further improve the services offered.
– Map & track: try to focus on the services that you offered based on the needs of the students and by choosing priority based on your available skills. Try to map the students' needs and think to offer them the best possible solution that could meet their needs.
– Identify the Red Zone: try to assess the effectiveness of the services offered and identify based on the needs' importance for students and their satisfaction and usage rate, which are the services that perform well and which one are the ones that require attention from HEIs and student support services' providers.
– Action and monitoring: implement the services that are in the red zone and constantly evaluate the services offered in the long-term.

APPENDIX

1. Methodology

In total 9,041 survey responses were collected between March and April 2015. The survey was sent out to students in all four partner countries, more specifically within the following universities:
– Croatia: The Catholic University of Croatia;
– Italy:
  – EDUCatt – Right to University Education Institute of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan, Brescia, Piacenza, Rome);
  – Regional company for the Right to University Education (ESU) of Padua;
  – Regional company for the Right to University Education (ESU) of Venice;
  – Regional company for the Right to University Education (ESU) of Verona.
– Poland: The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin;
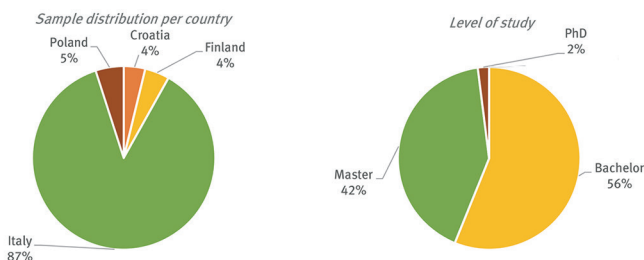– Finland: Åbo Akademi University, Turku.

The survey was developed conjointly by all the partners, through the first kick-off meeting in November 2014 and several Skype conference calls, where all partners have discussed student needs and services provided by each university. These discussions led to an agreement on which themes should be covered in the survey. Furthermore, a literature review was made in order to map out and utilize earlier research and publications regarding student's needs and services. On the basis of the literature review, a map of needs and services was created in order to identify all the possible needs and services and to associate each service with the macro-categories of needs. The map of needs was shared, commented on, filled in by all partners, and used as a starting point for the development of the survey.

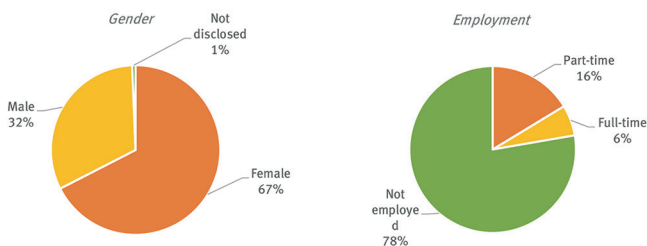The WISE matrix is a grid that represents the satisfaction and student needs according to three dimensions:
– The degree of needs importance: assessed through a 5-point Likert scale.
– The degree of service satisfaction: assessed through a 5-point Likert scale.
– The degree of service utilization: assessed through a 5-point Likert scale.

The grid allows the research group to take into consideration the three dimensions at the same time, in order to classify each key area of services offered by the students' service provider into their priority.

A total of 126,377 students received the survey (either by email or as a paper copy). The total number of respondents was 9,041 leading to a response rate of 7.1 %.

Sample distribution per country
Poland 5%
Croatia 4%
Finland 4%
Italy 87%

Level of study
PhD 2%
Master 42%
Bachelor 56%

More than half of the students belong to Italian universities (87%), and the remaining ones distributed between Poland (5%), Croatia (4%) and Finland (4%) universities. The 9,041 students, who participated in the survey, spread across different levels of studies: bachelor degree (56%), master degree (41%) and Ph.D. degree (2%).

Gender — Not disclosed 1%, Male 32%, Female 67%

Employment — Part-time 16%, Full-time 6%, Not employed 78%

Furthermore, the majority of students who participated to the study were female (67%) and not employed (78%), only 16% of students worked part-time and only a small percentage (6%) worked full-time.

Following the three phases of the student lifecycle described above, the students who participate to the survey are mostly in the exit phase (57%), while 43% are in the entry and in the during studies phase.

Phases — Exit 57%, Entry and during studies 43%
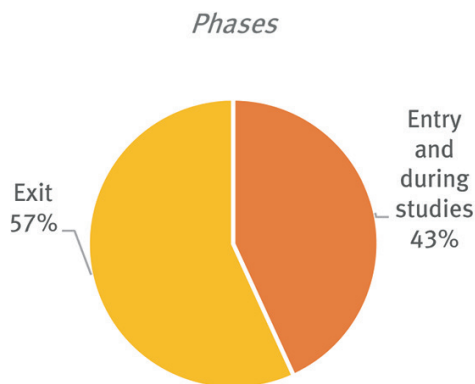
For the Italian sample, students with specific learning disorders were considered separately from students with disabilities. For students with specific learning disorder the following needs and services were evaluated:

STUDENTS' WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY NEEDS	STUDENTS' WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES
Receive specific administrative assistance for students with specific learning disorders	Secretariats dedicated to students with specific learning disorders
Receive pedagogical assistance for students with specific learning disorders	Pedagogical counseling
Need to use specific facilities to access the campus (for students with mobility impairment)	Availability of accessible facilities (wheelchair adaptation, widened doors, ramps) to provide a comfortable access on campus
Need to attend sports competition and fitness program for disabled students	Sports activities for disabled students

Table 12 – Importance, satisfaction and usage rate for each area

For the Croatian sample, international students and students with disabilities were not considered.

In addition to the survey, the partner universities – Catholic University of Croatia, the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland and Åbo Akademi University – developed focus group meetings attended by students and University employees, in the period from September 2015 to January 2016. Focus interviews were intended to clarify the results concerned the service areas, which students assessed as important and simultaneously not satisfied. The analysis of group interviews focuses on services, which are located in the "Priorities for action area".

Participants were invited to comment on the following questions: why do you think that this need or this service has been rated in this way? Which factors have led to this rating? How would you comment on the rates of utilization on this service? Do you think this is specific for this institution? How do you think these services could be improved? Either by improving already existing services or by creating new services?

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