



Poland

3D4DEAF - Promoting digital transformation and social innovation in VET for better access of deaf students to the labour market



The 3D4DEAF aims to promote social inclusion and improve the outreach to people with fewer opportunities focusing on people with deafness/hearing impairments. The main objective is to develop a Training programme for VET teachers and students with deafness or hearing impairments to upgrade their 3D, coding, digital, and social entrepreneurial skills to meet the needs of the digital labour market and foster equal opportunities.

NATIONAL REPORT RESULTS

Education of deaf/hearing impairment students

1

National policies regarding the education

There are no separate policies regarding the education of the deaf, but there are some actions. At the academic level, there are Offices for Persons with Disabilities, aimed at eliminating all barriers and improving participation in the life of the academic community. Vocational courses and training are an area of lifelong learning that is willingly supported by the Polish government and EU Funds. Projects supporting vocational education, as well as training from district employment agencies, are carried out. Local governments raise money from the budget for investments in special schools. The Ministry of Education is working on solutions to help deaf students learn, e.g. "Migaj razem z nami".



NUMBER OF DEAF/HEARING IMPAIRMENT STUDENTS IN POLAND
OVER 15 000

2

Training for the teachers

Education in the field of functioning of the deaf and hard of hearing can be obtained at 1st and 2nd-degree studies, as well as postgraduate studies in surdopedagogy, speech therapy, and special education. However, the study programs focus mainly on the issues of rehabilitation, correction of speech defects, and issues of social integration and education of the deaf. They lack topics related to Deaf Culture, sign language, the identity of the deaf as a linguistic minority, and many other important issues. There are no Polish Sign Language (PJM) courses, only occasionally as part of the study program, an artificial Sign Language System (SJM) course is available. The regulations do not indicate which of the languages (PJM, SJM) or at what level teachers working with students with hearing disabilities should know.

The situation of deaf people in the labor market

3

National policies regarding the labor market

As part of the vocational rehabilitation system, the Deaf can be activated through training, internships, professional preparation for adults, intervention works, studies, as well as starting a business with a possible refund of social security contributions. Vocational Activity Centers, Sheltered Work Establishments and Vocational Therapy Workshops are being created. In addition, there are instruments to support the employment of people with disabilities addressed to employers, such as monthly wage subsidies, subsidies for creating or equipping workstations. Every employer employing at least 25 full-time employees is obliged to make monthly payments to the State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PFRON). The deaf community is supported from its funds.

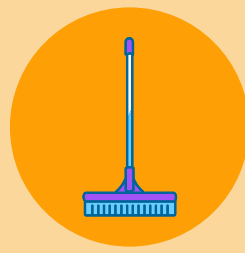
JOB POSITIONS FOR THE TARGET GROUP IN THE LABOR MARKET



packer



warehouse



maintenance



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Digitalisation of the education

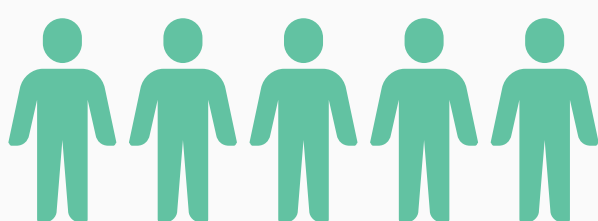
4

Training for the teachers

The report 'State of Industry 4.0 in Poland' indicates that the development of Industry 4.0 in the country is dynamic, but still too slow to guarantee us an important position in this field on the international stage. There is still much to be done in terms of robotization and digitization of Polish education. This is attributed to the digital revolution. In Poland, there are over two million students with special needs, including the deaf. Especially this group requires investment in digital infrastructure, equipment, teacher competences and appropriate software. According to the main directions of the state's educational policy in Poland, there are two related to digital upskilling of teachers and STEAM education. But the programs such as this are no long-term. Such policies and programs are still lacking.

FOCUS GROUPS RESULTS

3 focus groups organised in Poland



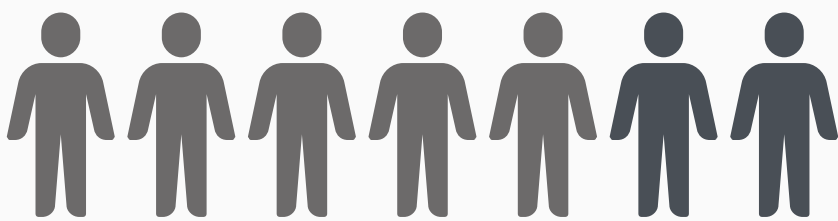
VET TEACHERS

5



VET STUDENTS

5 (4 girls, 1 boy)



ENTREPRENEURS

7

5

Focus Group Results: VET Teachers

The main challenge for teachers is to communicate with the student so that they understand the instructions, questions, and educational materials. Teachers have access to language training, appropriate textbooks and other tools (Internet, mobile applications). An individual curriculum is used, tailored to the needs of the student. Psychological and pedagogical support is offered. Vocational training takes place mainly in special institutions. However, in practice, this does not always match the needs of deaf students. Access to specialized teachers and adapted materials is limited. At the same time, the education system is too complicated and demanding. Knowledge about Deaf Culture is also at a low level. More often artificial SJM is used instead of natural PJM. Emotional and social support is insufficient.

6

Focus Group Results: VET Students

Deaf students must bend to the system, not the other way around. It starts with a lack of proper communication and a misunderstanding of their needs. Instead of developing an identity, they are forced to talk and work with a speech therapist. The education itself is based on speech and writing. If the teacher knows sign language, it is artificial SJM, not natural PJM. There is a lack of common materials developed in PJM grammar, properly simplified and visualized. Difficulties also occur when passing exams, where just reading the questions is a problem. Deaf people eventually graduate from school, but they are much less prepared for life than hearing graduates. They are not taught independence, thinking, or creativity - instead, there is reproducible, memorized learning. All this limits the paths of development, which is why the Deaf are often forced into a given profession (usually simple manual work). It leads to the deaf's passivity, learned helplessness and expectation that hearing people will do their job.

7

Focus Group Results: Entrepreneurs

There are internships from the employment office, subsidies from PFRON funds for employing people with disabilities, and tools facilitating contact (e.g. online sign language interpreters). EU-funded projects and NGO activities also play an important role. Unfortunately, there is a lack of systemic solutions ensuring long-term assistance. Most employers do not know sign language and are not aware of the functioning of the Deaf, which is why they are afraid to employ them - they do not know how to communicate with them, introduce them to work, settle tasks; how to deal with them. The availability of interpreters is insufficient and the associated costs further deter employers. Occupational physicians are also skeptical about admitting the Deaf to most professions. There is also no support from psychologists in sign language for Deaf people entering the labor market.



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