

# TIU- Towards Inclusive Universities

by Empowering Disabled Students

NEWSLETTER 5

221-24 November, 2009, Hatay

The sixth activity of the TIU Project was Establishing Common EU-level Management Standards to Support Disabled Students at University. The aim of this activity was to

- strengthen the E-Network of support specialists for disabled students at university
- developing common management standards for Support Specialists of disabled students
- creating an integrated approach to make universities “inclusive” in Europe
- advertising the proposed methodology towards larger target groups and beneficiaries at EU-level

The Workshop in which The Common EU-level Management Standards were established was held in Hatay, 21-24th of November 2009. Specialists from the United Kingdom, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, France, and Turkey attended the workshop and shared their experiences. Michel Cartier from University of Bourgogne, France, Georgios Kouroupetroglou from National and Kapodistrian University of Athens Department of Informatics & Telecommunications, Osman Tatal from Anadolu University, Andrea Hathazi from....., Svetoslava Saeva from....., and Nurcan Köse from Mustafa Kemal University gave their presentations on how the disability system works at their universities.

The workshop was based on two questions and the roundtables were moderated by two specialists on Special Education. A Video Conference with Prof. Dr. Ayşegül Ataman, a leading authority in Special Education, was held during the workshop.

Standards And Needs For The Disability Coordinators At Eu Level were discussed during the workshop.

The Purpose Of The Discussion Paper was to find answers to the following questions

## 1.1 The Fundamental Question



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- What/Who is a Disability Coordinator/Disability Unit?

## 1.2 Some Threshold Questions and Issues

- What does it mean to be a Disability Coordinator
- Why do Disability Coordinator Units need Standards
- Who would benefit from the identification and use of standards of Disability Coordinator Units?
- Upon what premises and principles ought the construction of standards of accomplished Disability Coordinator Units be based?

## 1.3 What should the accomplished Disability Coordinator know, understand, do, and value?

As a result of the discussion of these questions the following items were highlighted by two different groups:

### STANDARDS

- General Standards
  - Encouraging students to disclose
  - The ways of encouraging students to disclosure
  - Offering free service
  - Each department /disability unit carries out surveys asking about definition of disabilities
  - Brochure, leaflet, web-site
  - Role models (Disabled people)
  - Having at least one disabled student in students clubs.
  - Giving Special education courses/training in all faculties.
- Specific Standards for each lecture, staff, etc.
  - Training University Staff about Special Education
  - Disability Question Time sor Disabled Students Question time
  - Little general handbook for Staff (What can be done for each disability, how should we treat disabled students)



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- The handbook should be prepared by a multidisciplinary group
- Training Disability Advisors
- Having a module for all students about special education
- Trying to reach the students at the stage when they are applying to university. Making them aware of DUs
  - What are DUs competencies and responsibilities
  - Coordination of Student-Staff- Parents in different aspects
  - Building Audit (better ask students and get feedback and then evaluate it)
- Self-Helping Strategies
  - To be able to ask the lecturer
  - To ask for some materials
  - Awareness and Training for the disabled students

### **Minimum Standards for DU Operations**

- 1) Each university/ faculty should have at least a person/ a unit/ a department for students to know who to contact. And it should be public/ should be known (maybe in leaflets )
  - This person should be officially appointed or must have access to authority ( This should be a person who **wants** to do the job)
- 2) Information about disability should be in student guides/ on university website
  - Information about legal rights should be provided
- 3) Staff development (implications of disability on learning, what barriers should they consider ) Not only the theory but practical training
  - What can I do, if.....?
  - Setting up standards for good practices for teaching at college level
    - Basic **practical** training for faculty members (a nuclear physicist may be great in his/her area but may not be prepared well to teach adults effectively in inclusive settings)



- 4) At a minimum level, letting know the faculty members/instructors about this unit and also letting them know that this unit exist to assist them ( in knowing how to make their classes accessible – instruction, content, evaluation-, what their responsibilities are, what the students` rights are etc. )
- 5) At the end of each semester, the unit can ask for feedback from the faculty members about having a student with disability (what did they think? What did they do for the student, would they be willing to talk to other instructors who might have students with similar characteristics etc).
- 6) Establishing a way for recognizing good practices
  - Include good examples on university website
  - Recognize the faculty/staff who serves students with disabilities well
- 7) Set up a system that facilitates the transition process into the university (Some students with disabilities feel that they cannot go or they cannot be successful in certain departments. Therefore, an awareness rising among high school students with disabilities is important) We need to encourage students with disabilities to pursue different paths/ variety of departments.
- 8) Sharing the responsibility and roles with faculty, staff members, mentors, students with disabilities, and peers for inclusion.
- 9) Confidentiality/ students should be able to come and talk about the disability when they are ready
- 10) There should be priorities in organizing assistance for students with disabilities (based on students` needs).
  - NO GREAT BIG PROMISSES!
  - Set up a filtering system ( to allow others who wants to create a project to assist students with disabilities to mature)
    - Summary of your project,
    - Summary of your methods
    - How will this benefit students with disabilities
    - IF SOMEBODY/AN ORGANIZATION WANTS TO HELP, IT SHOULD BE IN OUR CONDITIONS!



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- 11) The person with a disability should be involved in the process of decision making at the university
- 12) Students with a disability should be consulted in decision making in the University
- 13) Every university should have a policy on disability
- 14) Universities should be kept accountable & they should have an evaluation method in place
- 15) Universities should take anticipatory measures



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