



Perspective of the university on ExchangeAbility

Krisztina Kovács, disability coordinator, ELTE University, Budapest, Hungary

with the help of coordinators of ExchangeAbility partners: Eva Reina, Marco LaRosa, Philippos Pattouras, Katri Kadakas, Elena Mendelova and Annelore Schittecatte

ExchangeAbility Final Café Event, Brussels
25 October 2011

„No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.”
(Helen Keller)



Overview

- Students with disability in the partner universities (definition, data, services)
- Mobility of students with disabilities (situation, problems)
- Preconditions of an accessible mobility program

Students with disabilities in the partner universities - Definition

Definition of disability is different in the given countries!

- Cyprus and Belgium: traditional disability categories + chronic illness + psychological/psychiatric disorders
- Slovakia: traditional disability categories without learning disabilities (no dyslexia!) and no chronic illness
- Hungary: traditional disability categories and no chronic illness
- Estonia: students with special needs cover traditional disabilities, chronic illness and gifted students.

Students with disabilities in the partner universities - Data

Number of students with disabilities in the given countries:

- ELTE University, Budapest: 30.000 students, 300 students with disability = 1%
- Tallinn University of Technology : 14.000 students, 21 students with disability 0,015%
- Comenius University, Bratislava: 29.000 students, 130 students with disability = 0,4%
- Erasmushogeschool, Brussel: 5000 students, 100 students with disability= 2%
- University of Cyprus, Nicosia: 6000 students, 210 students with disability = 3,5%

Students with disabilities in the partner universities - Services

This is the issue that all partner universities have similarity. But the quality and quantity of the services are different

Services provided:

- Disability coordinator(s)- most have coordinator at each faculty
- Support centre
- Technical devices – some rentable
- Psychological counselling
- Sign language interpretation: on campus or outside service
- Note taking
- Personal assistants
- Adapted learning material
- Extra time during exams
- Reasonable accommodation and adaptation of the curriculum
- Extra tutorials
- Student Associations and ESN sections with mentor programmes

Mobility of students with disabilities - situation

All partner universities have very low rate of outgoing or incoming students with disabilities

Some data of the last 3 academic years:

- ELTE University, Budapest had 0,17% outgoing and 3 incoming students with disability
- Erasmushogeschool, Brussel had no outgoing and 1 incoming student with disability
- Comenius University, Bratislava had 0,03% outgoing and 2 incoming students with disability

Mobility of students with disabilities – problems from the side of the institute

- time consuming preparation
- need of intensive assistance
- problematic communication with the host university
- incompatibility of support services
- definition differences
- lack of/insufficient financial support

Problems from the side of the students

- lack of information concerning disability policies
- absence of relevant information in foreign languages of the universities
- lack of information on extra funds available for EU exchange programmes
- fear of the unknown (people, environment,)
- language dis-ability
- lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem
- accessibility of the city and public transport
- physical barriers at the university
- limited number of adapted learning material
- teachers mindset, and attitude
- limited freedom of choice
- accessibility to the student life
- students with disabilities need extra effort to be integrated as foreign students
- employability after studies

Preconditions of an accessible mobility program - What to change?

- 1.) Accessibility of the physical environment – at least make some steps to the environmental modification of the university buildings
- 2.) Cooperation of the university with the city administration and consumer organizations
- 3.) Accessibility of the learning material in foreign languages in adapted formats
- 4.) Training of sign language interpreters on an academic level in foreign languages
- 5.) Information on disability policy and accommodation possibilities for students with different disabilities in foreign languages on the web site of the university
- 6.) Raising awareness about disabilities among the university staff to remove human barriers

- 7.) Choosing representatives with disabilities in the local student associations and in ESN
- 8.) Special language courses for students with disabilities (especially in the post communist countries)
- 9.) More intensive counselling for students with disability
- 10.) Providing trained personal assistants
- 11.) Giving the opportunity to short-term visits for students with disability before decision making on the study program**

What did we learn from this project?

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

(James Baldwin)



UNREGI
STERED



ISLAND BREEZE



THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR
ATTENTION