

PACES Newsletter No. 5

Issued: 5th of March 2020

The overall aim of the PACES project is to progress and set up a programme of initiatives in universities in Egypt and Morocco to support the modernization of higher education by developing Accessibility Centres (static, mobile and virtual) that will enable students with disabilities (SwD) to access Assistive Technology, (AT), and support services such as counselling and peer support. Through these centres SwD and the Employer/HEI network SwD will be able to gain employability and transition skills in order to move forward into employment. All project partners have learned many lessons and aim through this new project to increase the scale of access to HEIs and employment opportunities for students with disabilities, SwD, throughout Egypt and Morocco.



This newsletter issue address the Train the Trainers and Project Meeting, University of Alicante, Spain on 17th February 2020 to 21st February 2020.

PACES Project is Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

Train the Trainers and Project Meeting, University of Alicante, Spain

Date of event: 17th February 2020 to 21st February 2020.

University of Alicante, Spain organized Train the Trainers and Project Meeting from 17th to 21st of February 2020 at the Faculty of Education with attendance by nearly 30 participants. This event organized in the framework of the PACES Project “Progression of Accessibility Centers in higher Education for Students with disabilities in North Africa that funded from the EU under the Erasmus+ Program”. There were two days meeting and three days training. The meeting gave a chance to the participants to sharpen their awareness on the use of assistive technology and get hands-on experience from the staff and students who have worked with students with disabilities over the last few years.

The participants who represented Morocco were from Ibn Tofail University, Mohammed V University, Moulay Ismail University of Meknes, and Abdelmlek Saaadi University. The Egyptians partners were Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Ain Shams University, Fayoum University and Mansoura University. It should be noted from the outset that Alice was very helpful in terms of providing the required logistics and assistance when need be.

The event was very fruitful and fraught with many activities. Mr. Luis Gómez de Membrillera Luis who was behind the organization of the conference commenced his presentation by outlining the objectives of the meeting at Alicante. He welcomed the participants and offered a through briefing before he gave the floor to both Josefa Parreno Selva, the director of Secretariat for Students support and Employability at the University of Alicante and Esther Gallego, CAE staff who delivered their speeches, respectively on the structures with students with disabilities and on the network between the families with Disabled students and experts in other national and overseas universities. Mrs Esther gave a through explanation of what they do to promote student’s autonomy within the university and outside the university.

After the break, Domingo Martínez, CAE staff delivered a wonderful presentation on the Universal Design of instruction in Higher Education. He gave a historical overview on the place of people with specific needs in society and the education system, from the Greeks where these people were excluded from certain

positions (military, religious, political) until the recent creation of the UID "European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education".

After that presentation, a Round Table on Adapted teaching for disability from the teaching staff, was directed by Tomás Ordoñez, CAE staff. It concentrated on the teaching methods adapted to people with specific needs; moderated by Professor Juan Miguel ORTEGA and moderated by Tomas ORDONEZ of the CAE-staff.



All the participants moved to another venue to meet José María Fernández, CAE IT staff who talked about "Assistive & Accessible Technology - Lab Room: An interactive tour. The participants could have a clearer pictures of the equipment used at the university for disabled students. It was in fact a hands-off experience. What is striking about that visit is that although Jose is partially visually impaired, he is able to devise his own application that could be used by

non-disabled people. The ones he developed by himself are "Listen All", and "Ability Connect". All in all, the Interactive visit for the discovery of equipment and technology available for students with special needs such as smart interactive board, Talking-Writing translation software, Mouse adapted to be used by the foot, the neck...



In the beginning of Day Two; after the arrival of all the participants, the floor was given to some of ERASMUS students to talk about their personal and unique experiences they have had with disabled students. Their stories were very touching and sincere and triggered a lot of debate and concern in the room. "Training for studies and for life";

After the break, a visit was organized to the Alicante Archeology Museum. Another striking element to mention is that people with specific needs are also at the center of the museum staff's

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concerns: accessibility, description in Braille for the blind, availability of applications for the hearing impaired, for deaf-mutes...; all the participants headed towards the tram station to visit MARQ to receive a very good example of universal design in culture and leisure. At first, the staff at MARQ delivered a presentation about the Museum. The presentation was in Spanish but Alice was there to translate. Her English was more than accurate.



After the visit to Alicante Museum, we resumed our workshop with some volunteers experience to talk about their personal, experience on and how they interacted with disabled students. Indeed once again, it was a rich and fruitful experience in which the volunteers were able to voice their journeys with disabled students.

A general overview on the progress of the PACES project by J. CAWSTON, project coordinator. After a brief introduction by Sarah

and Jackeline about the schedule of the day, Lefkothea KARTASIDOU- University of Macedonia on the progress of Work Package 3 (deliverables) delivered a presentation via Skype. She highlighted all the Training reports, statistics on students trained on the use of equipment delivered within the framework of PACES, meetings with employers).



Matjaž started his presentation that discussed the accessibility center in which he checked about physical issues of the project. All the participants have set up the accessibility center, then he checked with the equipment and he showed some of the pictures of all the centers involved in the project. Then he moved to talk about the virtual accessibility centers set up and the software preferences used by the centers for video conferencing. He also pointed out at the guidelines for interacting with students with disabilities.

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The third presentation was delivered by Prof. Mohamed Shehadeh and Mootaz Anany to talk about the established of the PACES project website and the using of social media and interface and the progress of the Project Dissemination activities (WP7), then they moved to talk about round table discussions with the entire participant about the required evidence from each partners.

Dr. Sanaa from Fayoum University talked about her accessibility center. She showed us the pictures and location of the center, News bulletin just to mention a few things, Most of the students as she confirmed that she were trained in English. She taught them how to write a CV. As part of the training. She showed some pictures of the training. She also demonstrated that she has an accessibility center for publication. As far as employment, because she has connection with Samsung companies and one of the student had a chance to be accepted

in the company. She highlighted some of the activities they are undertaking at the university.



Imane Raissouni presentation: sustainability she talked about sustainability which art of WP 6- the content was as follows: Sustainability, The sustainability journey and the Project of sustainability planning. Strategic planning implementation: scale of operation to meet:

- mission, vision, philosophy
- identification of stakeholders and advocates,
- results orientation,
- financial planning,
- adaptation to change, and
- management structure: assign and delegates power and responsibilities

Then there was an interactive workshop directed by Alicante Staff and on the other hand to CAE VISIT: Facilities tour and meeting with the Staff.

All in all, the conference was a great success and achievement. It has reached and attained its

ultimate goals. The majority of the participants expressed their positive attitudes towards the archived goals so far. The conference has been a success because the participants showed eagerness, diligence, and a lot of responsibility. The hope now is to improve special education in the two countries. We also hope that the participants' visit to Alicante and elsewhere would contribute to the development of accessibility centers in other universities and therefore help students with disabilities across the nation.



Progression of Accessibility Centres in Higher
Education for Students with Disabilities in
North Africa

Train the Trainers + Project Meeting
University of Alicante, 17-21 February 2020

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