
Implementation of existing legislation – evaluation of factors preventing or facilitating integration

Our research showed very clear that there is already a huge amount of work done in the field of integrating people with disabilities into society, education and workforce. However, in most cases, the transfer of the results into real life or legislation is lacking, because the information / reporting of results stays in a very narrow context (scientists, universities, institutions...).

Another problem is that there are latent, neither intended nor (instantly) identified functions of all (well meant) rules which lead to problems or disadvantages for exact the people the rule is meant for.

For example the interviewed experts mentioned the following point as central theme: “regulations which oblige employers to make an effort for disabled employees are difficult to enforce, despite sanctions”. Most regulations contain wording that is open to interpretation, and it has to be determined from case to case what constitutes undue hardship on the employer or whether it is impossible to accommodate a person’s disabling condition in the company: “Fines are often so low that employers may find it easier to pay than to make an effort.”

One main challenging task for all the partner countries – despite their different cultural context - is to implement the existing legislation. Legislation should not only be a written paper but it should be used in practice.

III. Areas of Interest: Focus by Country

The following section deals with special features of the partner countries concerning the situation of students with disabilities in higher education.

1) Greece

The term disability is used in Greece to refer to a permanent physical, mental or intellectual limitation of functional capacity as a consequence of an injury or an illness that existed at birth has arisen thereafter or which may be expected to arise.

Types of disability in Greece: Blindness, Deafness, Motor disability, Thalassaemia (blood disease), Pernicious anaemia, Hydrocephaly, Diabetes, Cancer, Dyslexia, Learning disorders, Mental disorders.

Legal framework: *The Law 2817/2000* has created a new separate framework concerning disabled people. The Law includes the concept, the aim and the education policy and defines the levels along with the units of education, vocational education and supportive services (Diagnostic Centers of Evaluation and Support). Furthermore, the Law describes the duties and responsibilities of those in charge of the units of special education and supportive services.

Funding in HE and labour market: The state offers a personal allowance per month to the disabled person which varies on the basis of the kind of disability. Employers are offered financial support by the state as a motive to hire workers with disabilities.

2) Sweden

The **Swedish Disability Ombudsman** monitors the rights and interests of people with disability. The objective is that people with various kinds of disability should be

able to participate fully in the life of the community and live on the same terms as others. There is a central office to assist the Ombudsman in her/his work. The Disability Ombudsman is a government authority.

Equal Treatment of Students at Universities Act (2001:1286)

The Equal Treatment of Students in Universities Act - came into force in Sweden in the spring of year 2002. This law states that no student at a university or other higher education institution must be discriminated against or otherwise differently treated on grounds of origins, sex, sexual orientation, or disability. This covers all levels of the studies: admission, study environment, teaching, and examination. The law enjoins all universities annually to draw up plans of action covering measures necessary to encourage and strengthen the students' equal rights regardless of ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, and disability.

Annual plan

All universities and University Colleges must each year prepare an action plan that shall contain a review of the measures that are required to promote the equal rights of students irrespective of their sex, ethnic belonging, sexual orientation or *disability* and in order to prevent and preclude harassment. The plan shall also contain a report on which of these measures the university intends to commence or implement during the forthcoming year.

The legal right to personal assistance for persons with severe disabilities

The legal right to personal assistance for persons with severe disabilities is measure to compensate for functional impairments and to create equal opportunities. The reform, that came into force on January 1st 1994 is characterised by an approach that gives persons with disabilities the same rights as all others to freedom of choice, integrity and participation in the life of the community. The adoption of financial support to fund personal assistants offers greater opportunities for independence and freedom of choice.

Prohibition of Discrimination in Working Life of People with Disability Act (1999:132)

The purpose is to combat discrimination in working life of people with disabilities. Disability means every permanent physical, mental or intellectual limitation of a person's functional capacity that as a consequence of an injury or illness that existed at birth arose thereafter or may be expected to arise.

Contact person / Co - coordinator

At all universities and HE - institutions there is a contact person/co-coordinator, working with issues relating to educational support for students with disabilities. A modification of the curriculum is made possible.

3) Poland

Employment and Education of Persons with disabilities from the perspective of legislative documents

A vast scope of legal acts concerning people with disabilities does not indicate that the problem of these persons is regulated properly, precisely and, which is more, in a complex way, with respect to the access to education and employment in the open market.

The conclusions below are based on the examination of the following legislative documents:

Parliamentary acts:

Act of 27th August 1997, on the vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons (with amendments of 20th December 2002);

Act of 29th November 1990, on social welfare;

Act of 24th April 2003, on the public benefit activity and voluntarism;

Regulations:

Regulations of the Minister of Economy, Labour and Social Policy:

Of 2nd July 2003, on particular provisions in financial economy and the management of the PFRON (the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons) resources ;

Of 22nd May 2003, on rehabilitation vacation terms;

Of 22nd May 2003, on determination of the provincial self-government which may be financed from the resources of PFRON (the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons);

Of 12th June 2003, on particular provisions and procedures in granting financial assistance to the institutions of protected work from the resources of PFRON (the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons);

Of 25th March 2003, on the organization and the acting method of provincial and local social committees for disabled persons;

Of 21st January 2000, on the institutions of vocational activity;

Of 30th September 2002, on particular provisions in creation, activity and financing therapy workshops;

Regulations of the Minister of Labour and Public Policy:

Of 25th June 2002 on determining the local tasks which can be financed from the resources of PFRON (the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons);

Of 6th January 2000 on the method of creating, activity and financing specialist training and rehabilitation centers and the method of supervision of their activity;

Regulations of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy:

Of 13th January 1999 on the commissioning of tasks in vocational, social and medical rehabilitation made by PFRON (the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons) with non-governmental institutions and territorial self-government units;

Of 31st December 1998 on corporate funds for rehabilitation of disabled persons;

Of 18th September 1998 on the type of diseases justifying the decrease of the employment ration of disabled persons and the method of decreasing the ratio.

Conclusions

1. The apparently impressive collection of legislation acts regulates the problems related to the employment, and much more rarely to the education of disabled persons, only in a very insignificant way. In fact, out of the three important parliamentary acts, only the Act on Rehabilitation defines precisely the scope of employment and assistance for disabled persons. Two other acts only mention disability in the context of public assistance and volunteerism.

2. The system of social assistance defined in detail in the Act on Rehabilitation may be referred to as a medical system, proposing assistance more in a form of benefits or numerous discounts rather than motivation for activity.

These tasks are executed by the units of territorial self-government (local and provincial) in co-operation with the Representative of Disabled Persons and appropriate minister. The investments are carried out by PFRON (the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons), which is reflected in the regulation of 2nd July 2003.

The creation of appropriate institutions determining the degree of disability is accompanied with a bureaucratic procedure related to the creation of qualification committees, adaptation of determination locations, notification of appropriate institutions, obtaining permits etc.

3. The act does not take into consideration many elements necessary for effective preparation to the entry into the open labour market e.g. higher education as an element increasing the probability of employment.

4. A system of incentives discourages rather than encourages the employers to employ disabled persons.

Article 15. 1. The working time of a disabled person cannot exceed 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week.

The working time of a disabled person who is qualified as a person disabled in a large or moderate degree cannot exceed 7 per day and 35 hours per week.

A disabled person cannot work at nighttime and in extra hours.

Article 18. 1. The application of working time standards referred to in article 15, does not cause the decrease of the remuneration paid on a monthly basis.

5. It is difficult to speak about any complex system supporting education and employment of disabled persons in Poland. This is the reason for a very small number of disabled students and disabled persons employed in the open labour market.

The state report made within the HERN project gives some instructions on how to create such a system.

Some universities in Poland have disability support teams in order to assist students with disabilities. It is not a result of legal regulations, but just the initiative of university chancellors (rectors) interested in the development in this area and education of persons with all kinds of disabilities at the university level.

Currently we are aware of 11 universities in Poland which have disability student support team or at least a contact person for disability. The universities created a kind of informal network in order to change reality in higher education sector for

people with all kinds of disabilities. Representatives of universities such as disability managers or contact persons for disability, meet a few times a year. There hold discussions, exchange experience and draft projects of legislative solutions during such meetings.

Last year a group of representatives tried to change the main Polish act concerning persons with disabilities – Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act. The attempt was supported by the Rector of Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Prof. Franciszek Ziejka, who chaired the Rectors' Conference. Unfortunately the act was amended without taking the representatives' suggestions into consideration.

The suggestions were written in such a way as to:

1. Create the basis for a **financing system** for universities interested in education of persons with disabilities.
2. To write and emphasise the **education** as a one of the most important and basic rights of persons with disabilities who have intellectual capacities to study.

Even the second amendment was rejected. The result is that higher education is not mentioned as a right and opportunity for persons with disabilities.

On the other hand, Polish universities do not need to ensure any crucial resources for supporting students with disabilities. Some of them do that, but needs are much bigger than their possibilities. In Poland, the government is responsible for the educational sector and for financial support provided to public schools.

In Poland there is also no national or comprehensive support system for students with disabilities. Universities wanting to educate those people create their own regulations which may vary and depend on financial conditions and awareness of the problem. Also, the universities do not receive any significant funding from the government or the National Fund for Persons with Disabilities to support students. The National Fund is a governmental fund responsible for all disability issues. The Fund operates based on the Act concerning Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

The only Polish university which received a large grant from the National Fund for activities towards accessibility was Warsaw University. The idea was to give resources for achieving full accessibility to students with specific needs. It was a kind of a pilot project and originally other universities could receive similar grants. Jagiellonian University was waiting for the grant, too.

In May 2003 a conference entitled "Employment of Persons with Disabilities on the Open Labour Market" took place in Warsaw organised by Friends of Integration Association. At the conference the Head of the National Fund for Persons with Disabilities stated that there would not be any financial support for universities wishing to educate students with disabilities. Representatives of chancellors present at the conference were surprised by that statement.

It is obvious that education of persons with disabilities is much more expensive than education of regular students, but they should not be excluded from full access to the educational process. Policy-makers should take this into account.

The National Fund considers the Ministry of Education, the source of financing and a body responsible for all students, including students with disabilities. On the other

hand, the Ministry of Education does not offer additional funds for education of students with disabilities except for small scholarships for full time students, which are admitted for individuals. The situation is like a vicious circle.

4) Latvia

Because of barriers concerning the integration process for people with disabilities in society, a conception called “**Equal Rights for All**” (1998.06.30) has been elaborated and accepted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia. The conception is worked out for the period till the year 2010 and the state, municipalities and non-governmental institutions have been included in its realization process. The conception’s basic principle is the removal of barriers for people with disabilities and supporting their independent life. The main aspects cover health care, education, employment, environment availability, social security.

The **Law on Education (1991)** defines “the equal rights for people to get education irrespective of property and social status, race, nationality, gender, religious and political opinion, health status, occupation and living place” (including disability). The law determines, that people with disabilities have equal access to all education institutions.

The **Labor Law (2002)** defines equal rights for labor; fair, safe and healthy working conditions, as well as fair wage without any direct or non-direct discrimination – in respect of person’s race, color, gender, age, disability, religious, political or other opinion; national or social origination, property or family status etc.

In the previous reports we tried to show laws and regulations in Latvia that are coordinated by legislation level and determined equal rights for all citizens of our state; including the obtaining of Higher Education and competition in the labor market (also for people with disabilities).

Unfortunately, researches within HERN project evidently show that there are troublesome factors for people with disabilities for obtaining Higher Education and be competitive in labor market in comparison with people without disability.

A state program with foreseen financial resources could give the possibility to create an accessible environment in all higher education institutions such as the design and implementation of special training programs, the application of the newest technologies for deaf and blind people, to build more subsidized working places as well as the creation of special working places for people with disabilities in the country and regions with high unemployment rate.

We have marked out that during the last 5 years there are positive tendencies in societies’ attitudes and possibilities for the people with disabilities; especially important is the contribution of the non-governmental organizations. A new initiative is the formation of the new disabled people center for information and environment accessibility “VAR” (ETR (Environment. Training. Resources)); Initiators: Organization of people with disabilities and their friends “Apeirons” (<http://www.apeirons.lv>). In the center there will be National Council Secretariat of Disabled; main activity field – disabled including into society processes (education, employment, decision making (government and municipality level), society development).

Latvia hasn’t the comprehensive general research about people with disabilities educated in Higher Education institutions and therefore we can not give reliable

statistical data. According to our interviews and the HERN project statistics our conclusion is: In higher schools there are a lot of people with “hidden” disabilities (for instance, diabetes mellitus, people with tumors etc.) as well as people with physical defects (of operation, trauma), which are able to move without wheelchairs and partially sighted and hard of hearing people.

As mentioned before, the higher schools are more accessible for people with disabilities in the last years and they are more accessible for people in wheelchairs. The most complicated situation is for blind and deaf people obtaining higher education: there is a lack of sign language translators and there is no sufficient amount of new assistive technologies available.

We hope that European Commission resources in the Equal program will help to resolve the problems of people with disabilities concerning higher education and employment.

5) United Kingdom

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

In 1995 new legislation was passed with the **Disability Discrimination Act** which defined who should be regarded as a disabled person and which made it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in the workplace or in the access to goods and services. The definition of a disabled person according to the Act is:

“A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be: Substantial (that is, more than trivial, and Adverse, and Long-term (that has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the life of the person affected).”

The Act has been implemented in four phases:

Part 1: Since December 1996 it has been unlawful to treat disabled people less favourably than other people for a reason related to their disability

Part 2: Since October 1999- Service providers have had to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people such as providing extra help or making changes to the way in which they provide their services.

Part 3: Since October 2004, service providers have had to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

This legislation applied to HE institutions as employers and suppliers of goods and services to the public, however, it was not until 2001 that the act was amended to include students in further and higher education.

SENDA

In 2002 the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) was adopted as part 4 of the DDA. SENDA legislation requires that all schools, colleges and universities and providers of adult education and youth services do not discriminate against disabled people. In September 2005, all education providers will be required to make adjustments to their physical premises to allow disabled access. The act stated that it is unlawful for the body responsible for an educational institute to:

to discriminate against a disabled students in their admission policies;

to discriminate against a disabled student in the student services it provides , or offers to provide;

to discriminate against a disabled student by excluding him from the institution, whether permanently or temporarily.

It also emphasised that disabled students are “not to be substantially disadvantaged in relation to:

the arrangements it makes for determining admissions to the institution;

student services provided for, or offered to, students by it, disabled students are not at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with students who are not disabled.

With the new legislation, a number of agencies and support organisations have come to the forefront in the UK. With regards to Education, two agencies have been very active in helping to support the changes in the sector, **Skill, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities and the NDT, National Disability Team**. These two organisations work closely with the **Higher Education Funding Council for England HEFCE**, higher education institutions and students, in disseminating information and providing studies and guides for good practice. Major changes have been taking place in Higher Education in order to be able to offer disabled students a wider range of fields to study.

As the DDA legislation is fairly new, it is very recently that some outcomes and analysis of this new legislation have become available. In June 2004, a report entitled **Aspiration raising and Transition of disabled students from Further Education to Higher Education** was released by the NDT and SKILL which outlined some of the major issues to come out of recent legislation and where further recommendations were made. Primary recommendations extracted from this report were as follows:

It is recommended that funders:

Provide Higher education Institutions and Further Education Colleges with information and guidance describing the factors that can block progression of some disabled people to HE

Provide guidance and giving examples of specific initiatives that FECs and HEIs could use as models of practice to help overcome identified barriers

Encourage FE and HE providers to continually review any aspiration and transition initiatives to ensure they are appropriate to the needs of disabled people

Promote staff development and training on disability awareness, inclusive learning and teaching methods, disability legislation and strategies to reduce identified barriers

Encourage individual FECs, HEIs and providers of Aimhigher activities to promote information on aspiration raising and transition opportunities for disabled people

Consider an expansion of Skill’s “Into HE” publication, ensuring that the guide is nationally disseminated to better reach disabled people and that it

addresses any issues relating to disabled people from ethnic minority backgrounds

Consider whether a national funded initiative targeted at disabled people specifically relating to FE to HE transition is needed

Jointly establish an English equivalent to the Australian RDLOs to provide a holistic approach to pre-16 and post –16 FE/HE study disability issues

Encourage institutions to share existing data about disabled people wherever possible

Engage all relevant groups and organisations in a discussion about about the lack of consistency in definitions of disability

Continue to work with organisations to establish data tracking of students. When the facilities are in place to monitor progress of people in pre and post-16 education, funders should place particular importance on gathering information on the educational experiences of disabled individuals

Ensure that any initiatives relating to disabled people are designed to incorporate views of disabled people

Recognise and promote the diversity of disabled people in guidance documents and recognise that disabled people, like people from ethnic minority backgrounds, are not an homogenous group

Agree a working definition of key terms such as disadvantaged; disabled; outreach and aspiration raising and transition

Should require Aimhigher partnerships to explicitly promote inclusive practice within all aspiration and transition strategies and activities

Quality Assurance Agency Codes of Practice

The Quality Assurance Agency has issued codes of practice to be observed by institutions in delivering education to students with disabilities.

Further Legislation

A further **Disability Discrimination Bill** will be presented to Parliament will extend existing legislation to deliver rights to disabled people. Discussions are ongoing as to how HEIs will be affected.

Employability

The UK has developed a number of programmes to support the integration of long term disabled people into the workplace. The TUC (Trade Unions Congress) issued a detailed report in September 2004 entitled **Disabled People Work and Poverty**.

This report shows that the rate of employment for the long term disabled is at 49% and recommends that government targets should be set at 60% to fall in line with other European countries.

The report also recommends that a disabled person should not be forced to seek employment but be given the choice, opportunity and the tools to do so.

A number of programmes have been put in place to help improve the rates of employment for the disabled in the UK. These include:

New Deal for Disabled People NDDP- a pilot project which has now become a national scheme. The NDDP is a national network of 'job brokers' who aid people in finding and retaining employment.

Disabled Worker Tax Credit

Job Centre Plus – Disability employment advisers

Access to Work Scheme- which offers subsidies to employers and disabled workers to help them meet any extra costs which might otherwise be a barrier to employment

Workstep and Remploy

Job introduction scheme

Job retention and rehabilitation pilot

Workprep programme

These programmes have helped to increase the levels of employment significantly in recent years.

Conclusion

As the final stage of current legislation relating to education will not come into full force until September 2005, it is difficult to fully assess the benefits and shortcomings though it appears that the UK is well under way in addressing the most pressing issues.

6) Austria

Federal Law regarding People with Disabilities

The stated purpose of this law is to enable people with disabilities and people threatened by a disability to live as integrated as possible within the community. This law mainly concerns the coordination of rehabilitation measures. There is no specific definition of disability to be found, because this law refers to the different definitions of disability that are contained in the following laws: pension insurance, accident insurance, labour market service provisions, relief benefits for war victims, relief benefits for damaging effects of military service, compensation for crime victims, victims' welfare, employment of people with disabilities, special support for people with disabilities ("National funds"), compensation for adverse effects of vaccinations, assistance for tuberculosis sufferers.

This law also regulates the establishment of a Federal Disability Council at the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations, the establishment of the "Funds for special support of people with disabilities" and the introduction of an identity card for people with disability.

Disabled Persons Employment Act

The most important law for the employment of people with a disability is the **Disabled Persons Employment Act** (*Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz – BEinstG*). This law aims to enable the integration of people with a disability into employment and to secure their jobs. It pertains to people with a disability between 15 and 65

years of age and comprises several provisions, among others: Quota scheme, Non-discrimination concerning wages, Special protection against dismissal, Special support measures (wage subsidies, loans etc.), Supported employment, Sheltered workshops.

It entails the registration of people with a disability with one of the most clear definitions of disability in Austrian legislation in terms of assessment.

In the area of employment the **Labour Market Service Act**

(*Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz – AMSG*) is important. It was passed in 1994 and regulates the work of the Labour Market Service and with it Austrian labour market policy. The most important task of the Labour Market Service is to support its clients in obtaining or retaining employment. This refers to clients of working age (15-65). Whereas there is no explicit mention of the term disability and thus no definition, the law implicitly mentions this group of people in its §31. This says that the Labour Market Services should offer their provision in such a way as to allow those who are disadvantaged with respect to the labour market and who have difficulties obtaining or retaining employment opportunities equal to those of other employees.

Anti-Discrimination: Article 7, Section 1 of the Federal Constitutional Law

Article 7, Section 1 of the constitution was extended as follows: “No-one may be disadvantaged by his/her disability. The Republic (Federation, Federal States and local authorities) is committed to ensuring the equal treatment of people with and without disability in all fields of daily life.” There is no legal definition of the term disability in there.

Measures:

The extension to Article 7 is not aimed at private individuals but at (federal / provincial / local) governments. As a consequence of the amendment a working group was set up at the Committee of the Federal Constitution in the Federal Chancellery. This group consisted of heads of civil service, official representatives of people with disabilities and members of interest groups of people with disabilities and they scanned through the Austrian Federal Law with respect to discriminating regulations. About 100 discriminating regulations were found, the final report contains 120 pages. Some of the regulations were changed. In some areas the ministries responsible and the interest groups did not share the same opinion. In some Austrian provinces similar working groups were set up. Originally it was planned to incorporate the results of the federal working group into the provincial laws. The strong Austrian federalism made this easy solution impossible.

Interest groups of people with disabilities have been demanding a real Act of Equality to enable victims of discrimination to institute proceedings.

IV. Discussion of Results

Significant Findings in the Results of the Survey Questionnaires on Social Inclusion and Integration into the Labour Market

One interesting aspect which emerged from the questionnaires was that there was a definite common response from all the countries in the „macro-sociological area“. All those values were considerably high, which means that they were evaluated as influencing / highly influencing.

We found out remarkable differences, too, which will be presented later. The differing items come out of the „macro-sociological area“, too with just one exception out of the „meso-sociological“ part. The responses we received in the micro-sociological sector were not significantly different or high.

One possible interpretation of these findings could be that the situation and the framework for people with disabilities is determined only by factors which cannot be influenced by the individuals themselves. Another, rather controversial interpretation can be that it is easier to „blame it on society“ instead of leaving well known paths and traditions, thinking laterally and trying to find new perspectives as well as new arguments for discussing the situation of people with disabilities.

The identification of the key aspects and key areas of problems influencing the integration of graduates with disabilities into the open labour market is very important in terms of changing these critical aspects. The outcomes should help to formulate strategies and methods for reducing and eliminating the barriers delaying and prohibiting social and economical integration of people with disabilities. Exactly these factors are the starting points for the enhancement of integration.

Analysing the most significant aspects delaying integration into the open labour market, the most frequently mentioned barriers in **all partner countries** are **attitudes of potential employers**. These attitudes characterised by prejudices and discrimination have a negative impact on the employment situation of graduates with disabilities. There are still on-going stereotypes held by employers. Often, a clear understanding of the qualifications and capacities of people with disabilities is missing. In addition to that the wide public and potential employers underestimate (or overestimate) the abilities of people with disabilities to take up competitive paid employment. One more relevant point is that potential employers are afraid of organisational problems and disadvantages that may arise from employing persons with disabilities. The striking feature of all partner countries is the attitude of potential firms. All partner countries mentioned this aspect as very influential in a negative way. The most significant point is to reducing prejudices and changing the attitudes of firms in all partner countries. The transition from university into adult working life which means becoming economically active is a significant step for the full and long lasting social integration of people with disabilities.

For these reasons, in our opinion, the following tasks are the main fields of action in order to enhance integration of graduates with disabilities into the open labour market

Sensitisation of firms

Information events on the issue of employing people with disabilities for potential employers.

Cooperation of representatives of people with disabilities with economy and firms: Cooperation is very important to develop a realistic view of the students' skills and abilities regarding qualification and education.

Networking in order to increase cooperation between universities and potential employers.

Job assistance for academics with disabilities

Financial aspects: resources, reducing taxes, funding

Creating positive incentives for potential employers in order to reduce the recognition of possible disadvantages resulting from employing a person with disabilities.

Public relations

Another relevant factor influencing the integration of graduates with disabilities into the **labour market is the critical labour market situation in general** in many partner countries. Even for persons without disabilities it is often hard to find a well fitting job due to a gap in the labour market (high unemployment rates, competition).

One more problematic area mentioned by the experts is the lack of information available on the actual abilities of people with disabilities and the latent image of people with disabilities in society. Society still underestimates the abilities and skills of people with disabilities. The attitude of the wide public concentrates to a large extent on the dysfunctional aspects, their dis-abilities instead of on the functional aspects- their abilities and skills. The **approach** to the topic has to be **transformed from disability into ability**. The point of view, the perspective of most people in society is the decisive factor. In order to change this rather critical and negative point of view paying emphasis on the "dis-" abilities of people, a great deal of work has to be done in the field of sensitisation of the whole society and information (events) on the issue of disability. In these respect policy makers have a high impact on the formation of opinion of society.

Seeking to achieve the economical and social integration of people with disabilities requires not only the change of attitudes of potential employers, but also the change of attitudes of all levels of society are of importance.

In addition to that the aspect "Lack of public relations and marketing campaigns that promote the abilities of people with disabilities" shows a remarkable value. In all partner countries **public relations and marketing for the abilities** of people with disabilities are necessary. The use of public relations and marketing campaigns will promote a change of attitudes in society which is very significant. Moreover, the lack of **awareness raising events** and disability awareness programmes is mentioned by experts from all partner countries. There is a raising need to do more in that direction.

Furthermore, contacts and cooperation between disability organisations and companies/potential employers is lacking in all partner countries (exception: Sweden did not mention). More cooperation will foster reducing stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination.

One more key aspect preventing graduates with disabilities from integration into the open labour market is the lack of accessibility concerning office buildings. These **architectural barriers**, existing in all partner countries, cause very much problems

for people with disabilities. In addition to these architectural barriers, a lack of workplace access is described. It covers problems such as lacking **assistive technologies** and special support. In particular for blind and partially sighted persons assistive technologies such as a Braille display or enlarged letters is essential.

Remarkable Differences between Countries regarding the Assessment of very influencing Factors (Barriers, Difficulties):

The analysis identified different fields of problems. That means that every partner country has different strengths and weaknesses, special features depending on the national situation.

The **legal restrictions and legal conditions** are mentioned as less influencing factors in all countries except **Poland**, where the legal framework seems to be considered as a main barrier regarding the integration of graduates with disabilities into the labour market. According to the Polish research document some times ago a group of representatives tried to change the main Polish act concerning persons with disabilities – Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act. Unfortunately the act was amended without taking the representatives' suggestions into consideration. The suggestions were written in such a way as to create the basis for a financing system for universities interested in education of persons with disabilities and to write and emphasize the education as a one of the most important and basic rights of persons with disabilities who have intellectual capacities to study.

Even the second amendment was rejected. The result is that higher education is not mentioned as a right and opportunity for persons with disabilities in Poland. This also has a negative impact on the employment situation of graduates with disabilities.

Following our experience collected during the HERN project the most crucial problem is the implementation of legislation. In all partner countries a comprehensive legislation referring to equal access and equal opportunities for people with disabilities is existing. The challenge is to practice the legal requirements.

It is striking that in Austria and Poland the aspect “**Achievement oriented society**” gets high values but in Latvia, Greece and above all in the United Kingdom this aspect is less influencing.

A “**lack of guidance and counselling services**” for graduates with disabilities is noticed above all in Greece, Poland and Latvia. In contrast, experts from Sweden, United Kingdom and Austria seem to be satisfied with existing guidance and counselling services.

The **lack of technological support, assistive technologies** and assistance is seen as a problem area in Latvia and in Greece.

One very important finding of this survey is that in most partner countries, except in Poland, the aspect “**Qualification and education of graduates with disabilities do not fit the demands of potential employers**” reaches low values. That means that the qualification and education has less negative influence on the employment / unemployment situation of graduates with disabilities. They are well educated and so an assumed lack of qualification, education and skills can not be made responsible for problems during the integration of graduates into the open labour market.

V. Conclusions

The analysis shows that the attitudes of society in general and above all the attitudes of employers are main barriers concerning the entrance and integration of graduates with disabilities into the labour market.

Therefore several measures have to be introduced:

Awareness raising actions for firms and society, public relation and marketing,
Extensive Information campaign

Awareness raising actions on the abilities of people/graduates with disabilities.

Prejudices have to be reduced and the understanding of disability has to be increased at all levels of society.

One significant outcome is that the **qualification and education of graduates** with disabilities is not considered as an influencing difficulty or barrier. The graduates are well educated and their qualifications - in most cases (except in Poland) - do fit the demands of the potential employers. On the one hand, this finding could be interpreted as macro-sociological problem – the target group is well educated and there are nevertheless no jobs for them. On the other (rather controversial) hand it could be that the experts think that the graduates with disability are well educated and prepared for the labour market (perhaps they trained & educated themselves) and there are problems, lacks and unknown barriers they don't know or disavow. This rather controversial approach would need to lead to a lateral thinking process in which nothing is fixed or approved anymore. One possible solution could be an initiative to support graduates with disability in forming companies. Another idea could be to support founders in building up "inclusive companies" where the founders get a jump start (e.g. employment or wage subsidy for a defined period). An example for a rather successful implementation of this model for people with disabilities (grade of disability 50%+) can be found in so called "integration firms" developed in Upper Austria. (see <http://www.integrationsfirmen.at> for details and information in German).

Outcomes of the E-Forum Discussion

As mentioned several times above, the (negative) attitudes of potential employers (prejudices, discriminations, stereotypes) concerning the abilities of people/graduates with disability are an influencing barrier on the way to a full and long lasting integration of people with disabilities into higher education and the open labour market. As a consequence a main field of action we identified in our research is the **change of attitudes** both of employers/enterprises/economy and of the whole society. Within the framework of HERN seminar series and the HERN E-forum the discussion on the following questions arose:

- 1) "How to **change the negative attitudes** of employers and society as a whole in an effective way?" and "Which **measures** can/should be introduced in order to **overcome negative attitudes, prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination?**"
- 2) "Which kind of **positive incentives** should be created in order to encourage employers/enterprises to employ graduates with disabilities?"

3) "What are the advantages of employing graduates with disabilities for an enterprise/organisation? What are possible **economical and social advantages** for employers/enterprises resulting from employing graduates with disabilities?" (These arguments and statements can be used as the basis for information campaigns and awareness raising events)

Ad 1) Concerning the first question focusing on overcoming prejudices and changing negative attitudes towards people with disabilities the following measures are recommended to be introduced:

Removal of psychological prejudices against people with disabilities by integration starting from pre-school age (kindergarten). This means inclusive and common education (no separate classes and courses) from the early beginning of education continuing the whole educational career of a person.

Removal of architectural barriers

Information and training of higher education staff/employers concerning dealing with students/employees with disabilities

Dissemination of information about positive experience, best practice examples

Using all kinds of (mass) media for public promotion

Initiatives by organisations of people with disabilities

All kinds of awareness raising events (campaigns like "We are the same as you", summer camps, "Paralympic" - Games for people with disabilities, exhibitions)

A comprehensive social service network for people with disabilities

Using information and communication technologies in order to enhance integration and access to labour market

Life long learning for people with disabilities

Training for entrepreneurs/employers. Attitudes of employers are characterised by following areas of concern:

lack of motivation;

lack of information;

lack of experience;

psychological uncertainty (fear of different things).

One of the possible ways to change employers attitudes towards employing people with disabilities could be providing an appropriate preparation/training of entrepreneurs and activating the social dialogue between employers and employees.

The training course/module for entrepreneurs/managers would informatively, psychologically and practically prepare entrepreneurs/managers (both existing and future) to work with people with disabilities which will promote the social dialogue between these two groups. Until this moment the most part of resources has been allocated only in one direction i.e. to train, educate, prepare people with disabilities for the labour market but it will not make the result because there is no respond from

employers. Therefore the idea of special training of employers will place resources to the other side of this social dialogue (employers).

Ad 2) Suggestions that came up in the E-forum discussion are that tax reduction and raising of subsidies should be created as positive incentives in order to encourage employers/enterprises to employ graduates with disabilities.

The need for positive and tightly – focused educational and awareness raising measures applicable to enterprises is one of the key elements of integrations of people with disabilities into labour market. The key role of personal experience as a motivational factor for employers could be highlighted, as has the prevalence of perceptions of disability based on fears of risk, incapacity (rather than ability) and absenteeism. This demonstrates both the possibilities created by good practice and familiarity with people with disabilities, and the need for broad and positive, awareness raising initiatives. Many of the study conclusions focus on concern about information provision. Information needs can be identified in financial incentives – the provision of information on the availability of financial incentives and the means by which they are accessed; recruitment practices – the provision of information on good recruitment and employment practices and procedures; information related to specific disabilities – practical information, where necessary, to enable the making of informed judgments and decisions about a candidate's suitability.

Ad 3) Concerning the question "What are the advantages of employing graduates with disabilities for an enterprise/organisation? What are possible **economical and social advantages** for employers/enterprises resulting from employing graduates with disabilities?" the following points have been mentioned.

Enterprises may formulate the question: "Why should I hire people with disabilities if I can hire non-disabled persons?"

Advantages can be recognised by enterprises in terms of financial and legal conditions (subsidies, social and health insurance reductions, legal obligation for medium-sized and larger enterprises to employ a given number of people with disabilities corresponding to the total number of employees)

One very significant advantage of employing a persons with disabilities is that people with disabilities have a positive effect on the social atmosphere in enterprises. Most people with disabilities are very emphatic and they really appreciate the possibility to work.

Benefits which may occur by employing people with disabilities:

Employers will be able to generate positive publicity in terms of workforce, trade unions and other organisations;

Employers will be able to demonstrate good equal opportunities practice, promoting a positive overall company image;

Employers will be accessing a previously untapped pool of labour, skills and abilities;

Frequent staff turnover in the company will be reduced as disabled employees are reliable and tend to stay longer with the one employer.

There will be opportunities to develop a better understanding of the organization's recruitment and training needs through the review of job descriptions and key job tasks.

Employers may benefit in an optimal way by employing persons with disabilities when they create (together with the staff with disabilities and experts) a well adapted surrounding and by matching job needs and job skills thoroughly in advance.

Employers in the European Union should start to recognize these benefits. Implementing good recruitment and employment practice for people with disabilities benefits everyone in an organization. The employer / manager needs to be aware that a significant proportion of actual and / or potential customers will be people with disabilities. They have the same needs in terms of goods and services as people without a disability. A positive attitude towards the employment of disabled people within the organization could have an equally positive effect on business. As positive case study, there could be mentioned a new and interesting initiative in Ireland. There was the introduction of “positive to disability” awards for employers who meet a list of criteria in relation to the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. Employers who have received the “positive to disability” award are entitled to use it in their publicity and communications. Within the framework of the European Year of People with Disabilities, in Austria the so called “Job Oskar” has been introduced. “Job Oskar” is an award for organisations which show a successful, innovative best practice model / example concerning vocational integration of people with disabilities.

One very crucial recognition is that **all members** of an organisation at the labour market may **benefit from the inclusion of students with disabilities** in the same way as students and teachers in higher education will do.

It is a fact, that non-disabled employees/students benefit from extra support provided in regular classes/higher education/enterprises resulting from the inclusion of students/employees with disabilities.

On one hand, most changes which are required when admitting students with disabilities or employees with disabilities will improve the situation for all students / employees. This advantages may be (for example) architectural and / or technical, or concerning the wording and structure of materials or the accessibility of adapted workplaces.

On the other hand, it will increase the quality of the university / enterprise in general (e.g.: online learning, distance learning, accessibility,...)

This is a fact, that most decision / policy makers – above all employers or staff in higher education – are not aware of.

VI. Recommendations

The Disability Research group recommends that a number of Europe wide initiatives would support and motivate member states to raise the standards of support to the disabled and create a stronger framework and guidelines for the integration of the disabled into Society.

These recommendations include:

The Development of a European Action Plan - which would provide a framework and benchmarks for the development of national policies

European Disability Act - which would provide a standard code of practice Europe wide.

Europe - Wide Definition of Disability - including medical and social implications and the impact on people with disabilities and their social inclusion. (currently, national definitions vary widely)

Appointment of a European Ombudsperson - to oversee the process of implementation of the European Disability Act and Action Plan and to promote the principles of "self advocacy"

Network of experts - Europe-wide expert database_The project and first of all the problems of some nations in gaining the necessary number of experts sending back the questionnaire make clear that it would be of great importance to install a database of experts at European level in the subject area of disability and inclusion in Higher Education and concerning the labour market. Persons with disabilities have to be seen as experts and should therefore be involved. There is already a network of institutions facilitating integration, HEAG. It would be important to build up a new database or implement a strand there dealing with European expertise in this field for effective research & development activities, so that research and development on this important complex could be better organized and coordinated.

Europe - Wide communication platform and database - to discuss problems and possible solutions, for networking and additionally provide a database for information and best practice.

Properly funded research on certain topics of interest should be instigated for individual countries - to provide further information and contribute to strategy.

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Work Package 7**Key Policy Recommendations****“Key issues and strategies for changing pedagogic practice”**

In today's knowledge society the function of Higher Education is expanding. People are looking towards education not only as a means to acquire additional skills and knowledge for the labour market, but also for personal growth and fulfilment. With the growing demands on education, it has become necessary to evolve pedagogic practice in order to provide a flexible and individual service that people can use at any time in their lives. With the diversity in the delivery of HE, it is also necessary to take into account methods for measuring learning outcomes from the various new methods employed (i.e. distance education, expanding qualifications through etc.). The responsibility is falling more and more on the individual to assess his own learning outcomes. HE should also provide the individual with the tools to be able to analyse and improve his own learning.

The seminar focussed on the reasons driving change in pedagogic practice (i.e. educational needs of society and the individual in a socio-economic context). It also studied the mechanisms for implementing these changes and the problems involved including quality assurance.

It was agreed that the knowledge society of today required a different set of tools for learning and teaching and diversifying from the more traditional models. This was needed due to the growing demands of society for higher education in a lifelong learning context.

A model for effective learning outcomes was presented:

ACCEL Model

Active - Learners participate in a learning program that requires thoughtful and engaged activity

Collaborative - Learners engage in discussions, activities and projects with fellow students

Customized and accessible - The learning program is designed to fit the needs and requirements of students in terms of time, career goals, levels of preparation, and learning styles

Excellent quality. Courses are designed with a learner focus, enabling learners to achieve desired goals and objectives. This learning generally includes communication with faculty members and other students, and it includes quick and easy access to high-quality instructional resources.

Lifestyle-fitted. Interactive distance learning accommodates the lives of students, affording cost-effective educational opportunities anywhere, anytime, and at a reasonable speed

Additional needs and factors:

It was generally agreed that a greater emphasis needed to be placed on Knowledge transfer between disciplines. There are many examples of knowledge transfer from Science, Engineering and Technology departments in higher education institutions. Yet more than half of the University sector in most countries is comprised of Arts, Humanities, Culture, Social Sciences and Education; it is more difficult to develop knowledge transfer in these areas but the potential is there and more effort should be made to encourage development in these areas.

There is also a need to recognise the important role of Art, Humanities, Culture, Social Sciences and Education related disciplines in producing leaders in a knowledge society, in developing creativity for innovations in business and the community, in developing attitudes towards society in general and in developing an understanding of ethics to tackle problems in both the profit and not-for-profit sectors. Ideally this requires the development and funding of some cross-disciplinary and trans national work.

Strategic aims that should be a priority for the development of higher education system across Europe were identified as follows:

The implementation of a widely accessible and flexible system of lifelong learning.

The adaptation of educational and study programmes to the everyday needs of the knowledge society

Improvement of the monitoring and assessment of quality and effectiveness of education (especially in independent and distance learning)

Provision of support system for change and openness of educational institutions

Change of role and professional prospects for pedagogical and academic workers

A transition from centralised management to accountable shared decision-making.

In order to fulfil these objectives an effective policy framework should be put into place which would provide a Europewide standard for delivery of education.

Specific issues with relation to existing policy were identified taking into account the objectives of the Bologna Declaration:**Recognition issues**

One of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration is concerned with the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees. A lot of practical reflection is needed how to improve existing recognition mechanisms (NARIC, ENIC, higher education institutions, European Diploma Supplement, etc.). Furthermore fundamental reflection is required on non-formal learning activities and on the evolution from equivalence to recognition and acceptance and the possible adjustments this might result in of the 1997 UNESCO-Council of Europe Treaty of Lisbon.

Credit accumulation and transfer system

The Bologna Declaration encourages the establishment of a system of credits. Special attention will have to be paid to the fact that it is the ambition of the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration to establish a credit system which not only allows credit transfer but also credit accumulation. This will no doubt lead to more flexible learning paths and module based curricula. These elements will require in depth reflection.

Quality assurance and accreditation

The promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance is also one of the aims of the Bologna Declaration. In order to have a good system within which students can be mobile it is essential that the students, and the home institutions, are able to trust the education students receive in other institutions. Therefore it is very important to have a good system which can insure the quality of the education within the single countries or constitutional regions.

Life long learning/new target groups

The Bologna Declaration did not mention a life long learning strategy as one of its objectives. The Prague Communiqué changed this by stating explicitly: "Life long learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area." Consequently it encouraged the development of life long learning strategies. Next to this responding to the challenge of the knowledge-based society and economy through life long learning strategies is a main policy concern of the European Commission and of a majority of European countries.

Social dimension of the creation of the European higher education area

The Bologna Declaration completely ignored the social dimension of the creation of the European Higher Education Area. Through serious student lobbying this was corrected in the Prague Communiqué as it stated clearly: "Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process

Transnational education

The importance of trans-national education in European higher education is growing continuously. The appearance of branch campuses franchise universities, corporate universities, e-universities, etc. are confronting the European Higher Education Area with huge challenges. Recognition issues, the problem of rogue providers and diploma mills, the problem of access and equity, the funding issue, the link with GATS, etc. will have to be coherently dealt with

Implementation of Change Strategies in Pedagogic practice:

It was widely agreed that the teachers themselves no longer had the control of their pedagogic practice. Government policy and institutional/departmental directives were driving changes in curricula and teaching methods. One of the problems highlighted was that change strategies were not effectively in place so that teachers could easily integrate new initiatives into their teaching methods. Better mechanisms and training were needed in order to motivate teachers to comply and cooperate with these changes.

Conclusions:

The key issues which were raised during the seminar focussed on:

The need for education to perform a function beyond skills and knowledge acquisition and to provide the tools to enable students to assess their own learning outcomes.

The need for pedagogic practice to evolve in order to meet the needs of society in today's changing socio-economic climate (knowledge transfer).

The need for better access through distance education methods incorporating face-to-face interaction (blended learning).

The need to recognize and accommodate the changing in the needs of students.

The responsibility of education in a lifelong learning context

The use distance education in facilitating lifelong learning

Processes of change and how it could be implemented

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Workpackage 12

The key policy recommendations

“HE Reform, Teaching and Learning, Change and Quality: Student Diversity, Distance Learning and Guidance”

Introduction

During the HERN project meeting, issues concerning the implementation, usage and development of Distance Education in all types of Higher Education establishments were discussed. The representatives from Universities, other Higher Education institutions, and Distance Education experts, also other Distance and Higher Education professionals have raised different questions. Discussion covered wide scope of topics, related to Distance Education in Higher Education institutions. It was agreed among the participants, that policy in this field should focus on six main issues:

- Students' approach;
- Teachers' approach;
- Institutions' approach;
- State policy;
- Technology;
- Quality assurance.

During the discussion it was tried not to duplicate already existing policy and benchmarks, rather recommendations are based on the existing experience and everyday activities of the institutions, working in the field of Distance Education.

Rationale for policy recommendations

Concerning **students' approach**, the main issue of learning skills “learn how to learn” and “how to learn using ICT” was identified. It should be discussed and suggestions provided how to take advantage of the fact that young people are eager to use new technologies and how to benefit from this eagerness in Higher Education. It was noted that the number of students, especially part-time, is increasing. These students are mainly working adults, and this requires HE institutions to be flexible. One of the solutions would be to introduce e-learning as the possibility to meet growing demand of the market. While doing so we need to treat equally both groups of students – having access to the PC and those who do not. Those who do not have access, have the right to be provided with the possibility to use PC in a special place in the Higher Education institution or in one of the supporting centres (public access points). This also raises the following questions: The capacity of the connection – is it high enough? Are students able to study without the Internet access points (ex. from homes only)? This is very important issue and has to be kept in mind while developing study programmes and the means for their implementation. And finally, Distance Education should be usable for ALL students / customers – it should serve as a tool, be user-friendly.

While speaking about the **teachers' approach** technical and pedagogical support to the teachers should be emphasised, as it is the crucial factor for the success. Only those institutions, which pay sufficient attention on this issue, may expect better results in the implementation and development of Distance Education. It was also pointed out, that there is a lack of highly qualified Distance Education and e-learning

staff, and this fact might be the main reason for insufficient support of the teachers. Having that in mind and the need to introduce new techniques, technologies, methodologies, and to adopt the changes of the educational market, learning theories/perceptions in Distance Education should be discussed between the educational and experts of the field and the recommendations should be drafted up for practitioners.

The discussion about the **institutions' approach** has raised the problem whether pure Virtual University would be successful, that it might fail as it happened in the UK in April 2004. One of the pure Virtual University's reasons for failure might be unwillingness of students to engage into such type of studies. However, Distance Education gives the ability to operate at a huge scale; however it is related to changing functions *academia*, because only teams of authors would manage the task. Courses should be designed by the Course Teams, which should include course author, IT specialist, DE specialist, designer and etc. Distance Education is not cheap, but economically effective. It was also remarked, that there is no real cooperation, mainly competition between Higher Education institutions in Distance Education field – even if one institution has already created a course on a specific topic, another institution will do it again – create its “own” course. Such problem exists and might be partially solved by introducing copyright roles, which would give the possibility for the institutions to allow using their courses without the fear that they might be copied by the user's institution.

State policy in the field of Distance Education was mentioned as one of the issues to which the attention should be paid. Participants raised the problem that in many countries there is a lack of strategic approach at governmental level; however, initiatives exist. Higher education institutions lack strategic direction in relation to e-learning and lack of funds for development of programmes. It should be kept in mind that e-learning might help to implement the strategy of wider participation in Higher Education – part of students could be e-students. The same might apply for older people wishing to return into education – they might use DE as a tool for their studies.

From the **technology** point of view Distance Education gives better possibility for equal opportunities and social inclusions. Disabled people feel more comfortable and this encourages them to learn. It opens up doors for Higher Education for those, living in rural area. HE becomes reachable from every geographical point of the country. While developing technology-based programmes and introducing Distance Education by using the possibilities of different technologies, it should be noted that technology is a servant, but not the master. New educational methods should be developed before introducing new technologies – methodology should go before technology. From the disability point of view, content in digital format is largely display-independent and this makes it more suitable for this particular target group.

Quality assurance is a very important issue while speaking about the Distance Education. The question “How to organise effective learning in DE?” is still on the agenda. It is still under the discussion how to achieve quality assurance in Distance Education, what should be the parameters that could help to measure quality in this field. A scientific research should be made here and the tool for measuring quality in DE should be created.

Policy recommendations

As a result of discussions, presented above, the following policy recommendations, focussing on three main issues, are suggested:

The relationship between distance learning strategies and opportunities for inclusion in tomorrow's knowledge society:

All students should be treated equally in terms of funding (full-time, part-time and e-students);

Higher Education has to be inclusive and Open Distance Education can help to achieve this objective;

Accessibility and flexibility of HE should give a possibility to the people with disabilities;

To make e-learning as a service which would be most available and accessible: enhancement of existing e-systems;

Low barrier entrance into education, especially people with disabilities – almost anonymous, flexible in time and place;

Exchanging conceptual frameworks for ODL case studies throughout Europe and lessons learned for the future:

ODL systems should be built as an addition or enhancement of the existing systems – should not be the replacement of existing systems;

Learning skills should be emphasised;

Studies in Distance Education should be applicable in vocational (formal, non-formal and informal) education;

Systems should be behind the technological cutting-edge – technology has to be the one what people have;

The development of pedagogy is slower than development of technology – emphasis on development of new educational methods before introducing new technologies is to be promoted;

Every teacher should master open learning models, be able to chose most appropriate technology and pedagogical methods, as well as be part of Course Team;

Blended learning should be introduced as a term for governmental policy;

Market demands, needs, quality and resources for distance learning methods:

Markets are different and education is and should be different;

Access to the internet is limited – it is impossible to request that person would have a computer at home;

Strategy for needs analysis is needed;

More attention should be given to recognition of Distance Learning, e.g., records in Diploma Supplement;

Need to study organisational culture;

Quality assurance regulations, strategies must be different from the traditional HE – same rules can not be applied for full-time and e-students – different requirements should be acknowledged for DE;

Guidelines for the implementation of copyright in Open and Distance Education should be created.

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Workpackage 12

Conference paper

“Student diversity, distance learning and guidance”

Helena Sebkova, Libor Novacek, Ondrej Svaton and Jan Kohoutek

Centre for Higher Education Studies

Prague, Czech Republic

The 9th seminar of the HERN project, with the overriding theme **“Guidance for Employment and Inclusion – The Development of New Competencies,”** was held in **Prague Center for Higher Education Studies, June 23-26**. The official program of the first day comprised a welcome reception of the thirty-seven participants from eleven countries, preceded by the meeting of a Disability Research Group, identifying and addressing the main issues preventing people with disabilities from a successful inclusion into the labour market and society at large.

During the meeting, the following main issues were mentioned as most imminent: discriminatory attitudes of potential employers (further enhanced by achievement-oriented society and rising unemployment rates in EU countries), rooted prejudices of general public concentrating on disabilities rather than abilities, architectural barriers (also concerning office buildings), lack of technological support and assistance, and lack of guidance and counselling services. Importantly, on the grounds of the survey conducted in six EU countries, it was stated that qualification and education of graduates with disabilities, as an aspect hampering their successful inclusion into the labour market, scored low on the scale, which means that a traditional employers' prejudice of people with disabilities having the lack of qualification, education, and skills has no practical justification. To tackle the abovementioned issues preventing people with disabilities from a successful inclusion into the labour market, the participants of the Disability Research Group finally suggested the EU authorities take the following steps: to raise an awareness of real abilities of people/graduates with disabilities amongst general public and employers in particular by launching an extensive information campaign, to develop a European communication platform for the needs of people with disabilities, to develop a European action plan which would provide the framework and benchmarking for the development of national policies thus making it possible to agree on a European definition of the term disability, to pass European Disability Act, to appoint a European Ombudsman, and to continue in research on the status of people with disabilities in enlarged Europe.

The second day of the seminar was devoted to the presentations of seminar participants.

Poland - Teachers as Learning Facilitators

Marek Frankowicz (Jagiellonian University, Krakow) in co-operation with Adam CHMIELEWSKI, Andrzej WODECKI (Polish Virtual University, Lublin), Barbara KEDZIERSKA (Pedagogical Academy, Krakow), Agata KOZIELSKA, Iwona MACIEJOWSKA, Marta WOLOS (Jagiellonian University, Krakow), Jadwiga

MIRECKA (Collegium Medicum, Jagiellonian University), Zofia WOJCIK (Nicholas Copernicus University, Torun)

The Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Poland Till the Year 2010 includes *the Polish National Development Plan* and, furthermore, *the Strategy for the Development of Continuing Education Till the Year 2010 in the Context of Lifelong Learning*. The Polish paper focused upon the description of the relevant experience with the program *New School*. This program implements already existing mechanisms, promotes the examples of good practice as well as new T & L methods and information literacy, creates the links among all the agents (educational institutions, regional and national authorities etc.), and changes the mentality of teachers.

Factors which will drive changes in status and role of teachers

These factors are:

Evolution of pedagogical concepts

Development of technical aids

Increasing competition among schools stimulated by demographic depression and facilitated student/staff exchange

Changing demands

A general call for quality reflected by TQM (total quality management) and the growing role of accreditation systems

teacher as facilitator and mentor

This role should become even more important in order to:

Provide guidance through the ocean of information

Answer questions

Offer career counselling

Monitor progress

Supervise team work

Serve as a visible link to academic community

Swot analysis

Strengths

Human resources (teachers), in particular young teachers open to changes

Experience of the implementation of the program *New School* (3 years)

Official documents (educational reform) containing such ideas as a changing role of a teacher, information literacy as one of the key competencies etc.

“Cascading system” of teachers’ training (hundreds of trainers educating thousands of teachers) implemented

External examination system checking pupils’ knowledge and not what has been taught by teacher

“Stick and carrot” teachers’ promotion system (motivating teachers to be active, to improve teaching skills etc.)

High unemployment and decreasing number of pupils – increased competition among teachers, increased motivation to acquire new competencies

Diversification of educational offer, competition between state and non-state institutions

Weaknesses

Teacher-centered model (officially already non-existing, but still functioning in practice)

Teachers are stuck to their roles as a basic source of information

Teachers not always feel that they also have to learn

Lack of belief in the efficiency of new T&L methods

Results of pedagogical research are not known

No tradition of application of results of pedagogical research in practice

New technologies are used in the old way

Teachers teach theoretical knowledge not the skills, so learners have knowledge but not the skills and are not prepared to enter the labour market.

General lack of correlation between the labour market and education

Opportunities

Increasing mobility of teachers and learners (import of examples of good practice from abroad)

Increasing computer literacy of learners (inducing the need of upgrading teachers’ IT skills)

New financial opportunities for teachers’ training (structural funds etc.)

Increasing teachers’ willingness/duty for training/upgrading/changing their specialization.

Recently introduced reform of the education system is giving space for introducing new approaches

Adaptation of didactic processes in pedagogical universities for needs of changing reality

Integration of information technologies into education

Cooperation between the educational sector and business institutions

Threats

Unstable political situation (frequent changes at decision-making levels)

Insufficient financial resources, improper use of existing ones (e.g. dissipation of funds among too many initiatives without a real impact on PL education)

Deregulation of educational market

Ritualisation of teachers' training (teachers will take part in training to get certificates, not to acquire new skills)

Misuse of new IT

Replacement of real practical courses by their virtual counterparts

Colours and animations instead of knowledge, i.e. courses are too learner-centred (to satisfy demands of learners at the expense of giving them basic knowledge)

Greece - Work-related Skills in Greek Labor Market: The defining Role of Gender and Academic Field

Despina SIDIROPOULOU, Anna TOULOUMAKOU and Katerina ARGYROPOULOU
(University of Athens, Greece)

The Greek paper presented research findings on definitions of graduate skill related to the labour market. With regard to the independent variables, the Greek research found both interesting and purposeful to explore the role of *gender* and *academic field* of the subjects participating in the study.

A questionnaire has been developed so as to tap 7 mutually exhaustive and exclusive graduate work-related skills. The Greeks presented these 7 skills along with their short description:

Verbal Communication is comprised of: a) the ability to explain a simple situation or procedure, b) the ability to carry out a short presentation on a subject, c) the ability of active listening, d) the ability to respond to questions, e) the ability to discuss complex issues, f) the ability to interpret the results of research studies, g) the ability to provide advice.

Written Communication is comprised of: a) the ability to fill forms, b) the ability to compose an e-mail or a letter, c) the ability to write with precision, d) the ability to compose a short written report, e) the ability to interpret in a foreign language, e) the ability to compose a report based on a research study.

Interpersonal Communication is comprised of: a) the ability to work with others, b) the ability to be an efficient member of a team, c) the ability to resolve conflicts, d) the ability to be warm and caring to others, e) the ability to judge impartially, f) the ability to understand the priorities of others, g) the ability to develop leadership skills.

Information Processing is comprised of: a) the ability to access information through a database, b) the ability to use a keyboard and a mouse, c) the ability to surf on the net, d) the ability to compose a report using PC software, d) the ability to understand and interpret graphs, e) the ability to create a database, f) the ability to construct a web page, g) the ability to compose a text including graphs

Independent work is comprised of: a) the ability to organize and put priority to certain activities, b) the ability to meet the deadlines, c) the ability to prioritise, d) the ability to evaluate myself, e) the ability to assess information,

f) the ability to cope with difficulties, g) the ability to appreciate one's self-efficacy

Technical Skills are comprised of: a) the ability to recognize and define a problem, b) the ability to find alternative solutions to a problem, c) the ability to perceive how things work, d) the ability to perceive danger, e) the ability to have a critical mind, f) the ability to develop research skills, g) the ability to develop analytical skills

Special Skills are comprised of: a) the ability to take initiative, b) the ability to be creative, c) the ability to be an innovator in terms of ideas and solutions, d) the ability to commit oneself to goals, e) the ability to put oneself into other's shoes.

In recent studies conducted in Greece, there has been a considerable amount of interest and research on the matter of skills that are necessary for someone to be efficient and successful in the Greek labour market. Those skills include entrepreneurial skills, organizational skills, leadership skills, cognitive skills, etc. Those skills not investigated by the present research, are, in many ways, incorporated in the categories chosen. Additionally, the Greek presentation focused on some categories that would be sensible for Greek universities to promote in tuition, as, in such a case, it was found that Greek universities were not efficient in terms of helping student develop such skills.

Given the results presented above, one may see the statistically significant (and not statistically significant) differences between social sciences versus natural sciences, math & engineering along the 7 skills categories in terms of students' acquisition of the relevant category skills.

Throughout the period of conducting this research project, the Greek team had been faced with a considerable amount of difficulties. The greatest one related to the attrition of subjects, and therefore the researchers concluded that they should refer to the sample as a limitation of their study. The intention rests with replicating the research, expanding in the sample size, exercising a random sampling, and making sure that there would be a representation of all groups to be studied. More research should be conducted with the Greek enterprises so as to validate the categories of skills to be included and assessed by the participants. This research should expand to the direct comparisons of the skills required by the Greek market and those fostered by university schools. Another interesting point relates to researching of the skills required by European market in an effort to establish what can be called *European skills*. Another conclusion drawn by that research relates to including the teaching of certain skills as a part of the curricula of Greek universities, or even embodying some of such skills into existing courses taught already in schools. For instance, time management and stress management should be included in the curricula, while organizational or analytical skills may be taught within the context of a number of classes, as part of the learning process. Onto a more practical level, the presented research findings would like to foster the active role of university career centres. Thee Greeks propose that university career centres should be enriched, while their role should be advanced. Universities should train people to work in such centres and introduce the use of researched and reliable/valid instruments that would help the students to develop professionally. Last but not least, the Greek research team proposed that it would be meaningful to research the matter of existence of European labour market-related skills in all European countries in order

to develop or adopt common guidelines concerning the issues that relate to the development of such skills in Europe.

Strength

- Research Team
- Amount of time devoted
- Time management
- Electronic libraries
- Sample accessibility
- Research methodology and statistical analysis

Weakness

- Sample
- Questionnaire development
- Funds
- Physical libraries used and equipment
- Culture barriers

Opportunities

- University reputation
- Department reputation
- Literature review on the international basis

Threats

- Non-existing collaboration of universities and enterprises
- Exclusion of teaching skills as a part of curricula
- Limited Greek bibliography on work-related skills in Greek labour market
- Attrition of subjects due to the extraneous factors
- Research into European skills
- Enrichment of university career centres
- Interconnection with other European universities

Czech Republic - Features and Models of University and Lifelong Guidance and Counselling Services

Zuzana Freibergová (NVF, CR)

The Czech paper was aimed at guidance and counselling services.

The Definition of Guidance and Counselling

In English two terms for guidance activities are used most often - *guidance* and *counselling*, whereas in many other languages the essence of guidance and counselling is expressed only by one word. Both terms have one objective in

common, which is to provide the client with basic information on options available, which subsequently allows him/her to make an informed decision. In both cases this process occurs as part of an interactive relationship between the client and the counsellor. Its objective is *to provide information or to help one or a group of clients learn more about himself/herself, others and the context and circumstances related to some routine situation or a particular problem in supporting his/her right to make informed decision at an appropriate time in order to address their problems or overcome various setbacks and difficulties they face in their working career or personal life.*

Guidance is mostly used when speaking about giving advice concerning career matters and counselling when speaking about psychological aid and giving advice on educational matters and exactly this approach is used within this article module: *career guidance, psychological and educational counselling.*²

In the paper various goals of guidance and counselling were identified: developmental, preventive, cognitive, social and political etc. Goals have in guidance and counselling process quite important function because they are its stimulus. Goals help the counsellor to select and evaluate various guidance and counselling strategies appropriate to the client's goals.

The process of Guidance and Counselling and C. was also described in a very detailed way. This process is based on *communication* and *interaction* between the counsellor and the client (or a group of clients). *An interview* (group interview, structured interview) is the core of the guidance process; it is an instrument for communication and acquisition of information. *Questionnaires or tests* can be used to receive information or opinions from clients as well. There are also two types of *observation* – direct and indirect. Direct observation occurs when the counsellor is actively involved in a certain activity. Indirect observation, where the counsellor is not actively involved in the activity and watches the client from a distance, is more common.

Some important methods and forms of G. and C. were listed: Formal G. and C. is provided within certain systems (such as labour offices, healthcare facilities, the schools system) by qualified and certified counsellors. Non-formal G. and C. is provided outside the formal systems (for example by recruitment agencies, training providers that are not part of the formal education system, associations and voluntary associations). Informal Guidance and Counselling takes place unconsciously and intuitively (for example within a family, at workplaces or in various communities). Direct face-to-face G. and C. is the most often used form now but the importance of technology-assisted distance G. and C. is growing.

Guidance and Counselling at Higher Education and Lifelong Learning

From the perspective of an educational institution the provision of guidance and counselling: 1. **Helps improve the institution's marketing activities**, particularly the recruitment of students not only in the short-term but also mainly in the long-term; counselling may also promote the institution's educational services, its image and information about what it has to offer. 2. **Helps increase the proportion of students** who complete their studies by means of removing or reducing negative

² During 9th HERN seminar it was obvious that there actually is no important difference in both terms – “career counselling” was used very often.

influences (external and internal) that distract students from learning. **3. Influences the management and organisation of the education process** and its content by means of monitoring feedback from clients and information concerning the situation in the labour market. The information acquired through counselling activities can be evaluated and used in the study programmes innovation process and strategic management of the institution.

Comprehensive counselling focuses on an individual's personality and its development with regard to his/her (A) personal life, mentality and **individual potential**, (B) **education**, ability and motivation for continuing education, and his/her (C) **professional development**.

These three areas – personal life, work, and education - are interrelated and influence each other. For example, seeking a new job involves a pursuit of harmony between the individual's potential and the requirements of a certain occupation or a particular professional position. Various types of G. and C. according to these areas were further specified (psychological counselling, pedagogical-psychological counselling, educational counselling, career guidance). The higher education and lifelong learning guidance and counselling might be built upon all three components (A – B – C) of a comprehensive model. The Czech model of university guidance and counselling services, which the Centre for Higher Education Studies promotes from 1994, is fully described in publication *Counselling services at Czech universities*.³

Activities of guidance and counselling can be carried out at various levels according to processes of which they are part. Within educational institution they can have the position of: **central student services** (information, advice and consultations to all students or prospective students), **individual student services**. The size of education institution, amount of its students and their characteristics influence the form of organisation of educational counselling. This might be viewed as a dilemma. The bigger the educational institution is the best-cost effectiveness can be reached because the cost per one student would be quite low.

Educational institution can decide which model of the relationship between guidance and counselling and the educational process would apply. The position of guidance and counselling in relation to the education process can be divided into the four categories: 1. Independent of the educational process and the particular institution. 2. Independent of the educational process. 3. Interconnected with the process of education. 4. Integrated, in a systemic matter, into the education process.

Quality of guidance and counselling

The counselling process is based on communication between the counsellor and the client. While the counsellor' qualification may be demonstrated quite easily, evaluation of the quality of the counselling process is very complex. Perception of quality is subjective and depends on the needs of the clients who come with various questions and expectations. There is a trend to introduce standardized quality management systems that originated in industry into the services sector. These include TQM (Total Quality Management) and ISO9001. However, both these systems present certain difficulties in counsellors' work by introducing standardized processes and procedures and inspecting their compliance with the relevant rules.

³ FREIBERGOVÁ, Z. (2003) *Counselling services at Czech universities*. National Training Fund – National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance. Prague. 159 pp.

Quality is closely connected with transparency, impartiality and accessibility of counselling services. Guidance and counselling services should also be proactive, i.e. they should provide objective and up-to-date information on the educational opportunities available regardless of who is requesting this information.

In the end of the paper some barriers for delivery of G. and C. were mentioned, perhaps the most important are **barriers given by the educational system** (the structure of formal educational system and ways of gaining a qualification; the influence of formal educational system on young people to improve their skill throughout all life; costs of education; competition for places in higher education; inappropriate support services for adult returnees; distance; inflexibility in delivery; the culture of educational institutions) or **barriers given by the labour market** (the view taken of advantage of study in terms of employability and wages; the attitude of employers to further education and training; expenditure on work-based training).

European Policy in Guidance and Counselling

In the Czech paper also the most important legislative arrangements concerning the guidance and counselling in Europe were mentioned. Before the Maastricht Treaty (1992), EU activities promoting co-operation in education rested on three documents:

Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome,

General principles on vocational education and training of 1963,

Agreement on co-operation in education in the aftermath of the first meeting of the EC Ministers of Education.

One important milestone was the signing of the Treaty on European Union (1992), which provided a new legislative base for EU policies and initiatives in the area of education – both vocational and general.

After 1992, the development of vocational education and counselling services was supported by three important documents:

White Paper on economic policy: Growth, competitiveness, employment: The challenges and ways into the 21st century (COM(93) 700)). The document encourages the development of active employment policies focused on continuing vocational education and assistance in acquiring work experience and employment, including the provision of counselling services in this area. It draws attention to the need for active harmonisation of supply and demand in the labour market.

White paper on social policy: European social policy: A way forward for the Union (COM(94)333)). This document also emphasizes continuing education, particularly in the context of potential social exclusion as regards access to paid work. It describes the role of EURES: a forum for discussion at operational level about European problems related to employment.

White paper on education and training: Teaching and learning - Towards the learning society (COM(95)590)). The document proposes a model of a learning society and encourages the development of skills and knowledge. Appropriate counselling is described as a service facilitating free access to information. It stresses the need for forecasting changes in occupations at European level – i.e. the changes in knowledge and skills that will have to be

addressed in the future. It assumes that the educational attainment of the population will increase if there is enough information about educational opportunities. Apart from this, the document proposes methods for international recognition of competencies.

Putting into operation an Internet portal of educational opportunities (<http://europa.eu.int/ploteus>), which would facilitate information, inter alia, about lifelong learning in EU member countries, and links to the relevant national on-line databases.

Setting up a EUROPEAN COUNSELLING FORUM bringing together representatives of major stakeholders and promoting their dialogue, exchange of good practices and identifying and tackling common problems.

(http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong_guidance).

Evaluating the effectiveness of the existing European networks and structures in the area of information and counselling services, and to arrange their operations to ensure that they become part of a comprehensive, inter-sectoral base for lifelong learning. This concerns particularly the following networks and structures supported by the EU: (<http://www.euroguidance.org.uk>).

Another important addresses:

<http://www.estia.educ.goteborg.se>

<http://www.eurodesk.org>

<http://www.fedora.eu.org>

<http://europa.eu.int/eracareers>

<http://europass.cedefop.eu.int>

<http://www.iaevg.org>

<http://www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca/guidance2003/mega-synthesis.pdf>

Great Britain - Key skills for undergraduates in the labour market

Heather EGGINS (SRHE, UK)

The fourth presentation, given by Heather Eggins from Society for Research into Higher Education, focused upon the elaboration of key skills which graduates are required to acquire in the labour market. Such key skills may be summarized as follows:

Personal skills including social, intellectual, self-managing, adaptive, and creative skills

Interpersonal skills comprising the ability of teamwork which can be further characterized as collaborating, facilitating, leading, delegating, supervising, mentoring

Communication that further comprises explaining, oral and written presenting, confronting, being assertive, telephoning

Management and organizing characterized by reviewing, contracting, chairing, interviewing, consulting, negotiating

Information technology skills and literacy

Creative problem-solving such as data handling, critical and lateral thinking, synthesizing, hypothesizing, interpreting, integrating, reflection and objective reasoning

Positive attitudes to a change including understanding the worlds of work, politics, and society

As Heather Eggins further pointed out, the enumeration of the required graduates' key skills bears a close affinity with the recent developments in thinking about personal attitudes, emotional intelligence, communication, and pro-social behaviour which generally reflect rising employers' demands for motivation, impartial judgment, monitoring/discriminating between emotions, greater loyalty, altruism, courtesy, flexibility, and collaborative work. The concluding part of Heather Eggins' presentation was devoted to the recognition that the required graduates' key skills should be considered a key not only to effective companies but also to social cohesiveness and competitiveness, as "If two economies have similar wage and output levels, the one with more on-the-job learning (not just training) at all levels will probably have better long-term growth and income equality."

Latvia - New Trends of Preparing Latvian Students for Labour Market (Using Possibilities of EU Structural Funds)

Elena KONSTANTINOVA, Baiba RIVZA (CEDeF, Latvia)

The Latvian paper dealt with preparing students for labour market.

Latvia higher education system is experiencing rapid and profound changes. Significant progress can be observed on various spheres, such as: enlarged learning opportunities; diversification of the institutional base; increased funding and diversification of funding sources; compliance with the Bologna Declaration through the adopting of a common framework for readable and comparable degrees and the introduction of undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with first degrees no shorter than 3 years and relevant to the labour market; accreditation of programs and institutions; new vision for science and technology and reorganization of system governance and coordination. The enrolment in HE institutions (HEI) has more than doubled during the last decade, from 46 thousand in the academic year 1990/91 to more than 110 thousand in 2001/02. The overall proportion of women among students is 61%.

Very detailed description of the current state on Latvian HEIs is the part of the paper and it is possible to get exact numbers in the supplement of this conference paper.

It may seem that in Latvia could be an overproduction of **specialists in social sciences** in the future, especially in economic and management, but a lot of new opportunities for these graduates have been created in finance and management service, real estate market, security market, market research and prognosis, e-commerce etc. In common, the main conclusion of researcher's is that representatives of social science field will be marketable still 10 years in labour market. It means, that future social science specialists have opportunities in labour market, however the labour market fills and there will be more competition in future

Labour market demands are influenced not only by economic and market development, but also by **demographical changes**.

The existing surveys shows that to produce employable graduates HEI should focus more on the people-oriented aspects of business education. Good communication and numeracy skills, organizational skills, flexibility and ability to work in teams will help graduates to survive in the global market today and tomorrow. Personal values such as cooperation, compassion, responsibility, loyalty and trust can be incorporated into the academic environment through teaching and personal relationships between students, faculty and administration.

One of the possibilities for better student preparation for employment is strengthening the cooperation between HEI and employers. Partnership between HEI and employers is a prerequisite for producing a new kind of graduate and HE system and employers share responsibility to educate for change and growth.

Lithuania - Higher Education and Employability: Relations and Trends

Ramunas KUNCAITIS (VDU, Lithuania)

Employability was the topic of Lithuanian paper.

The society in Lithuania is more and more worried about the social problems of the youth the solution of which is difficult under the conditions of economic decline. The Institute of Labour and Social Research carried out the complex research "Labour motivation and territorial mobility of the unemployed youth and their integration into the labour market". This research covered a sociological survey of the young people registered at the labour exchanges and expert survey of the employers. It showed the situation of the youth on the labour market and developed the trends for increasing the employment of the youth.

Currently, a lot of is done in Lithuania to improve vocational orientation and consultation system though, with the increase of availability of such services, the need of the youth, especially students, for vocational information, orientation and consultation are not fully satisfied in the country. The research data showed that, when choosing profession, vocational consultation specialists have very little influence upon the youth. There is a lack of information about vocational orientation and consultation institutions themselves. Part of the young people even does not know where to apply regarding such problems. Vocational orientation and consultation of students is started too late – only in 10 (former 9) – 12 grades.

Institutions of higher education carry out labour market research, and introduce new study programmes according to potential needs: almost all institutions introduced marketing, as Lithuanian society is in the process of rapid transformation into market based economy, with entrepreneurship, readiness for innovation, and collaboration skills being at core of competencies.

Great Britain - Developing enterprising students: reflections on the Enterprise in Higher Education Programme at a UK university

Ivan KENT and Myszka GUZKOWSKA (Roehampton University, UK)

Recent changes in the higher education system were described in the second paper from the UK.

Higher Education (HE) in the UK, as elsewhere in Europe, is changing from a highly selective and academic system that catered for about 5% of the relevant age cohort in 1960 (it was about 1% in 1900) to a much more inclusive, flexible and vocationally oriented system catering for over 30% by the end of the 1990s. The current target is 50% participation in HE by 2010.

Large businesses (those employing more than 250 people) comprise approximately 0.2% of all UK businesses but employ 40% of the UK workforce. 13% of the workforces of these large businesses are graduates and this sector recruits approximately 30,000 new graduates a year.

The Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) was launched in December 1987 by the Secretary of State for Employment to "encourage the development of qualities of enterprise amongst those seeking higher education qualifications". The original concept of 'Enterprise' in EHE was couched in terms of developing entrepreneurial behaviour in response to many and repeated calls by the Confederation of British Industry and others for higher education to put more effort into preparing its students for work in the globalise and knowledge-based economy.

Personal Development Training Programme (PDP) had its origins in reflection on the benefits of the activities of the Outward Bound Trust, the challenges graduates faced at the sort of selection centres used by an increasing number of firms, on existing curriculum based activities such as field work and on the clear benefits to be gained from work placements integrated with the curriculum. The aim of PDP was to provide training in teamwork, leadership, communication and organisation skills in order to improve the participating student's skills profile.

A survey of former PDP participants was carried out as a part of a DfES/HEFCE Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) project called "Marketing Graduates' Skills" in order to find out what effect PDP might have had on former participants transition into employment.

Most students need help to realise their potential. Current policy treats the individual student like a component in a factory designed by Taylor and Ford. There is very little emphasis on education as an enabling, transforming or liberating experience. Students are graduating into a knowledge society which needs them to be self-actualising, creative and flexible: not qualities that Fordists or Taylorians value highly in their workers but very evident in the knowledge businesses around.

AUSTRIA - Overcoming disability - recommendation from the disability research group.

Barbara HENGSTBERGER and Andrea PETZ (Institute „integrated study“, University of Linz, Austria)

In the presentation titled “Overcoming Disability – Recommendations from Disability Research Group” Barbara Hengstberger gave the summary of the outcomes of the meeting of the Disability Research Group from the previous day. Speaking of the raising of chances of people/graduates with disabilities in the labour market, Barbara Hengstberger stressed the necessity to overcome baseless fears, prejudices, and discrimination by the process of transforming a disability into an ability by launching information campaigns (including well-known disabled artists, politicians etc.), and by establishing closer contacts, cooperation, and communication between organizations, uniting people with disabilities and potential employers. As for the development of guidance and counselling services for people with disabilities, Barbara Hengstberger emphasized the need for the establishment of a job database (ideally on the European level), and for job-assistance programs integrating a support in finding a (first) job, support in staying in a job (job adaptation), looking for/finding vacancies, and promotion of integration in the workplace (including work place accessibility). The final point of Barbara Hengstberger’s presentation concerned recommendations to the EU authorities as regards the EU policy on people with disabilities (passing of European Disability Act, creating of the network of experts disseminating the examples of good practice, harmonization of national standards dealing with form, grade, and impact of disability).

The Netherlands - Guidance and counselling in higher education with special reference to ethnic minorities and refugees in particular

Folke GLASTRA and Lonneke van PUTTEN (ESREA, the Netherlands)

As apparent from the title of the presentation “Guidance and Counselling in HE with Special Reference to Ethnic Minorities and Refugees in Particular,” Lonneke van Putten set out the number of strategies that Dutch guidance and counselling centres used for the inclusion of immigrants and refugees into the Dutch labour market. Such strategies most notably comprise information about social, economic, and cultural country background, assistance in the process of settling down and finding a job, voluntary traineeships, and enhancement of job motivation including language courses.

Workshop 1 - "Guidance for lifelong learning"

Moderator: Helena SEBKOVÁ and Reporter: Vaiva ZUZEVICIUTE

Focus on the concept of “guidance” – particularly how to conceptualise guidance provision that is driven by the learners’ needs (i.e. is supportive of future, and unpredictable, lifelong development rather than reactive to historical labour market trends). Questions:

Specification/clarification of the term “guidance in lifelong learning”?

What are particular approaches to guidance in HE3 in respect of lifelong learning?

Role of guidance in the process of making lifelong learning more accessible to Students

Other partners (employers, HEIs, public)

Ad 1) The debate started from the problem of terminology as such. It was stressed that organisation of lifelong learning is very different in various countries which is valid as well for the number of different types of educational institutions offering various LLL courses. Not properly used terminology or making the same term different meaning as regards their content may lead to very strange misunderstandings (example – the declaration that LLL does not exist in the country came perhaps from the fact that LLL courses are simply identified by another term). Problems coming from translations among various languages were also considered, the explanation of native speakers how using of different preposition can change the meaning of words´ sequence was highly appreciated and to view guidance for LLL rather than in LLL was fully accepted. The debate about exhaustive offer of literature was taken, unfortunately with the understanding that broad practical outcomes like the facts exploration or literature retrieval would be difficult, even if extremely helpful.

Conclusions:

Even if literature is exhaustive, there should be some reference place to have national concepts in one place

Guidance might be viewed IN or FOR LLL

Guidance FOR LLL is characterised by its ability to help person to take possible educational services

Ad 2) It was agreed that practical approaches to guidance focused on LLL has its owns specificities. The debate considered again the different ways of LLL courses offer in various countries. The countries where some kind of Open University was established (like for example the UK of the Netherlands) were mentioned in contrary to those where universities are developing both traditional and distance way of teaching and various private establishments offer learning while number of additional opportunities. The possibility to organise guidance and counselling within the Open University was discussed comparing this situation with the lifelong learning spread among the number of institutions where guidance and counselling follows perhaps rather independent model. The specific needs of adult learners were tackled including difference between central and individual students services as well as the needed relation of career guidance with counselling focused on education orientation and opportunities. Participants of the workshop agreed that guidance centre should be the place where people like to go.

Conclusions:

Guidance for lifelong learning should be:

Flexible,

Open and

Comprehensive, i.e. professionally, educationally and practically oriented

It should enable a person to be

Self-determined and

Unique

Therefore, guidance and counselling **FOR** lifelong learning should be

- Easily accessible,
- User-friendly and
- Reliable (especially with respect to quality)

Ad 3) Accessibility of guidance in lifelong learning may be supported in many ways. The debate was focused on possibility to share the good practices of different higher education establishments, experience of various countries. It was agreed that the guidance processes should take into consideration the needs of adult learners, which are in many aspects different from those of young students. It was suggested to use data gathered by various types of information centres (NAIRCs/ENICs), to exploit knowledge about quality of studies concentrated in quality assurance agencies and to support the bottom-up approach of their networking at the national level. Networking of guidance centres and associations of employers/professional bodies was found very useful as well. The suggested networking seemed to be important at the international level as well.

It was stressed that networking will enable to involve all partners into the process, will enable to use effectively all available quantitative and qualitative data and materials.

Conclusions:

In order to achieve accessible guidance it was suggested:

- To employ practices gathered by Open University and other similar agencies functioning in tertiary education,
- To change services provided for adult education with respect to real adult needs

In order to make guidance user-friendly and accessible and lifelong learning oriented both bottom-up and top-down action/initiatives should be encouraged:

Bottom-up approach (preferably national level)

Networking of agencies dedicated for QA, information/statistics, labour market agencies, professional associations and guidance centres

Top-down approach (international level)

Creation / "thinking about"

One agency,

Network supported by web based database that both integrates data available in all EU countries and provides referents points for possible benchmarking and sharing practices. It will also help to solve the problems of excessive non-systematic information.

However, the process/established agency should not be directive, cultural and historical context of particular countries should be preserved.

Workshop 2 - "Student diversity, distance learning and labour market"

Moderator: Ondrej SVATON and Reporter: Folke GLASTRA

Focus on the 'methods of delivery' – particularly how to deliver guidance services at a time and place that meets the learner's needs – both within and beyond the academy

Focus on the methods of delivery – particularly how to deliver guidance services at a time and place that meets the learners needs – both within and beyond the academy

Questions:

What do we really mean by "student diversity" and how does this meaning (do these meanings affect our concepts of guidance?

How can effective guidance be delivered to students and graduates – is "distance learning" and euphemism for "finding out the hard way"?

Is "guidance" only relevant to the transition from study to work, or does it have a broader relevance to HE? And if so, what is it?

Ad 1) There was a hesitation when trying to define "student diversity". Actually there are two possibly explanations of the term "diversity". We can mean the "**institutional diversity**" or "**individual diversity**". There are various types of universities in different countries, which constitute a diversity of HEIs. The second type of diversity is individual student diversity.

The situation is not the same in every EU-country and we lack the data necessary to define some more precise categories of "student diversity".

We could offer various point of views to the define the student diversity:

- Gender diversity,
- Ethnic diversity,
- Age diversity,
- Social diversity (social class),
- Cultural diversity,
- Religious diversity,
- Health disabilities.

Without the sufficient data it is difficult or impossible to set correct criteria for "student diversity". The problem of course is which definition of diversity should be used when collecting the data. So it is really necessary to share some definitions of diversity in the EU when collecting the data across Europe.

It is also advisable to take in account the different experience of various countries. There is the thread of stigmatisation or labelling when dealing with different types of "diversities" in specific countries.

Recommendations:

Initiating of more complex research in the EU countries, on appropriate quantitative data it is possible to define various student groups (no "instinctive", "soft" definitions of diversity);

Creating of more general picture of student diversity in EU.

Mapping of advantages delivered to diverse students group receive in universities in specific countries. -> Mapping of various ways of guidance delivery.

Ad 2) It is necessary to get the true information about the **needs of the labour market**. When preparing the career guidance it is unavoidable to study the trends of development of the labour market – to know, what could be the situation in future. Three stakeholders should be involved in the process of career guidance:

HEIs,

State,

Employers.

The career guidance should be considered as a continuous process – it should be very flexible.

When speaking about distance learning we know that all technology development could be used for well or bed of clients. ITC can broaden the audience but the motivation, personal contact and social skills could be affected in a negative way.

Recommendations:

The social interaction and impacts of new technologies should be tested.

The necessity of interpersonal contact is to be taken into consideration when supporting distance learning (e-learning).

It is necessary to support the social practice – without it the technology-oriented education could be wasting of money. (“What can be learned by e-learning?”)

Ad 3) The first answer was “YES” – when seeing the competition of private HEIs but then the question of “drop-outs” was discussed. It is necessary tom concentrate even on this aspect of guidance and counselling. Pre-study and perhaps also after-study guidance could be useful to help match the needs of labour market and individual capability of students.

The better choice of field of study, testing of students’ skills could help to cover the needs of labour market more efficiently. Professional competencies could be supported by testing and improving skills like:

emotional intelligence,

communication,

prosocial behaviours

personal attitudes.

Not only young and unemployed people are involved in the education process now. We should think of the needs of not “typical” students, too. In many countries the people involved in higher education become to be more diverse. The guidance and counselling is to prepare sufficient support even for these groups.

Recommendations:

Preparing new ways of guidance and counselling for more diverse groups of students (older and employed students).

Inventing new methodology of guidance and counselling for these diverse groups. New theoretical input in the field is necessary.

Supporting the training of “soft skills”.

Workshop 3 - “Guidance for Enhanced Employment Prospects”

Moderator: Jan KOHOUTEK and Reporter: Maria SLOWEY

Focus on ‘labour market dynamics’ – especially how we prepare graduates within an academic environment for the challenge of an unpredictable career path within employments that may be unrelated to the subject studied.

Questions:

What features of graduate labour market are effective in driving a change in HE guidance practice?

To what extent do current QA mechanisms meet the needs of graduates and their future employers?

How inclusive is the graduate labour market?

What are the principal issues in relation to guidance in HE for employment in enlarged Europe?

Ad 1) The list of features mentioned by the workshop participants reads as follows:

Role of practical work experience

Development of language competence

Development of interactive skills including self-confidence and attitude building, self-presentation, teamwork

Development of interdisciplinary forms of knowledge

Clarification of actors responsible for the provision of HE guidance and counselling

Ad 2) As regards the extent to which current QA mechanisms relate to graduates and employers’ needs, the workshop participants argued that:

There is an urgent need in the HE sector to develop and establish central guidance and counselling provision/centres if missing from the structure of HEIs (including the law enactment if necessary), as, currently, the extend of QA mechanisms remains rather limited

In order to develop professional standards to be a subject of QA mechanisms, HEIs should build up/broaden appropriate partnerships with potential employers

In order to strengthen the relationship between QA mechanisms and graduates and employers' needs, it is important to adopt the perception of quality in HE as a fitness for purpose

Greater information provision on HE guidance and counselling should be seen as a paramount objective of the existing QA mechanisms/agencies

Ad 3) Regarding the inclusiveness of the graduate labor market, the primary opinion of the workshop participants was that the graduate labor market should not be considered inclusive a great deal, however, further suggestions were made during the discussion:

Distinction has to be made between large and small enterprises, as the former ones are generally more willing to invest into graduates' professional development

Measures should be taken by state authorities to encourage graduate employment in terms of grants and taxation (tax reduction/exemption)

Links between Heist and employers should be strengthened especially as regards mutual communication, practical placements, traineeships

Alumni should be used in a more active way to foster links between Heist and employers

Ad 4) The principal issues affecting guidance in HE for employment in enlarged Europe were summarized by the workshop participants as follows:

Existence/creation of job vacancy databases (preferably in English) with regular updates

Introduction of 3-level professional guidance at pre-entry, academic, and post-entry level

Greater utilization of joint degree policy in practice

Increased allocation of funds and resources devoted to HEI staff development

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DELIVERABLE N° 52

RESTRICTED

Contract nr: HPSE-CT-2001-50011

Title: Higher Education Reform Network (HERN)

Project coordinator: Roehampton University (ROEI.DSC)

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Starting date: 1 Nov 2001

Duration: 36 months

Date of issue of this report: 20 December 2004

Workpackage 12

Guide to policy

“HE Reform, teaching and learning, change and quality: student diversity, distance learning and guidance”

Helena Sebkova, Libor Novacek, Ondrej Svaton, Jan Kohoutek

Centre for Higher Education Studies

Prague, Czech Republic

Chapter in brief guide to policy: HE Reform, teaching and learning, change and quality: student diversity, distance learning and guidance (WP12). The key points reviewed at the seminar, which were at the same time the main topics of the workshops were as follows:

“Guidance for lifelong learning” focused on the concept of “guidance”. Particular intention was given to conceptualization of guidance provision that is driven by the learners’ needs (i.e. is supportive of future, and unpredictable, lifelong development rather than reactive to historical labour market trends)

“Student diversity, distance learning and labour market” with focus on the ‘methods of delivery’ – particularly how to deliver guidance services at a time and place that meets the learner’s needs, both within and beyond the academy.

“Guidance for enhanced employment prospects” with focus on ‘labour market dynamics’ – especially how to prepare graduates within an academic environment for the challenge of an unpredictable career path within employments that may be unrelated to the subject studied.

The content of contributions presented at the seminar on “Guidance for employment and inclusion: the development of new competencies”, interesting and life discussion on the initiated questions and opened problems, three workshops and their outcomes as well as the number of informal debates among all participants of the seminar during their stay in Prague resulted in the three main recommendations for the European Commission

Recommendation 1

To establish the Network of the already existed Networks:

Guidance network/networks (need of mapping, identifying)

Quality assurance networks (ENQA - European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), CEE - Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, INQAAHE - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, JQI - Joint Quality Initiative, ECA - European Consortium for Accreditation, networks of agencies for professional accreditation etc.

Networks providing information services (NARIC – Network of Academic Recognition and Information Centres, ENIC – European Network of Information Centres)

Networks of employers, professional chambers, etc., with possibility to involve useful databases (for example PLOTEUS)

Comments:

Ideal form of guidance and counselling should be comprehensive and should provide clients with information on possible professional orientation and job career as well as on all opportunities of higher education/lifelong learning including the relevant quality. All guidance services should take into consideration both national and international levels.

To fill such role the guidance and counselling centres should find the access to the reliable and updated information about national and international study offer, to the valid statistical data about higher education and lifelong learning systems and to the concrete knowledge about possible recognition of studies and obtained diplomas. The academic information centres relatively well developed in many countries (established in accordance with the Lisbon Convention) and usually closely connected with the information networks ENICs/NARICs would be useful and reliable sources of needed data.

The education market has been quickly and extensively developed; it is composed not only by public institutions but also by the number of various private establishments and by the increasing transnational education services. The situation is convenient as regards the variety of possible study choices and promising for diversified group of applicants for studies. On the other side it is not easy to be aware about quality of the offered education and there is an urgent need that guidance services are able to gain valid information for their clients. The collaboration with the networks of quality assurance agencies would enable to fill this task.

It is necessary to mention the Bologna process, its important priority in building the joint European higher education area – quality assurance, the ENQA established with the aim of the broad collaboration in the field of quality and the other recent initiatives (JQI, ECA) complementing this idea. Proper networking of guidance and counselling centres with networks of quality assurance agencies would help significantly to improve services in the field of quality.

Useful and reliable information in the field of job career may come from collaboration with different networks of employers, professional chambers, other professional bodies etc.

All information are to high extend interrelated and so the networking of existing networks may support the effective and useful work of guidance and to economise financial sources as well as human capacities.

Thus the recommendation builds on identifying and mapping of guidance networks and their gradual networking with the already established networks (agencies dedicated for QA, information/statistics, labour market agencies, professional associations). Bottom-up approach of networking is considered at both national and international levels.

Recommendation 2

Develop existing systems building on the number of both national and in international programmes currently running and results of those already covered:

NL – dual studies programme

EC programmes

CZ - Co-operation of Czech HEIs with industry

GER - Career Preparation at the Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich

Others on the basis of monitoring the situation in this field

To include activities/projects of various associations and other bodies working in the field of guidance and counselling as for example:

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services

Association of Careers Advisers in Colleges offering Higher Education

International Association of Career Management Professionals

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance

Institute of Career Guidance

National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers

National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults

National Association for Managers of Student Services

Comments

The idea of the development of comprehensive guidance and counselling systems would be built on the number of important results of various projects supported at the national levels as well as at the European level (projects funded in the framework of programmes of the EU). It should be worthwhile to take into consideration also those projects currently running and to use their intermediate outcomes. This would be considered as the top-down activity co-ordinated from the international level.

The activity needs first of all serious stocktaking of as many projects and their results and ideas as it would be possible.

The main aim of the next phase would be the share of the good practice and the exchange of good experience.

The further step would be the development of the useful reference points, which may indicate for particular countries their “state of art”.

As the final step would be the recommendation to think/to create International agency

Website based database which would integrate the data available in all EU countries and facilitates the use of the reference points for the international benchmarking

The top-down approach may help to overcome the problem of excessive and non-systematic information and to reach the certain extent of harmonisation. However this should not be directive, should not call for uniqueness and should preserve the cultural and historical context of various countries.

Recommendation 3

Facilitate research in the field of guidance and counselling in higher education and lifelong learning including distance learning:

- Qualitative aspects of research,
- Quantitative aspects of research,
- Research of students' diversity and connected consequences,
- Research on students' situation and relevant needs,
- Research on careers guidance systems, structures and paradigms.

Comments:

The debates initiated by the seminar contributions and questions surveyed at the workshops discovered that there is neither enough knowledge about the problems related guidance and counselling, students' diversity and their needs nor available data and their interpretation.

The high number of various types of students' diversity was discussed (gender, ethnic, age, social, cultural, religious, health diversity) at the workshop 2 and the need of complex research leading to the "soft" definitions of various students groups was declared. The high attention should be paid to the qualitative data expressed in simplified way as student's wants and needs. It is necessary to consider not only students in formal learning processes, but also already working adults who rely first of all on new forms of learning (distance learning) enabling further qualification/re-qualification without interruption of their jobs.

The new methodologies used in guidance and counselling should be invented and its use for diverse student groups assessed. Social interactions and impacts of new technologies should be tested; the need of interpersonal contacts should be taken into consideration.

The aim to enhance prospects for students from diverse backgrounds would need to analyse

- Concepts of guidance
- Methods of guidance delivery
- Labour market dynamics

In general, mapping of various guidance systems with respect to students' situation and their real needs would support significantly the further guidance and counselling development.

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RESTRICTED

Contract nr: HPSE-CT-2001-50011

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Project coordinator: Roehampton University (ROEI.DSC)

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The HERN Interactive CD

The CD, produced by the Continuing Education Development Foundation, Latvia on behalf of the HERN partners accompanies this report as a separate item.

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Title: Higher Education Reform Network (HERN)

Project coordinator: Roehampton University (ROEI.DSC)

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PLAN FOR FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

A number of collaborations between partners exist that will carry on aspects of the HERN work. An example is a LEONARDO project called IDOL, led by the Jagiellonian and involving Linz University and Roehampton, among others, is continuing work in the area of disability.

Several unsuccessful bids have been made, such as MURACEE by the Jagiellonian University or a Framework 6 Network of Excellence bid, TRIPOD, which was put together in 2003/4 involving HERN partners with a wider network of researchers.

Preparations are presently in hand to put together another Framework 6 bid based on the HERN partnership and developing themes in lifelong learning and the knowledge society for the call announced in November 2004 and due for submission in April 2005.

The network of relationships and communications will be maintained with the aim of developing new research bids and further exploiting the work done during HERN.

This will be supported by the maintenance of the www.HEreform.Net website as an archive of HERN materials and a focus for continued dissemination. The present site will be redeveloped in the early part of 2005 and all the project's materials will be available.