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**VET STUDY VISIT IN LAVAL, FRANCE**  
**1 - 3 February 2012**  
**Visit details**

**Study visit participants:**

Linda Jordan (expert from England)  
Sharon Gould (expert from England)  
Serge Ebersold (expert from France and host)  
Rémy Leblanc (expert from France and host)  
Mary Kyriazopoulou (European Agency staff)  
Flora Bellour (European Agency staff)

**1<sup>st</sup> day morning**

**Presentation of the French VET system and, specifically, the VET system for disabled people and its link to employment.**

A meeting was organised with representatives from MDPH, the Regional Agency for Health, the National Education department, an apprentice training centre, the Employment and Training department (DIRECCTE) and the General Council.

- Presentation by Mr Bernard Bonnel, Director of the Mayenne House for disabled persons, MDPH

The law of 11 February 2005 introduced a new approach. Disabled people are now fully recognised as citizens. Their place is within a society which needs to include them. The definition of disability has changed: disability is not only the result of a deficiency; it is the impact of the deficiency on the person's daily life which creates disability. The law promises to compensate for the impact that disability can have on a person's life in any field. A multi-disciplinary evaluation is therefore necessary. The MDPH provides advice, support and help to create a life project for disabled people. The MDPH also plays a role in building a life project for each disabled person by means of the "employment opportunity assessment". This assessment brings together different actors from national education, local mission and medical social structures. The MDPH can orientate disabled persons towards either medical social structures or the mainstream sector.

(See presentation of the Mayenne House for disabled persons, [Presentation-1.pdf](#))

- Presentation by Ms Patricia Salomon and Ms Elisabeth Bernard, ARS Inspectors, Regional Agency for Health

The Regional Agency for Health was created in 2009 in order to develop a unique regional actor to lead the health-care system. The French schemes for children and teenagers with SEN are the following:

- SESSAD: specialised education and home care services. This structure provides special support to children and teenagers in their various areas of life and activities.
- IME ("Instituts medico-éducatifs"): Medical social institutes. The IME are special schools aimed at children and young people with mental health disabilities aged from 3 to 20.

Disabled children generally attend mainstream schools during their primary education. When they reach the age of 10 years old they are directed towards special schools.

In recent years, an effort has been made to decrease the number of children attending special schools and to increase inclusion. We can see this trend at national level with 50% of children in SESSAD and 50% in IME.

(See presentation of the health-care system [Presentation-2.pdf](#)).

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- Presentation by Mr Alain Landeau and Mr Alain Levesques, National Education Inspectors, “Disabled pupils in mainstream schools”

Nursery schools welcome all pupils between the ages of 3 and 6, including disabled children, who attend ordinary classes. In primary school (between the ages of 6 and 11), there are special needs classes that accommodate a maximum of 12 pupils per class (the CLIS classes). In La Mayenne, the majority of disabled children are included in mainstream classes. At secondary level, special inclusion units known as the ULIS classes are made up of 10 pupils, a specialised teacher and a school assistant. In the apprentice training centres, we find ULIS classes as well. La Mayenne has a high level of inclusion in the mainstream education system: 83% of disabled children attend mainstream classes and 17% go to special schools. This compares with the national average; 70% of disabled children attend mainstream classes and 30% are in special schools. Disabled pupils older than 16 – the age at which compulsory education ends - have 3 options: to go to a vocational-orientated school, to the apprentice training centre (CFA) or to a vocational unit in special schools (IME).

(See presentation [Presentation-3.pdf](#)).

- Presentation by Ms Marie Schaettel, apprentice training centre, “CFA des trois villes”

In order to become an apprentice at the CFA you need to be 16 years of age, find an apprenticeship supervisor and sign a work contract with a company. Apprentices benefit from being given the status of a worker, with wages and paid holidays. They spend 13 weeks per year at the apprentice training centre and work for the rest of the year. Disabled people benefit from the CFA apprenticeship in a number of ways. Various professionals are involved in helping the apprentices, such as the disability coordinator and the supervisor for the “Département”. Once they have signed their apprenticeship contract, the apprentices have full access to all workshops and support (a break during exams, adapted timetable, etc.).

Data: 413 disabled apprentices in the region, 57 in La Mayenne. The majority of disabled apprentices in La Mayenne have cognitive disabilities (71.9%).

(See presentation on CFA [Presentation-4.pdf](#)).

- Presentation by Ms Chanteau-Nogues, General Council

The General Council has different financial tools for disabled persons. It delivers financial help for a disability and finances accommodating structures. They are 2 kinds of services for disabled persons provided by the General Council: the SAVS, which is a structure that helps disabled persons to lead an independent life and the SAMSAH, which provides care support.

(See presentation [Presentation-5.pdf](#)).

## **1<sup>st</sup> day afternoon**

- Presentation by Mr Patrick Marchand, Deputy Manager Territorial Unit of Mayenne, DIRECCTE

In France, various laws have developed the principle of positive discrimination. In 1957, for the first time, a law obliged employers to employ disabled persons as 3% of their workforce (10% in firms of more than 10 employees). This quota has since been increased to the current level of 6%. Penalties are applied if this percentage is not reached.

Data: at national level, 49% of the firms who must employ disabled workers respect the 6% quota imposed by law. In La Mayenne, 54% of firms with more than 20 employees respect this law.

“Pôle Emploi” is the main body for job seekers and “Cap Emploi” is especially dedicated to the inclusion of disabled persons in work. The AGEFIPH collects the penalties paid by firms that do not respect the 6% quota. In the last few years, we have observed a decrease in the penalties collected by the AGEFIPH. The RLH programme aims to compensate the impact of a disability on a person’s capacity to work. The law of 11 February 2005 transformed the conception of sheltered work into work in adapted firms. Disabled employees have wages



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which are at least equal to the SMIC (national minimum wage). At national level, 650 adapted firms employ 28 000 disabled workers.

(See [presentation on the employment of disabled people presentation-6.pdf](#)).

- Presentation of the DJINH project by the GEIST 21 Mayenne association by Mr Rémy Leblanc and Mr Pascal Fournier

The 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.

The DJINH program was created in 1993 in order to facilitate the transition from teenage to adult life. DJINH has various missions, for example 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 for 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 work life. In 2007, the SAPHIR program was created for young people with mental health disabilities. It supports 25 young people 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.

(See [presentation of the DJINH project Presentation-7.pdf](#)).

## 2<sup>nd</sup> day

### Visit to Vocational Secondary School : Lycée Robert Buron

#### **Presentation of the practical details of training for disabled pupils linked to DJINH**

A meeting was organised in order to present two secondary schools and the facilities for disabled pupils.

- Presentation of the Vocational Secondary School Robert Buron by the Head teacher, Mr Gagnaire

The Lycée Robert Buron is a secondary school that provides technical education to young people of 15 years of age and above. 850 pupils are enrolled at the school. In September 2009, the school opened an inclusion unit for students with SEN, called ULIS-LP. The ULIS-LP unit welcomes around 10 pupils with cognitive disabilities between 16 and 20 years of age. The pupils from the ULIS-LP unit are in mainstream classes and have the possibility of carrying out an internship. Each pupil has an individual timetable according to his or her needs and also benefits from an individual schooling project. The pupils can participate in technical classes and workshops and carry out their training periods in firms or adapted firms. The training periods are mainly in firms on the ordinary labour market. In the Robert Buron school, the 34 disabled pupils are divided as following:

- 11 pupils in the ULIS unit;
- 14 pupils in the apprentice training centre;
- 1 pupil in the technical school, “BEP”;
- 8 pupils in “Bac pro” (equivalent to the second level of NVQ).

(See [Presentation of of the Vocational Secondary School Robert Buron by the Head teacher, Mr Gagnaire Presentation-8.pdf](#))

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- Presentation of the private Vocational Secondary School Haute Follis by Head teacher, Mr Bayol

The secondary school Haute Follis provides 12 different types of workshops (mechanical engineering, trade, secretariat, catering, social care, finance, etc...). The school has one inclusion unit called “Springboard class” with 11 pupils aged 16 to 20. The pupils are integrated into mainstream classes and workshops according to their individual, adapted timetable.

- Presentation of the coordinator teacher’s role by Mr Geslin, Coordinator teacher

The coordinator teacher should monitor the path of a young person’s education from nursery level up to the end of their schooling, by organising regular meetings. The path of a girl who attends a NVQ Level 1 course was presented by a coordinator teacher who described her school career. From 2002 to 2006, she was in a CLIS unit in a mainstream primary school. Then, during secondary school, she was in a ULIS inclusion unit. In June 2010, the coordinator teacher organised a meeting in order to prepare her entrance to the apprentice training centre of Ebron. This student had the opportunity to be helped and supported by DJINH. Today, she is doing her first training period working as a nurse.

### **Visit to Apprentice Training Centre, “CFA des 3 villes”**

- Visit to a pastry-making workshop and presentation of the practical details of the training of young disabled people in the framework of the apprentice training centre linked to DJINH.

Ms Marie Schaettel presented her team and explained the role of the disability coordinator. The disability coordinator establishes the personalised path of the disabled apprentice and provides him or her with support.

### **Visit to Secondary School Gaston Lesnard**

- Presentation of the Secondary School Gaston Lesnard by Ms Laure Pilorge, Teacher
- The secondary school Gaston Lesnard is the school specialising in construction for the “Département”. The school has 390 pupils and one ULIS inclusion unit with 11 pupils, which opened in September 2011. The pupils in the unit have learning difficulties and cognitive disabilities and are between 16 and 18 years old. They are included in mainstream workshops such as roofing, electricity work, painting, etc.

- **Meeting with one student with SEN supported by DJINH.**

Camille lives in Montenay, 30 kilometres from Laval. DJINH has supported him since September 2011. He took part in a cooking workshop organised by DJINH and has received special training from them on how to manage his time. He is carrying out his training period at the Laval theatre with a job coach provided by DJINH.

### **Visit to a company which has employed a person with Down syndrome for several years, who has benefited from a vocational education scheme in the form of an apprenticeship supported by DJINH**

We visited a company where Aurélie has worked for 10 years. She distributes the mail within the company. DJINH has supported Aurélie since she started working there, particularly with the communication between Aurélie and her employer. The manager said that she is happy with Aurélie’s performance and said that the assistance of DJINH is a very positive aspect.

### **Meeting with 3 young people supported by DJINH who are in training or retraining schemes. Their family or training mentors were present**



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Kelly is 22 years old and has been supported by DJINH since September 2008 after she left a special school. In 2008, she signed a contract for an apprenticeship in a retirement home. Two years afterwards, she signed a second apprenticeship contract with another retirement home. She lives on her own and DJINH supports her in various aspects of her daily life: at home, in her work environment, in developing contacts with the apprentice training centre, etc. She takes part in events organised by DJINH in order to avoid loneliness and create friendships.

Pierre-Yves is 21 years old and has been supported by DJINH since 2007. In 2009 he signed an apprenticeship contract with Mr and Ms Fortuné, farmers. In 2011 he graduated and obtained his "CAPA PAUM", a vocational qualification for agricultural workers. He then enrolled in an extra vocational training course in farming. DJINH supports him in his plan to prepare for a degree that would allow him to be an agricultural worker. DJINH has also supported him in his efforts to pass his driving test.

Alexandre is 30 years old and, following his apprenticeship, he was employed as a part-time worker in a building firm. Alexandre has been dismissed due to economic reasons. After a period of unemployment, he found a part-time job at the St-Nicolas swimming-pool. The part-time contract has now expired and negotiations for a permanent contract began a few months ago. DJINH is involved in these negotiations and acts as mediator between Alexandre and the employer.