

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

1) Short abstract

Several education and training facilities were visited during the Luxembourg study visit. The Institute for autistic and psychotic children (IEAP) is a national school with several “classes de cohabitation” in regular schools. In total there are 5 “classes de cohabitation” in primary schools, 1 in a grammar school and 1 in a special school with a focus on students with mental or learning difficulties. Some students however, (those with less developed social skills) participate in special classes which take place at the institute. Regarding children with Asperger syndrome, the institute’s main aim is social integration, with focus placed on structured time and places, as well as developing communication and social skills. There are usually 5-6 students per class, with 2 teachers. Different classes and workshops are on offer in the institute, including a clay workshop, a wellness programme and a paper workshop, as well as several relaxation facilities. A lot of in-service training is provided in order to prepare teachers. Yearly development plans are drafted for every student. All students come to the institute a minimum once per week. For example, the students in the IEAP co-habitation class in Lycée Michel Rodange meet at the centre once a week to transfer into practice what they have learned in theory. All the other teachings take place in the co-habitation class, which is part of a campus for 1373 students and 142 teachers in 57 classes.

The supported and sheltered workshops at Beckerich are organised by a non-profit organisation that cares for people with severe developmental disorders. This kind of workshop is 100% publicly funded. Employees are paid the minimum wage, giving them a status equal to that of a regular worker. Vocational and employment training is offered after compulsory school in order to prepare a student to enter either the open labour market or one of the organisation’s own workshops. Workshops include graphics/printing, paper, catering/menu service, gardening, housekeeping and ceramics. The duration of training is about 2 years, up to a maximum of 3 years. Training programmes are individualised. In addition to practical vocational skills and

skills for independent living, the institute emphasises the improvement of communication and social skills as well as the student's psychological identity.

2) Highlights / Uniqueness

Many support and bridging measures are provided for learners with SEN; the system is adaptable and provides many options so that there are alternatives for everybody. Concerning the concrete example, the "classes de cohabitation" are a good example of practice as they allow students with special needs to participate in regular systems to a certain extent. Classes are small, and contact between the highly skilled teachers and the students is very good. Teachers focus on age-appropriate skills, for example on how to dress properly. It is also noteworthy that there is a possibility – also for people with SEN - to validate non-formal and informal qualifications (e.g. acquired through years of working in a particular field). There are however some challenges in the application process.

3) Availability of evaluation data

There is no data available for the concrete example. Concerning the national level however, it is interesting to note that about 1% of all children of compulsory school age attend special education schools. The national drop-out rate was 9% (in 2009/2010, meaning around 500 persons) and about 1160 students finished school without certification.