



Erasmus+



Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership
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Our Strength is Experience — EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE Project Turkey National Workshop 4 April 2018 ANKARA

Objective: Introducing the Project EXPERIENCE, sharing the national and international information and experience that was acquired during preparation of Project activities and outputs with teachers/trainers, disability experts and families of persons with disabilities, explaining legal regulations in Turkey, narrating coping methods to disability related problems, talking on disability employment and brainstorming on training of trainers

Place: Sincan Lale Special Education and Rehabilitation Center, Sincan Plevne Mahallesi, Bosna Caddesi No:109/A Sincan/Ankara

Participants: Special Education Teachers/ Trainers/ Advisors and Mentors, Persons with Disabilities and their Families, Counselors, Academics, Psychologists, Sociologists and representatives of associations, foundations and NGOs that are working on special education and persons with disabilities

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

4 April 2018 - Wednesday

10.00 – 10.20	<p>► Opening Speech and Introduction of Project EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Dr. Faruk AYIN (Founding Manager of Dost Special Education and Rehabilitation Center)</p>
10.20 – 10.50	<p>► Disability in Turkey and the European Union (Statistics, general circumstances, etc.) and the objectives of Project EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Nuray ÖZTÜRK (Child Development Expert – Manager of Dost Special Education and Rehabilitation Center)</p>
10.50 – 11.30	<p>► Education of Persons with Disabilities and their Employment, Relevant Legal Regulations in Turkey and EU</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Hakan SARI (Special Education Expert – Head of Department of Special Education in Necmettin Erbakan University)</p>
11.30 – 12.15	<p>► Group Study (Measures to be implemented so as to develop status, living circumstances, rights and education persons with disabilities in the country)</p> <p>All participants will be divided into groups and ensured to brainstorm. Then, results will be discussed.</p>
12.15 – 13.45	<p>► Lunch</p>
13.45 – 14.15	<p>► Training of Teachers and Trainers of Special Education Teachers and Expected Results of Project EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Köksal TÜRKMEN (Special Education Counselor)</p>

14.15 – 14.45	<p>► Family Dimension in Special Education and Responsibilities of Trainers</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Dolunay ŞENOL (Sociologist – Head of Department of Sociology in Kırıkkale University)</p>
14.45 – 15.15	<p>► Necessary content that should exist in EXPERIENCE E-learning platform and other training sessions</p> <p>Faruk SEVİNDİ (Social Services Expert – President of Association of All Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers (ÖZERKDER))</p>
15.15 – 15.45	<p>► Skills and knowledge that Special Education Teachers in Turkey need most</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Mustafa KESKİN (Sociologist – Head of Sociology Department in Abant İzzet Baysal University)</p>
15.45 – 16.15	<p>► Group Study (Necessary Content, Quality and Features that should be included in E-learning platform of EXPERIENCE)</p> <p>All participants will be divided into groups and ensured to brainstorm. Then, results will be discussed.</p>
16.15 – 17.00	<p>► Question – Answer part and Assessment of Results that have been reached in the Workshop</p>
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MINUTES OF EXPERIENCE TURKEY NATIONAL WORKSHOP

ANKARA – APRIL 4, 2018

Dr. Faruk Ayın from Dost Special Education and Rehabilitation Center made opening speech of the workshop. He revealed the agenda of the workshop and briefly introduced the experts that will give speech during the workshop.

He said that according to Turkish Statistical Institute 2011 data, there are more than 5 million individuals with disabilities in Turkey; which constitutes about 7% of whole population. He said Turkey pursues a different policy in education of students with special needs than European countries and the USA: Turkey provides extra education and rehabilitation (in special education and rehabilitation centers) to students with special needs in addition to mainstream education. He also reported that there are about 306,000 students with disabilities in the first and second level schools and there are about 17,500 special education teachers in special education schools in Turkey by the end of 2017. He emphasized the significance of training of special education teachers so as to provide better education to students with special educational needs (SEN). He stated that private sector and universities are so weak in providing supportive trainings to trainers of persons with disabilities (PWD). He hailed efforts of government universities and institutions; and on the other hand, he stated that these trainers and teachers surely need more trainings, particularly after they start working. He underscored that education of trainers should continue throughout their working life since new educational methods are found out as years passes mainly in parallel to technological developments and economic improvement and facilities.

He summarized his speech by hammering out the result that there is a strong need in development of innovative methods and trainings to trainers, teachers and counselors. Then, he stated that the project EXPERIENCE will contribute to this objective. He said that the project is an Erasmus+ project which has been carried out by 4 institutions from Turkey, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. He stated that the project is coordinated by Slovakian partner and taken from Slovakian National Agency. He revealed the objectives, target groups, stakeholders and expected results of EXPERIENCE. Then he concluded his speech.

The second speaker is Nuray Öztürk from Dost Special Education and Rehabilitation Center. She is special education and rehabilitation expert and the manager of the institution. She said that at the EU level, about 25% of people aged 16 and over declare an activity limitation and 8% of them declared a heavy activity limitation according to EU-SILC 2011 survey. She also explained Turkish statistics in detail and stated that PWD experience difficulties mostly in accessibility to pavements, houses, shopping malls and government institutions. She also reported that labor force participation rate of PWD was about 22% by 2011 in Turkey. She narrated that Turkish government pays their education fees and obliges families of PWD in including their children to special education centers. She stated that educational needs of PWDs are satisfied to a large extent thanks to government efforts. Then she explained the project EXPERIENCE. She talked about e-learning platform that will be created. She said the platform will be available in 6 months and will provide training to teachers of students with SEN. She stated that the target groups of the project are mentors and advisors with disabilities engaged in promoting the reintegration of PWD in the partner organizations and PWD

themselves. She also revealed the project objectives and emphasized that the project will contribute to satisfaction of educational needs of teachers, trainers, mentors and advisors who work with PWD.

The third speaker is Prof. Dr. Hakan Sarı from Necmettin Erbakan University. He said that he is the head of Special Education Department in the university. He explained that they have carried out several EU projects with Dost on PWD and other disadvantaged groups since 2008. He emphasized the significance of special education teacher training in universities. He explained the curricula they follow in undergraduate and graduate levels in their university. He said that more empirical academic studies should be carried out in Turkish universities on special education. He stated that although there are many studies in the field, there is lack of empirical and quantitative studies. Moreover, he said that special education training should be in a more employment supporting manner. Trainers should know more about national and local labor market; and should focus on satisfying that need more. He also stated the importance of lifelong learning for special education teachers. He hailed government opportunities for disability employment; at the same time stating the inadequacy of employment opportunities at national level. He emphasized also the importance of increasing awareness of other parties in the society for disability employment. Employers generally don't want to employ disabled persons mainly because they don't believe the PWD will be able to fulfill their responsibilities in the job. He said this perception can be overcome by increasing awareness, as well as providing more vocational education to PWD. He concluded his speech by emphasizing the importance of international projects like EXPERIENCE; since these projects provide innovative solutions and developments to special education field.

The next session is group study and discussion. Participants are randomly divided into 6 groups. Each group contains about 5 participants + 1 group leader (group leaders are speakers in the workshop). They are asked to brainstorm on how to improve the conditions of PWD in Turkey. They are told to regard the issue in any areas of life and dimensions when assessing; such as psychological, economic, educational, regulations related to PWD, social, medical and government dimensions. Groups contain people that are related to disabilities from different angles. Groups are told to have 20 minutes to produce ideas and write them down for discussion part. After 20 minutes of brainstorming, groups are told to read their findings and ideas. All findings and ideas are read one by one by each group and discussed.

- Some parents of PWD emphasized the importance of social activities in special education. They appreciated government opportunities for PWD, but they stated social ones among these opportunities are very few. They said students with SEN should be included in more social activities like cultural trips, picnics, theatre and cinemas, sport activities etc. Someone said that the lack of social activities is a common problem in education in the country. Someone said that social activities for students are expected to be carried out mostly by parents of students in Turkey; however, parents of students with SEN need economic support due to their worsened economic conditions. They are said to have to spend so much for their children for the disability. Besides, someone said that students with SEN need to be together with other students with SEN when carrying out social activities, since they are happier when they and their family don't expose any kind of discriminative actions and feel out of things. So, special education and rehabilitation centers, municipalities and other related parties should add more social prospects in their curricula.

- Some participants stated that implementing 12-year compulsory education to mentally retarded students as well as other students is not fair and makes no sense. These students graduate from at least high school as other students, but this is not rational since most of these students are not able to have sufficient skills and knowledge as other high school students must have when graduating. So, these students should not be bored under academic knowledge. After some levels of basic education, they should be taught more vocationally. They can be able to carry out some kind of jobs with respect to their disability type. Some participants stated that although some government schools are giving vocational education to these students, their education is restricted with some kind of jobs, like cleaning. They stated that Turkish government should provide more opportunities to these students by directing them to jobs like animal breeding, agriculture, handicrafts, needlecrafts, painting and sports. Most participants agreed on this judgment. Some of them emphasized that students with Down syndrome, autism, mental retardations, visual and hearing impairments generally have more attentions on animals, sports and painting; and practicing on these fields bring their health to a better condition. Some other participants stated that some countries use horses and other animals in rehabilitating some kind of disabilities, so it is a good idea. Government should subsidize farms and farmers for opening their gates to students with SEN for learning, rehabilitation and then employment. Besides, although some students have special abilities in sports, painting, handicrafts and similar kinds of artistic fields, our country doesn't have enough motive and facilities in order to lead students with SEN to these areas. So, special education should not contain academic burden as much as other students as it is implemented now; but should contain more vocational, artistic and sports education.
- Education discussion continues. Some participants moot the idea that Turkish special education approach is not adequate. In Turkey, students with SEN have to complete 12-year compulsory education as well as other students. This education includes nothing special for students with disabilities. They are treated as other students (apart from assistance in grading). Out of mainstream education, they are taken to special education centers for 3 hours in every week. So, students with SEN have only 3 hours of special education. Some participants argued that this is too low for these students. They suggested the idea that these students should get special education in at least half of their total education. So, they proposed that students with SEN should be educated in special education centers for at least 2 (full time) days of the week. Most of the participants also agreed on this proposal; but some of them said that they are not sure whether the government has a financial burden for covering this cost. Special education is subcontracted to private sector in Turkey. Each student has right to attend 3 hours free (government funded) special education in one week. Government may have to found its own special education schools if it decides to increase 3 hours to 10-15 hours a week; since covering these costs will be so hard. It can decrease its cost by establishing its own centers for special education. Some participants disagreed with this idea and stated that more special education and less mainstream education will isolate children with special needs from other students; and this is not good for their well-being.
- Some parents of PWD complained about too long legal procedures for PWD so as to be considered as eligible for special education. They stated they have to go several institutions and hospitals for proving the eligibility. No participants disagreed on this problem.

- Some participants stated that playgrounds and buildings are not designed properly. They said important progress has been made in adopting streets to PWD needs; but this adaptation has not been done in playgrounds and buildings. Other participants agreed on this issue.
- Some parents reported that they need some day care centers for their children with SEN for to have leisure time. Moreover, some of them stated that especially parents of PWD who are confined to bed seriously need support of government. Participants said that government should hire mobile caretakers and employ them in helping these families. These parents will easily let their children to this mobile nurse and will do their necessary work and leisure activities when needed. Of course, families' rights to take the caretakers should be confined to some days; for example 2 days a month or 3 days a month. All participants agreed on the necessity for day care centers and mobile caretakers.
- Participants also emphasized the importance of family training for parents of PWD. Government should organize trainings for parents.
- Participants stated the need for psychological support divisions in hospitals for parents of PWD. When the disability of the child is firstly revealed to the parents (after the birth or before the birth), parents should be taken to special division of the hospital which is constituted from experts of that disability type. These experts will provide technical knowledge as well as psychological support to the parents. All hospitals should involve divisions for support for each type of disabilities.
- Some participants stated the need for increasing the minimum obligatory percentage of disability employment of government institutions and private institutions. However, some other participants stated that these rates are almost same with European rates and global rates for disability employment; so it is hard (and may be wrong and unfair) to increase these obligatory minimum rates.

-Lunch break for 1.5 hour-

Afternoon session is started with the speech of Köksal Türkmen, a psychological counselor at Dost Special Education and Rehabilitation Center. He introduced selected curricula of undergraduate special education departments from various universities in Turkey and compared these with curricula of some foreign universities. He stated that special education is similar to European countries to a large extent. There are some differences, however. For example, he said that European countries and other good practices include more field of professions than Turkey has, in the matter of disability studies. He said that there are counselors, mentors, advisors, trainers and teachers in European countries who are elementarily working on disability issues. On the other hand, he said that Turkey has been trying to handle disability issues by primarily special education teachers. There are also mentors, advisors and counselors in Turkey, of course. But they are not widespread in disability area since they work in generally private sector and in Turkey, most parents of PWD cannot afford to pay for their effort. He said that relative government institutions and special education and rehabilitation centers have to employ some counselors, advisors and mentors; however, their number is very few to reciprocate all the need. He said that project EXPERIENCE would be so beneficial in providing special education teachers with advising, counseling and mentoring skills and knowledge; and thanks to this project, Turkish version of special education would go better. Then, he passed to expected results of project EXPERIENCE. He introduced expected results. He stated that project EXPERIENCE

aims to exchange and share experiences, ideas, procedures and methods at the international level in the field of education of mentors, experts by experience, special and technical advisors of PWD. He concluded as emphasizing the importance of projects like EXPERIENCE and their benefits to circumstances of PWD.

Prof. Dr. Dolunay Şenol started her speech by introducing herself. She said that disability is an issue that must be handled with cooperation of three parties: Family, teachers/trainers and government. She stated that government is still in a strong position and private entrepreneurships and initiatives are still weak in Turkey; so government continues to regulate disability area and support PWD in all fields of life. Secondly, teachers and trainers is so important since they prepare PWD to the life and labor market. Third and the most important one is the family of PWD. She argued that just parenting children with SEN with regular parenting abilities is not sufficient for children with SEN. She said that the parents should also be trained and rehabilitated. Then, she explained what skills and knowledge the parents must have one by one. She said that some parents in Turkey have too restricted knowledge about the type of disability their child has had for years. She defined this as “deliberate ignorance”. Parents sometimes run into a heavy despair after they try to do anything for treatment. They think their child will never become a “normal” person; so there is nothing to do. They sometimes are aware of learning about the type of disability. Mrs. Şenol stated that parents should never give up although their children will never become non-disabled. The main point here is that aim is to improve the child’s independent living skills and knowledge as much as possible; so as to better integrate him to the society. She also underlined the significance of teachers support and encouragement to parents to involve them to training process. So, she said project EXPERIENCE should aim to enhance communication skills of teachers, to increase their level of knowledge in parents’ psychology and to provide them with mentoring, advising, counseling and guiding abilities.

The next speaker is Mr. Faruk Sevindi. He started with talking on what is an e-learning platform is. He also indicated an example of it, which had been prepared for a totally different area, but a good example of an e-learning platform. Starting with this, he explained desired features of an e-learning platform. He said that flashcards of learning chapters should be visually attractive and eye friendly. He also stated that knowledge on each flashcard should be limited and not so much. Besides, he said that each topic should be lectured as a summary in e-learning platforms. E-learning platforms have to teach the core of the topics as tabloids and should be easy. Moreover, he said that an evaluative part should be added to the end of each chapter. These parts may be in the form of tests, matches, cards or in any kind of joyful games. Evaluation will be better to in this form, rather than hard exams. He said that they worked together with Dost in some previous projects in the past and he is the head of an umbrella organization to more than 200 special education schools. He concluded his remarks with stating that he will surely examine EXPERIENCE products and suggest them to other disability related institutions.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Keskin stated that in Turkey, special education teachers/trainers are educated in special education departments of universities and universities have few professors in special education in Turkey. He said that there are not enough doctors and professors who are experts of the field in Turkey. Secondly, he stated that special education department students are mostly complaining about shortage of practicing during four year university education. There are so abundant amount of theoretical knowledge in curricula, but little practicing in special education departments. So, practice part of the education shouldn’t be neglected. Thirdly, he said that special

education teachers generally experience lack of class materials according to different levels and types of disabilities. They say that generally there is only one educational toy in the class and they have to use it when educating all students with SEN. So, Mr. Keskin stated this is as a big problem in special education practicing in Turkey. Fourthly, he reported that amount of in-service trainings is not sufficient for special education teachers. Particularly, he stated that teachers/trainers in private schools have very little in-service training; one time in a year etc. So, it will be better to increase compulsory in-service trainings because lifelong learning is so important for all people in all jobs. Fifthly, Mr. Keskin reported that branching in special education has been recently removed from special education in universities in Turkey. In the past, there were various branches in special education faculties as training teacher of hearing impairment, teacher of visually impaired, teacher of mentally handicapped etc. But, by now, all these branches are combined under special education department in universities in Turkey. Special education teachers complain about their deficiency in some situations. For example, special education teachers train all types of PWD; including speech handicapped individuals. Teachers must also apply speaking practices with these individuals. But, they never get lectures in their university education and this is the job of speaking therapists; who never exist in special education schools or government schools, but only exist in some hospitals. Mr. Keskin reported this is as an important problem. Mr. Keskin concluded his remarks with specifying that these deficiencies cannot be covered entirely by project EXPERIENCE. However, the project can increase the awareness and knowledge of teachers about European country practices.

The next before the last session is a group study again. Participants again divided into 6 groups and asked to brainstorm on what “the Necessary Content, Quality and Features that should be included in E-learning platform of EXPERIENCE”. After brainstorming ends, groups were asked to reveal their results and discuss on it. Results of the discussion were:

- Teachers should be trained about local and national labor market for PWD. Some participants said that teachers should know basic statistics of employment of PWD in national and European level and should be able to compare them. Moreover, they should know regulations for disability employment (quotas, minimum rates etc.) in order to better guide to PWD. So, teachers should be taught to be more employment oriented when training PWD.
- Teachers and trainers should know how to prepare a CV, how to search a job, how to communicate in job interviews etc. so as to be able to teach them to PWD.
- Some participants complained about poor communication of some teachers who are teaching at mainstream schools their children continue. They said EXPERIENCE e-learning platform must involve a communication part for teachers and this platform must be reached to the teachers in mainstream schools. They complain about these teachers and said that they never understand sensitivities of students with SEN and regard these students as others.
- As discussed above, some participants stated that teachers should be taught in counseling, advising and mentoring. They should be provided with necessary skills and knowledge for these professions.
- Some participants (teachers and trainers) proposed to add a part about a scaling and evaluation chapter to the platform. They said they want to know more in this topic.
- Some special education teacher participants emphasized that special education trainers in Turkey don't have enough knowledge in child development (developmental phases etc.) and

child psychology; since they are educated in disability issues for PWD at all ages. All participants agreed on this issue.

- Some participants suggested involving typical problematic behaviors that PWD have and intervention strategies to the e-learning platform.

The last session was proposed as a Question – Answer part. This part is combined with the discussion part above; so is not held as a separate session. The workshop is ended by concluding remarks of Dr. Faruk Aydın. He said that he appreciated the workshop; it was fruitful and efficient and beyond his expectations. He suggested participants talking workshop topics and results with other people in their environment. He said that he will inform all participants about EXPERIENCE products when they are completed.

At the end, leaflets are distributed to participants.