Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Montenegro - SINC@HE

[Minutes of the working visit at University of Macerata - Italy]

The working visit took place within the development of the activities planned for WP1, specifically the visit is included in the tasks of deliverable 1.1. The document is authored by Laura Fedeli with the contribution of the presentations produced by the speakers during the two days meeting]
[Minutes]

[DEV 1.1: working visit to Italy (UNIMC)]

THE WV RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

The working visits are a primary activity to be run within the deliverable 1.1 “analysis and benchmarking of EU/national policies”. The deliverable’s tasks, as reported in the work plan provided by WP1 lead Partner, are “Identification, collection, collation and analysis of material on inclusion of students with disabilities in HEIs”. The planned working visits (Greece, Italy and Poland) are aimed at analysing European practices in the countries involved in the projects and at developing a discussion about the content of the reports that will be prepared by ME partners. The working visit to Italy follows the first run in Greece at University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, 10th -11th January 2012).

THE WV | BRIEF OVERVIEW

Organizing and reporting | quality procedures

The visit was organized taking into account the period set for this action in the project and the availability of UNIMC university staff to be involved trying to find a good time balance between the fixed dates and its communication to partners who were expected to participate (about 20 days).

As a quality procedure UNIMC sent a draft of the agenda first to the project coordinator and, after her feedback, a final version was delivered to all partners along with travel and accommodation information in order to facilitate the practical issues connected to the visit (the agenda is available in annexe 1).

For the same quality assurance concern the present document was sent to both the project coordinator and the lead partner of WP1 before making it available to all project partners.

Those actions were necessary also because a common graphical template has not yet been developed by the project partnership and specific content structure directions were not set for reporting the minutes of the working visits.

The attendees | partner institutions

Three partner institutions from Montenegro were expected to participate:
- University Mediterranean – UNIM (2 people)
- Association of youth with disabilities of Montenegro – AYDM (1 person)
- Ministry of information society and Telecommunications – MIS (2 people)

Partners from University Mediterranean communicated they were not going to participate in the working visit and the attendees were finally three people within two institutions: Bojana Lakovic (AYDM); Dzevad Purisic and Viktor Berishaj (MIS).

The speakers | Background
The visit was structured involving three kinds of university staff: 3 faculties, 1 administrative officer and 2 members of the technical staff of the Centre of Innovation.

That choice was meant to offer a full overview of the different procedural perspectives and the valuable connections among staff members with different positions and roles to accomplish effective actions for the inclusion of students with disabilities.

The meeting was also supported by Laura Fedeli who is in charge of following the development of the SINC@HE project and, being fully informed about the design of the activities, was able to manage the whole process and facilitate the communication among the different participants.

The presence of the faculties ensured the provision of a research attitude and a better overview of the general actions activated by the university in terms of local, national and international projects aimed at deepening and improving the involvement of the whole body in this area.

Here follows a brief description of the roles of the different speakers:

Prof. Pier Giuseppe Rossi (full professor) is dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences and full Professor in General Didactics. Prof. Rossi’s research field is Educational Technology;

Prof. Catia Giaconi (researcher) works at the Faculty of Education and teaches courses in Special Need Education;

Prof. Paolo Nicolini (associate professor) works at the Faculty of Education and she is the director of the CAO (Centre of Student Orientation structured into 2 different services: COT and CETRIL);

Miss Carla Bufalini (administrative staff) works as technical director of the COT (Centre for student Tutoring and Orientation: http://orientamento.unimc.it/);

Mr Roberto Rascioni (technical staff) works at the CSIA (Centre for the Innovation: http://www.unimc.it/csia) and he is involved in the development and management of the university website;

Mr Lorenzo Maurizi (technical staff) works at the CSIA and he is involved in the development and management of the Learning Management System used for the e-learning services.

THE WV | THE FIRST DAY

Welcome and introduction | Pier Giuseppe Rossi

Pier Giuseppe Rossi opened the meeting describing the structure and organization of the Faculty and the University highlighting the role and functions of:

- supporting student centers;
- completed and in progress projects for students with special needs.

The description aimed at underlining the integration of structures, services and specific actions.
Specifically the presentation proposed a focus on a national project, WISE FIRB (Wiring Individualized Special Education [http://www.wisefirb.it/]), aiming at supporting homebound students and in which University of Macerata is directly involved. That project highlights the need for homebound students to take advantage of a synergic action plan that can develop from a double perspective: a medical perspective and an educational one.

The welcome also allowed invited partners to introduce themselves and communicate their specific interests during the two days meeting. The presentations, in fact, were meant to serve mainly as inputs to be further exploited through active participations of all attendees.

During the introductory phase the following issues were underlined and many questions were asked in order to better understand the university system:

- How to ensure quality in exams where students with disabilities followed a personalized learning path?
- What level of physical accessibility do the structures have?
- What kind of founding do the university receive to support students with disabilities and from what source?
- How is the tutoring system organized?

**Italian legislative overview | Catia Giaconi**

Catia Giaconi presented an overview of the Italian legislation for the inclusion of students with disabilities. She focussed on three main sources:

- Law number 104 (1992): Framework law for the assistance, the social inclusion and the rights of the disabled (this law covers all educational system from primary to university level);
- Law number 17 (1999): review act of the previous law;
- Law number 170 (2010): laying down new standards on specific learning disorders at school (e.g. dyslexia).

For what concern the law 104/1992 the presentation focussed on the following articles:

- Article 12 – the right to education and training
- Article 13 – Access to school
- Article 16 – Performance assessments and examinations

The presentation also included the law 17/1999 that provided guidelines for the Italian university system in relation to activities to be implemented for disabled students, specifically it was remarked that each university should appoint a Delegate for disabilities. The articles that integrated the previous law, in
terms of specific technical and educational support, tutoring services and individualized paths for student instruction and examination, were highlighted during the description.

Services and actions for disabled students | Paola Nicolini - Carla Bufalini

Paola Nicolini and Carla Bufalini lead the different actions for student support through the two offices of the University Centre of Orientation (CAO).

CAO is divided into two main structures:

- COT: centre for student orientation and tutorship
- CETRIL: centre for internship and job orientation.

The presentation run on the first meeting day focussed on the services of COT. We have to underline that this centre is aimed at supporting all students enrolled at University of Macerata, but special actions are taken for the inclusion of students with disabilities as shown in the following image:

The presenters also provided some statistics about students’ enrollment, the percentage of disabled students and their rate of success during the development of the degree course.

Participants’ questions covered the following topics:

- the cooperation with institutions outside university;
- the connection with the social and sanitary system.
THE WV | THE SECOND DAY

Actions for graduate disabled students | Paola Nicolini - Carla Bufalini

The supporting actions through the university centres aim at developing a proper placement in society also through a job experience in terms of internship and permanent positions. For this reasons many attempts are made to prepare students in their applications, job interview and selection of a range of opportunities. Job placement for disabled graduate students can be a difficult procedure for a number of reasons, so CETRIL (centre for internship and job orientation: http://cetril.unimc.it/) develops its actions not only offering a front office to provide information on specific legislation and job placement, but also running an annual survey to check the level of satisfaction of disabled graduated at University of Macerata.

CETRIL works in strict collaboration with “Agenzia Lavoro Disabili” (http://www.agenzialavorodisabili.it/), a small company run by Daniele Regolo, a person with a hearing impairment who succeeded in creating his own project to help and support job placement for disabled people.

The same company is also involved in the FIxO project (Education, Innovation for Employment) promoted by CETRIL and whose final objective is to set a permanent special observatory that will take care of disabled students’ job placement, monitor the participants and develop research paths on their experiences.

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Web, e-Learning and Accessibility @UNIMC | Roberto Rascioni – Lorenzo Maurizi

The presentation included two parts. The first one aimed at showing different aspects related to web accessibility (legislation overview; Italian procedure by Public Administration Ministry, DigitPA and Formez to check quality measures; measures adopted by University of Macerata for its web portal) while the second and final section offered an overview of the requirements of the current LMS used for e-learning at University of Macerata.

For what concerns web accessibility there were presented different options to facilitate the user experience with the Content Management System used, in terms of access keys and requirements for visually impaired (Enlarge font, High Contrast, etc.).
Finally it was presented a case-study represented by an action designed to enable staff with disabilities and, specifically, the design of a special staff directory for a switchboard receptionist who will take advantage also of special technology such as a screen reader and a Braille keyboard.

The final section of the presentation showed some specifications of the OLAT platform used for all online courses run in 7 Faculties of the University of Macerata. OLAT is optimized to support accessibility to visually impaired people:

- Access keys for a quick navigation;
- Font sizes: font sizes are not fixed absolutely, users can adjust the font size in the browser to their needs;
Web 2.a Mode ((Braille reader compatibility): in this mode all modified elements are marked in a special way: all advantages of web 2.0 can be used without diminishing its accessibility.

Finally it was presented the case-study about Luca Bernardi (http://www.lucabernardi.eu/).

Luca, a 25 years old student from Jesi (40 km from Macerata), suffers from Duchenne muscular dystrophy. He can't walk, he can't move, he can't breathe autonomously: he needs a mechanical ventilator to support his lungs, and lives on bed 24 hours a day. Luca is enrolled at the Online History Degree Course, and he attends lessons from his computer, next to his bed.

In order to let Luca complete his course and have regular exams the procedures reported in the image below were set.

**CONCLUSION**

The two days visits was a good opportunity to have a face to face interaction with project partners and let them express their concern/questions and, at the same time, share opinions and hyphtotesis of solutions to common experienced issues in the field. All the materials and presentations prepared by the speakers and available were given to the attendees in a digital version.
## AGENDA

### Working visit to University of Macerata (Italy)
February 23-24, 2012

**Attendees:**
- University Mediterranean
- Association of youth with disabilities of Montenegro
- Ministry of information society and Telecommunications

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>23 February</td>
<td>15.30-17.30</td>
<td>Inclusion of students with disabilities at University: Italian legislative overview</td>
<td>Meeting room – 3° floor – Department of Education Sciences</td>
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<td>Prof. Catia Giaconi - Department of Education Sciences</td>
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<td>23 February</td>
<td>17.30-19.30</td>
<td>Services and actions for disabled students at the Centre for Student Orientation</td>
<td>Meeting room – 3° floor – Department of Education Sciences</td>
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<td>Prof. Paola Nicolini - Director of CAO (Centre for the Student Orientation) Miss Carla Bufalini – Technical Director of COT (Centre for student Tutoring and Orientation)</td>
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<td>24 February</td>
<td>10.00-13.00</td>
<td>Future supporting actions for graduate disabled students</td>
<td>Meeting room – COT</td>
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<td>Question &amp; answers</td>
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<td>Prof. Paola Nicolini - Director of CAO Miss Rosella Mariotti – Technical Director of CETRIL (Centre for Internship and Job Placement)</td>
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<td>24 February</td>
<td>15.00-17.00</td>
<td>Web accessibility &amp; enabling technologies @ UNIMC</td>
<td>Meeting room – 2° floor – CSIA</td>
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<td>Mr. Lorenzo Maurizi, Mr. Roberto Rascioni - C.S.I.A. technical staff (Centre for the Innovation)</td>
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**Additional Information:**
- The Department of Education Sciences (Faculty of Education) is located in contrada Vallesena, Piazzale Bertelli, 1
- COT is located in viale Piave, 42 (meeting point at the main entrance)
- CSIA is located in Vicolo Tornabuoni, 58
- Google map of the different locations: [http://goo.gl/hxcm8](http://goo.gl/hxcm8)