

VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING AND TRAINING OF PUPILS WITH SEN

Lithuanian Experience

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The problems that are noticed:

- insufficient collaboration of specialists of various fields with a family in order to achieve complex solution of common problems and striving for changes,
- insufficiently organised education of parents (majority of parents do not participate in working out programmes for education of children),
- significant differences in personal, economic, and social life quality of healthy children and their families and families in which disable children are brought up.

In order to reveal advantages and disadvantages of VET system for pupils having SEN, analysis of present Lithuanian situation was done according to main 2 areas:

- Accessibility to VETsystem.
- Flexibility of the VET system.

1. ACCESSIBILITY TO THE VET SYSTEM

- Theoretical issues indicate the orientation towards empowerment, social participation paradigm and the conceptions of progressive education.
- Context learning: learning like living - when isolation doesn't have much sense.
- Understanding is the best when rich context of the environment is involved.

- Direct and constant feedback: learning is improved when pupils receive direct and suitable feedback through interaction with the environment.
- Applicability of knowledge: a pupil feels like having “knowledge” when he/she is able to apply one’s skills in new situations creatively.

- Diversity of vocational education usually depends on resourcefulness of pedagogues, facilities.
- Main forms employed in schools for vocational education were singled out.

NON- FORMAL FORMS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF PUPILS WITH SEN

Forms of vocational education		Developed abilities	Implementers
Consultations on vocational counselling	School's vocational information room, labour exchange office	Self-assessment	Social pedagogue, psychologist, special pedagogue, teacher of vocational counselling
Excursions for cognition	Excursions to vocational schools, enterprises	Knowledge on professions, career planning	Class tutors, teacher of vocational counselling
Project activities	Participation in programmes on vocational counselling developed by a school and financed by EU and other foundations	Self-expression	Deputy director, teacher, social pedagogue, special pedagogue

Out-of-school activities	In schools and outside them, clubs, exhibitions, fairs, competitions, contests are organised	Entrepreneurship, creativity, social skills, social activeness, physical activeness, conditional vocational skills	Teachers, heads
Practical testing of professions	Centres for Vocational Rehabilitation	Critical attitude towards own wishes and possibilities	Class tutors
Collaboration with parents of pupils	Individual conversations, meetings	Responsibility, social activeness, career planning, critical attitude towards child's wishes and possibilities	Class tutors, social pedagogue, special pedagogue, teacher of vocational counselling

FORMAL FORMS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF PUPILS WITH SEN

Forms of pre-vocational education		Developed abilities	Implementers
Lessons of various taught subjects	General subjects, technological education, physical education, lessons of music, fine art, an elective subject – entrepreneurship and career.	Conditional vocational abilities (responsibility, endurance, small motorics, physical activeness), critical attitude towards own wishes and possibilities, general skills of living	Teachers
Activities organised by a class tutor	Class sittings	Knowledge on professions, career planning, self-assessment, social skills	Class tutors, a teacher of vocational counselling

- One of the essential principles of teaching pupils having SEN is to maximally make the taught content closer to practice in order a pupil would grasp the applicability of knowledge.
- Pedagogues' knowledge and abilities to work with children having SEN has rapidly increased during the latter five years; however, most schools still lack methodical means, textbooks for work with children having special needs.

- As teachers of general subjects notice, they present simpler tasks for pupils having SEN, try to make theory closer to practice.
- However, lack of distribution of attention is mentioned as a negative factor; due to this, quality of delivery is diminished, because both gifted and SEN pupils are to be taught within the same time.

- It was estimated that the methodical base of special education is more developed in these schools which have had experience in the field of special education earlier.
- In schools teachers of technologies effectively apply programmes on technologies oriented towards development of technological literacy of pupils with special needs of the 5th-9th forms, as well as formation of their primary vocational skills (in sections of wood, metal, textile and nutrition).

- It was set up that schools differently implement new subjects related to pre-vocational and vocational training into the educational content.

- As analysis of content of educational programmes and survey data show, development of general abilities of pupils with SEN in schools is insufficient.
- Skills of communication, self-esteem and respect, constructive ways for resolutions of conflicts, ability to work in a team in schools are usually developed during individual conversations; however, they are developed non-systemically and inactively.

2. FLEXIBILITY OF THE SYSTEM OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- Lithuanian and EU Documents regulating vocational education, development of the system of vocational training, re-qualification programmes, made impact on development of vocational education content, educational environment, practice of pre-vocational education and vocational counselling.
- Modernised physical environment of schools and enriched infrastructure of school opened equal opportunities for pupils with special needs.
- Some schools created preconditions to apply flexible forms and methods of education for SEN pupils.
- Created and applied methods for development of skills of career planning, social skills, applied tests of self-assessment, vocational counselling.

- When creating a flexible system of VET, the importance of support of Lithuanian policy, economic situation of the state and development of economy branches was highlighted.
- A pessimistic point of view towards development of state's economy influencing negative perspectives for pupils with SEN to get employed was revealed.
- According to possibilities, schools on their disposition implement programmes of non-formal education.
- Acceptance of foreign experience is observed in project activities of schools when methods for development of social skills of pupils with SEN, education of the social-psychological competence of pedagogues are accepted.

Vocational education and training institutions

- 79 state-run vocational education and training (VET) institutions:
 - 54 VET schools (budgetary institutions) – founder ME&S
 - 20 VET schools (self-governing public institutions) – one of the founders ME&S
 - 5 Labour market training centers.
- 82 qualifications in IVET
- The purpose of CVET marketable professional qualification cover all areas of economic activity.
- Every school has a point of Guidance and counselling; one of the national goals for guidance - targeted young people with special needs for guidance (dialog and cooperation with parents).

Students are included in mainstream classes and receive additional support focusing on learner's capabilities



VET systems are already required to be much more flexible than at present

The first dimension is individual flexibility. Individual flexibility is achieved by widening the curriculum, by developing the students "learning to learn", and by identifying and including "key competences" in the curriculum.

The second dimension is curriculum flexibility. Curriculum flexibility is achieved mainly through modularisation, credit schemes.

A third dimension is flexibility of delivery. A VET-system based on flexible delivery may contain many hybrid forms of apprenticeship, simulation, work-based training, open learning etc.

Many hybrid forms of training in cooperation with local companies



Vocational training programmes

- Skill needs are evaluated by performing sectoral studies, and by making labour market forecasts, as well as in the course of developing VET standards.
- Practical training should comprise 60% to 70% of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects.
- VET programmes are developed by VET providers, in cooperation with representatives of employers. When developing programmes, providers follow VET standards and the general requirements approved by the ME&S.
- A newly drafted VET programme is subject for approval by the competent employer organisation (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts). Next experts evaluate the quality of the programme and in the case of positive assessment the programme is entered on the Register of Study, Training and Qualification.



Award of certificates

With the aim of ensuring the uniform assessment of VET graduates' readiness for practical activity, the function of the final qualification assessment awarded by national accredited institutions (in every region).

Upon the successful completion of all training programme, graduates get a vocational qualification certificate.

Upon the successful completion of modul/es of the programme students get a modul/es certificate.

Formal education qualifications

LTQF
levels

Basic education certificate based on curriculum for students with moderate and severe learning disabilities

1

Basic education certificate based on simplified curriculum
Basic education certificate

2

VET without basic education requirement certificate

VET based on basic education certificate

3

Upper secondary general education certificate

Upper secondary VET certificate

VET based on upper secondary education certificate

4

5

Diploma of Bachelor's degree,
Diploma of professional higher education

6

Diploma of Master's degree

7

Diploma of Doctoral degree

8

Thank You for your kind attention!

