Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment

Case Studies from France

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to Tertiary Education and Employment

CASE STUDIES
FRANCE

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FOREWORD

There is little information available at present on the fortunes of students with special needs.[1] This lack of information and data is a great drawback on several counts: it disregards the fact that transition periods can also engender fragility, it reinforces social inequality and it prevents the promotion of policies that can smooth the path to success at school and university and integration into the world of work and society as a whole. That is why France agreed to take part in the research begun by the OECD in 2007, taking a particular interest in *Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment*.

In 2008, INS HEA (National Higher Institute for Training and Research for the Education of Young Disabled Persons and Adapted Teaching) was entrusted with the French contribution to the research. Jointly funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Community Life, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the *Caisse Nationale de Solidarité pour l'Autonomie* (National Solidarity Fund for Autonomy, CNSA) and INS HEA, this study seeks to identify the factors that support or hinder the transition to tertiary education or employment, considering the impact of measures and practices on school and/or university pathways and the daily life of students with special needs. The research also seeks to identify the pathways that encourage the social integration of disabled students and forestall the disruptions and discontinuities caused by longer transition periods and the individualisation of public policies.

The research draws on data from a government report, quantitative data from a longitudinal study which tracked a cohort of school and university students in 2008 and 2010, and qualitative data from interviews.

- ***The government report*** looks at the situation of the groups in question, existing transition policies and the quality of the institutional framework and support measures. The report is in nine sections: definitions of disability, statistics, current policies, funding, the institutional framework, support structures, training, involvement of parents and the community, and the outlook for the future.

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[1] In this report, we have chosen to use the terms "students with special needs" and "students with disabilities" or "disabled students" without distinction. That choice also corresponds to the understanding of the terms we came across during interviews: some students agreed that they had "special needs" without necessarily feeling "disabled", while others made no such distinction.

- *The longitudinal study* seeks to identify the factors that favour pathways to tertiary education and employment for a cohort of students with special needs in their final year of high school in 2006-2007 and for a cohort of university students who completed their undergraduate education in 2006-2007 (3-year undergraduate degree or equivalent, BTS, DUT). This element of the research is based on analysis of answers to questionnaires distributed to the two groups.

- *The case studies*, based on interviews with students and other stakeholders involved, aims to give an account of the skills mobilised and the strategies used to support them on their pathway. The information will highlight the practices in place and the articulation of employment, education and health issues.

The purpose of this report is to describe how the case studies were conducted. We start with a consideration of methodological aspects and the conditions for this phase of the research in France. We then describe the pathways of those we met and end with an analysis of the information gathered in relation to the questions raised by the research.

This phase of the research was coordinated by Olivia Rick under the aegis of Bernadette Céleste, director of INS HEA.

Bernadette Céleste and the study team would like to thank Serge Ebersold, sociologist and coordinator of the project for the OECD, for his attention and availability and for providing us with the information we needed in order to conduct the research.

The research was carried out in consultation with a **steering group** whose members included Catherine Becchetti-Bizot, General Inspector of Schools; Annie Bretagnolle, Inspector at the Equal Opportunity and Employment Unit of the General Directorate of Higher Education; Chantal Brutel, Head of School Education Statistics at the Assessment, Forward Planning and Performance Directorate; Jean-François Jamet, Deputy Head of the Unit for the Adaptive Education and Schooling of Children with Disabilities at the Directorate General for Schools; Philippe Van den Herreweghe, Ministerial Delegate for People with Disabilities; Eric Chenut, president of the association Droit au Savoir, and the co-ordinator Marie-Pierre Toubhans. The steering group was coordinated by Nadine Prost, OECD officer at the European and International Relations and Cooperation Directorate of the National Education and Higher Education and Research Ministries, Department of Community and Multilateral Affairs, delegate on the OECD Education Policy Committee.

As part of the arrangement for co financing the research, INS HEA made a practical contribution by setting up **a team within the Institute**. The group that carried out the case studies comprised Brigitte Bayet, Fabrice Bertin, Astrid Griffit, Nathalie Lewi-Dumont, Olivia Rick, Anne Vanbrugghe and Carole Waldvogel. Most of the interviews were filmed with technical support from the Institute's audiovisual and multimedia unit. Certain interviews with hearing-impaired individuals were conducted with the help of Vincent Bexiga and Guylaine Paris, sign-language interpreters at INS HEA. Tarik Berzedjou and Foued Nezzar, researchers at Strasbourg University, helped with data collection.

This report was written by Olivia Rick and revised by Sylvaine Granier, who was also responsible for the layout.

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the OECD methodology,[2] the case studies are intended to supplement the information provided by the government report and the longitudinal study. The information gathered in the course of this study contributes to knowledge about the formulation and implementation of effective policies for transition to tertiary education and employment.

To this end, the case studies aim to identify high-quality strategies developed and skills mobilised by stakeholders involved in the transition process to create pathways into higher education and employment for students with disabilities. In particular, they look at how those stakeholders:

- create a learning environment conducive to high-quality transition;
- include transition issues in the organisational framework of schools and universities, in teaching methods and in support strategies;
- link tertiary education with secondary education and working life;
- promote tracks between the different education sectors (from VET to tertiary education or from secondary education to tertiary education);
- develop coordinated services allowing for effective and smooth transition;
- prepare students with special needs for employment and independent living and enable them to cope with changing situations;
- ensure quality and improvement of practices.

According to the methodology used by the countries taking part in the OECD-led research, the case studies focus on successful transitions to tertiary education and employment. Respecting the characteristics of the groups questioned in the longitudinal study, the qualitative interviews were designed to shed light on the transitions:

- of school leavers with special needs[3] who are either in employment or in vocational training or higher education;
- of university students with special needs who are either in employment or continuing

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[2] Cf. Annex 1.

[3] As in the longitudinal study conducted for the purposes of this research, this study concerns students with an impairment or illness or learning difficulties, corresponding to CNC A and CNC B in the OECD classification.

in higher education after completing an undergraduate course.

The participating countries also used a common method to select students[4] for interview. Students were chosen[5] on the basis of initial information provided by stakeholders involved in transition programmes, especially higher education institutions, employer representatives and representatives of support structures.

Each student, apprentice or young worker was then asked to point us towards three or four people whom they thought had played an important part in their transition (parents, friends, university disability officer, teacher, employer, etc.). Consequently, each case study would comprise three to five interviews.

- The main purpose of the **student interviews** was to focus on pathways followed after leaving school or completing first-level tertiary education, on the enabling effect of teaching practices and supports as well as on strategies developed for overcoming barriers or difficulties.
- The aim of the **interviews with stakeholders involved in the transition process** was to emphasise key factors contributing to effective transition to tertiary education or employment (strategies developed and their strengths and weaknesses, and skills required and to be promoted).
- **Interviews with representatives from secondary schools** could concern issues such as policy strengths and weaknesses, diversity policies (accessibility, quality assurance, disability officers, awareness-raising), educational strategies and tools developed to create a learning environment conducive to progression in secondary education (staff empowerment, training courses), strategies and tools developed to foster transfer from secondary education (assessment of students' interests, formal transition plan), etc.
- **Interviews with representatives of support structures** varied according to the type of service provided. They could concern, for example, assessment procedures for identifying individuals and institutions' needs and required supports, around existing strategies and tools for interagency collaboration, support or accommodation strategies developed to empower institutions and individuals, and strategies and mechanisms

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[4] Given that all those interviewed had completed secondary education, we have preferred to use the generic term "students" in this study, except where indicated otherwise.
[5] See below, Conduct of the Qualitative Study.

developed for ensuring quality (quality standards, guidelines, monitoring and assessment mechanisms allowing for continuous improvement of practices).

- **Interviews with employers** could include such matters as existing support measures to accommodate students in the workplace as well as their effectiveness and quality, policies developed to open up to diversity (e.g. awareness campaign, diversity management, quality assurance, disability officers), and interagency strategies and tools developed with educational and other sectors involved in transitions to tertiary education and to employment.

- **Interviews with family members** could include aspects such as the quality of the educational environment provided to the student and its impact on progression in education and on the quality of transfer to tertiary education and employment, the type of involvement required and quality of involvement, etc.

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2. CONDUCT OF THE QUALITATIVE SURVEY

Groundwork by INS HEA began in late 2009 and continued throughout the first half of 2010. The first priority was to define the criteria for selecting structures that support the transition of disabled students to tertiary education or employment. At the same time, the problem arose of the different interpretations of the term "*successful* transition or pathway". These issues had to be resolved before the interviews could be conducted.

A. Choice of support structures

The primary aim of the case studies was to highlight the conditions in which transitions to tertiary education or employment can be prepared and take place. Bearing in mind the specific missions of INS HEA, however, the research also helped to give us an insight into possible distinctions relating to the type of impairment, illness or learning difficulty affecting students.

According to the structure, and where the structure is not primarily limited to students enrolled in a particular institution, support for disabled students in France is organised in different ways that might depend on the type of impairment and/or the age of the person concerned or whether the transition is to vocational training or university. In view of this diversity, and given the time limits and material conditions,[6] the key criterion for selecting structures soon proved to be possibility of access, in relation not only to the position of INS HEA and the team members with regard to disability issues, but also to the response times of the structures concerned.

On completion of this groundwork, the following support structures were selected:[7]

- a regional non-profit association that supports disabled students in their continuing education, student life and integration into the workforce;
- a regional unit that supports students in the context of vocational work-and-study training in preparation for integration into the workforce;

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[6] Under other circumstances, and even though an exhaustive review would entail specific research, it would have been interesting to focus our investigations on the status (private/public, non-profit, business federation, university unit, etc.) and source(s) of funding of the structures in order to gain a clearer insight into the likely similarities and differences in the design and provision of support.

[7] Located in the Paris region or elsewhere in France, they are also referred to in this report as "source structures". For reasons of confidentiality, we give only the stated missions of the structures that agreed to contribute to the research.

- a non-profit association that helps school and university students achieve their educational goals, focusing mainly on work-and-study training and integration into the workforce;
- an institute that supports sight-impaired children and young adults;
- a non-profit association that supports and helps children and adults with cognitive impairments and learning difficulties;
- a regional non-profit association that promotes the integration of hearing-impaired people;
- a non-profit association of families and friends of disabled people that particularly supports those with specific learning difficulties;
- two medical and educational clinic.

B. Selection of students and conduct of interviews

After describing the overall context of the research to each structure, we told our contacts in them how to select one or two students whom they were helping or had helped into tertiary education or employment. The condition relating to "successful transition or pathway" often raised questions, but for methodological reasons in particular we allowed them latitude to define it themselves. As well as avoiding another form of imposition originating in categories of perception (and judgment) linked to object-relations, this also gave us the possibility of subsequently comparing and measuring the differences between institutions' and students' definitions of what might constitute "success".[8] Lastly, we asked the representatives of these structures to make initial contact with the chosen students and, if they agreed, to pass on their contact details to us.

Once the students had been identified and informed and we had made contact with them, we described the purpose of the study to them in greater detail. We explained that we wanted to meet three or four people in their circle, whoever they may be, who they thought had played an important part in their pathway,[9] especially during the transition period after leaving school. While most of the students who agreed to meet us were able to give us the

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[8] Although it had been decided not to disclose this "motive" to the students questioned, it turned out that some researchers did in fact mention it to them at some point in the interview and that some students had already been told about it by the source structure representative.

[9] We refer to them here as "resource-person(s)".

names of those resource-persons immediately, some wanted time to think before getting back to us, during the meeting or after. Some wanted time to think because of the unexpected nature of the request; others wanted to sift through the people regarded as important. In both cases, we wanted the student to obtain each resource-person's consent before the members of the INS HEA team contacted them. These procedures inevitably had an effect on the time taken to conduct the research, which depended on the participants' availability.

The interviews began in early January 2010 and continued until early May.

Several interview guides were prepared, each one adapted to the type of person we would be interviewing. Specific guides were produced for students, for parents and friends and for resource-persons from support or educational structures. This enabled us to take account of the specific nature of the relationship to the student (and to the perception of his or her pathway) according to particular social or professional positions (emotional affinity of parents, resource-persons with whom the student had a professional or friendly relationship, etc.). It also meant that we could ensure a degree of consistency in the collection of data by different members of the team, since the interviews were divided between and conducted by seven different people. We tried to ensure that a given case study was conducted throughout by the same researcher, though this was not always possible.

Most of the interviews were recorded, with the interviewee's consent, and some were also filmed. The interviews lasted 90 minutes on average.

We conducted 69 interviews in all. Despite the precautions explained above, some initial contacts did not lead to extended interviews with resource-persons, because they were materially unable, did not have the time or turned down the request. In view of the methodological frameworks used by the participating countries, only eight case studies[10] were analysed in depth.[11]

C. Difficulties encountered and limitations of the qualitative study

Rather than difficulties, the first point to mention here is perhaps the time pressures and material restrictions we faced in view of the other phases of the research. The need to

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[10] See Summary Table below.

[11] However, it would have been regrettable not to take account of information that emerged from the other interviews, some of which we have therefore decided to include in this report.

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combine the obligations of conducting and following up the longitudinal study with those of the case studies restricted some of the possibilities on the ground at certain times. It is also important to bear in mind that the team was made up of people who were all responsible for other research and training activities. Although the recruitment of researchers from outside INS HEA meant that there was no interruption in data collection and that a start could be made on analysis, it was not possible to transcribe and analyse some of the interviews as we would have wished.

The team's dissimilar aptitudes and experience with regard to sociological research were another factor to be taken into account. The time taken to assimilate a common methodology meant that some of the later stages of the research had to be pushed back, including the transcription and, above all, the analysis of interviews.

Lastly, and from another standpoint, we consider it important to draw attention to the fact that this qualitative phase of the research looks at only one specific dimension of what the conditions for transition to tertiary education and employment might be. As mentioned earlier, the interviews focus on "successful" transitions and pathways, considering differing conceptions that are the product of socially endorsed and legitimised representations according to the issues concerned, and that could not be clearly determined beforehand.[12] Although it may seem more appropriate at first sight to track back from "successes" to try and identify factors that have contributed to them, it is highly likely that by questioning only part of the population of disabled students we have overlooked certain aspects of the conditions for access to tertiary education and employment. This raises the question, for example, of the conditions for transition of disabled students who have continued their studies or entered employment without being identifiable because they have refused to declare their impairment, illness or learning difficulty; or the paths of students who consider themselves to have "succeeded", but for whom the criteria of "success" do not correspond to the dominant categories or may be regarded by support structure representatives as socially less estimable or esteemed.

On this point, several of our contacts drew a distinction between students they regarded as "succeeding", but for whom the nuance lay in a greater or lesser "time-lag" in relation to an accepted norm for progress through school (sometimes seen as both a cause and a consequence of complications). Without questioning what was said about "the need to take

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[12] The question of differing relations to success will be discussed later. See Analysis of the Case Studies below.

the time to review [the student's] options and interests",[13] which is just as valid for non-disabled students, it is as though disabled students were more successful ("it was less complicated") if they did not lag much or at all behind legitimate school and university milestones. Other contacts considered that a student had "succeeded" if he or she was no longer in a specialised environment. It also emerged from the interviews that some of the students identified by the source structures were those for whom "it wasn't that complicated, when all is said and done". In this way, the representatives of the structures concerned were not only putting a sort of gloss on their own work but also contributing to a process that renders disability invisible.

In the light of these comments, this report should therefore be regarded as a first step. Further exploration is needed and we should continue to find out more about the conditions in which students with special needs follow pathways towards integration into society and the workforce, and about those involved in following them up, supporting them and accommodating them. This qualitative information represents only part of the overall research and should be taken in conjunction with the quantitative data collected in the longitudinal study.

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[13] Consideration should be given to the question of what constitutes "disruption" or "discontinuity" in a pathway, in relation to considerations about what constitutes a "success factor" and what "leads to failure". One student explained that the breaks or interruptions in his pathway were due to changes of direction, corresponding to the "time to find out what I like". Contrary to institutional judgments, he considered himself to have succeeded and raised in counterpoint the question of the effectiveness or otherwise of career guidance services.

3. THE STUDENTS AND THEIR PATHWAYS

The eight case studies comprise interviews that track the pathways of four young women and four young men. At the time of the interviews, three were in salaried employment, two were in vocational work-and-study training, two were enrolled at university and one was looking for work (and enrolled at university "in the mean time").

The people identified as having played an important part in their pathways were mostly the parents, in many cases the mother; a brother, sister or friend; a rehabilitation professional (speech therapist in particular); and, less often, a teacher (who stood out from the teaching staff as a whole). It is interesting to note that stakeholders in the source structures[14] who helped to identify the students were only very rarely mentioned as having played a key role, or at least a much less important role than the three or four people regarded as essential.

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[14] However, we met most of them even though they were not necessarily identified by the students as having played an important part in their transition.

Type of source structure	Students interviewed[15] and situation at the time of interview (2010)	Type of impairment / illness / learning difficulty	Resource-persons interviewed
Regional inter-university non-profit association that supports disabled students in their continuing education, student life and integration into the workforce	**Mickael, 25** Looking for a job and enrolled in an undergraduate course	Illness – mobility impairment	**- Mother - Sister - Person in charge of the source structure - Person responsible for his internship**
Non-profit association that helps school and university students achieve their educational goals, focusing mainly on work-and-study training and integration into employment	**Clément, 29** Student in third-cycle higher education	Hearing impairment	**- Mother - Case officer in the source structure - University disability officer - Person responsible for his internship**
Institute that supports sight-impaired children and young adults	**Karim, 25** Employee on a permanent contract, in the tourist industry	Sight impairment	**- Three educators from the institute - A high-school teacher - A member of the support unit**
Regional support unit for apprentices with disabilities	**Luc, 25** On a work-and-study program in the industrial sector	Developmental problems / behavioural disorders	**- Mother - Father - Best friend**

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[15] Names have been changed for reasons of confidentiality

Regional support unit for apprentices with disabilities	**Barbara, 24** In work-and-study program in the social work sector	Hearing impairment	**- Parents** **- Specialised teacher (home tutoring)** **- Speech therapist** **- Case officer in the source structure**
Non-profit association that supports and helps children and adults with cognitive impairments and learning difficulties	**Sophie, 23** Employee on a permanent contract	Learning difficulties	**- Father** **- Mother** **- A teacher** **- A friend**
Regional non-profit association for the integration of hearing-impaired people that proposes communication aids, inter alia	**Line, 30** Employee on a permanent contract	Hearing impairment	**- Former university teacher** **- Sister**
Medical and educational clinic 1	**Carole, 24** In higher education (work-and-study program)	Illness	**- Mother** **- Sister** **- Aunt** **- A teacher (special school)**

"Barbara", 24, on a work-and-study course, in the social work sector (hearing impairment)

Barbara became hearing-impaired in her early childhood. She lives with her parents and in 2010 was in work-and-study training in the social work sector.

Throughout her pathway, her parents insisted that she should go to mainstream schools even though doctors recommended that she should attend a special school. Her parents "kept" her in "normal schools" with the help of a speech therapist, a specialist tutor to help with homework and, from a very early age, an audioprosthetist who provided Barbara with a microphone and earphone that enabled her to follow lessons.

Shunned by her classmates and often misunderstood by her teachers, she did everything she could to gain acceptance by "hearers", especially after a few visits to an institute for young hearing-impaired people which confirmed, according to her, her

incomprehension of and a certain unease in the "world of deaf people". Barbara's pathway, her ambitions and disillusionments are situated "between two worlds". On completing Year 9 she was interested in the health professions but was very soon discouraged from pursuing this ambition. She completed Year 10 in a general academic class and Year 11 in a class specialising in laboratory studies (easier, according to her, because words were less important than "movements" and practice), and was allowed extra time in her exams on her parents' intervention. Because of the pace of classroom teaching, she repeated her final year and ultimately passed her baccalaureate with merit the following year. She then made several abortive attempts to enter higher education. According to those responsible, one of the work-and-study courses she wanted was incompatible with her hearing aid (it was feared that her device could interfere with the lab machines), which ruled her out before she could even take the entrance exam. Adjusting her ambitions, she embarked on a BTS work-and-study course linked with the health area. The workplace training contract and recruitment premium were successfully negotiated with the help of an association for the vocational training of people with disabilities. Looked down on by her boss, who gave her either non-core tasks such as dog-walking instead of teaching her the job, or tasks that immediately made her ill-at-ease, such as answering the telephone, and for which her boss imposed extremely exacting demands, the atmosphere in the workplace quickly deteriorated, as did Barbara's results in the classroom. Discouraged, she nearly quit the course and did not pass her final exams.

After a year off, which gave her time to think things over with her parents and the association mentioned earlier, and a series of internships in specialist institutions for people with hearing impairments and multiple disabilities, she began to see social work as a potential source of professional fulfilment. The professional values of listening and dialogue which she asserts, on which she says the success of a pathway depends and from which she has herself benefited, together with her "understanding" of what it means to be "disabled", are aptitudes on which she has "built" her vocation. Following a personal search for training courses, she prepared intensively for an entrance exam for that type of course. She began the work-and-study program and, supported in her initiatives by the same association, , she was taken on as a trainee educator in a high school, a working environment in which she very soon found her feet. She set up personalised support arrangements for pupils in difficulty and even managed, so she said, to get her work colleagues, especially the teaching staff, to recognise the legitimacy of her role and of her approach.

Barbara attributes her successful transition to her determination, her parent's help and the preponderant support of the home tutor who helped her with her homework. From her parents' standpoint, the technical support (the audioprosthetist), medico-social support (the speech therapist) and help with administrative procedures (the association) that Barbara received constituted a favourable environment (one of "determined and available professionals") for her successful integration into employment.

"Luc", 25, on a work-and-study course in industrial sector (behavioural difficulties)

Luc is a young man with behavioural difficulties that psychologists and doctors have never been able to identify or name. He lives with his parents and in 2010 was on a BTS work-and-study course in the industrial sector.

Luc had a difficult time at school, during which he was systematically shunned by his classmates. Teasing and bullying sometimes goaded him into a violent response which he tried to keep under control. Marginalised and isolated at secondary school, it was only when he started vocational training in higher education that he was able to gain the "esteem" of some of his fellow-students and work colleagues. However, those around him regard some of his behaviour and practices as "out of place".

Luc's behavioural difficulties were spotted at nursery school, following an incident with a teacher. On the advice of the school medical officer, he was given psychological counselling until he left junior school. He attended a mainstream lower secondary school and was allowed extra time to take exams. He experienced difficulties with problems of logical reasoning and writing. At that time Luc hoped he would be able to work in the sector of mechanics, but was discouraged after a period of work experience (while he was at lower secondary school), during which the physical demands and pace of the work revealed his unsuitability for that type of job. At high school he entered the industry stream and abandoned his first wish. He passed his baccalaureate with the benefit of extra time for exams and a dispensation for sport. Helped and guided by an association for the vocational training of people with disabilities, he took a work-and-study course in industrial design and joined a firm well-known for its training "culture", open-mindedness and personalised monitoring of apprentices with disabilities. It was at this point that the question arose of recognising his status as a disabled worker. In negotiation with the previously mentioned association and in liaison with the departmental office for persons with disabilities (*Maison départementale des*

personnes handicapées, MDPH), he decided to seek recognition as a disabled worker in order to have, according to him, a "label" that would help to pass off supposedly deviant behaviour among those in his working environment.

Luc puts his successful transition down to his parents' support. His mother works in healthcare and, in addition to her moral support and understanding of the illness, undertook most of the administrative formalities for obtaining adaptations. His father, who worked in industry and vocational training, was able to guide Luc in his choices and, through his connections, to enable him to discover certain types of work. His knowledge of industry was particularly useful in helping Luc with his homework throughout his schooling. Luc also cited the support of his psychologist and of his mentor in the company where he completed his work experience as key factors of his successful transition.

"Karim", 25, sales assistant in the tourism sector (sight impairment)

Karim is a young man who lives with his family. He currently has a permanent job as a sales assistant in the tourism sector. He has a slight sight impairment for which he has never personally or spontaneously sought special treatment. He says he wants "to be accepted without people knowing about [his] disability", even if on occasion he has been able to obtain particular dispensations with professional support. Karim has done everything he can to conceal his disability throughout his pathway, even having an operation. He will ask for an adaptation of his workplace when he thinks he has sufficient confidence in himself to tell his colleagues.

After attending a mainstream nursery school, Karim was diagnosed as " sight-impaired" in Year 1 and placed in a special-needs class in a mainstream school until the end of primary school. For the lower secondary cycle, he attended a special school for the sight-impaired. Having expressed a wish to return to a mainstream school in Year 10, he finally decided, on the advice of sight-impaired friends, to attend a special high school. As a boarder far away from his parents, the break marked the beginning of a particularly difficult time for Karim. His results were "disappointing" and he expressed a wish to switch to a vocational stream. Support from his sisters, who had gone into higher education, and from professionals (associations, teachers and social workers) established the conditions in which he was able to gradually "take responsibility for himself". This objective was particularly important for Karim, who holds to a "culture of success" fuelled as much by a determination not to

disappoint his parents as by a wish to "get out of the neighbourhood". The following year, while still living in the specialised institute, he joined a Year 11 class in a mainstream high school and, although he had great difficulty adapting, was able to "outdo himself" and pass a technical baccalaureate. On the threshold of higher education, he hesitated between going to university and taking a vocational course. He finally chose the latter, encouraged by the institute and the policy of support for courses leading to vocational qualifications. He was attracted by banking and even turned down permanent jobs in other sectors offered after internships. However, his ambition to go on and take a vocational degree was soon undermined by a lack of consideration and encouragement from certain professionals in the sector concerned.

The support of professionals from the specialised institute (specifically the educators and a high school teacher) was decisive in Karim's successful transition. The importance in his career choices of personal ambition and his aspiration to live and work in an ordinary environment seem at every stage to have been underpinned by his aptitude for work, his trust in the advice of the professionals around him and the possibilities for obtaining help and particular adaptations for the courses of his choice (that is what determined his choice of a work-and-study program, for example). However, although the establishment of an individual project and special arrangements for his needs (adaptation of documents and teaching) were empowering factors, it seems to have been much more his educators' support and their human work on Karim's "self-confidence" that determined a "successful transition" to employment.

"Clément", 29, PhD student (hearing impairment)

Clément is a young man of 29 who lives with his partner and is currently preparing a doctorate while at the same time completing a one-year internship in the financial sector. His hearing impairment dates of his early childhood: he is totally deaf in one ear and very hard of hearing in the other. When those around him noted that he was having difficulty learning to read in primary school, he was quickly referred to a speech therapist. His parents and healthcare professionals did not initially realise that Clément had impaired hearing, since he had developed a "face to face" coping strategy that enabled him to lip-read. Clément retook his Year 1 and it was only by chance that his mother noticed the impairment in that same year.

After primary school, Clément's father sent him to a private school, which had a section for "gifted children", and offered the possibility of preparing several levels of study in

a single year. Clément, wishing to "catch up", completed the four years of lower secondary school in two but failed his secondary school certificate exams. He believes that it was not so much his hearing impairment as his advance at school (which meant he was younger than his classmates) that was, according to him, a "social handicap". After Year 10, he moved to another private school and passed his baccalaureate. He owes part of his pathway to financial support from his parents, who paid for frequent trips to English-speaking countries and private lessons, for example. His parents then sent him to a private university. As Clément had no particular career plans, he followed their advice. However, as courses were given entirely in English, the necessary attention and concentration left him deeply fatigued. The family's financial circumstances influenced Clément's pathway at this point, since financial difficulties soon led the family to abandon its initial choice. Through a family connection, Clément got a job and enrolled in an undergraduate university course in modern languages "to keep up to scratch". On his parents' advice he applied for a catering course and obtained a vocational diploma without declaring his disability. However, he still aspired to a "better" future for himself. After failing the entrance exam to an elite university, and on the advice of one of his father's friends, he was accepted at a big business school, also enrolled at university and left home. The following year he obtained a Master 2 Research diploma in economics and embarked on a doctorate. He also found an internship with the help of an association, despite persistent problems with spelling.

Generally speaking, Clément has never wished to draw attention to his disability. He has been given special treatment only rarely (extra time for his baccalaureate exam in French) and did not benefit from an individual support project when entering private-sector higher education. At university he clashed with the disability service, which would not recognise his hearing impairment and deemed that no special treatment was necessary because he did not wear a hearing aid, had developed communication strategies and "had no difficulty with his studies". He had to justify himself through a series of administrative procedures that were not only cumbersome but also unsuited to his case, including to doctors. After enrolling for a doctorate, he met a volunteer in the disability service who enabled him to be given training in sign language through specialist associations. Clément has always wanted to "conceal" his disability and argues that his "ability to learn easily" makes, according to him, his impairment "secondary" and makes it easier for him to integrate. His attitude to disability changed at university and in his internship and the decision to recognise his disabled status has become a "plus factor" that enhances the value of his pathway with regard to those around him, its

success becoming all the more "exceptional" in the light of the difficulties caused by his impairment. Clément highlights the place and role of his father as "decision-taker" in his educational and career choices. He has also benefited from his father's connections, which have helped in certain aspects of his pathway (finding somewhere to live, choosing courses). Likewise, the people from disability support associations that he has met since embarking on his doctorate have enabled him to move forward and to solve human and administrative resistance, especially during his internship.

"Carole", 24, on a work-and-study course in a leading French school ("Grande Ecole") (genetic disease and learning difficulties)

Carole has a neuromuscular disease diagnosed while she was at primary school, when learning difficulties (dyslexia) were also identified. Carole is currently attending a leading French business school. Having opted for a "work-and-study" path, in 2010 she was an intern a major multinational.

Carole's schooling was marked by a number of years spent in foreign countries, since the family followed the father when he was sent abroad on business, and by several different sets of conditions. She completed the first three years of lower secondary school (Years 6 to 8) in a distance learning scheme; then, on returning to France, attended mainstream schools for Years 9 and 10 and completed Years 11 and 12 in a special school. Throughout her secondary schooling she benefited from special transport from home to school, which her mother was finally able to obtain after a year of trying. Despite strong preconceptions on the part of the head of her lower secondary school, which Carole and her mother had to fight, Carole continued her schooling in a mainstream high school. The first year was difficult, since her disease made her very easily tired and the serious consequences of surgery. But Carole wanted to "be like the others" and refused to consider studying anywhere other than in *her* high school. With the head's support and help from her mother, her schedule was lightened and she was allowed extra time during exams. The head "gave her a chance" by allowing her to move up into Year 11 despite poor results, but she had a serious operation during that year and subsequently had to spend time in a wheelchair, making it impossible for her to continue her studies in a school with unsuitable architecture. She had to change schools and "reluctantly" entered a special school, where she remained as a boarder until the end of Year 12. It was there that she found out that as well as being allowed extra time for exams, she

could also have an amanuensis. Having passed her baccalaureate, Carole started a work-and-study course but had trouble "reintegrating", being surrounded by people who did not understand her physical difficulties and state of fatigue "because they can't see the disease". Nevertheless, Carole "rose to the challenge", managed to secure an internship in a company where she did not have to stand and passed her diploma "with flying colours". She then sat the entrance exam for a higher education institute ("Grande Ecole") in order to take a work-and-study course in management. Although the high school had never had a student with special needs before, Carole managed without too much trouble to obtain the help from which she had benefited until then, with the exception of special transport. She experienced one very difficult episode at the beginning of the program, since in the eyes of the teacher concerned she had "no apparent reason to seek special treatment". Supported by the direction staff, she has since been able to pursue her activities "like the others".

Although at the time Carole saw her entry into the special school as the "worst moment of her life", she now considers her time there as a real piece of luck, a "lifesaver", as her mother says, which enabled her to accept her illness, get back up to speed and regain confidence in herself and in her capacities. Defining her pathway as "untypical", she nevertheless believes that it "enabled her to build herself". Now "very proud" of having succeeded, she also knows that the level of her qualification combined with disabled worker status gained her the internship she is currently serving in a major multinational. Carole puts her success down to her determination and her will to succeed and to change mindsets. She says that her time at the special school, the intense support and faith of her mother and relatives and the tolerance and consideration of certain people she has met along the way, are resources that have enabled her to "get to where I am now".

"Sophie", 23, employed on a permanent contract in the designer crafts area (learning difficulties)

Sophie is a 23-year old dyslexic woman who lives with her parents. She is currently employed on a permanent contract in a designer crafts company. Her impairment was first detected by her mother in Year 1. However, the diagnosis was questioned by doctors at a child guidance centre, who believed "the problem to be psychological". Despite the medical opinion Sophie's mother sent her to a speech therapist, though the treatment was not

recognised by the Social Security authorities until a year later, and her dyslexia finally diagnosed and acknowledged.

Sophie started school in a mainstream primary school and repeated one year. She went on to a private lower secondary school which had a reduced-numbers class for pupils in difficulty up to Year 8. After the family moved to a larger town, she repeated her Year 8 and then her Year 9 in a school with a special needs section. The school head refused to send her on to an agricultural school for a course linked with nature et environment, her first choice. During a period of work experience, however, she discovered a school that offered a course in crafts and design, which she joined "with enthusiasm". Against the recommendation of one of her teacher but with the support of her class teacher and with good results in her secondary certificate exams, Sophie entered a work-and-study vocational baccalaureate stream. She obtained an internship in a well-known company with the help of an acquaintance who was already working there (in addition to the support of her school). Sophie finally obtained her diploma with merit and was then taken on by the same company.

Although her pathway was studded with hesitations over the choice of a career and integration difficulties (especially teasing and bullying at primary school), Sophie was able to pursue it thanks to special treatment during exams (extra time and help with reading and writing from an amanuensis at exams), and also thanks to her personal aptitudes, especially her "ability to cope", based on the acquisition (with parental help) of compensatory skills, such as the development of a compensatory visual memory and oral skills. Her family, informed by a network of mediators (specialist associations, speech therapist), helped her to become self-reliant from an early age, constantly encouraging her through games and play (such as memorising a route that she would then take on her own) and the use of technology to help her manage by herself (satnav, voice recognition software, etc.).

Sophie considers that she owes her successful transition in particular to the support and education she received from her parents, the main feature of which was a constant concern to give her self-confidence (for example, by including her in decisions about her future). In her schooling, innovative and effective teaching methods, such as the use of cassettes and videos to help with reading and comprehension, and the support of certain teachers were decisive factors in her successful integration into working life.

"Line", 30, research engineer (hearing impairment)

Line was born deaf in a family of hearers. After three years in a mainstream nursery school "with no possibility of communication", she went to special schools for hearing-impaired children until the end of the upper secondary cycle. Equipped with an assistive device from a very early age, she learnt sign language (cued speech) at primary school, accompanied by speech therapy sessions, and speaks of this "entry into the world of the deaf" as a "rebirth" as a result of which she was at last able to communicate. Line experienced two years of uncertainty after obtaining a science baccalaureate and a postgraduate degree in sciences of the matter, but has been a research engineer in the laboratory of a major company for over two years.

While Line was "reborn" when communication was made possible for her in primary school, her years in secondary education were much more difficult and painful, since she was in a special school that emphasised spoken language above all. Completely discouraged and disappointed in the special curricula and the teachers' attitudes, she no longer took any pleasure in learning and did "only as much as it took to move up a class". However, she borrowed her older sister's text books to find out what was not being covered in the classroom and started to take an interest in science subjects, especially biology. She passed her science baccalaureate "much to her teachers' surprise", but with the constant support of her parents and siblings, despite fragile possibilities for exchange and limited resources.

As her applications for specialist higher education institutions were all turned down, Line enrolled at university, even though most of her teachers told her "she would never manage". She continued her studies nonetheless, repeating her third undergraduate year, and obtained a master's degree, not without having had to "battle the whole time with the disability service to obtain often inappropriate assistance". Although she could use note-takers, Line says that she was able to complete her studies above all thanks to the support and advice of other hearing-impaired students and help from interpreters – whom she nevertheless had to train in scientific language – provided by an association outside the university. Despite excellent results in her master's, her applications for a postgraduate course were turned down. One teacher even discouraged her from continuing, advising her to "go and work" in an environment that he suggested would be "quieter, more appropriate". "Shocked and destabilised", Line left university and, reckoning that she could no longer count on help from disability services, managed through her own efforts to find an internship that enabled her to

apply for a postgraduate course, which she finally joined at another university. After gaining her degree, she spent a year looking for work without much help from occupational integration structures. On a friend's recommendation she taught science at a special high school for a year before getting her current job.

Line is convinced that most of her university applications were turned down because of her impairment. This impression is strengthened by negative reactions or "sudden changes of mind" on the part of employers when they learnt of her hearing impairment (which she does not disclose on her CV). Although the company for which she works has a disability policy there is no internal disability unit – "ultimately nobody knows who does what" – and Line reckons that if she had not fended for herself, including training people, she would have been totally excluded and isolated. After a transition that she defines as "very difficult but very rewarding", and despite all her interest in her work, Line is looking for a job in a "more human company, one that corresponds more to [my] identity", where she would no longer feel like "an odd man out among hearers".

"Mickael", 25, looking for work (motor impairment)

Mickael is a 25-year man who lives with his parents. He was diagnosed with a progressive neuromuscular disease when he was a teenager. Until he started in lower secondary school, his great difficulties in sport and writing had been put down to "lack of effort", but diagnosis of the disease made it possible to adapt the rest of his studies. He repeated his Year 6 and was then provided with a certain number of resources, such as a laptop computer, support from a teaching assistant, remedial work and extra time for exams. A school attached to the local education authority reinforced this support until Year 12 through loans of equipment, weekly sessions with a teacher and career guidance. Mickael's mother was also given help with all the administrative procedures by a French federation for debilitating illness. Having passed a technological baccalaureate, Mickael changed paths and obtained a vocational diploma. He was, in 2010, looking for work while he also was in the second year of an undergraduate course in human sciences.

Mickael had dreamed of working outdoors. In Year 9 he made enquiries and found a school willing to "do the necessary" to support and adapt his studies while explaining the realities (physical strength in particular) and requirements of the job in the light of the possible course of his disease. "Out of caution", he decided to go on a general studies class in

Year 10 then, not having been able to get into the school of his choice because his grades were not good enough, he took the "default" option of a technological baccalaureate in Year 11. He repeated the year due to a prolonged absence linked to major health problems and passed his baccalaureate a year later. Mickael then enrolled in a work-and-study course. With the support of an association that helps disabled students and the consideration of the teaching staff, Mickael was offered a 3-year course with a lighter schedule but in fact completed the course in two years. His applications for a number of internships were rejected, which he "puts down to his difference", but he managed to find two firms willing to take him on, subsequently "facilitated" by the above-mentioned association. Despite the pace of the work and the stress and fatigue he had to overcome, and although disappointed not to be offered a job afterwards, Mickael said that "everything about the experience was positive". Not knowing what to do next, he got back in touch with the association and through them started a new course, alternating study and work in a large firm for an 18-month period, which also obliged him to move away from the family home. The firm found him accommodation, made accessibility improvements, adapted his workstation and lightened his schedule, unlike the training institute, which allowed him only a minimum adaptation. However, time pressures, tiredness, the new environment and having to manage daily life on his own led him to abandon the course a few months later. While waiting to find a job, Mickael has enrolled at university. However, this new social life has brought new difficulties with it: the pace of courses is such that he can no longer use his computer, though he can benefit from the help of note-takers, through the good offices of the same association for disabled students, which is also involved in the university disability service.

Very close to his sister, "protected" and supported by his mother, supported by the association for disabled students, and regarded "as a person before being different" by the people he has met in his internships, Mickael does not regard the disruptions of his transition as failures. He is now continuing his studies while looking for a "quiet" administrative job and is involved in the association that has helped him, but nevertheless remains disinclined to make projections for a future that he considers "too uncertain" with regard to the possible course of his illness. Back in the family home, Mickael is preparing for his *potential future independence*.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDIES

Any school or university student without an impairment, illness or learning difficulty may encounter disruptions during their education, such as repeat years and changes of direction or difficulty choosing a direction. However, the pathways of the students we were able to interview shed light on aspects that give a better insight into the particular features of the interruptions or obstacles encountered in schooling and in the transition to tertiary education or employment that make their pathway look irregular or erratic.

Also basing our remarks on our interviews with resource-persons, our aim in this section is to give an account[16] of the practices,[17] or what was said about them, that facilitated or on the contrary impeded or slowed transitions, especially those of the students we met.

Before doing so, we shall consider **two prior aspects** to certain analyses that we have not yet been able to expound more fully.

"New" temporalities and space of possibilities

The primary purpose of the case studies was not to distinguish pathways or types of transition in terms of a student's particular impairment, illness or learning difficulties. However, we thought it important to briefly consider the question of when the diagnosis was made and what that may imply in terms of the course or aggravation of a condition, or even of survival, and the effect on how the students and those around them may project themselves into the more or less immediate future.

In some cases the impairment or disease was detected very early, before or at primary school, or even soon after birth. However, we also met students whose disability was not identified until later in childhood or adolescence, leaving some of them in a form of uncertainty about how their condition, and consequently the course of their life, might evolve. The remarks made by one student[18] with a "serious illness" (and by those close to her) revealed a narrower, or at least vaguer representation of what was possible than that of the other students we met. Her projections into a future more or less traced out were made not

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[16] Again, we would recall that this is an initial analysis, to be expanded and explored more fully at a later stage, and that it needs to be correlated with the quantitative data from the longitudinal study.

[17] The interviews revealed a differentiated ranking of practices and their enabling or disabling effect on the students' transition into tertiary education or employment. Nuances in the ranking process need to be viewed in relation to the standpoint of those interviewed (including their position with regard to the handling of the disability and the closeness of their links with the student).

[18] The interviews are not included in this report.

according to criteria of educational or career success – the five years of tertiary education she had wanted to embark on before her illness appeared – but more according to her "wishes and desires" to do certain things that "life may not leave enough time for".[19] Time spent in study was no longer regarded as essential, or even legitimate, but almost as time wasted, generating an accumulation of deep fatigue in a life whose "length seems to have been reduced". The force of that depreciated representation of time spent in education seems all the more deeply rooted in the young woman in that it was expressed during a period of remission, which might have been thought more conducive to a re-appreciation of the value of success in educational terms. In this particular case, the representation of the disability and the time constraints associated with it caused a shift in the criteria for social success, from academic excellence to personal self-fulfilment through integration into working life, regarded as better suited to her illness.

In a way, this form of suspended temporality can also be seen in Mickael's pathway. As the people we met had anticipated the likely course of his illness and its incompatibility with his "dream job", Mickael took a number of vocational training courses and tried living on his own, albeit without finding a situation that suited him. The effects of the illness and the related complications, combined with the pace of his latter years of study, led him to envisage the course of things in another way, needing time, it would appear, to understand and reappropriate a changing body (and his centres of interest) before being able to envisage the future, albeit with plenty of work experience, diplomas and skills acquired during internships behind him.

In relation to the students interviewed who have significant psychological, physical or cognitive impairments, this uncertainty about the future was less apparent in what they said than in the contributions of the resource-persons they had identified, mostly members of the medical and teaching professions. In these cases, the impact, the course and the treatment of the illness proved predominant or at least decisive in the possibility or otherwise of continuing in education and, for some, of access to employment. On this point, a teacher working in one of the special schools said that it can be very tricky and take a long time to get students to accept that they will not be able to start or finish their preferred studies: "In those cases you just have to take the time, and wait if you have to. When a student arrives, you're not going to

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[19] The student's own words. At the time of the interview she had dropped her idea of further education, preferring to set up her own business and spend time on "what she likes doing".

start by destroying their dreams, you do what you can to get them to gradually work it out for themselves and if they're going to run into the wall, you go with them so as to catch them just before they hit. That's often when you can start to build something with them, but it can sometimes be very complicated. There are young people where it is simply not possible." A doctor also admitted that "sometimes the educational project is just an adjunct to the treatment, and the most important thing is for the student to get better. It's a shame and it's sad to say, but there are some students who will never manage to get better and who will never be able to study or even to work."

A. Obstacles and disabling effects of practices in students' pathways

Pathways with dead-ends and gaps

The interviews, especially with students though also with resource-persons, very strongly emphasised the **lack of information** and the lack of formal resources available. "Muddling through" was the term often associated with the possibilities for support and adaptation, due to the difficulty of finding anyone who could provide reliable information or enable a more or less systematic and long-term relationship with people capable of giving appropriate advice, or establishing links between support structures throughout an entire pathway, thereby facilitating the most cost-effective and continuous management of the student's future.

This lack of information, mentioned by almost everyone, can be put down to **a lack of links between representatives of establishments that accommodate and support new students**, though it is not possible to determine here whether this is a cause or an effect. One student said, for example, that "what happened to me was like trying to build with bricks but no cement". As well as doing her university coursework, she herself had to find the "leads" that would enable her to benefit from a sign-language interpreter, and keep her university's disability unit informed so that it could start the formalities. As this proved to be fruitless, the student had to initiate the procedure herself with an association outside the university in order to obtain assistance appropriate to her needs.

This lack entails other difficulties for students, and sometimes their parents as well. Many of them have to accomplish the same **administrative formalities** at the beginning of each academic year, sometimes even within the same institution. Although there seem to be few (or at least fewer) problems with the transfer of case files from secondary to tertiary

education within the same local authority, that is not the case when a student crosses certain administrative boundaries or categories. One representative of a university reception service said on this subject "Paris, for example, is a complete mess from that point of view! There are so many students from other regions or attached to other departmental disability offices, we're completely at sea! So of course it's [the students] who have to go through the formalities all over again, can you imagine?"

The effect of this lack of cooperation between educational institutions and support structures, and of the organisation and perception even of reception facilities for disabled students, is to oblige disabled students to legitimise (or religitimise) their presence through their disability and to explain (or re-explain) their needs and expectations, which are never objectivised and which in some cases can never be met satisfactorily or appropriately because the responses are already standardised. "It's difficult to say what you need", said one student, "when you know what you are going to be allowed. I need an interpreter but I know I'm not going to get one, so I take what I can." Another student mentioned the requirement to situate oneself "as soon as the year starts" in relation to "needs", and by extension in relation to disabled-student status: "Under the pretext that you overcome your disability, you no longer need help [...] You are disabled, you fight so as not to be regarded as disabled, and the day you say, well, yes, actually, I am disabled, I need special treatment, you're told 'but you don't have a problem'; OK, but I'm not going to wait until I have problems in my life in order to be recognised as disabled! It's almost like we're expected to anticipate problems; it's preventive!"

This "obstacle course" or "labyrinth", as some of the students and parents in particular called it, can also to some extent **make students' preferred educational or occupational options more difficult**, or even discourage them altogether. The lack of support for some parents at a loss before the difficulties facing them and their child, cumbersome administrative procedures and relations, and stakeholders' ignorance and lack of training are so many obstacles or "trials" to be overcome, in the first place by the students themselves, to such an extent that it may become destabilising and sometimes too restrictive to envisage further education with serenity. In some situations this is compounded by negative representations of disability, bullying and attitudes that emphasise students' incapacities rather than their aptitudes and skills, leading in some cases to discouragement or feelings of inferiority. From another standpoint, all the students – and sometimes parents too – mentioned the difficulties they had encountered with the prejudices and preconceptions of education

professionals, at least at some point during their schooling, and how they had to "fight" them. They spoke of entering Year 9, passing the baccalaureate, being accepted in a mainstream school or obtaining a Master level degree "to the surprise" of a head or class teacher, or "against all expectations". Preferred options were sometimes deemed "over-ambitious" or "doomed to failure" even when grades made them legitimate. One student told us that some of her teachers thought she "should be proud to have got as far as a Master's" and that it might be "preferable" for her to think of a job "somewhere quieter, like in a library".

Pathways with disjointed temporalities

Disjointed institutional and administrative temporalities, combined with the difficulties described above, present another obstacle to access to adaptations, and hence to satisfactory conditions of work or study. The cumbersome nature of some administrative procedures, the time needed to obtain a medical certificate (the "passport" for being able to claim and obtain the various types of support and adaptation), the time needed to obtain funds to buy a laptop computer, for example, or the necessary permission to keep it, or the time needed to adapt a working environment, are all factors that hinder the smooth progress of a six- or seven-month academic year during which coursework may alternate with work experience. People involved in structures to help disabled students into tertiary education or employment also face these time-lags and find themselves "powerless" or "unable to do our job as we would like. [...] We know where they [disabled students] are, some know where to find us, but there aren't enough of us, we don't have what we need to be able to do the right thing according to their needs, especially as it's never the same thing!"

A sort of *institutional paradox*, these different temporalities instituted in or by particular forms of the treatment of disability may also be compared here with the questions raised about the categories of perception of "success". Time spent waiting can delay the possibilities of access to higher education or employment or hold back a progression, thus increasing the time it takes to validate diplomas and hence to embark on a higher level of education or apply for a job.

These distinct temporalities are also linked to **the way in which particular agencies or institutions operate**, some focusing on specific help with further education, others on access to employment (or internships), others on the organisation of care and help in daily life. The lack of interconnection between these different modes of organisation highlights a fragmentation of procedures which students (and often their parents) have to deal with in

order to combine the different types of help they can claim, in some cases to the point of having to conceive or even schedule their lives according to what they may be allowed. Those most immediately concerned are sometimes unaware of the existence of this internal pathway to adaptations and additional resources, which they discover as they go along, sometimes "depending on who you come across", the "good fortune" of meeting the "right people" often being mentioned in the interviews. Responses to these particular conditions are described, especially by representatives of support structures in educational institutions or workplaces, in terms of the burden being shifted onto the student or young worker. As the manager of one university structure explained, acknowledging a certain violence in this order of things, "in any case if a student doesn't put something in first and show that they're up for it, maybe even that they're more up for it than the others, because the extra work they're asked to do is enormous, we won't necessarily help them right away. They really have to show that they're motivated and then we'll be motivated too [...]. We mustn't forget that the aim is for them to be independent."

The lack of training and information, of awareness of disability issues, of connections and resources, coupled with the "mindset barrier", are central to what makes students' pathways difficult. Issues of "accessibility" and possible access to tertiary education and employment also concern mindsets and the advantage that stakeholders may find (or not) in an almost total reconfiguration of their perception of disability and what it makes of or does to the people who try it out, in the sense that – if we take the legal definition of disability as the product of a relationship between the individual and his or her "environment" – the people they encounter during their transition are also part of that "environment".

B. Elements that facilitate "successful" transitions and conditions that make them possible

Family and friends as determining factors

One aim of the interviews was to comprehend how students' pathways progressed, the conditions of their schooling and the way in which they understood, experienced and perceived their transition from secondary to tertiary education, vocational training or employment. But when they were asked what they thought had enabled them to "get to where they are now", and although a set of factors had been unfolded during the interview, in most cases we found, from both students and resource-persons, two types of response. One was "courage", "motivation" and the "desire to succeed", these being associated with what our interviewees referred to as "individual qualities" or "strength of character"; the other was the key role and place of parents (or, if not the parents for reasons related to a student's particular pathway, another "pillar" person), making a form of projection possible and allowing those concerned to seek and mobilise related forms of support.

Students themselves and the resource-persons we interviewed highlighted "individual propensities", to such an extent as to become significant – at least from their standpoint – of what the conditions of mainstream schooling and the transition to tertiary education and employment involve. However, that is not sufficient in itself to grasp what actually happens. While the information brought up in this report deserves closer analysis, the interviews reveal dimensions that go beyond "intrinsic values" and the role played by a "key" person, highlighting a set of social propensities and mindsets more generally at work.

Because particular attention is paid to **the place and role of the parents** – in most cases the mother – it is appropriate to look at their social position, in terms of the social propensities that enable them to make such an investment in supporting and accompanying a child throughout his or her education. Again, this should be seen in relation to the specific characteristics on the basis of which the interview sample was chosen. The "success" criterion meant that we met students from families with a particular set of social propensities: not only cultural and economic "resources" but also connections and networks of acquaintances on which to draw according to the needs and difficulties encountered at various points in the life of the child (and family).

The substantial investment and support of the parents, and of the mother in particular, take various forms. In some cases, it may lie firstly in the possibility of conforming and adjusting to **multiple time constraints** relating not only to the child's education but also to time taken up with healthcare, travel and administrative and institutional procedures, which must also fit in with the father and/or mother's professional, family and personal time constraints. At least until the end of secondary school, several of the parents we met said that they had had to reorganise their own professional and family life in order to be able to support their child in his or her education. The father of one student with psychological troubles told us, for example, that he had had to come to an arrangement with his employer, allowing him to "adapt" his working hours so that he could be with his daughter during the day "when she needed it". In such cases he returned to work in the evening, uploaded or downloaded his documents or even spent nights at the office in order to "catch up" his hours. This authorised time-shift is compounded by a form of symbolic violence perpetrated on the father, obliged to expose a private situation to his line manager. Another example is that of a mother who, having stopped work altogether when her child's illness was diagnosed, an interruption made possible by her husband's job and income, decided to start working from home again once her son was more independent, when he left school. Not subject to the restrictions of working in a company, it also meant that she could always be there for her three children and be available (because that was her wish) to respond immediately if necessary.

The time investment and consequent reorganisation of working and personal lives for parents and family may in some cases be accompanied by the **mobilisation of professional (or personal) connections and acquaintances**. Connections with healthcare or employment professionals may be keys that open up possibilities, in terms of faster response times and access to an apparently less "accessible" world. Getting an appointment with a specialist more quickly, being "sponsored" by a member of an association, getting an internship or even a job hitherto refused are socially determined examples (equally valid for students without disabilities) of things that may, at a given time, have eased the transitions of the students we met.

The **parents' own educational and career path** is another contributing factor to the conditions of a pathway that, if not necessarily regarded as "successful", has at least been possible. Where parents are not "disappointed", a reaction that cropped up in some interviews, their own pathway also helps to determine projections or "ambitions" for the child's future. Some of the students we met had opted for, or been directed towards, courses or types of

training in which at least one of their parents had been "initiated". In a way, it is as if the opportunity to use or reuse knowledge, experience and skills already acquired, and hence regarded as certain and reassuring, helps to alleviate uncertainty about the future associated with the child's illness or trouble.

Looking at the conditions that make the transition to tertiary education or employment possible thus helps to reveal what can be a handicap and what, depending on the pathways, social propensities and resources that those concerned have mobilised or are able to mobilise, can help to "overcome" it. Nonetheless, it emerges from the interviews with students' parents or other family members that ways of reorganising family and working life, ways of sometimes imagining or rethinking life as a couple, life with other children, the possible futures of those involved, constitute a set of constraints – though they are not all thought of or expressed in those terms – generated by the lack of or shortcomings in forms of support and institutional case management: families too have to make up for "lack of resources", "lack of staff", "lack of funding", "lack of information", and in doing so produce or reproduce what seem, for some, to correspond to "success" factors.

People outside the family also play a part alongside the important role(s) of immediate family and the mother in particular. We were not always able to meet them, but most students mentioned their **friends**, in many cases one particular friend, as providing essential support, a person on whom they can count, on whom they can lean. The "friends" we were able to meet were mostly surprised to learn of the "important role" attributed to them. "I didn't do anything special", they tended to say. However, some of the reasons why they were picked out emerged from the interviews. They were often among those who did not take part in teasing, bullying or insults about the student's impairment or trouble, they were those who gave encouragement, helped with getting around, passed on their course notes, explained things, took time and gave time. They were distinguished, in a way, by the fact that their attitude was perceived as different, shifting the disability without denying it. In the words of one student, speaking about a friend, such friendships allow those with disabilities to "exist for and through something other than disability".

Forms of recognition

"Existing for and through something other than disability" can also raise the question of the different resource-persons' attitude to disability within the established meaning of the term. By taking account of the difficulties encountered by the student, this attitude helps to reduce the disability without denying it. This, apparently, is where the importance of resource-persons lies: considerations of what is possible are based not on the difference or the impairment but on the whole person, in an ongoing process of development. The students we interviewed saw the attention paid by **one or two stand-out teachers** to the person rather than the disability as a means whereby they could think of themselves differently (because they were thought of and perceived differently), if only at a particular point in their pathway, a means of projecting themselves into a future envisaged as possible. One student told us that, of all the teachers she had come across, "*her* degree course teacher" (as though his attitude towards her put all the others in the shade) had enabled her to continue "because she felt a bit like a normal student". Another student said that despite the "urgings and discouragement of most of her teachers" at secondary school, she had been able to carry on into an academic rather than vocational Year 10 class thanks to the support of her class teacher, "because she believed in me and what I was capable of. She knew I could manage, just like the others."

These forms of support founded on recognition, i.e. the consideration given to the student's possibilities in relation to a level of achievement rather than an impairment, are linked with the **various forms of support and adaptation provided to students** during their studies, such as extra time for written exams, a note-taker, an interpreter in core subjects, a teaching assistant, remedial work, a computer or some other type of appropriate equipment. As we saw earlier, however, for most students this human and technical support was not obtained without difficulty, on account not only of the procedures to be gone through but also of the attitude of other students to an apparent difference. While students noted the "relief" that such aids could bring, making lessons or exams "more bearable", some also emphasised that they "attracted the attention" of the others. Obtaining adaptations often led to students having to answer classmates' questions, seen by some as an "opportunity to talk about disability" but by others as over-exposing their impairment or difficulties.

In most cases, this human and technical support was obtained as a result of **meeting professionals**, less within universities than in associations, which students (and their families) seem to tend to turn to when initial approaches through institutional channels are fruitless. These encounters also help to "resolve an impasse" that might arise in an internship, a workplace or an educational institution: "they have keys that we don't have", said the mother of one student. Although "they know how the system works and how to get results", in her words, those involved in the structures we interviewed said that it was still just "muddling through". One representative of an association explained, like others, that although he was aware of how important their presence was for the students (and sometimes even more so for the parents, who found in it an opportunity to offload some of the "burden"), achieving an outcome was sometimes complicated. "You have to play the system as it is!" These interviews also revealed an apparent paradox in what is said about inclusion. Those involved in structures emphasised the importance of giving consideration to the difference of the young people and adults entering educational institutions or a workplace. They emphasised this aspect not as a reminder of inclusion but more because from their standpoint it seems to be widely misunderstood by the many stakeholders from the worlds of education and work that they frequent. "People think it's magic and that the young people will be able to do just like everyone else, then when they see there are problems they tell themselves it won't work. [...] When you explain to an employer, for example, that a kid is just as capable as the others but that his workstation is going to have to be adapted, or that he's going to need a bit more time than his colleagues, he understands, that's what we're there for, but we've still got to go out there and say it!"

This cooperative effort is another contributing factor to these pathways of the possible, mingling as it were the various aspects that lead to a student, intern or young worker being given a place, rather than a "chance".

5. INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

From what they say, students' perception of their own pathway is often based on "strength of character". However, it is apparent that the lack of personalised and continuous support in efforts to gain administrative and social recognition of students' impairments from one stage to another of their pathway sometimes leads them – in a sort of institutionalisation of that "muddling through" that they are always liable to fall back on when facing institutions supposed to dispense aid and support in a continuous, homogeneous and coherent process – to establish differentiated and multiple integration "strategies" that may coincide with all the attributes of their disability without necessarily always being thought of as such, because the preferred "pathways" are abstract arrangements that do not give consideration to the specific nature of disabilities. Under these circumstances, forms of social usage of disability appear, ranging from rendering the disability invisible to a quasi-militant stance. They are understandable, in light of the various situations considered in the analysis, in the sense that stakeholders may give them in relation to their own situation and the remoteness they experience vis-à-vis the institution. These usages reveal the absolute necessity of being able to restore the place and presence of the legitimate ordinary world; a mode in which the treatment of disability is conceived and implemented, perhaps precisely because disability is, paradoxically, the subject of an unthought.

In the first case, "compensating strategies" enable the student, with sometimes considerable effort and by calling on specific skills such as lip-reading or the development of a "primarily visual" memory, to make his or her impairment invisible in order to facilitate integration into the ordinary, the normative yardstick. In the second case, the intention is to bestow value on or restore value to a pathway by highlighting conditions that are "out of the ordinary", the gap between the initial conditions and the final position in a way neutralising the usual cardinal and depreciative value of disability in order to turn it into a value-enhancing prism for viewing and appreciating a pathway through education or transition into employment. In this case, it is above all the highlighting of value-enhancing skills or attitudes in relation to disability, "individual qualities" like courage, determination and will-power, demonstrating a capacity to "cope", which, through specific and specified channels, seems to facilitate integration and progression on a pathway through education or into employment.

More broadly, the interviews conducted in this study highlight, in a sort of counterpoint to the difficulties encountered, what seems to be the principle of possible

"success" in students' pathways through education or into employment. It is above all social, cultural and economic propensities (primarily those of students and their families) that lie behind "individual" aptitudes and are to be grasped, since they condition possibilities for access to education and employment. They are propensities to make and maintain connections with the various sources of adaptations, while increasingly legitimising (and proving – or experiencing) a place, understood as a place of right(s). Drawing on the information provided by the representatives of institutions and associations[20] to which the students directed us, we find in a way the same propensities to commitment to and investment in the reception of disabled students or young workers, which, in most cases, can be grasped in the sense of a "biographical" and often personal proximity to the issues of disability. The students regard them as pillars of their pathway and they do indeed play an often decisive part in the realisation of certain projects. Nonetheless, they mostly define what they do as "muddling through", in or around specific situations and circumstances. "We are non-standard. We spend our time making up specific protocols because our kids do not fit into the pigeon-holes."

Although the objectives supported by all consist in leading students towards a form of independence and active involvement in their personal project, it is perhaps in these fine distinctions that, in part, all of the fragility and uncertainty of transitions, and the pathways in general of students with disabilities are to be found.

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[20] It would be instructive to continue and extend the research by enquiring more precisely into the pathways of such people, who may be assumed to be in a dominant position in relation to the treatment of disability, especially insofar as their practices also draw their legitimacy from an institutionalisation of the treatment of people with "special educational needs".

This initial analysis requires further development, but the interviews already provide indications for understanding and thinking about the conditions for transition to tertiary education and employment imposed on students with special needs.

Information and advice that does not enable students to act, make informed choices or envision their future

Since the 2005 Disability Act,[21] information and training relating to the accommodation of people with disabilities has been widely disseminated through various media channels. Nevertheless, it seems to be unevenly distributed, too abstract for those concerned (and those who deliver it) and insufficiently implemented in practice. Although this information is supposed to foster full awareness of what can be done (in terms of support or adaptation, or educational and career guidance, for example) and of what the more or less long-term consequences of the decisions taken will be, it appears to be relatively "inaccessible" and "ineffective". It rarely paves the way for action, for informed and appropriate choices or for a practical vision of a possible future.

Uncertain and insufficiently structured links between the institutions and organisations concerned

As widely reported by those we interviewed, the lack of clear and effective information is compounded by a lack of connections between institutions and structures that support disabled students and young workers. Dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders is problematical because of their respective issues and interests and the resulting strategies and policies devised within each organisation. Although those interviewed shared the same intention of accommodating disabled students and workers, cooperation – which also depends on all the stakeholders sharing a sense of the practicalities – is not effective enough for disabled students and workers to take a position in "personalised projects" that give the appearance of being primarily designed *for* them rather than *with* them.

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[21] Act 2005-102 of 11 February 2005 for equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities.

Conditions of transition that depend on the inclusive strategies and policies adopted by institutions

The admission and support strategies adopted by schools and universities still seem ill-suited to harmonisation and organisation around a continuous pathway, since the conditions of accommodation and transition often seem to be conceived "in-house" before being seen as forming part of a broader framework. These lags, compounded by disjointed administrative and institutional time-frames, seem to do much to increase discrepancies between institutions and create gaps in their support and adaptation arrangements. At another level, it appears too difficult to reconcile education and employment policies with differing economic and managerial interests and rationales, especially as these representations and practices appear to be regarded in the first place as a "forced adjustment to exception" rather than an openness to diversity.

Stakeholders in the accommodation and support of disabled students who are still institutionally under-prepared and under-supported

One effect of these differing ways of conceiving inclusion, and by extension the conditions of transition, is to make it more difficult for those who accommodate and support disabled students and young workers to devise methods, tools and strategies to guide transition processes. The self-containment of structures and organisations contributes to a form of isolation of stakeholders and the compartmentalisation of support practices.

Conditions of transition that depend above all on individual resources and commitment

Because those involved in supporting disabled students or workers find it difficult to work together, each often blaming its impossibilities on the other's incapability, the students and young workers (and their families) increasingly become the drivers of the process – albeit without being regarded as a fully-fledged player in it –, since it is above all their capacity to prove their motivation and the legitimacy of their participation in the ordinary world that will determine the extent of the involvement of the professionals they meet, which in this case is a sort of prerequisite for possible transition to tertiary education or employment. This aspect, correlated with the other aspects mentioned above, increasingly shifts the possibilities for support and transition onto the resources (economic, social and cultural) available to those concerned and their families

Within a methodologically defined (or, more accurately, assumed) notion of "success", this stage of the research (which demands to be extended) has nonetheless shed growing light on some of the conditions for possible entry (because they are socially established, politically legitimised and institutionally codified and categorised and hence unequal) into an ordinary world where the norm continues to be the yardstick and where envisaging the future of students with disabilities in terms of access and "accessibility" helps to redouble or at least reinforce a process that renders social relationships invisible.

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INSTITUT NATIONAL SUPÉRIEUR DE FORMATION ET DE RECHERCHE
POUR L'ÉDUCATION DES JEUNES HANDICAPÉS ET LES ENSEIGNEMENTS ADAPTÉS

RECHERCHE

ANNEXES

Pathways for students with disabilities to tertiary education and employment

Methodological aspects

Case studies

Background

1.   This document provides an outline of the methodology proposed by the secretariat for implementing the case studies to countries participating to the project "*pathways for students with disabilities to tertiary education and to employment*".

Purpose of case studies

2.   Case studies complete information provided by the country reports and the longitudinal study by providing policy makers information and analysis assisting them in formulating and implementing effective transition policies to tertiary education and to employment for persons with disabilities.

3.   Case studies aim therefore to identify high quality strategies developed by stakeholders involved in the transition process for implementing successful transition to tertiary education and to employment as well as skills mobilized. They will notably look at how stakeholders:

- Create a supportive learning environment allowing for high quality transition.

- Include transition issues in the organizational framework, the teaching methods and support strategies.

- Link tertiary education up and downstream with secondary education and working life.

- Promote tracks between the different education sectors (e.g. from VET to tertiary education or from further education to higher education).

- Develop coordinated services allowing for effective and smooth transition.

- Prepare SEN students for employment and independent living and enable them to cope with changing situation.

- Ensure quality and improvement of practices.

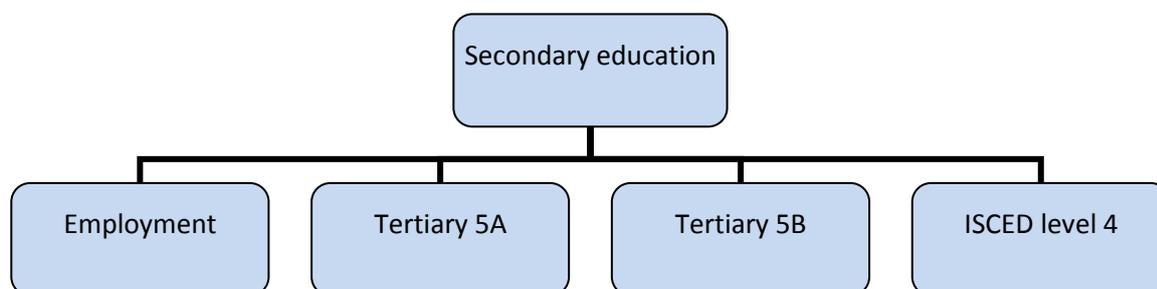### *Methodology*

Identification of case studies

4.   Case studies focus on successful transitions to tertiary education and to employment. They look at:

- Students who are in employment or who attend ISCED level 5A, ISCED level 5B or ISCED level 4 courses after having left upper secondary education.
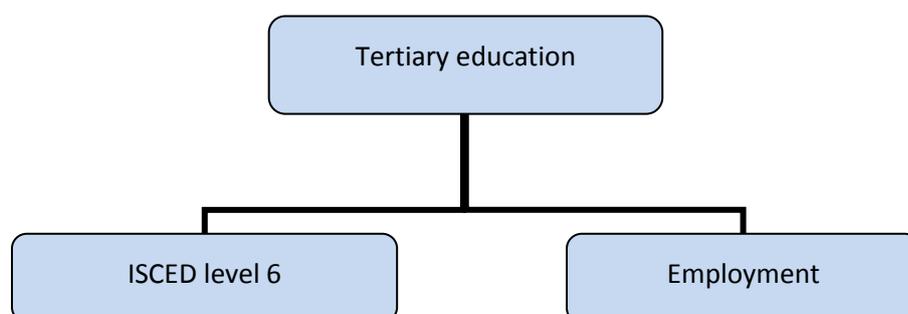
- Students who are in employment or attend ISCED level 6 courses after having finished their undergraduate courses.

5.	As shown below, case studies could therefore be built, at least, on four main pathways opportunities after secondary education and two pathways opportunities after tertiary education. Case studies may, in addition, be related to specific issues revealed by country reports and/or the longitudinal study.

Figure N° 1: Main pathway opportunities after secondary education

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                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │ Secondary education │
                          └─────────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────┬───────────┴───────────┬──────────────┐
 ┌────────────┐  ┌────────────┐         ┌────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
 │ Employment │  │ Tertiary 5A│         │ Tertiary 5B│  │ ISCED level 4│
 └────────────┘  └────────────┘         └────────────┘  └──────────────┘
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Figure N°2: main pathways opportunities after tertiary education

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                       ┌────────────────────┐
                       │ Tertiary education │
                       └────────────────────┘
              ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
       ┌──────────────┐               ┌──────────────┐
       │ ISCED level 6│               │ Employment   │
       └──────────────┘               └──────────────┘
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6.	The literature review suggests that students with learning difficulties (CNC B) have different pathways opportunities than students with disabilities or illnesses (CNC A) and case studies should therefore distinguish both groups of students.

7.	Research shows also that successful transitions require coordinated services and case studies should therefore provide *a cross sectoral perspective* including point of views of main stakeholders involved in the transition process. Students (or his/her representative) will therefore be asked to indicate four stakeholders they consider as playing (or having played) a key role in the transition process. Interviews made within each case study will be carried out with the student and, if wished by the latter, with e.g. the family, colleagues or friends, teachers of secondary schools, transition services, disability support services in HEIs, service providers, employers. However, each case study should not include more than 5 interviews including the student.

8.	Case studies are implemented and analysed by national research centres appointed by participating countries and sent to the OECD secretariat within a report. The report will describe the methodology implemented, the transition programs retained as well as the cases analysed, present major findings in terms of high quality strategies and skills developed and make recommendations. More specifically, the report will:

- Explore innovative conceptualizations of transition strategies and practices,

- Describe key features and processes of high quality transition strategies in a manner that will inform practice elsewhere;

- Identify key dimensions of exemplary practice such that readers of the report will be helped to consider the application of (all or elements of) the strategies in their particular conditions;

- Identify and draw further implications for policy conditions needed to support such high quality strategies ; and

- Point to new research and development needed to promote the adaptation and broad diffusion of such innovative practices.

9.   Findings and recommendations of this report will be used by the OECD secretariat for providing an international perspective included in the final report.

Identification of interviewees

10.   To identify interviewees, countries select at least 2 or 3 good transition programs aiming at improving access of students with disabilities to tertiary education and to employment. Identified transition programs should meet the following criteria:

- Be designed to improve access to tertiary education and to employment of students with disabilities,

- Develop high quality strategies,

- Be in operation for a period of time sufficient to establish its operational viability;

- Demonstrate initial results that suggest that it is on track to achieve its intended outcomes;

- Afford full access to the program and to relevant data.

11.   Selected transition programs are invited to indicate at least 1 CNC A and 1 CNC B SEN students who had an exemplar transition to employment or to education beyond secondary level or at least 1 CNC A and 1 CNC B SEN students who had an exemplar transition to employment or to education after having left tertiary education.

Interview procedure

Interview topics

12.   Interviews should identify key factors to be considered in developing effective pathways to tertiary education and to employment.

Interviews with students

13.   In depth interviews with students will focus on pathways followed after having left secondary education/first level of tertiary education, on the enabling effect of teaching practices and supports as well as on strategies developed for overcoming barriers or difficulties. They will more specifically gather information on:

- Participation opportunities gained after secondary or tertiary education and within education or employment (e.g. modes of participation, conditions of participation, housing, transports, economic and social independence, difficulties faced).

- Quality of educational environment at secondary/ tertiary level (e.g. academic attainment, skills acquired, accessibility of educational supports, mobility within the premises of the institution and the campus, strengths and weaknesses of educational environment).

- Quality of supports and accommodation after secondary/tertiary education and within education or employment (e.g. availability and appropriateness of advices, supports and accommodations, quality of needs assessment procedure, articulation of individual transition plans (ITPs) with individual educational plans (IEPs)).

- Progression made after secondary/tertiary education and within education or employment (e.g. models of transition, continuity of progression, support systems for choice and planning, efficiency of strategies developed for preparing for employment or tertiary education, barriers and facilitators).

- Quality of transfer after secondary/tertiary education (e.g. prospect opportunities, ease of transition, continuity of the financial, human and technical support systems, links between the curricula at different levels of education, quality of transfer assistance, co-ordination and piloting mechanisms adopted to ensure continuity).

- Affiliation effect of participation (e.g. ability to make informed decision, ability to cope with changing situations, sense of self, involvement in community, quality of life, sense of well being).

Interviews with stakeholders

14. Interviews with stakeholders will look at strategies developed, their strengths and weaknesses and at skills required and to be promoted.

15. Interviews with representatives of tertiary education institution may gather information on:

- Strengths and weaknesses of policy measures taken by ministries and their impact on strategies developed.

- Policies developed to open up to diversity (e.g. access plan, quality insurance, dedicated disability service or officer, special admission procedures).

- Educational strategies and tools developed to create a learning environment fostering progression within tertiary education (e.g. awareness campaigns, training and tools for empowering teaching staff, guidance service).

- Support or accommodation strategies developed to create a supportive environment (e.g. disability support officer in departments, assistive technology officer, learning support tutor, training in using assistive device).

- Strategies and tools developed to include transfer from secondary education (e.g. open days and orientation days including SEN issues, system for contacting SEN students in secondary schools).

- Strategies and tools developed to include transition to work issues and career development (e.g. internship, career services including SEN students, meetings with employers, links with public employment service and/or guidance or transition service, development of job and job placement options).

- Strategies and tools developed for interagency collaboration (e.g. participation to a network, links with schools, employers, service providers).

- Strategies and tools developed for empowering families to participate to the process.

- Strategies and tools developed for empowering students to cope with changing situations (e.g. portfolio).

- Strategies and mechanisms developed for ensuring quality (quality standards, guidelines, monitoring and assessment mechanisms allowing for continuous improvement of practices).

- Priorities for increasing participation of SEN students in tertiary education.

- …

16.   Interviews with representatives from upper secondary education may include the following topics:

- Strengths and weaknesses of existing policy measures and their impact on developed strategies.

- Policies developed to open up to diversity (e.g. access plan, quality insurance, dedicated disability service or officer, awareness campaign).

- Educational strategies and tools developed to create a learning environment fostering progression in secondary education (staff empowerment, training courses).

- Support or accommodation strategies developed to create a supportive environment.

- Strategies and tools developed to foster transfer from secondary education (e.g. assessment of student's interests, formal transition plan).

- Strategies and tools developed to include transition to work and career development (e.g. articulation of general courses and professional courses, meetings with employers, links with public employment service and/or guidance or transition service, development of job and job placement options).

- Existing strategies and tools for developing interagency collaboration (e.g. participation to a network, formal collaboration with HEIs).

- Strategies and tools developed for empowering families to participate to the process.

- Strategies and tools developed for empowering the student to cope with changing situations (e.g. portfolio).

- Strategies and mechanisms developed for ensuring quality (quality standards, guidelines, monitoring and assessment mechanisms allowing for continuous improvement of practices).

- Priorities for increasing participation of SEN students in tertiary education.

- …

17.   Interviews with service providers may differ depending on the service provided. However, they may include the following topics:

- Strengths and weaknesses of policy measures taken by ministries and their impact on strategies developed.

- Assessment procedures developed for identifying individuals and institutions' needs and supports required.

- Strategies and tools developed to develop interagency collaboration.

- Support or accommodation strategies developed to empower institutions and individuals.

- Strategies and tools developed for empowering the student to cope with changing situations (e.g. portfolio)

- Strategies and tools developed for empowering family's participation in the process.

- Strategies and mechanisms developed for ensuring quality of service, advice or guidance (quality standards, guidelines, monitoring and assessment mechanisms allowing for continuous improvement of practices).

- Priorities for increasing participation of SEN students in tertiary education.

- …

18. Interviews with employers may include the following topics:

- Strengths and weaknesses of existing policy measures and their impact on developed strategies.

- Policies developed to open up to diversity (e.g. awareness campaign, diversity management, quality assurance, disability officers).

- Interagency strategies and tools developed with educational and other sectors.

- Existing support to accommodate students' workplace as well as their effectiveness and quality.

- Priorities for increasing participation of SEN students in tertiary education.

- …

19. Interviews with family members may include the following topics:

- Quality of educational environment provided to the student and its impact on his/her progression in education and on the quality of transfer to tertiary education and employment.

- Type of involvement required and quality of involvement

- Type and quality of supports received and its enabling effect (e.g. training, advice).

- Possibility given to combine involvement in transition process and work.

- ….

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Reminder of the aims of the survey:
→ **To find out and understand how students with special needs experience their education, especially after leaving school.**
→ **To find out what skills are mobilised to overcome the difficulties they encounter.**

- **How have things been for you since you started going to school?**

- **Which baccalaureate stream were you in at high school?**
  - ✓ **How did you come to choose that stream?**
  - ✓ **What practical steps were taken so that you could attend classes?**
    In terms of mobility, educational support, involvement in setting up arrangements, help from family and friends, etc.

Case 1 – If nothing:
✓ **How did it go then?**

✓ **What did you do to overcome obstacles? How did you organise yourself?**

✓ **Was there someone you could turn to all the same?**

✓ **What would have liked in the way of institutional support, had it been possible?**
(assigned teacher, administrative and/or teaching staff, associations, outside assistance, etc.)

Case 2 – If special arrangements:
✓ **Did the arrangements change over time? For what reasons?**
In response to needs; school years; cumbersome administrative procedures for changes?

✓ **Looking back, what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the arrangements?**

- **What pathway have you followed since the baccalaureate?**
  - ✓ **How did you come to choose this stream after the baccalaureate?**
    Guidance at high school? Work experience? Possibility of participating in a professional project? University open days? Decisive meetings?
  - ✓ **How did the transition go in practical terms?**
    Continuity of financial, technical, human and other support?
    Information about existing assistance? Declaration of the disability?
  - ✓ **How did you experience the transition?**
    In terms of mobility, adaptation to a new environment, access to housing, economic and social independence, etc.
    In daily life, in terms of independence (leisure activities, cooking for yourself, etc.).
  - ✓ **What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the support arrangements in place at university?**
  - ✓ **What do you think you learnt at university?**

✓ **Do you think your studies prepared you for future employment? Why?**
Internships, role of the school disability officer, university reception and careers services, personal searches, etc.

- **How did you enter working life?**
  Connections, sending a CV, etc.? How long after finishing your course? Interest in the job?
  ✓ **What do you see as the conditions that helped you get a job?**
  Your strengths (self-confidence, initiative, etc.)? Relationship with the employer? Terms of employment?
  On the employer's side? Help mechanisms?
  ✓ **Do you think that the quota of 6% disabled employees for firms with more than 50 employees played a part?**

- **Did you ever compare yourself with your classmates at school and university?**
  ✓ **Why?** (mainstream or special school, capacities, etc.)
  ✓ **In what ways?** (school grades, leisure activities, etc.)
  Relationship with the disability

- **Looking back, what do you think of your pathway?** (difficult? successful? a challenge?, etc.)
  ✓ **If successful: what do you think contributed most to your success?**

- **Have you anything to add that we have not covered during this interview?**

Complete the sociographic factsheet

INTERVIEW WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

Reminder of the context and aims of the survey:
→ **To understand how students with special needs experience their education, especially after leaving school, in connection with their environment.**
→ **There has therefore been a prior interview with X.**

- **From your point of view how did X's schooling go, starting at the beginning?**
  How did you organise yourselves? What did you do? How did you experience the situation? Relations with schools (teachers, administration, head, etc.)? Role? Resources and help mobilised? How? How was the information obtained?

- **Do you think there were obstacles to X progressing serenely through his/her studies? Entering working life?** (change of environment, etc.)
  ✓ **How did he/she react?**
  ✓ **From your standpoint, what was your role in relation to such things during X's schooling?**
  ✓ **What did you do to overcome them? to help him/her overcome them?**

- **What do you think were the conditions that enabled X to continue his/her studies (despite everything)? To get a job?**
  Quality of the educational environment, commitment of parents, friends, etc.

- **If it had been possible, what sort of institutional support would you like to have seen for X? For you?** (parents' time, relationships within the couple, within the family unit; resource-persons for the parents, etc.)
  - ✓ **Who do you turn to in times of need?**

- **Does X have any brothers or sisters? Do they also have impairments?**
  - ✓ **Do you get the impression of making distinctions in your children's education because of disability?**
  - ✓ **Do you get the impression that your partner has made distinctions in your children's education because of disability?**
  - ✓ **Have you always handled your children's education like that, or has it changed over time?** *(same questions put to the other partner)*

- **How does X get along with his/her siblings? Have the relationships changed?**

- **Have you anything to add that we have not covered during this interview?**

Complete the sociographic factsheet

INTERVIEW WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Reminder of the context and aims of the survey:
→ To understand how students with special needs experience their education, especially after leaving school, in connection with their environment.
→ There has therefore been a prior interview with X.

- **How long have you been supporting X and how do you organise that support?**
  Conditions of initial meeting/contact; procedures to assess needs; extent of investment by X, his/her parents, teachers; have there been developments?

- **Since you started supporting X, have you had discussions with the relevant teacher or team in X's school?**
  - ✓ **Between you, how have you organised X's support?**
  - ✓ **Which person(s) or service(s) do you have most contact with when supporting or taking action relating to the young person's or worker's needs?**

- **Have you used any specific tracking tools while supporting X?**
  Support tools, types of adaptation proposed, actions or reactions in response to change, etc.
  - ✓ **Have you adjusted them as X has progressed along his/her pathway?**
  - ✓ **How?**

- **Have you seen X change since you started supporting him/her? In what ways?**
  Reactions to problems; actions to overcome obstacles, investment in his/her own pathway / support measures; attitude towards his/her situation (denial, awareness, self-confidence, etc.).
  - ✓ **What do you think of his/her pathway?**

- **More broadly, do you develop methods for supporting students?**
  Support "toolkit" for example
  - ✓ **What difficulties do you come across in putting the methods into practice?**

    ✓ **What are the advantages of the method?** (strengths, weaknesses)

- **In your experience, what do you think still remains to be done in order to accommodate disabled apprentices and young workers?**
Obstacles encountered by young people, tools to be developed, training of professionals, etc.

- **Have you anything to add that we have not covered during this interview?**

Complete the sociographic factsheet

INTERVIEW WITH STAFF OF SECONDARY/TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Reminder of the context and aims of the survey:
→ **To understand how students with special needs experience their education, especially after leaving school, in connection with their environment.**
→ **There has therefore been a prior interview with X.**

- **How long have you been supporting X and how do you organise that support?**
Conditions of initial meeting/contact; procedures to assess needs; extent of investment by X, his/her parents, teachers; have there been developments?

- **Have you seen X change since you started supporting him/her? In what ways?**
Reactions to problems; actions to overcome obstacles, investment in his/her own pathway / support measures; attitude towards his/her situation (denial, awareness, self-confidence, etc.).
    ✓ **What do you think of his/her pathway?**

- **What tools and strategies has your establishment implemented in order to accommodate and support disabled students?**
Accessibility, adaptations and support, awareness-raising, disability unit, needs assessment, specific enrolment procedures, oversight and assessment of service quality, etc.
    ✓ **Are specific measures taken for staff (teaching/administrative)? What are they?**
      Adviser in training and research units, adviser on technical assistance and other adaptations proposed, training in how to accommodate students with special needs, etc.
    ✓ **What strategies are in place for the parents of students with special needs?**
    ✓ **What are your relations with them?**
    ✓ **What impact do you thank that has on students with special needs?**

- **What tools and strategies are implemented in your establishment for further education? For access to employment?**
Careers fair, open days, days for students with special needs, university or careers guidance units, etc.
    ✓ **What strategies are there for cooperation with educational institutions?**
    ✓ **With businesses? With employment agencies?**
      Links with local high schools, contacts with future students, establishment of interagency networks, cooperation with associations, cooperation with businesses, etc.

- **What do you think are the strengths of the support structures within your institution? Things that could be improved?**

✓ **What difficulties have you encountered?**

- **What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of policies for the schooling and access to employment of students with special needs?**

- **In your experience, what do you think still needs to be done in order to accommodate disabled students?**
  Obstacles encountered by young people, tools to be developed, training of professionals, etc.

- **What do you think should be the essential aspects to tackle when training those professionally involved in accommodating and supporting disabled students?**

- **Have you anything to add that we have not covered during this interview?**

Complete the sociographic factsheet

INTERVIEW WITH THE EMPLOYER OR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

Reminder of the context and aims of the survey:
→ To understand how students with special needs experience their education, especially after leaving school, in connection with their environment.
→ There has therefore been a prior interview with X.

- **How long have you been supporting X and how do you organise that support?**
  Conditions of initial meeting/contact; procedures to assess needs; extent of investment by X, his/her parents, teachers; have there been developments?

- **How was X recruited?**
  Date of recruitment, conditions for applications and interviews, 6% quota, issue of disability raised (or not) on recruitment, etc.

- **Have you seen X change since he/she started with you? In what ways?**
  Reactions to problems; actions to overcome obstacles, investment in his/her own pathway / support measures; attitude towards his/her situation (denial, awareness, self-confidence, etc.)
  ✓ **What do you think of his/her pathway?**

- **What tools and strategies has your business implemented in order to accommodate and support disabled apprentices and young workers?**
  Accessibility, adaptation of workstation and support, awareness-raising, disability unit, needs assessment, specific enrolment procedures, oversight and assessment of service quality, etc.

- **With what outside partner(s) do you work to accommodate disabled apprentices and young workers?**
  Links with vocational training institutions, disability units, participation in disability days or forums, interagency networks, cooperation with associations, cooperation with other businesses, etc.

- **What do you think are the strengths of the support structures within your business? Things that could be improved?**
  - ✓ **What difficulties have you encountered?**

- **What do you think should be the essential aspects to tackle when training those professionally involved in accommodating and supporting disabled apprentices and young workers?**

- **Have you anything to add that we have not covered during this interview?**

Complete the sociographic factsheet