

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

1) Short abstract

The Secondary Vocational and Technical School Bezigrad-Ljubljana (SPSSB Ljubljana) is a mainstream state school offering 14 different programmes at lower vocational, vocational, secondary and technical level. There are 924 enrolled students, including 84 with special needs who have access to individual professional help and learning assistance.

The Institute for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Ljubljana follows children from their diagnosis up until they have completed their studies. Its primary goal is the optimal development of the learner's abilities in all areas, with a special emphasis on the development of language (Slovenian and Slovenian Sign Language). The institute is the only secondary school for deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech- and language- impaired students in Slovenia. In lower and middle-vocational education, middle-technical and vocational-technical education, students can choose between graphics, woodwork, mechanics, textiles and information and media technology programmes.

The Centre of Education and Rehabilitation (CIRIUS) is a state-funded specialist centre for the education and comprehensive rehabilitation of children and adolescents with motor impairments, chronic illnesses, multiple disabilities and specific learning disabilities. It was founded in 1947 and is available for children from across the country. CIRIUS consists of a primary school, a secondary school, adult education and education at Kamnik Grammar school with boarding in CIRIUS. 171 children are currently enrolled at the centre, 120 of whom attend the secondary school. The goal is for each child to achieve an appropriate educational level with regard to their individual abilities, as well as to achieve the highest possible level of independence and competence in physical, intellectual and social functioning.

2) Highlights / Uniqueness

The SPSSB Ljubljana provides study adaptations for students who may not be subject to an official SEN statement, but who nevertheless experience difficulties in achieving positive results. Some of these students may require intermittent so-called

"learning help", in which case a proposal for such a support measure may be made by either the parents or by class teachers / special teachers.

The Institute for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Ljubljana currently has 20 professional workers, with 14 working externally throughout the country. They provide 350 hours of additional assistance per week, of which 287 hours is allocated to learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, and 63 for learners with speech and language disorders. Last year, assistance was provided for 64 learners in pre-school, 136 in primary schools and 25 in secondary schools. These specialists visit 84 cities per week, each providing 22 hours of lessons per week or more. Blind, deaf, physically or mentally disabled students or students with learning difficulties can therefore receive support from mobile teachers. Additionally, this team gives workshops and lectures in mainstream schools for parents, teachers and other interested parties, as well as seminars for experts.

CIRUS provides an individual education plan for each student, as well as small classes (12 or fewer) and specially trained teachers. CIRUS also integrates non disabled students into the institution.

The SPSSB Ljubljana is a mainstream public school, whereas the Institute for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Ljubljana and CIRUS are special schools. A highlight of this Slovenian example is the valuable collaboration between all services involved, which ensures that the needs of all students are met. It is also important that such connections between special and mainstream schools are created and maintained. The example further highlights that the focus should not just be on independence and finding a job on the labour market, but remembering that education is valuable in itself.

3) Availability of evaluation data

During the period 2010-2011 the school population of Slovenia was 162,544. There were 11,890 pupils with special needs of whom 8641 pupils (equal to 4.8% of the total school population) were in regular settings and 3249 pupils (equal to 2% of the total school population) were in special settings. Concerning the CIRUS example, 2-3 of the 13 young students to leave CIRIUS will enter employment in the next few years.