



Internships for students with physical disabilities and fewer educational opportunities

Promising Practice

Implemented by:

Rompsay Vocational School in La Rochelle

Where:

France

Status:

Started in September 2022

Summary:

The vocational school provides equal access to international internships for French students with disabilities and fewer educational opportunities.

Overview

Rompsay Vocational School in La Rochelle has over 450 students, 90% boys. The school offers courses on boiler making, electronics, industrial maintenance, nautical maintenance and digital systems courses. The school provides training for students with special educational needs.

Description

Erasmus Project preparation

The management of Rompsay Vocational School in La Rochelle decided to participate in the Erasmus + project to provide a foreign four-week internship for students with disabilities and fewer educational opportunities. Preparatory visits in Portugal were organized to sign the contract and learning agreement.

Recruitment process

Students were recruited according to the project's aim to support students with disabilities, special educational needs and fewer educational opportunities.

Medical support

Students with disabilities received medical support and therapy sessions, which were consistent and regular. The number of accompanying teachers was also adequate.

Objectives

The initiative aims to broaden French vocational students' horizons by allowing them to experience a positive work environment in a foreign country. The programme also focuses on providing equal opportunities to students with disabilities and those with fewer educational opportunities, ensuring they get the chance to explore their potential and enhance their skills. The programme focuses on creating a transformative experience for the participants by providing a safe and supportive environment, helping them expand their knowledge and gain valuable international exposure.

Providing equal opportunities for students with disabilities and fewer educational opportunities

The school's initiative to address the issue of inclusion is commendable. It is crucial to provide internships and cultural activities to disadvantaged students and those with limited educational opportunities, as it can help bridge the gap and provide them with better prospects for the future. By promoting a culture of inclusivity, the school can create a more equitable and diverse learning environment that benefits everyone. It is essential to ensure that all students have access to the same resources and opportunities, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. The internship project in Portugal:

- Helps to support every student regardless of their health, economic or educational situation.
- Gives students the chance to travel the world and immerse themselves in other cultures.
- Allows teachers to support their students not only in a classroom environment but also by helping them to build self-confidence and prospects for a better future through engaging in new experiences.

Outcomes and impact

Inclusion success

- All twelve students completed the internship in Portugal.
- Vocational training abroad.
- All students developed their professional and soft skills.
- All students enjoyed the opportunity to learn about other cultures and history. It was the first time most of them had travelled abroad.

Student development

- All students declared their enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The future career prospects are increased thanks to the exchange experience, learning the language and working in a multicultural environment.

Challenges

Logistics

Accompanying teachers ensured the electric wheelchair could be manoeuvred in the workplace and during cultural activities. However, there were difficulties with getting around companies, problems with stairs and issues with wheelchair recharging. During the cultural activities, it was difficult to find appropriate transportation that could accommodate a wheelchair.

Inclusion

The lesson here is that anything is possible with collective work and in sharing the values of inclusion.

Medical care

Thanks to a Portuguese partner institution, it was possible to organize medical support and therapy sessions.

Insights

Young people should be taught that everything is possible, and that teachers and trainers are eager to help and support them. Teachers should not be discouraged from promoting educational and social values outside the school environment.

Next steps

The school plans to work on similar projects within the received Erasmus+ accreditation for the coming years. The main approach is to help disadvantaged students and those with fewer educational possibilities develop their self-confidence, ensure equal chances in the labour market and support their educational and professional careers.

Learn more

Rodolphe Damon, French and History Teacher from Rompsay Vocational School in La Rochelle, helped to compile this document.

For more information, please contact:

rodolphe.damon@ac-poitiers.fr

To learn more about Rompsay Vocational school in La Rochelle, visit:

<https://ww2.ac-poitiers.fr>

Discover other practices

The **UNESCO-UNEVOC Innovative and Promising Practices database** presents successful projects tackling key themes in TVET, such as entrepreneurship, youth employment, the green transition, digitalization, private sector engagement and more.

Learn more on our website at:

<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/promisingpractices>

Questions or comments? Contact our team at:

unevoc-pp@unesco.org

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The ideas and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

© UNESCO, 2024

This document is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<https://en.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).

Cover photo: © Rompsay Vocational School
Design: UNESCO-UNEVOC