

## ALdia MOOC in numbers

8 training modules

8 self-assessment tests

32 peer-assessment assignments

1 final exam

80 hours of training

## Piloting the ALdia MOOC

### What has been the challenge?

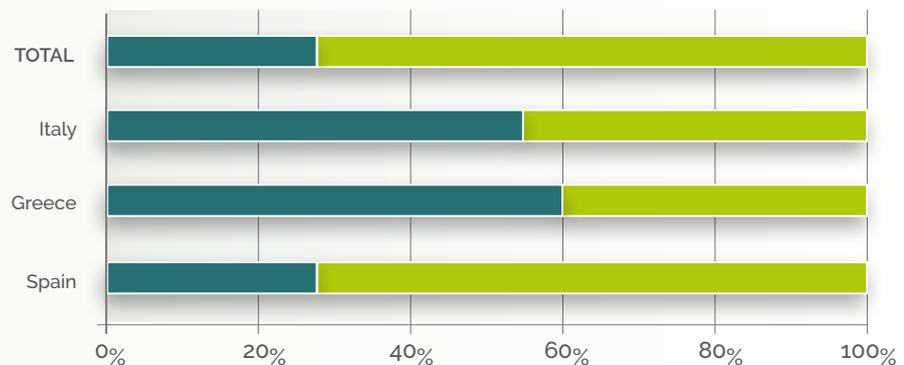
Equal access into all education sectors is a common, transnational challenge, expressed both by the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the Education and Training 2020 programme (ET2020). According to the Council Conclusions of 11 May 2010 "the provision of key competences for all on a lifelong learning basis will play a crucial role in improving citizens' employability, social inclusion and personal fulfilment". Even though the United Nations and European Council have set a context for equal study rights for everyone, Higher Education Institutions still do not meet the demand for accessibility. The main reason is the lack of specialized training of education professionals on universal learning design and accessibility practices.

### Are there supported data?

Findings emerged from a study conducted within the framework of the ALdia project, showed that most educational professionals have some experience in teaching students with disability, but only around 30% have received specialized training. On the other part, students identified this lack of specialized training as one of the main obstacles for embedding accessibility practices.

Therefore, ALdia project focused on the challenge to increase the percentage of education professionals who receive specialized training on universal learning design and accessibility practices, thus creating a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).

Figure 1  
TRAINING ON TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



	Spain	Greece	Italy	TOTAL
YES	91	10	8	109
NO	247	6	6	259

## Voila! The ALDIA MOOC

The ALdia MOOC was structured around 8 modules, designed by adopting the latest techniques in open & collaborative learning, to be compatible with European Qualifications Framework at EQF level 4.

The open and flexible learning nature of the course better addresses the needs of educational professionals, since it does not impose time and location constraints. Its self-pace mode fits well to their preferences, as well.

The ALdia MOOC is being offered through the Moodle modern and accessible learning platform. It contains audio-visual learning and self-assessment material, as well as a repository of useful resources about assistive technologies. Moreover, it facilitates the interaction among the educational professionals, who can exchange know-how and practices through a forum or chats thus promoting the creation of a virtual community.

## The ALDIA MOOC in action

The ALdia MOOC is in 4 languages (Spanish, Greek, Italian and English). It was implemented in two cohorts in Spain, Greece and Italy. The total number of trainees reached was almost 470, a strong evidence for the positive impact of the MOOC. The ALdia training was evaluated through different evaluation techniques (e.g. questionnaires, interviews and observation). In particular, an evaluation toolkit was developed to assess both the content and the delivery of the training courses, as well as the classroom deployments by trainers, trainees and disabled students.

The majority of trainees stated that the most important part gained from this seminar was specialized expertise from accessibility specialists, about "assistive technology and ways in which they can encourage the learning of students with special educational needs". More than 70% of the trainees stated satisfied from the e-learning experience of the ALdia MOOC, and this finding increased the intention of the trainees to propose this seminar to others, which is very encouraging for the further exploitation of the seminar.

## Implications for policymakers

Building inclusive and connected higher education systems is one of the main goals and the European Commission works closely with policy-makers to propose specific actions to this direction. The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 notes that disabled people are much less likely to participate in post-school education and to obtain employment than non-disabled people, so removing barriers and improving outcomes for this group is critical to the overall economic and social objectives of the EU (NESSE, 2012). The ALdia partners, via the ALdia MOOC, can influence the European higher education institutes & VET organisations to improve the quality of education/training services to students with disabilities.

The ALdia's project expectation is that policy makers can further exploit the ALdia MOOC for widely training educational professionals thus improving the impact on accessibility issues.



## Further Reading

United Nations – Disability, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html>

NESSE (2012), Education and Disability/Special Needs: Policies and practices in education, training and employment for students with disabilities and special educational needs in the EU  
<http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports/activities/reports/disability-special-needs-1>

ALdia R3.2, ALdia training programme: description of methodology and tools.  
[http://aldia-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ALdia\\_METHODOLOGIES\\_AND\\_TOOLS.pdf](http://aldia-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ALdia_METHODOLOGIES_AND_TOOLS.pdf)