



• LABS 4 CHANGE •

Social Innovation Labs for the
promotion of equality, diversity,
and non-discrimination in
higher education institutions

INTERIM IMPACT REPORT · 2026

Changing universities from within

Two years of living labs, participatory audits and open learning in European higher education — what we did, what changed, and what we are still learning.

Labs4Change

Social Innovation Labs for Equality, Diversity & Non-Discrimination in Higher Education

Erasmus+ KA220-HED · Sep 2024 – Aug 2026 · Spain · Greece · Germany



Co-funded by
the European Union

Reimagining universities as engines of equity

Universities are not neutral ground. The way a campus is built, run and spoken about shapes who feels safe and who gets to participate.

Labs4Change examines this through the lens of **gender equality**, read intersectionally — alongside sexual orientation, disability and migration. Officially launched on 1 September 2024, it unites four organisations from Spain, Greece and Germany around three connected tools: a qualitative **audit** method, social innovation **labs** embedded on campus, and an interactive online **academy**.

Our evidence so far is strongest on gender and LGBTQ+ inclusion; disability and migration emerged most clearly at the University of Thessaly and are an explicit, still-developing axis of the work.



The Labs4Change team — four partners across Spain, Greece and Germany.

What we set out to achieve

Generate knowledge

Actionable gender-equality knowledge through highly participatory methods.

Create space to act

Dedicated environments for social innovation inside the institution itself.

Design educational models

Frameworks that integrate gender perspectives into higher education.

Interactive learning

An online academy tailored to university communities, in three languages.

The activity, in numbers

Every figure below counts something specific — here is exactly what.

100+

Trained through the Academy

Participants in the Beyond Gender Academy across the consortium. *Enrolled vs. completed — to confirm.*

3

Campuses mapped

Campuses that ran a full Mapping Equality process. Depth varied (see method).

17

Students led the Equality Walks

Student co-researchers: 4 Dortmund · 6 Thessaly · 7 Mondragon.

3

Gender Living Labs

One embedded participatory lab per partner university.

18

Solutions co-created

Proposed across the three labs: 8 Mondragon · 5 Thessaly · 5 Dortmund.

—

Staff & researchers involved

Project managers, researchers and academic staff across the four partners. *DATA TO CONFIRM.*

—

Stakeholders & local organisations engaged

Internal university stakeholders and external local organisations reached. *DATA TO CONFIRM.*

“Inequalities in higher education are not only social or institutional, but also spatial and experiential.”

Mapping Equality — final comparative report

What actually changed at the institutions

Activity is not impact. These are the shifts the labs set in motion inside the universities — some already in place, others formally committed.

IN PLACE

Gender-neutral, accessible facilities

Mondragon's student-designed neutral bathroom signage and a Menstrual Rights Kit bringing free products into compliance with health regulations.

COMMITTED

New courses in the curriculum

Electives on feminisms and inclusive social economy entering Mondragon's LEINN programme.

IN PLACE

Equality work, connected

The MU lab is now linked to the university's Feminist Assembly; at Thessaly, the Equality, Psychological Support and Accessibility offices are working together through the lab.

COMMITTED

Gender-sensitive recruitment

Mondragon's admissions team is beginning to embed gender-sensitive perspectives into student outreach.

IN PLACE

Students inside institutional structures

A Dortmund lab member is helping shape the university's **Equality Week 2027**; an Equality Office staff member sits on the lab to anchor continuity.

COMMITTED

Findings made public

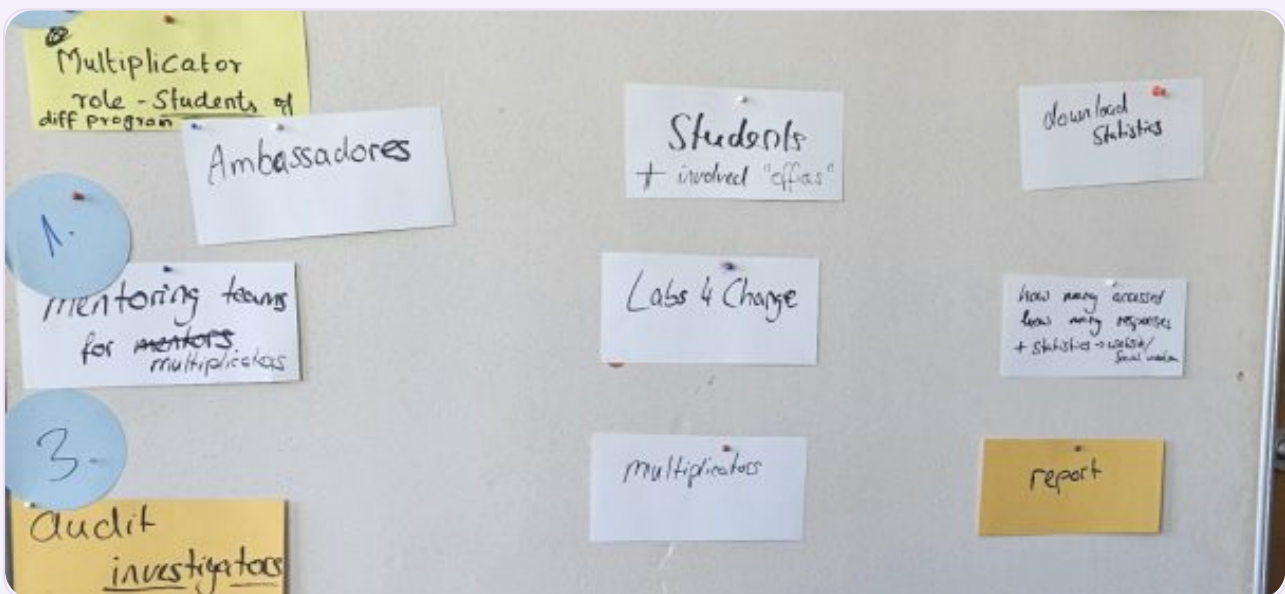
TU Dortmund is leading an open-access research paper on the Living Lab results (2026–27), keeping the evidence in the academic commons.

"In place" = implemented or operating during the project. "Committed" = formally agreed and resourced for after it.

Sources: partners' Sustainability & Action Plans.

Twenty-four months, at a glance

From launch to close — how the project's phases build on one another.



Emotional mapping: students mark comfort, belonging, stress and access barriers directly onto campus maps.

Labs for Change



Final Conference

26/5/26 Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας, Βόλος, Ελλάδα

• LABS 4 CHANGE •



2811 dinamia®



tu technische universität dortmund



Co-funded by
the European Union

“

University campuses are not neutral environments — they are active frameworks shaping access, comfort, visibility and recognition.

MAPPING EQUALITY — CROSS-CAMPUS FINDING

Three connected pillars

Each pillar feeds the next: the Academy builds the knowledge, Mapping Equality produces the evidence, and the Living Labs turn it into prototypes.

01 **Beyond Gender Academy** Power, diversity and belonging in higher education

Four modules in English, Spanish and Greek, examining the intersections of gender, diversity and inclusion — with practical frameworks to embed gender perspectives into research, teaching and community life.

02 **Mapping Equality** How do university spaces shape who feels welcome and able to participate?

A participatory, qualitative and intersectional research process combining spatial observation, emotional mapping and collective reflection, with students as co-researchers.

03 **Living Labs** How do communities co-create change from within?

Participatory spaces for social innovation embedded in each university — the move from diagnosis to action, each producing an Action Plan and a Sustainability Plan.

DATA TO CONFIRM · ACADEMY PRE/POST

The Beyond Gender Academy includes a self-assessment of knowledge and confidence. *Pre- and post-course results to be supplied by the academic team* — they will be reported here as a before → after measure of the shift in participants.

A system-change approach

Mapping Equality treats the campus as a **system**, not a checklist. It looks at how spatial design, social dynamics and institutional practices interact to produce — or undo — inequality, placing students' lived experience at the centre.

It is participatory, qualitative and intersectional, inspired by **Jane's Walks** (Jacobs, 1961) and aligned with the **3R framework** — Representation, Resources, Reality. Students and young people are **key actors** — co-researchers who rethink their university, co-design solutions and drive institutional change from a leading position. Findings feed directly into the Living Labs' challenge-based work.

How a walk works

- **Participatory design** — students co-create the tool
- **Equality Walk** — guided tour + emotional mapping
- **Collective reflection** — patterns with mentors
- **Synthesis** — an institutional report per campus

WHAT WE CHANGED — AND WHY

The project's clearest lesson in adaptive design

THE PROBLEM

The first design was a 19-indicator audit framework. Experts in direct contact with students judged it too technical — at risk of becoming a rigid, inaccessible exercise.

THE DECISION

Rather than simplify the indicators, the consortium reformulated the approach into an experiential, Jane's-Walks-inspired method.

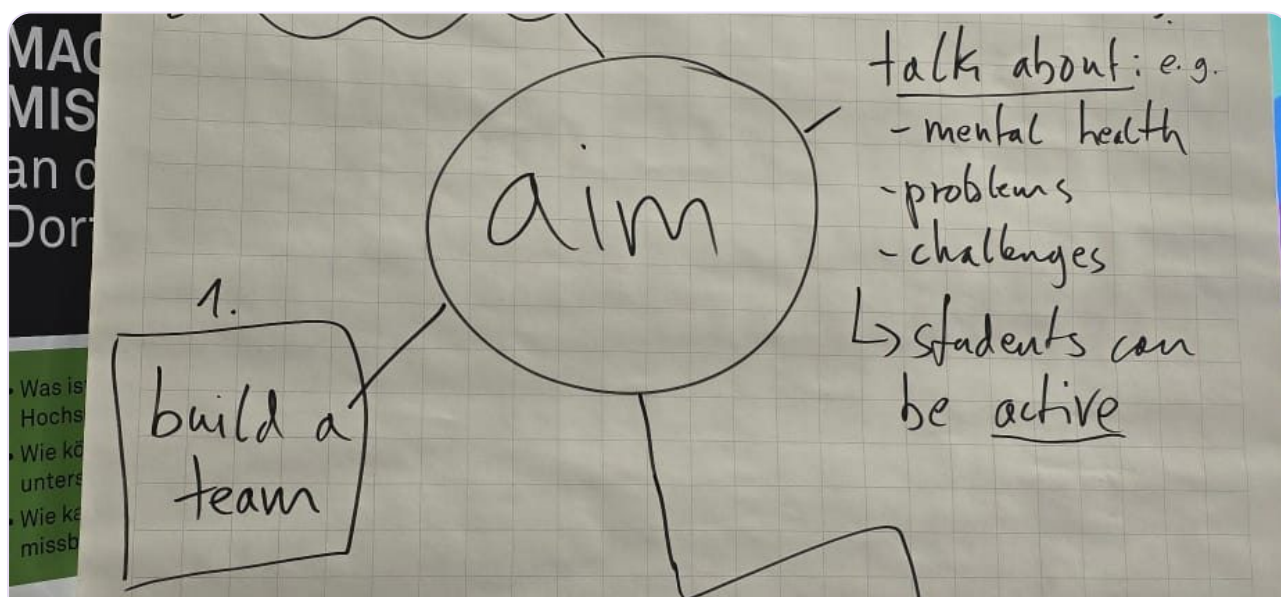
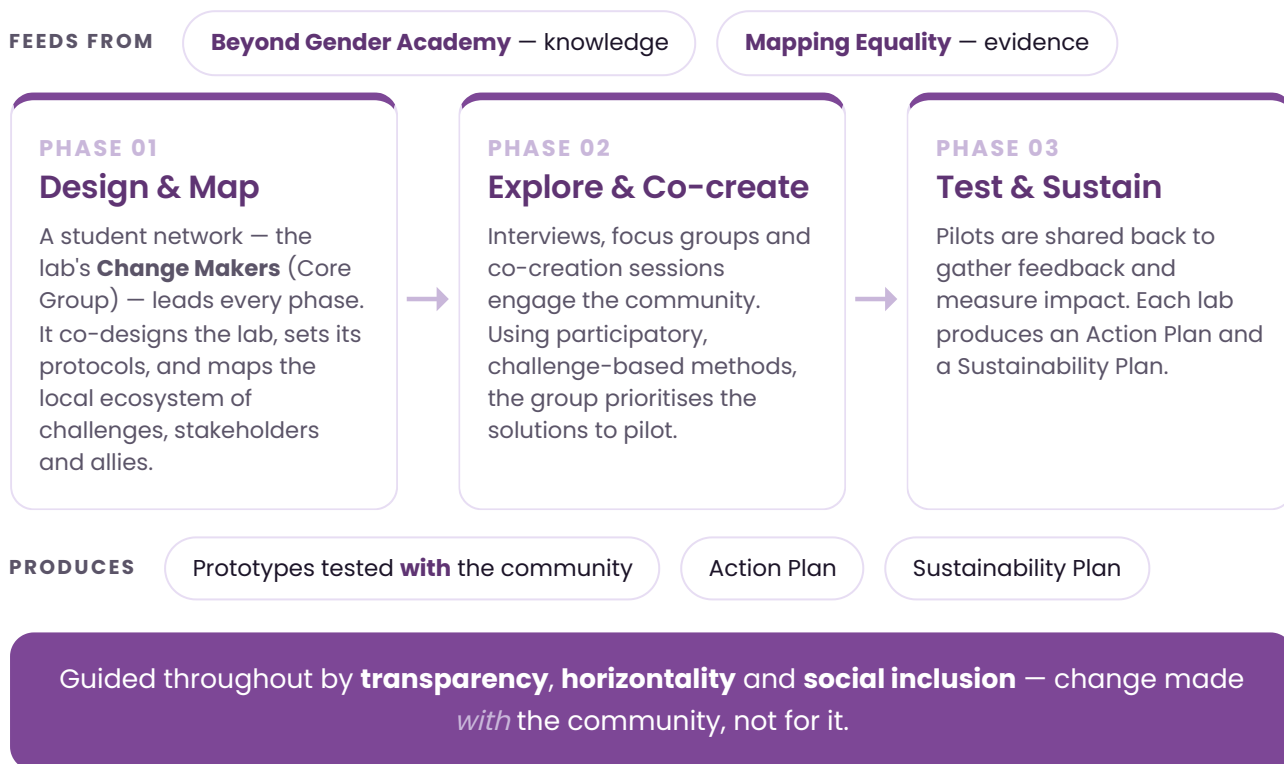
THE RESULT

Students led as co-researchers and change-makers, the analytical concerns survived as observable questions, and the method became a participatory, challenge-based model transferable to any campus.

UNIVERSITY	CAMPUS / PROGRAMME	EXPERT MENTORS	DATES	STUDENTS
TU Dortmund Germany	Campus North	Kaya Gödeke, Sude Pekşen	Dec 2025	4
Univ. of Thessaly Greece	Humanities & Social Sciences, Volos	D. Botsoglou, V. Vassiliou	Jan 2026	6
Mondragon Unib. Spain	Business Faculty, Irún — LEINN	S. Alvarado, A. Pipaón, M. Landaberea + Ara!gorputz	Nov 2025 – Mar 2026	7

How a Living Lab works

Every lab follows the same arc — from a shared diagnosis to prototypes that outlast the project.



A driving group's working board: building the team, defining the aim, recruiting ambassadors.

Five dimensions of equality

Across the three campuses, five recurring dimensions shaped students' unequal experiences. Each now drives a concrete solution (see the three cases).

01

Visibility & Representation

Visible equality signals built belonging (Mondragon); their absence read as a lack of care. LGBTQ+ visibility was most fragile at Thessaly.

→ Inclusive Space & Purple Point (MU)

02

Safety & Accessibility

Access routes and transitional spaces drove stress and exclusion — lighting, distance, unclear signage. Accessibility is relational, not just architectural.

→ Accessible Campus Map (UTH)

03

Communication & Symbolism

Inclusive resources exist but stay invisible; students find them by chance. Silence reads as disengagement, not neutrality.

→ Student channel (TUDO) · Campus Map (UTH)

04

Care & Wellbeing

Campuses are built for productivity, not rest. Bathrooms emerged as the most sensitive space — where dignity, privacy and care converge.

→ Menstrual Rights Kit (MU)

05

Participation & Belonging

Belonging is not guaranteed by access. Informal norms of noise and group dynamics shrink some students' presence.

→ Safe Space for Dialogue (UTH) · Roles Wheel (MU)

CROSS-CAMPUS

A shared pattern

The same dynamics appeared in three very different countries — evidence that these are structural, not local, features of higher education.

Six conclusions that hold across borders

- 1 Equality is produced through space**
Campuses are active frameworks shaping access, comfort, visibility and recognition. Everyday and transitional spaces either reinforce or mitigate inequality.
- 2 Safety & accessibility are relational**
Lighting, signage and layout interact with feelings of orientation, exposure and comfort. Accessibility is an experiential condition, not just a technical one.
- 3 Inclusive resources exist but stay invisible**
Universities provide services for inclusion, but students rarely know they're there. Communication and symbolic visibility are essential, not secondary.
- 4 Care & wellbeing spaces are structurally insufficient**
Spaces for rest, privacy and sensory relief are limited or invisible. Bathrooms are where care most visibly converges.
- 5 Belonging requires non-normative ways of being present**
Even in safe, active spaces, informal norms generate subtle exclusion. Belonging depends on inhabiting space in diverse ways.
- 6 Visibility & representation shape perceived inclusion**
Explicit references to equality build recognition and institutional care; their absence produces spaces that feel neutral but emotionally ambiguous.

How each finding becomes a prototype

The dimensions, conclusions, recommendations and solutions are one chain — not four lists. Here is the thread, finding by finding.

FINDING	WHAT STUDENTS SAW	RECOMMENDATION	ALREADY BEING TESTED BY
Care & wellbeing dim 04 · concl 4	Bathrooms and care infrastructure are the most sensitive gap	Review bathrooms & care provision	MU · Menstrual Rights Kit + neutral facilities
Visibility dim 01 · concl 6	Visible equality signals build belonging	Make equality visible across campus	MU · Inclusive Space & Purple Point
Communication dim 03 · concl 3	Inclusive resources exist but stay invisible	Communicate what already exists	TUDO · student channel · UTH · Campus Map
Safety & access dim 02 · concl 2	Access routes drive stress and exclusion	Light, signpost & map routes	UTH · Accessible Campus Map
Belonging dim 05 · concl 5	Informal norms shrink some students' presence	Support diverse ways of being present	UTH · Safe Space · MU · Roles Wheel

Read a row left to right: a lived experience on campus becomes a cross-campus recommendation, then a concrete solution a partner is already piloting.



“

Belonging is not guaranteed by physical presence on campus — it depends on the possibility of inhabiting space in diverse and non-normative ways.

MAPPING EQUALITY — FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Three Living Labs, three routes to change

Each university read the same evidence through its own context. Mondragon ran the project's **deep case**; Thessaly and Dortmund are two **emerging labs** taking different routes. Together they produced **18 solutions**.

UNIVERSITY	DEPTH	THE LAB'S FOCUS	SIGNATURE MOVE	SOLUTIONS
Mondragon Spain	Deep case 7 students · 11 sessions	Feminism & gender in entrepreneurship education (LEINN)	Transforming spaces, curriculum & team culture	8
Thessaly Greece	Emerging 6 students	Gender & GBV · disability · cultural diversity	World Café with local support organisations	5
TU Dortmund Germany	Emerging 4 students	Connecting the university's scattered equality work	Student multipliers & a mentoring network	5

"The Living Labs represent the project's transition from diagnosis to action — co-designing, prototyping and testing real solutions to everyday inequality."

Labs4Change — Toolkit

Mondragon Unibertsitatea

7 students

11 sessions

LEINN

driving group

Nov 2025–Mar 2026

Business Faculty, Irún

The lab explored how feminist and gender-sensitive perspectives can transform entrepreneurship and innovation education. Hosted in the Palmera Montero building — shared with Irún City Council and recognised as a climate shelter — it produced **eight concrete solutions**.

01

Inclusive Space & Purple Point

A feminist reference space with a reading corner, visible equality resources and a safe point for support.

02

Roles Wheel

A tool to analyse productive and reproductive roles within entrepreneurial teams.

03

Feminist Indicators

Indicators to embed gender perspective into entrepreneurial projects and business models.

04

Inclusive Dictionary

An inclusive-language dictionary in the Basque language.

05

Role-Model Catalogue

A catalogue of women entrepreneurs and community role models.

06

New Elective Courses

Electives on inclusive social economy and feminisms, in the curriculum.

07

Educator Training

Internal training on gender-based vulnerability and violence prevention.

08

Menstrual Rights Kit

Free menstrual products and awareness resources, meeting health regulations.

Lasting it: the lab is now linked to the university's Feminist Assembly, its facilities team and academic coordination — with new electives entering the curriculum and partnerships with feminist organisations such as Ara!gorputz.

University of Thessaly

Volos

Humanities & Social Sciences

World Café

co-creation format

5 solutions

Thessaly's lab worked across three interconnected thematic axes, opening its sessions to the wider student body and inviting local organisations as guest facilitators.

AXIS 01

Gender & GBV

Stereotypes, the “leaky pipeline” in leadership, visibility of non-binary identities, and a culture of silence around misconduct.

AXIS 02

Disability & access

Physical barriers and the social isolation of students with disabilities, recorded during the diagnosis.

AXIS 03

Cultural diversity

Belonging and visibility for students from migrant and minority backgrounds.

01

Accessible Campus Map

An illustrated map of accessible routes, ramps, lifts and facilities.

02

Inclusive-Language Materials

Digital materials using gender-inclusive language, with the Equality Office.

03

Safe Space for Dialogue

A recurring, facilitated space to discuss gender, discrimination and inclusion.

04

First-Year Induction

A gender-equality, consent and inclusion session within orientation.

05

English Academic Support

Support for migrant and refugee students not yet fluent in Greek.

Partners

A local network

Women's Centre of Karditsa · Volos Municipality Shelter · the Equality & Psychological Support offices.

“There is a culture of silence around gender-based misconduct inside the university.”

UTH Living Lab — Action Plan

TU Dortmund University

Campus North **Faculties 12 & 17**

Community-building

Education, Psychology & Social Sciences

Rather than launch new actions in isolation, Dortmund's lab set out to **connect the equality work already scattered across the university** under a shared framework — making existing efforts visible, mutually reinforcing, and explicitly intersectional.

01

Student Multipliers

Students acting as ambassadors who carry the lab's work into the wider community.

02

Mentoring Network

A long-term mentoring programme, anchored in Faculties 12 and 17.

03

Internal Indicators

"Investigators" who surface internal indicators and areas to improve.

04

Communication Strategy

A channel integrating the lab's actions with the university's existing offers.

05

Academic Dissemination

An open-access research paper sharing the Living Lab results with the field.

Anchor

Built to last

An expert from the Equality Office sits on the lab — a deliberate choice for long-term sustainability.



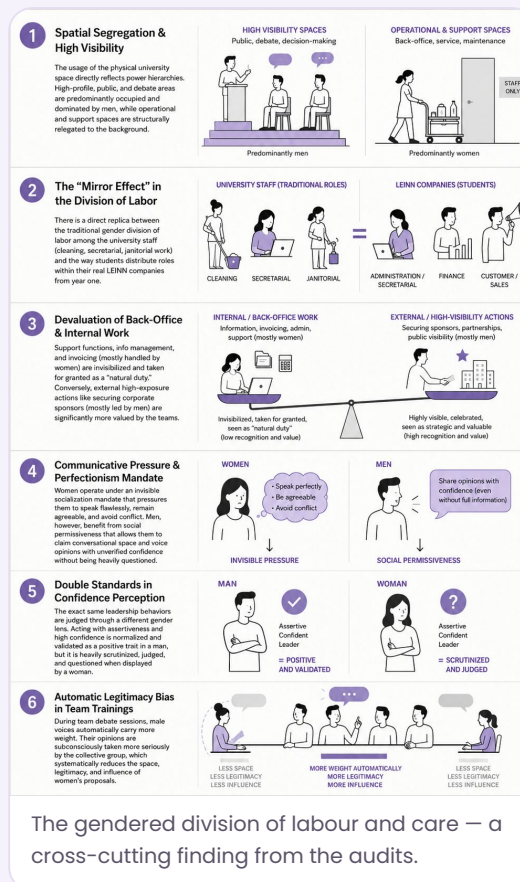
ASIDE_TU — the student-run channel born from the lab.

Beyond the project: the lab links to other initiatives such as InterHED, a team member is already helping shape Dortmund's **Equality Week 2027**, and the project's research paper will be open access in 2026–27.

What universities can do now

The same evidence base points to a consistent set of actions. None require large infrastructure budgets; most are about visibility, communication and care. Each is already being piloted by a partner (page 11).

- **Make equality visible.** Integrate inclusive signals across the whole campus. → **Inclusive Space, MU**
- **Light and signpost** access routes; make accessibility options easy to find. → **Campus Map, UTH**
- **Communicate what exists.** Surface support services clearly, in multiple languages. → **Student channel, TUDO**
- **Create quiet, low-stimulation** retreat spaces for rest and emotional regulation.
- **Review bathrooms** for inclusivity, accessibility and care — including menstrual products. → **Menstrual Rights Kit, MU**
- **Support diverse ways** of being present; participation isn't always visible interaction. → **Safe Space, UTH**



"Building more inclusive universities requires moving beyond isolated infrastructural fixes — towards integrated approaches grounded in everyday experience."

Mapping Equality — final conclusions

Open, replicable, and measured

For public funding of this kind, the strongest return is replication — and an honest commitment to keep measuring.

Built to travel

Every tool is free and open at **labs4change.org**: the methodological proposal, the toolkit, the diagnostic and the Beyond Gender Academy — the latter in **three languages** (EN · ES · EL). The method is deliberately transferable: any campus can run an Equality Walk without specialist software or budget.

DATA TO CONFIRM · REACH

To turn replication potential into evidence we will report: *toolkit/proposal downloads, Academy registrations & completions, languages served, and reach beyond the consortium* (via labs4change.org analytics — pending GA4 activation).

What we'll track — with targets

Solutions sustained after the project	Target: ≥1 solution per lab still running 12 months after close · annual monitoring
Participation in lab-related activities	Target: baseline set at close, tracked via attendance at workshops & courses
Curricular integration	Target: feminisms / inclusive-economy electives live in the MU programme by 2026–27
External reach & replication	Target & instrument: to be set once GA4 + Academy analytics are live

Built by four partners, three countries

Mondragon Unibertsitatea

Coordinator · Faculty of Business Studies · Spain

University of Thessaly

Volos · Greece

TU Dortmund

Germany

2811

Social enterprise · Germany

Get the project's open tools

The full methodological proposal, the toolkit, the diagnostic and the Beyond Gender Academy are all available — free and open — at **labs4change.org**.

Contact: **labs4change@mondragon.edu**



Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+ KA220-HED · Grant Agreement 2024-1-ES01-KA220-HED-000248544 · 1 September 2024 – 31 August 2026.
Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.
Interim Impact Report · prepared by 2811.