

Good practice in Social Dimension- POLAND

The Disability Support Service at the Jagiellonian University (UJ) in Cracow, Poland, has been providing students with assistive technologies, counselling and educational support since 1999. During that time, the number of disabled students at the UJ increased from 30 to 676.

The Service provides specialized support to students with mobility disabilities, blind and partially sighted students, deaf and hard of hearing, students with mental health problems and those with special learning difficulties. The Service emphasizes the need to create such adaptations for disabled students that would allow them to fulfil their duties in full compliance with the academic standards.

The Service also directly supports academic teachers in adapting teaching methods to the needs of students with disabilities. 1

The UJ Disability Support Centre uses transnational cooperation projects - in particular Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation action - to further develop its offer, building upon achievements of other institutions, and, at the same time, sharing the methods and programmes and spreading good practices to institutions in other countries.

In a 2007 LdV TOI project „DARE - Disability Awareness - a New Challenge for Employees” the Jagiellonian University together with Padua University (IT) and organisations experienced in counselling, vocational trainings and disability awareness trainings (Learning Differences Ltd., UK, Euroinform Ltd. BG and FEPAMIC, ES) developed training materials and training courses in disability awareness for academic teachers and for administrative staff, providing teachers with solid knowledge on different types of disabilities and disabilities barriers and how to eliminate them, and thus better to teach students with disabilities. The training for the administrative staff allows them better to serve students with disabilities and can be used to by non-academic institutions, e.g., by government agencies, to train their employees in how to better serve disabled clients.

In 2009 in a „DARE 2” Leonardo project the Jagiellonian University with new partners: University of Iceland and Cyprus Adult Education Association and in cooperation with Learning Differences Ltd., UK, further developed the disability awareness training for academic teachers and transferred it to Iceland and, based on the British achievements, developed a disability awareness training program for SME managers, in Polish for Polish and in Greek for Cypriot users.

Thus the Jagiellonian University Disability Support Service not only supports students and academic teachers and staff but also helps to increase the employability of disabled students/ graduates by making the prospective employers aware of the actual potential of employees with disabilities and ways of removing barriers.

In 2011 the Jagiellonian University with new partners including Charles University in Prague (CZ), Pierre et Marie Curie University (F) and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (EL) started a new Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation project, entitled „DARe-Learning – Disability awareness of academic teachers: improvements through e-learning” that will develop a syllabus of disability awareness training course for academic teachers and an e-learning platform that will be integrated into the existing <http://www.dareproject.eu/index.php?lang=en> website.