



D4.2: IDP involvement and dissemination strategy

Project Acronym	STOREM
Project full title	Sustainable Tourism, Optimal Resource and Environmental Management
Project No.	
Coordinator	The University of Cagliari – UNICA
Project start date	15/10/2018
Project duration	36 months
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Abstract	The current report has the objective of describing the strategy that the project will implement to involve students of internally displaced populations (IDP) and the dissemination activities that will be used to reach these students. The implementation strategy is based on the findings of the project Advisory Board which documented the problems and needs of IDPs with respect to education and employment. The current report specifically defines a wider population of student profiles that will be considered eligible for STOREM support and describes the strategies that the project will use to facilitate their enrollment in the STOREM pathway. External
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	organizations with which the project hopes to establish cooperation are listed and dissemination channels to address a broad IDP participation are compiled. Finally, a strategy is described to design an educational module to fill the educational gap for newly enrolled students.
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DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Title of Document	IDP involvement and dissemination strategy
Work Package	WP4 – Dissemination and Exploitation
Last version date	5/11/2019
Status	Draft
Document Version	v.02
Number of pages	16
Dissemination level	Internal

CONTRIBUTION HISTORY

Version	Date	Description	Responsible Partner
v.01	15/10/2019	Draft version	P4, P3 & P8
v.02	5/11/2019	Revised version	P4, P3 & P8
v.0n			



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACDVPR: Alta Consejería para los Derechos de las Víctimas

APICE: Asociación Panamericana de Instituciones de Crédito Educativo

COLCIENCIAS: Departamento Administrativo de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación

COTELCO: Asociación Hotelera y Turística de Colombia

CUN: Corporación Unificada Nacional de Educación Superior

EuroPaz: European Academic Network for Peace in Colombia

ICETEX: Instituto Colombiano de Crédito Educativo y Estudios Técnicos en el Exterior

IDP: internally displaced populations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commission for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current report describes the strategy that the project will implement to involve students of internally displaced populations (IDP) and the dissemination activities that will be used to reach these students. The implementation strategy is based on the findings of the project Advisory Board which documented the problems and needs of IDPs with a focus on education access, employment programs, and sustainable tourism strategies. A wider definition of the eligible beneficiaries has been defined as *vulnerable populations*, which include internally displaced populations, victims of violence, victims of armed conflict, refugees, disabled students, and minorities from marginalized populations such as Afro-Colombians and Indigenous-Colombians. Strategies to facilitate their enrollment in the STOREM pathway focus on funding opportunities for scholarships (both existent and new scholarships) and professional internships. External organizations with which the project aims to establish cooperation include governmental organizations, NGOs and private companies. The publicity channels used to dissemination funding opportunities and the STOREM pathway to a broad IDP participation include those of the project itself, institutional channels, external organizations and local press.



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Finally, a strategy is described to design an educational module to fill the educational gap for newly enrolled students.



1. IDP INVOLVEMENT APPROACH

The approach for involving students of the IDP profile has been discussed by project partners, specifically those in Colombia: UniMagdalena (P3), EAFIT (P4) and UPD (P5). The foundation for establishing this approach has been described in the previous deliverable D1.6 which analyzed the problems and needs of IDPs, the affects of conflict on communities, and general issues that these populations face with regards to education and employment. A project Advisory Board was also established for the subject of IDP involvement, including the aforementioned partners, the project coordinators, and other external organizations which have been invited to participated. The principal findings of the Advisory Board, documented in the D1.6 report, pertaining to IDPs were focused on: 1) education access, 2) employment programs, and 3) sustainable tourism strategies.

The report highlighted the problems (economic, academic, social, etc) incurred by students classified as IDPs or victims of the conflict. IDPs are generally affected by socio-economic problems. Often, IDP students must work to sustain themselves during their academic studies due to precarious economic situations. Their academic performance may also be affected by lack of time to study. One of the problems that IDPs face while enrolling in the university is a lack of knowledge of the opportunities that higher education institutions can offer them, as well as a lack of economic resources to travel to the university and pay for registration fees.

The most common problems for IDP students/victims while attending university are the stigmatization they may suffer, the fear of moving to a new city and the possibility of not completing their academic program due to a lack of opportunities, poor economic status and fear to suffer again the scourge of violence. IDPs and victims generally look for study options greatly demanded by the market, such as dressmaking, ICT systems, mechanics, and heavy machinery, since these courses are mostly free and short.

The young IDP students interviewed stated that university enrollment was difficult, because there is only one scholarship per academic program and this is disputed in the admission exam. Among the IDPs interviewed, those who have obtained Master's degrees did so for work reasons, since many are working in the teaching professions. To foster access to Master courses for IDPs, it is mandatory to ensure special places for this population, affordable stay or mobility support and flexible schedules, since the problems they face the most are associated with economic and social factors.

The IDP students showed their knowledge of university procedures to grant benefits for the IDP status and are aware of the existence of scholarships, although the number of available scholarships is limited. The students describe the phenomenon of forced displacement as a time of fear, insecurity, violation of rights, spoils, threats,



and intimidation caused by criminal armed groups. They also affirmed that they fear discrimination at the university, because they are struggling to start a new life, and since in the past the word “displaced” was related to delinquency and this stigmatization is still present in many of these battered populations.

At the working level, the report highlighted the following problems:

- The main problems incurred by young IDPs to enter the labor market:
 - a. The level of education is extremely low;
 - b. The passage from a rural to an urban environment is difficult;
 - c. Working opportunities are mostly in the informal sector;
 - d. Urban working demand requires some level of formal training, limiting formal sources of work due to their labor profile, mainly linked to agricultural and extraction/mining activities;
 - e. Job instability and unemployment;
 - f. Lack of knowledge of the employment opportunities;
 - g. The abandonment of the native land and the loss of their loved ones cause these young people to generate feelings of helplessness, sadness, anxiety, high levels of stress and depression that run the risk of becoming hostile towards themselves or towards their environment; behavioral changes and negative emotional situations that can lead to physical, social and personal deterioration;
 - h. Many victims have some disability condition.
- The problems incurred by young IDPs to start a business activity (economic, academic, social, etc):
 - a. Lack of economic resources for business ventures;
 - b. Lack of advising on the follow-up of business initiatives;
 - c. Lack of logistical support in the creation of the enterprises.
- Measures that would be necessary to facilitate the entry of young IDPs into the labor market:
 - a. Academic preparation;
 - b. Psychosocial accompaniment towards an optimal social performance;
 - c. Restoration of a life plan;
 - d. Training in human relations and work contexts;
 - e. Tailored training towards the company needs;
 - f. Access to higher education programs, such as those advanced by ACDVPR (Alta Consejería para los Derechos de las Víctimas), should be strengthened through the CUN (Incubator of Dreams) and the Higher Education Fund.



- Specific policies for the integration of young IDPs in the labor market and in the business sector:
 - The Law 387 of 1997 "By which the measures for the prevention of forced displacement are adopted, and likewise the attention, protection, consolidation and socioeconomic stabilization of the displaced persons of the internal armed conflict in the Republic of Colombia is promoted. In June 2011, Law 1448 was passed "By which measures of attention, assistance, integral reparation to the victims of the internal armed conflict are dictated and other provisions are issued".
- The displacement phenomenon and its relations with the economic development:
 - Displaced households are on average larger than the urban poor and indigent ones, which is a sign of greater vulnerability. This characteristic strongly affects further social change for IDP families.

At the Environmental level the Report highlighted a twofold relationship:

Firstly, in some territories the armed conflict, which generated displacement, acted as a preservation agent, protecting the environment from organized development, where economic agents could use the territories for mega projects and oil industries. Secondly, in other territories, the lack of State control allowed criminal groups to exploit the natural resources, often in an unsustainable manner, such as illegal mining and illicit crops. Furthermore, additional negative environmental impact can be generated by the unorganized settlement of displaced populations.



2. DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE POPULATIONS

Recent discussions of the Advisory Board have agreed on the importance of broadening the definition of populations eligible to be included in the support provided by the project to IDPs. The concept aims to permit a wider inclusion of vulnerable populations that may be considered victims of violence, students with disabilities or marginalized racial minorities. The project will thus define that eligible beneficiaries will extend to various *vulnerable populations*, which include internally displaced populations, victims of violence, victims of armed conflict, refugees, disabled students, and minorities from marginalized populations such as Afro-Colombians and Indigenous-Colombians.

The general justification for broadening the definition of eligible beneficiaries is to be as inclusive as possible of differing types of vulnerable populations. The specific justifications for including each term within the broad definition follows:

- **Victims of armed conflict**: this term may be considered synonymous with the term IDP and is used by the Superior Tribunal of Justice and Peace of Medellín, which mandates that EAFIT University must provide support to these populations.
- **Victims of violence**: this term is used to apply for financial support on the applications forms at EAFIT University. The term may be considered more general than the term *victims of armed conflict*, as victims of violence may also include victims of domestic violence or victims of local gang violence, all of which may force the displacement of the victimized persons.
- **Refugees**: In Colombia there is currently a large flux of refugees coming from Venezuela which face extremely vulnerable conditions. A large effort is being made in Colombia to facilitate the transition of these refugees and so it would be fitting that the initiative is supported by the STOREM project as well. The term refugee in general would be the preferred term, which naturally includes Venezuelan refugees, but does not exclude refugees that may come from another country and face similar conditions.
- **Disabled students**: Persons facing physical or mental impairment may also be termed vulnerable populations that face conditions limiting their opportunities for education and employment. UniMagdalena has identified funding opportunities to support the enrollment of this population within the STOREM pathway.
- **Minorities from marginalized populations**: Racial minorities, such as Afro-Colombians and Indigenous-Colombians, may also be termed vulnerable populations that face conditions limiting their opportunities for education and



employment. UniMagdalena has identified funding opportunities to support the enrollment of this population within the STOREM pathway.

3. STRATEGY TO FACILITATE ENROLLMENT

The project plans to implement various strategies in order to facilitate the enrollment of vulnerable populations in the STOREM pathway. In order to promote enrollment in general, the project will provide information on each Master's program's application and enrollment process on the project website. As the new master's programs and modules are still under development, this information will be made available mid-way through year 2 of the project.

To facilitate financial support for beneficiaries, measure will be taken to identify funding sources and provide information on application processes. This effort will focus on 1) support for existing scholarships, 2) creation of new scholarships, and 3) creation of professional internships.

- I. **Existing scholarships.** A review has been done by UPD of existing scholarships that IDPs in Colombia would be eligible for (Annex 1). This includes a wide range of funding sources such as ICETEX, COLCIENCIAS, Universidad del Rosario, Comisión Europea, PRODECO, Observatorio de la Universidad Colombiana, Asociación Panamericana de Instituciones de Crédito Educativo (APICE), Fundación Beca, Banco de la República, Becas Structuralia, Becas para Colombianos, Plataforma de Alianza Pacifico, and Red Latinoamericana de Cooperación Universitaria. This information will be organized into a simple guide for potential students and made available on the project website.
- II. **New scholarships.** The participants of the Advisory Board are making an effort to identify funding opportunities to create new scholarships specific to the STOREM pathway in Colombia. These efforts have been focused on funding within the partner universities in Colombia (P3, P4) and with private companies with an interest in funding education, supporting vulnerable populations and/or the development of sustainable tourism.

A viable strategy for the creation of new inclusion scholarships could be the mutual agreement between universities and local tourism enterprises. This strategy would also lead to valuable collaborations between the academic world and the labor market. Such collaborations would mutually benefit both sectors by privately financed scholarships and greater productivity through the creation of new local-based opportunities.



At UniMagdalena, an important source of funding is the Special Quota Scheme. This scheme allows candidates to apply to the university through diverse categories, which include IDPs, single mothers head of household, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian population members, people with disabilities and candidates recognized by their artistic or sporting achievements; selected applicants obtain a 90% tuition fee scholarship. Nonetheless, the institution is a public university and as such, it has a series of policies that seek to reduce the tuition fees for people who are admitted via normal selection with backgrounds such as students that graduated from a public high school and economically disadvantaged people, among other measures. Discounts in tuition range from 50 to 90% of the fees per semester.

In the framework of STOREM, UniMagdalena expects to offer up to 8 scholarships with institutional or private funding per cohort, combining 90% tuition scholarships for candidates with academic excellence with mixed scholarships, which means scholarships with 50% or 75% tuition reduction complemented with In-Campus Student Worker/Assistant Researcher schemes that offer a monthly allowance to successful applicants. Once the program is ready to be presented to the tourism sector and the recently launched “Sierra Nevada” University - Businesses - State Committee, the Faculty of Managerial and Economic Sciences will work on establishing cooperation agreements that allow interested companies to sponsor eligible students.

Additionally, an innovative approach that UniMagdalena expects to implement is to offer the MSc program in a dual category: both in-campus and online. With the online offering, UniMagdalena wants to engage with potential candidates that would find it difficult to relocate to Santa Marta while undertaking their studies, achieving a nationwide reach and more impact.

At EAFIT University, there is an active funding program which supports students at the undergraduate level that identify themselves as victims of violence (or of armed conflict) when they apply for admission. While this funding is not current available at the graduate level of the Storem pathway, internal verifications are being made at EAFIT regarding the process to officially request that this funding program be extended to the graduate level as well.

Efforts will also be made at EAFIT to liaise with private companies that may have an interest in creating news scholarships to support the education of vulnerable populations. Though EAFIT does not have strong ties with the private sector dedicated to tourism enterprises in the Caribbean coast, there



may be companies in Medellín with an interest in financing the capacity building of victims of armed conflict or refugees from Venezuela, both of which currently represent significant national issues.

- III. **Professional internships**. Similarly, the Advisory Board will seek out opportunities for professional internships with private companies that have an interest in funding education, supporting vulnerable populations and/or the development of sustainable tourism. Professional internships are an important component of a Master's education program and so the STOREM pathway aspires to make such opportunities available in the field of sustainable tourism and environmental management for its students.

A viable strategy for the identification of opportunities for professional internships could be the development of agreements between universities and local tourism enterprises. For example, the University of Magdalena expects to take advantage of partnerships with the private and public sectors to secure internship placements and negotiate sponsorship agreements with the tourism industry to further boost the employment strategy efforts of the consortium. Furthermore, with the support of the In-Campus Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, another avenue to support both for-profit and non-profit initiatives is open to students that wish to go that route with their projects or social innovation ideas in the fields of tourism and environment protection.



4. COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

The project aims to establish cooperation with external organizations that are involved in initiatives to support vulnerable populations in Colombia. In order to cover a broad range of organizations, the project will identify and contact national units and other stakeholder organizations, and invite them to participate in the Advisory Board. These organizations will also be utilized to maximize dissemination, publicity and foster the inclusion of vulnerable populations in the STOREM pathway. These organizations will be among the governmental sector, foundations/NGOs and the private sector. Below listed are the organizations identified to date.

Table 1. External organizations identified for the Advisory Board

Sector	Organization	Description of activities
Government	Unidad de las Victimas	Strategic objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To work jointly with victims in the comprehensive reparation process to reconstruct and transform their life projects. 2. To bring the State closer to the victims in order to give them a relevant, efficient, sustainable and timely offer. 3. To define jointly with territorial entities, the implementation of Law 1448/2011, its Regulatory Decrees, and Law Decrees. 4. To actively bind civil society and the international community together in the processes to comprehensively repair the victims of the armed conflict. 5. To strengthen the trust , collaboration and innovation culture, to guarantee a dignified, respectful and differential care.
	UN Refugee Comission	UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
	The Norwegian Refugee Council	Provide assistance to IDPs in rural areas where authorities struggle to provide help, and in urban



		environments, where the majority of Colombia's IDPs has sought safety.
NGOs	Fundación Environomica	Mission and Principles: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conserving ecosystems in conjunction with its inhabitants.2. Triggering the transition of local economies towards environmental sustainability.3. Advocating for strategies to boost conservation practices in the business sector.
	Procata	Mission: Improve the quality of life of the communities and the conservation of our biodiversity. Active in both Colombia & Costa Rica.
Private	Hotel Associations (Santa Marta)	COTELCO Magdalena
	"Sierra Nevada" University - Businesses - State Committee	A dialogue space for university representatives, business people and government officials of the Magdalena State. The goal is to encourage discussions and initiatives that generate development, new knowledge and concrete actions that help improve the efficiency, competitiveness and innovation in the region.



5. DISSEMINATION CHANNELS

In order to optimize the publicity of enrollment and funding opportunities to the target vulnerable populations, specific channels will be utilized to achieve a broad dissemination and ultimate participation of students. These channels include those of the project itself, the project partners and external organizations. These are listed in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Publicity channels for disseminating opportunities

Institution	Channel
STOREM Project	Project website
	Project social networks
Project Partners	Institutional websites
	Institutional social networks
External Organizations	Asociación Colombiana de Universidades
	Red Colombiana Internacionalización (nodo Caribe)
	Local Press
	Ministerio de Educación Nacional (Website - press release)
	ICETEX - Call for applications: Government Scholarships for Foreign Citizens (Becas Programa de Reciprocidad para Extranjeros)
	EuroPaz (European Academic Network for Peace in Colombia)

Regarding EuroPaz, to support the peace process, the University of Roma Tre promoted the establishment of a European Academic Network for Peace in Colombia (EuroPaz). To achieve its goals, the Network makes use of the digital multilingual platform "CoExist" designed to share information and contents among the participants. EuroPaz is a network of academic and private institutions that pursue the following objectives:

1. Promote studies and research in support of the “Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition”;
2. Contribute to the implementation of multidisciplinary research on Colombian social, political and economic dynamics;
3. Open a space for dialogue between researchers and partner institutions in order to enhance knowledge, skills and methodological approaches;
4. Develop and consolidate relations with Colombian communities in Europe.



UPD and University of Cagliari are applying to join the network and thus be able to make the STOREM project known also through this channel. Furthermore, the Network would be useful to share the IDP and vulnerable population inclusion strategy with a wider professional audience, improving the possibility of obtaining academic feedback and including different perspectives.

6. GAPS EDUCATION MODULE

An educational module will be designed to fill the education gap for newly enrolled students of the vulnerable populations profile. In consideration of the difficult conditions that students of this profile have endured, it is possible that they may lack some of the knowledge that may be considered a pre-requisite for the STOREM pathway at the Master's level. For this purpose, UniMagdalena has proposed the development of a virtual module on interdisciplinary themes, including tourism and environmental sustainability, that would fill these education gaps. This module could in fact be offered to all interested students (not just vulnerable populations) should they need to complete their prerequisite knowledge before beginning the Master's programs.

Based on the institutional experience of developing a "Sustainability Policy" at UniMagdalena with shared efforts from the students, administrative staff and teaching staff of the university, and the subsequent development of a cross-cutting and interdisciplinary Sustainability Pathway available to students from all fields of study, this good practice could prove beneficial to replicate with the involvement of the future academic body of the STOREM-based MSc program. In order to share key information, concepts and practical knowledge that admitted students and especially those with diverse professional backgrounds (e.g. Environmental Engineering, Anthropology, Business, and people with an interest in Sustainable Tourism that do not have qualifications in tourism management), this effort could be used to strengthen their skills and the base knowledge that are expected to be set as requirements to successfully complete their studies during the first academic year of the Master's degree. This could be done either on a collaborative framework with the support of the STOREM consortium partners, or based on the academic and practical needs identified to undertake the STOREM pathway at each institution.



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Table 1: External organizations identified for the Advisory Board

Table 2: Publicity channels for disseminating opportunities

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ANNEX 1: Survey on Access to Higher Education in Colombia, Available Scholarships.