



ANED country report on equality of educational and training opportunities for young disabled people

Country: Cyprus

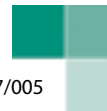
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The information contained in this report was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in May 2010.

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the Thematic report on the implementation of EU Equality of educational and training opportunities in European countries with reference to equality for young disabled people.

The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation on equality of educational and training opportunities for young people, and in particular the National Strategic Reports of member states from a disability equality perspective in education and training, and provide the Commission with useful evidence in supporting disability policy mainstreaming.

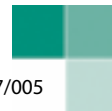


Section 1: Executive summary and conclusions

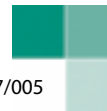
In Cyprus, there is currently an integration policy while at the same time there are increasing calls for inclusive education. In particular, the policy context regarding Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education is founded upon legislation that favors the integration of 'children with special needs' in mainstream schools while maintaining that special schooling is also an option. Despite the integration rhetoric, implementation of the law is characterized by a segregating philosophy. Its implementation was not without problems: general teachers' non-compulsory involvement in differentiated instruction, children's increased segregation in general school settings and poor educational opportunities provided in special settings functioning in general schools. It is expected that the development of a new National Curriculum which is currently in progress will facilitate the development of a more inclusive way of thinking and practice within the educational system.

According to the data presented in this report, budget allocations towards inclusive education remain restricted. The total expenses for Special Education have increased substantially in the last three years and the expenses in mainstream school settings support segregating provision. No comparative official data could be found regarding the number of disabled and non-disabled students participating in different types of learning. However, other relevant data suggests that there is a small increase in the number of disabled students attending special schools. Furthermore, the number of students who receive individualized support in Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary and Technical Education has increased. There is no data to compare the educational outcomes and qualifications for young disabled students compared to non-disabled students. However, the fact that young disabled students are not assessed according to their individual progress is one important restriction to students' success. In addition, there is no official data to provide a comprehensive picture of the state of art regarding the percentage of disabled students who pursue academic education, apart from students with hearing impairments.

The majority of support arrangements (financial and practical) for disabled students and trainees are controlled by separate policies and schemes for school aged students, university students and vocational trainees. As far as school aged students are concerned, support in the mainstream classroom is provided by teachers who have basic knowledge regarding disability issues and inclusive education. Individualized support outside the general classroom is provided by special teachers in the mainstream pre-primary and primary schools or secondary school teachers in mainstream secondary schools. Support for university students differs according to internal University policies.



For example, in the University of Cyprus has its own support policy for disabled students, according to which students are eligible to financial support, equipment and support provided by personal assistants. Support regarding vocational training falls within two schemes, one about training offered by the national centre for vocational rehabilitation and one that provides financial support to disabled people who wish to receive training in areas other than those offered by the national centre. In what follows, a more detailed analysis of the issues raised here is undertaken.



Section 2: Legal and policy context

In Cyprus, like in many other European countries, there is a concrete integration policy while at the same time there are increasing calls to shift towards inclusive education principles (Symeonidou, 2010).

The policy context¹ regarding Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education is founded upon the Education of Children with Special Needs Act (N. 113(I)/1999)² and the relevant regulations for its implementation, known as the Regulations for the Early Detection of Children with Special Needs K.185(I)/2001³ and the Regulations for the Education of Children with Special Needs K.186(I)/2001⁴. This legislation favors the integration of ‘children with special needs’ in mainstream schools while maintaining that special schooling is also an option. The legislation came into force in September 2001, two years after passage through the Houses of Parliament in 1999. Both the legislation and the regulations were a product of a decade’s consultation process with all interested parties (disabled people, parents, experts in the field of special education and the University of Cyprus).

The passing of the 1999 Act was important as it legitimized integration, which was unofficially taking place since the 1980s (Phtiaka, 2000). The most important features of the law are: (a) the proclamation that integration is the rule and special schooling is the exception to the rule, (b) the introduction of the term ‘special needs’, (c) the state responsibility for special education provision between the ages of 3 and 18 years with an extension of education up to 21 years where it is deemed necessary, (d) the recruitment of Special Educational Needs Coordinators, (e) the establishment of an assessment procedure and, (f) the right of parents to participate in the assessment procedure and appeal when necessary.

The overall structure of the Law creates a special education mechanism controlled by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In particular, it sets the criteria for the establishment of special schools (Part II); the formation of Regional Committees of Special Education (Part III); the identification of children with special needs through a set assessment procedure (Part IV); the provision of special education in general and in special schools (Part V); the formation of a Council of Special Education (Part VI); and the formation of a Departmental Committee of Special Education (Part VII).

Despite the integration rhetoric, implementation of the law is characterized by a segregating philosophy (Phtiaka, 2008; 2007). This is reflected in a series of practical problems experienced, such as general teachers’ non- compulsory involvement in differentiated instruction, children’s increased segregation in general school settings and poor educational opportunities provided in special settings functioning in general schools (Symeonidou and Phtiaka, 2009; Phtiaka, Michaelidou, Tsouris and Vlami, 2005).

¹ <http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/index.html>

² [http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Nomothesia_N%2013\(I\)_99.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Nomothesia_N%2013(I)_99.pdf)

³ http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Kononismoi_KDP_185_2001.pdf

⁴ http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Kanonismoi_KDP_186_%202001.pdf

Importantly, Cyprus is currently in the process of developing a new National Curriculum, which is expected to embrace inclusive education ideas and influence public thinking. To this end, an inclusive education committee was appointed in order to aid the infusion of an inclusive ethos in the new curriculum (Phtiaka, 2010). The outcome of this process remains to be seen.

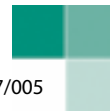
Accessibility in the built environment and learning in public schools is encouraged through regulations and circulars. To begin with, accessibility in the built environment for public schools is monitored by the Regulations K.186(I)/2001⁵ (Part IX, Building Specifications of Public and Private Schools). As far as individualized support for learning is concerned, children are entitled to individual equipment, such as mobility equipment or assistive technology equipment (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2004). Special units functioning within special schools are equipped with a package including basic technological means (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2002) and each school year they are allocated a fixed amount of money to equip the unit with necessary materials. A number of children with special needs attending public general schools are entitled to a school assistant, employed by the local school authorities.

Regarding tertiary education, each university follows its own policy for encouraging disabled people's entry and support in the courses offered. For example, the University of Cyprus, the oldest state university of Cyprus, developed the 'Regulations for Additional Positions for Students Belonging in Special Categories' (University of Cyprus, 2010). According to the Regulations, 6% of all undergraduate positions are allocated to disabled people or people with other problems. As noted elsewhere (Symeonidou, 2010), entry for these applicants is subject to 'special criteria', which means that these students may have lower attainment in entry examinations compared to other applicants. Furthermore, decisions about placement are subject to availability of positions, and thus, applicants may be offered placement in a department that was not their preferred choice. Once students are enrolled in any program of studies, they can attend preparatory seminars offered by the Centre of Teaching and Learning of the University of Cyprus. These seminars prepare the learners to develop skills for studying at University level (i.e. skills for academic writing, presentation, library use etc.). Disabled students are eligible for individualized support offered by the University (personal assistant for note taking, library use, essay writing etc.). Accessibility in Universities and other public buildings is regulated by the Regulations for the Use of Buildings from Disabled People (K.61(H)/1999)⁶.

On the 30th of March 2007, the Republic of Cyprus signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol. Several improvements in the legal and policy context have been recorded since then.

⁵ http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki/nomothesia/Kanonismoi_KDP_186_%202001.pdf

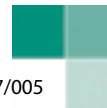
⁶ <http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dbpd/disabledaccess.nsf/All/3BC82DF3DA86360BC22572A6004A620D?OpenDocument>



However, there is still a long way to go in establishing the most appropriate legislative framework for disabled people's inclusion in all areas of life, including education and training. The ultimate goal is the ratification of the UN Convention and the optional protocol.

Further information about the legal system for special education is provided in the country reports of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education⁷.

⁷ <http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/cyprus/national-overview/legal-system>



Section 3: Evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion

Relevant sources suggest that spending towards segregating education hinders the progress towards inclusion.

Investments in segregating schooling

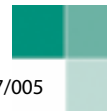
Importantly, there is an increase of investments in segregating schooling. According to the 2009 Annual Report⁸ (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 60), the total expenses for Special Education have increased substantially in the last three years: 4.810.690 euros (2007), 5.368.248 (2008), 6.739.089 (2009). However, the Annual Report does not clarify what is actually included in the category 'Special Education' (i.e. special schools, special teachers, special units, special equipment etc). In a recent study, Demetriou (2010) researched information from three different state report titles issued annually and he provided evidence to suggest that the real expenses for all nine state special schools in Cyprus have increased dramatically between 1998-2010. In his study, Demetriou also reported that in the period 1998-2009, the overall number of students in special schools has increased from 249 to 293 students and the number of support teachers in special schools increased from 84 to 137. Demetriou notes that although the number of disabled students decreased in five out of nine special schools, the number of support teachers in those schools remained the same or increased over the years, resulting in a teacher-student ratio of 1:2.

Participation in Education and Learning Structures

Although no comparative data could be found regarding the number of disabled and non-disabled students participating in different types of learning, the following data is important.

As far as the Primary and Pre-Primary Education is concerned, the school year 2008-2009, the overall number of students in pre-primary and primary schools was 72.808, whereas the number of children attending special schools was 293 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 54). Importantly, there is a small increase in the number of students with special needs attending special schools, from 276 in 2007-2008 to 293 in 2008-2009 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 54). According to the Annual Report (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009), in 2008-2009, 2232 students with special needs attended mainstream primary school classes and 237 students in mainstream pre-primary school classes. Disabled students who attend mainstream school classes usually receive individualised support outside the mainstream classroom. During the same school year, 343 students with special needs attended 68 special units located in mainstream primary schools.

⁸ http://www.moec.gov.cy/etisia-ekthesi/pdf/annual_report_gr_2009.pdf



According to the Annual Report (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 21, my translation), 'an effort is being undertaken so that more special units are established to cater for students with different impairment groups (i.e. autism, syndromes etc), in order to provide more effective help and support to grouped needs'.

As far as the Secondary and Technical Education is concerned, the school year 2008-2009, the overall number of students was 55.615 (my calculation according to the data reported in the Annual Report, Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 54-55). According to the same source (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 106), 1862 students with special needs attended mainstream school classes (usually combined with individualised support outside the mainstream classroom) and 1333 attended literacy programs. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 106), the support programs operating in the Secondary and Technical Education fall into six categories: learning difficulties, special units, hearing impairments, visual impairment, home education and literacy. The number of students who receive educational support in Secondary and Technical Education has increased from 2811 students in 2007-2008 to 3195 students in 2008-2009 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 107). There is no data regarding the number of children who receive each type of support. In 2008-2009, a total of 240 disabled students attended 36 special units (my calculation based on the data reported in the Annual Report, Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 112-113) functioning in Secondary and Technical Education schools.

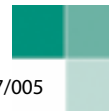
According to the *National Summary Sheets on Education System in Europe and Ongoing Reforms*⁹ (EURIDICE, 2009a: 6), 0.035% of disabled students receive education at home.

Educational Outcomes and Qualifications

There is no data to compare the educational outcomes and qualifications for young disabled students compared to non-disabled students. This section reports on information that is related to the topic in indirect ways.

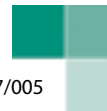
The National Entrance Examinations are the state exams which young students are expected to undertake if they intend to secure a placement in state universities in Cyprus and Greece. Although there is no data to provide a comprehensive picture of the state of art regarding disabled and non-disabled students' achievements in the exams, the Annual Report (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009) reports on the achievements of young students with hearing impairments. According to the Annual Report (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009: 117) during the school year 2008-2009, eleven young people with hearing impairments succeeded in the National Entrance Examinations and thus, they secured placement in state universities in Cyprus and Greece.

⁹http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_CY_EN.pdf



Furthermore, during the school year 2008-2009, twelve young students with hearing impairments had excellent school grades and they were awarded an honorary diploma, as it is standard practice for all students who receive excellent grades. According to the Annual Report (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009) a total of forty students with hearing impairments who participated in the integration programme of the Ministry of Education and Culture over the years have managed to secure placement in state universities of Cyprus and Greece.

It is worth mentioning that due to legislative restrictions, young disabled students are not assessed according to their individual progress. Thus, they are expected to undertake the same examinations as their non-disabled peers. This makes education and assessment problematic for many disabled students (such as students with learning difficulties, students with particular syndromes or students with multiple impairments). Due to this restriction, a number of young disabled students is labelled as 'students who observe' (in Greek they are known as *'paratirites'*) which means students who attend the lessons but do not undertake any exams and thus, they do not get any grades. Within this context, disabled students who had been labelled as 'students who observe' and disabled students who graduate from special schools, receive a school diploma (in Greek is known as *apolitirion*) which states the details of their status in the educational system. This is a restricting factor for being employed, as employers tend to prefer people whose school diploma does not suggest a special status while at school. Furthermore, disabled people with such a school diploma cannot undertake any examinations for driving licence.



Section 4: Types of support for students and trainees

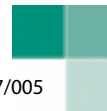
Despite the growing rhetoric for inclusion, the majority of support arrangements for disabled students and trainees is controlled by separate policies and schemes for school aged students, university students and vocational trainees.

As far as school aged students are concerned, support in the mainstream classroom is provided by teachers who have basic knowledge regarding disability issues and inclusive education. For example, Primary and Pre-Primary Education teachers who are graduates of the University of Cyprus have attended one basic module entitled 'Introduction to Inclusive Education' which provides information about the historical, political and educational issues regarding disabled students' education and it develops ethical commitment to the concept of inclusive education. However, this is not the case for graduates from other universities who may or may not have attended courses about inclusive education (Symeonidou and Phtiaka, forthcoming). Secondary Education teachers have no basic knowledge regarding disability and inclusion. In the Pre-Service Training Course which is compulsory prior to their appointment in state schools, there is an elective course on Inclusive Education. Support teachers in the Primary and Pre-Primary Education are either teachers or educational psychologists with specialization in Special Education or special teachers who hold a Special Education degree. Support teachers in Secondary Education are subject teachers who have a brief in-service training regarding their duties. In all levels of education, support teachers are expected to provide individualized support to disabled students outside the mainstream classroom.

Support for university students differs according to internal University policies. For example, in the University of Cyprus has its own support policy for disabled students¹⁰, according to which students are eligible to financial support, equipment and support provided by personal assistants. Financial support and assistive technology equipment is allocated to a small number of students after internal assessment. The policy of personal assistants is followed for many disabled students and it is believed to be useful. Personal assistants are university students hired by the University of Cyprus and they are expected to provide assistance during lectures and personal reading. Personal assistants are not expected to have any particular qualifications. University teachers are informed by the Social Support Service of the University about the condition of disabled students attending their classes and they are sent relevant information regarding ways that could facilitate their learning and participation in the classroom.

Support regarding vocational training falls within two schemes. The first scheme is about training offered by the national centre for vocational rehabilitation, known as the Centre of Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled People. The Centre offers training in areas that have traditionally been considered to facilitate disabled people's employment (i.e. carpentering).

¹⁰ <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/goto/acafsw/el-GR/SocialSupportOffice.aspx>



The second scheme provides financial support to disabled people who wish to receive training in areas other than those offered by the national centre.

Section 4a: Financial support

Financial support for disabled students varies according to their age and educational setting. This section focuses on financial provision for school age students, university students and vocational education trainees.

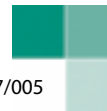
School age students,

Due to the centralized support system for disabled students, there are no individual financial support schemes, except for the financial support provided for transportation. Disabled students are entitled to free transportation by law (N.119(I)/1999), given that their school is far from home. According to the report *Organization of the Education in Cyprus*¹¹ (EURIDICE, 2009b: 296) if a disabled child is placed in a school more than 4.2 kilometres from the family home, the Ministry of Education and Culture covers the cost of travelling to and from school for the child and one of his/her parents or an escort. The District Committees of Special Education operating in the Ministry of Education and Culture decide upon financial support to this end. If the student's transport is arranged by means of taxi, then the Ministry chooses the taxi company and then proceeds to direct payment. The payment goes directly to the parents if they have agreed to undertake the transportation of their child. The amount of financial support for transportation is dependent upon distance between the family home from the school setting suggested by the District Committees of Special Education. There is no published evidence about the equity or effectiveness of this financial support. This type of financial support is not available to disabled students who study in other countries. However, this type of financial support is available to disabled students from other countries who study in public schools in Cyprus.

University students

Disabled students studying in universities are entitled to financial support provided that there is an internal university policy to this end. For example, disabled students studying at the University of Cyprus, the oldest state university in Cyprus, are eligible to financial support which is used for payments of support assistants. According to information collected by means of personal communication with the Social Support Office of the University of Cyprus, any student who can support his/her case with relevant medical documents in a multi-disciplinary committee is eligible to financial support for support assistants. The amount of financial support varies according to the severity of the impairment or illness. For cases that are assessed as very serious, a maximum amount of financial support of €880 per month is allocated which covers up to 40 hours of support.

¹¹http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/CY_EN.pdf



For cases that are considered less serious a maximum amount of financial support of €550 per month is allocated, covering 25 hours of support. Payments are made to the support assistants, following certain internal control procedures. In 2009, thirty out of one hundred and twenty disabled students who are currently studying at the University of Cyprus received financial support for support assistants. The amount of financial support is decided by a committee which investigates the supporting documents of each case. The financial support is funded by the Government through the University's annual budget. This type of financial support is not available to disabled students who are studying in another country as part of their course. However, financial support is available for disabled students from other countries who study at the University of Cyprus. There is no published evidence about the equity or effectiveness of this financial support.

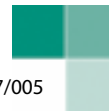
Vocational education trainees

The Department of Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities provides financial support for vocational training through a scheme entitled the 'Vocational Training of People with Disabilities in Areas not offered by the Centre for Vocational Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities'¹², is an important scheme which promotes disabled people's autonomy in selecting the training course they wish to attend. According to this scheme, financial support is allocated to disabled people who wish to receive training in areas that are not offered by the national vocational rehabilitation centre. This allowance can be used for personal training programs undertaken by training institutions or private and public business settings. The choice of training programs is expected to facilitate employment or professional development of the disabled applicants. The suggested training program needs to be short (about six months) and accessible to the applicant in terms of content, material and setting. This scheme covers training costs up to € 1.708,60.

Financial assistance for technical equipment is available through a scheme entitled 'Financial assistance for technical equipment and other assistive means'.¹³ This benefit is addressed to disabled people aiming to improve their quality of life by using technical means that contribute in their autonomy at the workplace and at home. Disabled people are eligible to this benefit regardless their statuses (i.e. trainees, employees, unemployed etc.). According to this scheme, the state covers 80% of the value of technical equipment and other assistive means considered necessary for the disabled person. There is a maximum limit of the amount that can be spent for each applicant. In some cases, 100% of the item's value can be refunded.

¹²<http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/136988418CDCBCB2C22575B6001E5430?OpenDocument>

¹³<http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/35535E2ECA9F73F2C22575B6001E6CF8?OpenDocument>



Section 4(b): Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations

Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations for disabled students vary according to their age and educational setting. This section focuses on personal assistance, equipment and adaptations for school age students, university students and vocational education trainees.

School age students

The provision of support for school-age students is highly centralized and it is provided free of charge by the state.

According to the report *Organization of the Education in Cyprus*¹⁴ (EURIDICE, 2009b: 296) the law specifies that special educational support must be provided free of charge by the state for those identified as having special educational needs between the ages of three and eighteen, with a provision to extend this to twenty-one years of age, if required. Personal assistance is provided by support teachers and school assistants on the conditions decided by the District Committees of Special Education.

Any kind of assistive technology, mobility equipment and environmental adaptations (such as ramps, lifts, toilet lifts, floor mats, curtains etc) are provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture, considering that students have been assessed as 'students with special needs' through the internal evaluation procedure, they are between 3-21 years of age and they attend public schools. The Ministry has full control and responsibility of the financial budgets for equipment and its technical support. Disabled students and their families have no control over financial budgets for equipment or environmental adaptations. The equipment belongs to the Ministry and it is returned there when the students graduate or when they are assessed for another equipment. Furthermore, the equipment follows the student in any public educational setting and it is managed by the school. Decisions about the type of equipment or adaptation each student receives are taken by the District Committees of Special Education which coordinate the evaluation procedure. In particular, the District Committees of Special Education appoint multi disciplinary assessment teams which consist of experts related to the students' profile (for example, assistive technology expert for suggestions on assistive technology, occupational therapists for suggestions about wheelchairs etc.). According to personal communication with the Ministry of Education and Culture, to date, about 300 disabled students were assessed for assistive technology equipment and about 200 of them have already received the relevant equipment. Equipment or environmental adaptations are not available to disabled students who are studying in other countries as part of their course. However, equipment or environmental adaptations are available to disabled students from other countries who are studying in Cyprus.

¹⁴

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/CY_EN.pdf

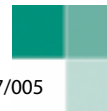
There is no large scale research to suggest the equity or effectiveness of equipment or adaptations provided for the purposes of education and training. However, a case study research conducted by Mavrou (2010) suggests that assistive technology equipment provided by the Ministry has been extremely valuable for the educational progress of disabled students who participated in her research.

University students

The provision of support for university students is dependant upon internal university policies. In what follows, the policy of the University of Cyprus is used as an example.

Disabled students studying in universities are entitled to personal assistance provided that there is an internal university policy to this end. For example, disabled students studying at the University of Cyprus are eligible to personal assistance. According to information collected by means of personal communication all disabled students are entitled to this type of support. The Social Support Office of the University of Cyprus is responsible for organizing personal assistance services for disabled students. Personal assistance is usually provided by post graduate, graduate or under graduate students who are employed by the University of Cyprus. Their duties entail help the students with reading, note taking, typing notes, support for use of library, escorting disabled students, facilitating writing during the exams etc. According to an internal regulation (Social Support Service, 2010) students who are employed as personal assistants to help the students with reading are entitled to the following rates: post graduate student assistants, €20 per hour; graduate student assistants, €16 per hour; under graduate student assistants, €12 per hour. Other rates apply for different duties, such as €17 per hour for facilitating writing up during the exams, €12 per hour for note taking and typing of notes and €9 per hour for escorting disabled student. A disabled student can receive support which does not exceed a payment of €1000 per month. The student can decide how to allocate this budget according to the type of support s/he needs and the cost of each type of support. The student needs to plan ahead and s/he is expected to come to an agreement with the Social Support Office about the level and cost of support. As the University of Cyprus is a state University, personal assistance is funded by the Government through the University's annual budget. This type of practical assistance is not available to disabled students who are studying in another country as part of their course. However, personal assistance is available to disabled students from other countries who are studying at the University of Cyprus. There is no published evidence about the equity or effectiveness of practical assistance with learning.

Disabled students studying in universities are also entitled to equipment provided that there is an internal university policy to this end. According to information collected by means of personal communication with the Social Support Service of the University of Cyprus, all disabled students are entitled to this type of support. In particular, disabled students studying at the University of Cyprus are eligible to assistive technology equipment.



The Social Support Office is responsible for evaluating disabled students by cooperating with professionals who are considered to specialize in specific impairments and assistive technology. According to the internal regulation (Social Support Office, 2010) the committee who evaluates disabled students´ is comprised of an educational psychologist, a psychiatrist, a doctor, a speech therapist, a special teacher, a University teacher of the student´s department, the head and employees of the Social Support Service. The University of Cyprus approves the purchases through its normal purchasing procedures. The University examines applications for any kind of equipment and it purchases the necessary equipment of own budgets. Equipment does not belong to disabled students

This type of equipment/adaptation is not available to disabled students who are studying in another country as part of their course. However, this type of equipment/adaptation is available to disabled students from other countries who are studying at the University of Cyprus. There is no published evidence about the equity or effectiveness of equipment or adaptations provided for the purposes of education and training.

Vocational education trainees

Personal assistance for vocational training is provided in the form of sheltered training run by the state. In particular, disabled people can receive training, free of charge, in any of the areas offered at the national centre for vocational rehabilitation, known as the Centre of Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled People. The Centre offers training in areas that have traditionally been considered to facilitate disabled people´s employment (i.e. carpenting).

Equipment and environmental adaptations for vocational education trainees follows the general guidelines set in legislation about disabled people´s rights (Disabled People´s Act, N.127(I)/2000)¹⁵ and in legislation about access to built environment (Regulation 61. The Roads and Buildings Act on the use of buildings by disabled persons, unified legislation 1954-1999)¹⁶

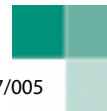
¹⁵http://www.kysoa.org.cy/kysoa/userfiles/file/nomotheties/nomoi%20voulis/pdf/3_%20127_2000.pdf

¹⁶<http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dbpd/disabledaccess.nsf/All/3BC82DF3DA86360BC22572A6004A620D?OpenDocument>



Section 5: Evidence of good practice

The Department of Education of the University of Cyprus is one example of good practice regarding the quality of support provided to disabled student teachers. The implementation of the University policy described previously in this report and the individualized guidance provided internally in the Department to disabled students explains their success in the process leading to the completion of their studies. First and foremost, the personal assistant policy has proven extremely useful for disabled students. The fact that University students agree to become paid assistants to other University students is helpful as students can communicate effectively and efficiently. Second, the appointment of a University educator within each department who is responsible for liaising for disabled students is also important. This policy is helpful as students feel that they have a contact person that can facilitate communication and other issues related to their studies. Third, the arrangements made during the School Experience phase (instructors' knowledge about disability issues, placement in welcoming school settings, acceptance of alternative means of communication etc.) facilitate disabled students' teaching experience. In several cases, disabled students who expressed fears regarding their ability to teach reported that they changed their mind after having succeeded in the School Experience phase.



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