



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

Country: Lithuania

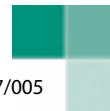
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The information contained in this report was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in May 2010.

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

Disabled pupils have the possibility to receive special pedagogical, psychological assistance, provision of educational assistive technology and training appliances, transportation to educational institution. Assistance for disabled pupils is rendered by: educational institutions (special pedagogical assistance – special pedagogue, speech therapist, special assistance – teacher's assistant, sign language interpreter, etc, psychological – psychologist). Administration of educational institution is responsible for ensuring and coordination of the assistance.

Pupils studying at mainstream school receive complementary financing – a larger 'pupil basket' calculation (which travels with the student). In 2010 the pupil's basket amounted to 3,310 (958 EUR). It should be accentuated that neither a disabled pupil nor his/her relatives participate in taking the decision on the use of this basket money.

The number of disabled students in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) increased during last few years. Despite this fact, there are some HEI, where disabled people cannot study. There is no HEI, that would be fully adapted to people with special needs or could provide a quality and comprehensive service system, but still there are a lot of HEIs that which are adapting the environment and successfully improving their availability to disabled students. The range of services for students with special needs is expanding, but the services are still more oriented to consultative – administrative services, volunteers are not enough involved. HEIs try to make higher education accessible to disabled students by using their own (HEI) finances. Parts of HEI receive financial support from the Ministry of Education and Science. Disabled students who have up to 45% of working efficiency and do not have academic debts can receive financial help. They can receive a monthly special needs allowance (180 litas – 52 euros) and, if they are paying for their education, a semester allowance for part payment for studies (416 litas – 121 euros). For the year 2009 there were 36 HEI who applied for the need for disabled students allowances.

The situation in practical assistance with learning for disabled students is complicated. Practical assistance can be received only by deaf students who can receive the services of sign language interpreter from a local Sign language interpretation center. There are not enough purchasable services for disabled students in HEI nor provided for free by the staff of HEI.

To improve disabled students' situation in HEI it is necessary to create national database of disabled students in HEI in Lithuania. Also in the high schools development strategy it is necessary to foresee equal opportunities and accessibility for disabled people and other people who are at social risk. Disabled students' participation in study process, university community's life, career planning process must be enhanced. It is recommended to establish special groups for co-coordinating the interests of all university community members', also to establish the post of coordinator for equal rights and possibilities. The state could create or find and use more and new ways how to incentive HEI.



Section 2: Legal and policy context

In addition to the following items, an overview of the legal history and context for special needs education is also provided in the European Agency country report for Lithuania¹ and the Eurydice educational system description². In general terms, the Ministry of Education and Science³ is responsible for general education, vocational training, higher education and lifelong learning. The Ministries of Health⁴ and Social Security and Labour⁵ are also involved in the special education system.

The current structure of Special Education is outlined in the 1998 Law on Special Education⁶, which includes provision for 'early and pre-school education, general training, vocational, college and university education, adult education and supplementary education of persons with special needs' (Art 1). According to this law, Special Education in Lithuania is treated as 'the education and training of persons with special needs, as well as development of their values, taking full account of their abilities and potential' (Art. 3). The law recognizes that the need for assistance and services arises from 'the fact that the mainstream educational and self-educational requirements do not correspond with the opportunities of persons with special needs'. It is based on stated principles of equal opportunities, integration, decentralisation, universality and flexibility. Free state education is available to all children and young people up to the age of 21.

Art. 4 determines that 'special education shall be implemented based upon the general principles of education in Lithuania and the following separate principles of special education'. Firstly, 'the equal opportunities and the same conditions for education and self-education of persons with special needs as those of other local community members' must be created. Also it is important to stimulate 'self-education and education of persons with special needs together with members of the local community and equal participation in the life thereof'. Thirdly, the attention should be paid to induce the 'participation of the family and public and local government institutions in educating persons with special needs'. It is important to mention that all persons with special need should be included in the education system, and this self-education and education of persons with special needs should continue throughout their lifetime. The special education should be successive and flexible and functional.

¹ <http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/lithuania>

²

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

³ www.smm.lt

⁴ <http://www.sam.lt/>

⁵ <http://www.socmin.lt/>

⁶ Law on Special Education http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=93743



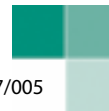
According to Art. 15 Education Act (amended 2006)⁷ the stated purpose of special education is:

- 'to assist an individual with special needs in his development, to help him learn according to his abilities, attain an education level and acquire a qualification; and to overcome social exclusion.' (Art 15.1).
- 'Special education is provided according to all compulsory and universally available programs of education. If necessary, such programs are amended and adjusted, special education curricula are developed and additional assistance is provided.' (Art 15.2).
- 'Special education is implemented by all schools that provide compulsory and universally available education, other education providers and (in certain cases) special education schools.' (Art 15.3).
- 'Completion of formal education programs may, for the purposes of special education, take longer than the established period. A learner who studies at intervals may complete the programs by way of discrete modules.' (Art 15.4)
- 'Individuals with special needs who study according to programs that meet national standards for attainment of an education level may attain such a level and/or a qualification. In certain cases a qualification is acquired without having attained an education level.' (Art 15.5)

The same Law on Education provides that:

- 'upon the request of the parents (foster parents, guardians) of a child with special needs, conditions are ensured for the child to study in a fully or partially integrated form at a pre-school and general education school located as close as possible to his home or at a school implementing a special education program. The school's special education commission or the Pedagogical-psychological Service assess special education needs and recommend a form of education. The Pedagogical-psychological Service recommends a school for the child.' (Art 34.1).
- 'Vocational, post-secondary schools and schools of higher education establish a supplementary preferential enrolment procedure for persons with special needs.' (Art 34.2)
- 'Accessibility of education to persons with special needs is ensured by adapting the school's environment, by providing psychological, special-pedagogical and special assistance, by supplying such persons with assistive education technology and special teaching aids, also in other ways prescribed in law.' (Art 34.3)

⁷ Law on Education http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=281043



The 1998 Law on Special Education⁸ provides that:

- ‘Persons with special needs shall be educated at state, municipal and non- state institutions of all types of general and Special Education, care facilities and special and special centres for adults. Persons unable to attend educational institutions shall be instructed at home.’ (Art 9.2)
- ‘The duration of instruction for pupils with special needs at special schools or other Special Education institutions, may last 1-2 years longer than that of students in general classes at general education schools.’ (Art 12.6)

On finishing school, a person with special educational needs has a possibility to ‘acquire a profession’ at: vocational schools, vocational instruction centres and courses; special schools of vocational training designed for persons with special needs; special schools vocational training departments; college-level schools; universities. (Art 13).

Art. 23 affirms who should provide special pedagogical, psychological and social assistance; health care services; educational assistive technology and training appliances provision; educational institution adaptation; and transportation to educational institution services. It includes the provision, free of charge, of ‘teacher assistant, reader, guide and sign language interpreter’ services. According to Ruškus, Blinstrubas, Daugėla, Šaparnis, Žukauskas (2007), students with special needs estimate the help and support they receive as negative and the need of this help and social services as necessary (see also, later sections of this report).

Vocational rehabilitation training is defined in the Social Integration of Disabled Persons Act⁹ (*Neįgalųjų Socialinės Integracijos Įstatymas*), which also affirms that all disabled people have an equal right to education as other citizens. It is worth noting that children with more severe impairments were not treated as educable before the political changes of the early 1990s.

Persons with special needs are attributed to a group of special educational needs (and the need for assistance is determined) by a special education commission of an educational institution¹⁰, pedagogical psychological services, Pedagogical Psychological Centre and its departments. This determines:

- programme level;
- period of application programme modifications;
- education methods, pace, forms;
- pedagogues and specialists adapting the programme;
- *adaptation of education environment*;
- choosing education place in a class (group), adaptation of education

⁸ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=93743

⁹ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=264550

¹⁰ http://www.smm.lt/teisine_baze/docs/isakymai/00_1057.htm

- environment and premises;
- need for technical assistance measures (educational assistive technology and training appliances);
- intensiveness and multilayeredness of pedagogical and special pedagogical, psychological, special assistance;
- need for special training appliances;
- *assistance for a family and person:*
- need of a family for pedagogical and psychological;
- need for social assistance for a family and person.

There is an adapted secondary education two-year education curricula for pupils with special needs. This curricula is adapted to peoples with special needs' skills and education level and is aimed to pupils with special needs, who are fully integrated into general education classes. Pupils, who have completed adapted basic education curricula are admitted to continue their studies by adapted secondary education curricula, which lasts 2 years¹¹.

Persons with special needs, who have completed secondary education curricula are admitted to III level vocational training curricula, for which he/ she has enough knowledge and skills, acquired during adapted secondary education curricula vocational training? The vocational rehabilitation system in Lithuania, briefly, may be described as follows: the need of a disabled person for vocational rehabilitation services is identified by the *disability and working capacity identification service* → individual vocational rehabilitation plan is made in *Territorial Labour Exchange Office* → vocational rehabilitation programme is realized in the institution *providing vocational rehabilitation services* → having implemented a vocational rehabilitation programme in *disability and working capacity identification service* the person's level of working capacity is identified (remainder of working capacity, %).

¹¹ http://www.studijos.lt/mokymo_programa/367/0/Adaptuota-Vidurinio-Ugdymo-Programa



Section 3: Evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion

Lithuania has a population of 3.5 million people in all. According to Population census of 2004¹² there were 7.5% people with disabilities in Lithuania. According to the Department of Statistics, in the academic year 2009-2010 there were 2,905 mentally impaired pupils; 212 pupils had impaired speech; 211 impaired eyesight; 395 impaired hearing; 268 pupils had muscle and motor system disability. In the same year 64 special schools provided their services for 4,253 pupils with special needs. 364 pupils with special needs have got services in sanatorium schools¹³.

The number of pupils with special needs and number of special schools in urban and rural areas is remarkably different; the majority of pupils and schools are in urban areas. It is important to highlight that the number of children and pupils with special needs, who were partly or fully integrated in the special, catch-up and developmental classes (partial integration) of education institutions, decreased during last 5 years: in academic year 2009-2010, 817 children and pupils with special needs were integrated in special, catch-up and developmental classes (partial integration) while in the academic year 2004-2005 it was 906¹⁴. 46,780 children and pupils with special needs were fully integrated into general education classes in 2009-2010, compared to 51,970 in 2004-5¹⁵.

It is not known the exact percentage of people with disabilities who would be potentially able to study in higher education. Only one research¹⁶ can be referenced as relevant, which stated that in preschool education there were 15.1% pupils with special needs, in secondary education 10.3%, in vocational schools 2.4%, colleges 0.4% and universities 0.3%. So, the decrease of pupils/students in each level of education is evident.

According to the Department of Statistics there were 210,400 students in the academic year 2008-2009. The Lithuanian National Union of Students¹⁷ (LSS) has collected annual statistical reports about disability¹⁸ in higher education from 2005. The number of students with disabilities has increased almost twice, from 530 disabled students in the academic year 2005-2006 to 1,026 disabled students in 2009-2010 (roughly 0.5% students from all students' population). So, the participation rate of disabled and non-disabled students in higher education is still remarkably different.

Some students with disability do gain remarkably high marks, especially those who study with assistance of their parents or personally-hired persons.

¹² Department of Statistics www.stat.gov.lt

¹³ <http://db1.stat.gov.lt/statbank/default.asp?w=1280>

¹⁴ <http://db1.stat.gov.lt/statbank/default.asp?w=1280>

¹⁵ <http://db1.stat.gov.lt/statbank/default.asp?w=1280>

¹⁶ "The Range of Persons with Special Needs Education", 2007

¹⁷ <http://www.lss.lt/dokumentai/kiti-45/lt/>

¹⁸ <http://db1.stat.gov.lt/statbank/default.asp?w=1280>

However, some disabled students who do not have accessibility or adapted literature end up with lower marks. For the moment, there are no evidence-based research studies about academic progress. At the request of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania the first national survey “Participation of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in Lithuania” was carried out for the first time in Lithuania during academic year of 2005-2006. However, a deeper, qualitative scientific examination of HE accessibility for disability issues and disabled students’ participation is needed. Furthermore, the statistical data about disabled students’ educational outcomes and qualifications is not being collected in Lithuania so far.

Taking into consideration the research by LSS, the conclusion appears that there is no tangible evidence about the heterogeneity of disabled student group. Firstly, higher education institutions (HEI) do not know themselves what kind of disabilities people do have because there are no obligations to disclose your type of disability or to fill any kind of registration form. Undoubtedly, some tendencies are evident. For example, at the moment Lithuanian HEIs are able to give education for persons with mild but not severe levels of disability. So, those persons who are more or less able to take care about themselves, or are given support by their family members, are able to study. However, there are some examples of disabled students who have chosen distance learning, for example, in Vytautas Magnus University. It would be difficult to collect such kind of statistics because distance learning is based on choosing different subjects. It is true to say that the goal, in general, is to create an integrated learning strategy, composed of both distance and traditional learning. There is a tendency at the moment that disabled students are choosing more traditional than distance learning. In 2009 there were four disabled students from four HEI, who were studying abroad as Erasmus exchange students, at the same time there were no visiting students from foreign university¹⁹.

Secondly, the LSS research (2009) showed that there were 51% male and 49% female disabled students. The general student population (*Department of Statistics, 2009*) has consisted of 41% of male students and 59% female students. Thereby, disabled male students’ participation was found to be 10 percentage points higher than male students in general. Conversely, disabled female students’ participation was found to be 10 points lower than females in general. According to the data, gathered by LSS (2010), most disabled students are studying in bachelor studies – 86%, master – 10% and doctoral – 1%. There were disabled lecturers in 15 HEI and 12 HEI did not have any data about this. There are 11 HEI where some members of administration have disability (LSS are implementing research by voluntary questionnaires, so data cannot be taken as definitely representative). For example, 46 HEI out of 50 responded in the year 2005-2006, 36 out of 50 in the year 2006-2007, 41 out of 50 in 2007-2008, 43 out of 50 in the year 2008-2009 and 33 out of 46 in the year 2009-2010)²⁰

¹⁹ <http://www.lss.lt/archyvas-30/lt/studentus-su-negalia-lietuvoje-saugos-tarptautine-konvencija-180.html>

²⁰ <http://www.lss.lt/dokumentai/kiti-45/lt/>



There are no data about ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion of disabled students but, taking into consideration that Lithuanian population is very homogenous, the basic tendencies should be apparent between students with disabilities as well. It is important to mention that there is no evidence about students with dyslexia and dysgraphia. At least until now, this group of students has been invisible. Also, dyslexia and dysgraphia are not treated as a disability in Lithuania.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. According to the Social Report (2008-2009), in 2008 there were 9 vocational rehabilitation institutions, which provided vocational rehabilitation services in 139 programmes. Since 2005 the need of vocational rehabilitation services is being observed. 'In 2008, the programme of vocational rehabilitation used LTL 6450800 (including LTL 5965200 for vocational rehabilitation services and LTL 485600 for vocational rehabilitation benefits from the state budget). The average duration of a vocational rehabilitation programme is 5.4 months.



Section 4: Types of support for students and trainees

In 2008 there were 200 study programs for teachers' education in Lithuania: 39 in higher non-university studies, 161 in higher university studies. From 1995, according to requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science²¹, every student who attempts to become a primary grades or subject teacher ought to study a compulsory course in special needs education. Real practice shows that not all higher education institutions respond to these requirements. L. Milteniene (2010)²² carried out research and analyzed the content of 70 higher university and 11 higher non-university study programs of initial teacher training using The Open System of *Conveyance, Consulting and Counseling* (AIKOS)²³. It was found that in only 25 programs (31% of those analyzed) there was at the least one course in special needs education or related to inclusive education. Usually, these courses were found in programs for primary grade teachers and social pedagogue training. For example in Siauliai University, Vytautas Magnus University, Klaipeda University, Vilnius Pedagogical university, students of such programs as social pedagogy, social work, health education have some courses related with disability: *Social work with children having special needs, Social educational work with disabled persons, Social inequality and segregation and etc.* Alternatively, students have a pedagogical practice in different institutions where disabled persons are educated or nursed.

General teachers and special needs education teachers graduate from different programs. The special needs education teachers' program includes several courses in disability issues.

In 2009-2011 Lithuania participates in the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education project *Teacher Education for Inclusion*, seeking to develop the teacher training system in this area.

In Lithuania, practical help for pupils in schools is provided by teacher' assistants. According to LR Education and Science Minister's order that came into force in 2005²⁴, assistant (hereinafter – assistant) help pupils with moderate, severe and profound special educational needs and restricted abilities to independently participate in education and extracurricular activity. Educational help is provided by special pedagogues, speech therapists, social pedagogues having university education.

²¹ The recommendation is not available in the internet. There is a complicated situation with these recommendations: officially everywhere is maintained, that these recommendations exist, but in reality there is no official document.

²² Milteniene L. (2010). Teacher Education for Inclusion: Results of study programmes' content analysis. Thesis of international research conference *Higher Education Studies: Challenges and Opportunities*. 2010-04-15 Siauliai College, Lithuania.

²³ AIKOS <http://www.aikos.smm.lt/aikos/programs.htm>

²⁴ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=248644&p_query=&p_tr2=

However, there is no personal support system for disabled students in HEI in Lithuania. This means that we do not have note-takers, readers, personal assistants or interpreters in higher education, even though the 1998 Law on Special Education applies to all levels of education (see section 1 of this report). Their functions are being implemented by student peers, family members or sometimes tutors. For example, there are sign language courses in Vytautas Magnus University. However, the availability of help from sign language interpreters is very limited.

Discussing the types of support for disabled people as trainees the following kinds of support should be mentioned:

Special pedagogical, psychological and social assistance. ‘Special pedagogical, psychological and social assistance shall be rendered to persons with special needs and their parents (or a child’s guardians) by: special education commissions of general education institutions; pedagogical psychological services; specialized services of healthcare institutions; special education institutions’. It is also expedient to mention free services of ‘teacher assistant, reader, guide, sign language interpreter for persons with special needs in educational institutions according to the procedure established by the Government or an institution authorised by it’ (Article 23 of LR Law on Special Education).

Provision of educational assistive technology and training appliances. ‘Persons with special needs shall be supplied with educational assistive technology and special training appliances in educational institutions and at home, in accordance with the procedure established by the Government or an institution authorised by it’ (Article 25 of LR Law on Special Education).

Transportation to educational institution. ‘The founder of an educational institution shall organise free transportation to the institution and back home for persons with special needs under 21 years of age, who are unable (can not walk independently and due to very serious impairment are unsafe on the street) to reach the educational institution (with the exception of vocational schools, colleges and universities) on their own’. (Article 25 of LR Law on Special Education).

Discussing the types of support of young people with disabilities as students it should be mentioned that financial support is provided (more detailed information about financial support is presented in 4a).

Also, HEI are providing information in special publications and their websites about higher education accessibility, support forms and persons who could be addressed for this issue. Roughly speaking, this information is provided by one third of HEI in all. The LSS research (2009) has showed that 19 HEIs are declaring themselves accessible for students with mobility impairments, for sight impairments – 4 and for hearing impairments – 7.



The position of disability coordinators have been created in 13 HEIs, deans are addressing disability problems in 10 HEI, the heads of departments – 6 HEI. Disabled students are, more or less, are participating in local Students Unions activities in 11 HEI and in the decision-making processes about HE accessibility in 9 HEIs.

Finally, information about study opportunities and disability education for HEIs, local student unions and society is being implemented by LSS. There are a lot of disability organizations in Lithuania, but they are not providing direct help for disabled students from the year when financial help started to be given by the State.

Taking into account that it is important to ensure successful participation in labour market not only support in gaining professional qualification, it is expedient to mention the “the support, i.e., subsidies for disabled people striving to integrate into labour market and for employers who employ disabled people”.²⁵ Disabled people, who are unemployed, are allocated subsidies to start business, to establish one’s own workplace, and employers could be allocated subsidies to compensate the salary of a disabled employee or a subsidy for establishment or adaptation of a workplace ²⁶for a disabled person.

In Lithuania, information about the vocational education of disabled people and kinds of support in striving to gain vocational qualification has been systemized in the publication *Guide of profession*²⁷ from 2002. According Branauskiene, Elijosius, Vinikaityte (2010) Lithuania has not adopted many vocational training institutions (e.g. unadapted environment, unadapted vocational training programmes etc.) for people with disabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of vocational rehabilitation. In Lithuania “the aim of vocational rehabilitation is to develop or recover working capacity of disabled people and increase the possibilities of their employment”²⁸. In our country vocational rehabilitation programme consists of the following components: assessment of vocational skills; vocational counselling and consulting; recovery of vocational abilities or development of new vocational abilities; assistance in employment. This system is mainly created and developed from project funds and on the initiative of separate regions.

²⁵LR Užimtumo rėmimo įstatymas. (Nauja redakcija 2009 – 08 – 01).

http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=279173&p_query=&p_tr2=

²⁶ No, it does not apply to young people with disability in training for work (if we are talking about process of vocational training), but in the workplace it does not independently is she or he in training for work or isn’t.

²⁷ Baranauskienė, I., Elijošius, E. Vinikaitytė, J. (2009). Neįgalių asmenų profesinio ugdymosi galimybės. (Red. Kligienė, M.). *Profesijos vadovas, 2009*. Vilnius: Švietimo mainų paramos fondas (Euroguidance).

²⁸LR *Neįgaliųjų socialinės integracijos įstatymas* (2005).

http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=264550&p_query=&p_tr2=



Section 4a: Financial support

The Department for the Affairs of disabled at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour²⁹ is responsible for financial support to disabled pupils and students. Pupils studying at mainstream school receive complementary financing – a larger pupil's 'basket' (per capita funding to the municipality, paid to the school) that is calculated according to an additional supplement for pupils with special needs of approximately 35%. In 2010, the pupil's basket amounted to 3,310 LTL (approximately €958). Financial support can be received by disabled students who are assessed as having up to 45% of working efficiency and who do not have academic debts or other penalties imposed by the university.

For satisfying special needs there is a monthly targeted benefit that amounts to 50% of the state social insurance basic pension (at the present time 180 LTL). For students who enter state higher education institutions, there are targeted benefit that amount to 3.2 times the basic social grants established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for every semester to partially compensate additional study expenses (at the present time 416 LTL). It should be noted that, in practice, the realization of this support goes smoothly.

If the student is studying in an exchange program, or partial studies abroad, s/he has right to receive financial support from her/his home university. Foreign students, or students without citizenship who satisfy the requirements and had declared their domicile in the Republic of Lithuania, have an equal right to financial support as local students.

The Department on Disability affairs of Social security and labour ministry got 37 requests of 26 public and 11 private higher schools for financial support for assistance to disabled students (2010 April, May, June). The total amount of required financial aid was 435.4 thousand litas. 759 disabled students have got the financial support (during this period).

When the Department for the Affairs of Disabled People at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour receives information from HEIs about disabled students, who have the right to financial support, a contract between the department and HEI is signed. Every three months, the department transfers money to the HEI. Each month the HEI pays money for the disabled student.

Until July 2009 vocational rehabilitation services for disabled persons were completely free, a vocational rehabilitation grant was also paid regardless of his/her other income, but from 24 July, 2009 "part of the expenses for food and accommodation"³⁰ has to be covered by the recipient of vocational rehabilitation services.

²⁹ It is so, more detailed: The department of the Affairs of the Disabled.

³⁰ Dėl LR Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro 2004 m. Gruodžio 31 d. įsakymo Nr. A1-301 "Dėl profesinės reabilitacijos paslaugų poreikio nustatymo kriterijų



Section 4b: Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations

As mentioned previously, the Law on Special Education provides that ‘Special pedagogical, psychological and social assistance shall be rendered to persons with special needs and their parents or a child’s guardians’ (Art. 23). Assistance for disabled pupils may be rendered by: Educational institutions (special pedagogical assistance – special pedagogue, speech therapist, special assistance – teacher’s assistant, sign language interpreter, etc, psychological – psychologist). Administration of educational institution is responsible for ensuring and coordination of the assistance.

Provision of special pedagogical assistance is regulated by more detailed description³¹. This states that speech therapist tenure is established in a mainstream school when there are 55-60 pupils having speech or other communication disorders (including pupils using cochlear implants). Special pedagogue tenure is established in a mainstream school when there are 20-30 pupils having intellectual disorders, specific cognitive disorders (underdevelopments), emotional, behavioural and social development disorders, movement and posture disorders, chronic somatic and neurological disorders, complex disorders, intellectual disorders, in case of the absence of typhlopedagogue or surdopedagogue – 15-20 pupils having visual, hearing disorders (including pupils using cochlear implants). Tenure of typhlopedagogue or surdopedagogue may be also established if in school there are 15-20 pupils having visual disorders/15-20 pupils having hearing disorders (including pupils using cochlear implants).

Teacher assistant’s tenure is established when in school, there are pupils having severe and profound special needs and limited possibilities to independently participate in education and extracurricular activity.

Psychologist’s tenure is established when in school when in school there are from 301 to 600 pupils.

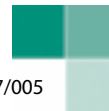
In case of need, persons having special needs are provided with technical assistance measures (provided by Technical Assistance Centre for Disabled People).

Free transportation to the institution and back home is organised for persons with special needs under 21 years of age, who are unable to walk independently or, due to severe impairment, are unsafe on the street (with the exception of vocational schools, colleges and universities) on their own (Law on Special Education, Art 27)³².

aprašo ir profesinės reabilitacijos paslaugų teikimo bei finansavimo taisyklių patvirtinimo“ pakeitimo.
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=349762

³¹ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=69873

³²LR *Specialiojo ugdymąstatymas* . Ketvirtas skirsnis, 27 straipsnis (1998 gruodžio 15 d. Nr. VIII-969).
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=69873



The Center for Technical Aid for Disabled People³³ (CTADP) under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour implements the system of social integration of disabled people by meeting the special needs of people with movement, vision and hearing disabilities by means of technical aids. According to the official procedure³⁴, the person (his/her parents or carers) applies to an institution appointed by the municipality 'to which the function of the provision of technical assistance measures is appointed...or to the territorial subdivision of the Centre'. A person has the right to receive, once in four years, up to 5,000 LTL but not exceeding actual expenses; for a scooter, once in six years up to 3,500 LTL; for a body thermometer (speaking), once in years up to 50 LTL; a mobile telephone (vibrating), once in 6 years up to 300 LTL, etc. In the aforementioned document the expenses for which technical measures are compensated and other conditions it is described in detail, here only examples are mentioned.

The person may independently decide how to use the financial support to satisfy special needs allocated with accordance to the assessment document – the monthly targeted benefit that amounts to 50% of state social insurance basic pension (noted earlier). It should be accentuated that neither a disabled pupil nor his/her relatives participate in taking the decision on the use of additional per capita 'basket' money allocated by the municipality to schools.

In 2007, by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science, a team of researchers conducted the study "Level of psychological, special pedagogical and special help for pupils of mainstream schools" (Ališauskas, Ališauskienė, Gerulaitis, Melienė, Miltenienė, Šapelytė, 2008³⁵). The results of the research revealed that the level of identifying and satisfying of pupils' special needs in different schools (municipalities, regions) varies. There are positive examples, witnessing that schools support children with special needs and are able to appropriately organize the assistance for these children, their teachers and parents. However, in the majority of educational institutions (municipalities, regions) the level of satisfying special needs is insufficient: special pedagogical assistance is rendered only for some children having special needs.

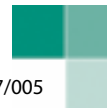
In HEIs practical assistance can be received only by deaf students, who can receive the services of a sign language interpreter from a local sign language interpretation centre. There are no purchasable services for disabled students in HEI, nor services provided free by the staff of HEIs.

Practical assistance is not provided in Lithuanian HEIs, so the assessment of needs for assistance is not being implemented either. There are some examples where disabled students are hiring a personal assistant to accompany them to university. This depends on the situation, but this kind of help costs on average €200-250 per month, approximately a minimal wage in Lithuania (€232).

³³ <http://www.tpnc.lt/index.php?1534099394>

³⁴ *Neįgalųjų aprūpinimo techninės pagalbos priemonėmis ir šių priemonių įsigijimo išlaidų kompensavimo tvarkos aprašas.* <http://www.tpnc.lt/index.php?2068669784>

³⁵ http://www.sumc.lt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=621&Itemid=0



The only document, which provides requirements for environmental adaptation for disabled people, is the Approval of Technical Construction Regulation³⁶. The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania is responsible for the preparation and supervision of the realization of environmental adaptation for disabled students' special needs. The local government and education institutions are responsible for environmental adaptation for disabled people. It is important to mention that there are no specific laws or demands for equipment or environmental adaptation in education institutions. Environmental adaptation for disabled pupils or students is based on general approvals of the technical construction regulations. Decisions are taken by the following ministries: Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Social Security and Labour; Ministry of Health; also by local government and education institutions. In educational institutions, where pupils or their parents (usually at schools) and students (usually in universities) are active, their voice is also important in the decision making process.

As previously mentioned, there is no specific document concerning equipment and environment adaptations in education institutions. In the Approval of Technical Construction Regulations education institutions are treated as public buildings/places. According to this document, the possibility for disabled people to enter, move freely and use all premises must be guaranteed. In each floor there should be an adapted toilet. All evacuation ways, exits, doors, stairs, ramps, halls and corridors must be adapted and a special alarm system must be installed. In all premises in educational institutions 5% of all spaces (not less than one place) must be adapted to disabled pupils or students. These places (for example, sitting, using the computer, reading places, etc.) must be evenly distributed in all premises. More detailed demands are contained in the Approval of Technical Construction Regulation.

Despite the fact that we have these regulations, not all education institutions adapt their environments. The most important reason is the lack of financing. According to Ruškus, Daugėla, Blinstrubas, Šaparnis, Žukauskas (2007)³⁷, the state's support for adaptation of educational institutions or living places is poor. There are just few universities (Vytautas Magnus University; Šiauliai University; Kaunas University of Technology) that have dormitories adapted to students with special needs. Educational institution and dwelling adaptation is still a pressing problem.

There is no official data on how many education institutions have adapted their environment to disabled people and how many disabled people are benefiting from this. Also, there is lack of research and published evidence about the equity or effectiveness of equipment or adaptations provided for the purposes of education and training.

³⁶ http://www.am.lt/VI/article.php3?article_id=4958

³⁷ http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/pr_analize/Negalia%20turintys%20studentai.pdf



Section 5: Evidence of good practice

Evidence of good practice No.1.

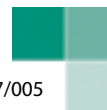
From 1992 VMU has implemented a social integration program for students with physical disabilities. According to special needs of disabled students, the material base is being created and reconstructed. Also, academic and social help and support is being provided: disabled students are supplied with special education means, recorders, audio-cassettes, duplicators, scanners, etc.

In VMU disabled students have a possibility to get privileges to join university, to get financial support; also the place in dormitory is guaranteed to them. If there is a need, the accompanying person can live together; a discount for paying fees is applied for both of them. The majority of premises in VMU is fully or partly adapted to students with movement disorders. The doors are automatic, elevators are broad, and in the part of lecture-rooms there are special places for people with movement disorders.

It is important so mention, that there is a rehabilitation room with special equipment for disabled students. Persons, who are using wheelchairs, can get into all libraries and reading rooms. In the main reading-room there is a place specially adapted for disabled students.

Evidence of good practice No.2.

Vilnius university at the moment has 115 disabled students out of 23,707 students. A few years ago the number of disabled students number was almost half this. Vilnius University Students Representation implemented a Program for Disabled Students. They knew personally some disabled students who needed personal assistance and reading help. At that time there was an electronic database of volunteers in Lithuania. So, letters were written to volunteers asking whether they would like to become personal assistants for disabled students. As a second stage, there were personal meetings organized with the volunteer, disabled student and a representative from VU SA to discuss practicalities. Afterwards, the volunteer and disabled student were contacted personally. Finally, both disabled student and volunteer assistant were invited to various leisure and academic activities organized by VU SA.



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