

Description of an example of successful national/local VET programmes for learners with SEN in France

1) Short abstract

The DJINH programme was established in 1993 in order to facilitate the transition from teenage to adult life. DJINH has various missions, such as preparing disabled teenagers for working life and allowing them to develop their social independence and further their individual development. The main characteristic of this project is that DJINH provides tailor-made support to each person. It supports 80 young people with the possibility of accompanying them beyond the age of 26, in order to support them in their daily working lives. In 2007, the SAPHIR program was created for young people with mental health disabilities. It supports 25 young people who are over 16 years of age. DJINH is composed of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals such as psychologists, social workers and inclusion experts. They provide a link between young disabled people and employers by helping to find a suitable position for young people within a company, negotiating for required adaptations and facilitating communication. DJINH also supports the young people in the transition to living an independent adult life, for example by providing “show flats” where they can get used to living on their own step by step.

The project is run by a parents’ organisation called GEIST. The GEIST association was created in 1981 by parents of children with Down syndrome. The main idea was to create a support system which would allow their children to be included in mainstream schools and avoid placement at a special school. The association then extended its scope to providing support for children with mental health disabilities.

2) Highlights / Unique factors

The example is a local initiative that supports disabled children, young people, adults and their families to lead inclusive lives. DJINH manages to bring all stakeholders together: Departmental, Regional, Municipality, Ministries of Education, Health and Employment, Firms, Parents associations etc. The project has also worked as a

catalyst for combining general education and VET within the Ministry of Education and with employers in the form of apprenticeships.

This example is developing a synergy between training issues, employment issues, housing issues and citizenship. One of the most important aims of DJINH is to bridge a gap; there is no progressional transition for 16+ in the mainstream sector. The project played a key role in a change of decision-making regarding suitable educational opportunities and employment in the open labour market. The multi-disciplinary approach, which includes employment and training specialists who respond to individual needs, is the key method used in the example.

The project has played a key role in empowering people with learning disabilities because its aims to empower individuals beyond simply supporting them. DJINH raises awareness about maintaining quality mainstream education and avoiding a return to special schools.

3) Availability of evaluation data

The number of young people supported by DJINH increased by approximately 50 percent between 2005 and 2011. In 2011, 56 young persons were accompanied by DJINH and 11 by SAPHIR. This year, DJINH welcomes 80 young persons with SEN. The total number of young people with special needs who attend mainstream schools has tripled since the beginning of the project. In 2011, 10,71% of students found a work contract.