



Co-funded by the  
Tempus Programme  
of the European Union



# Summary Project Report

Sustainable ways to increase higher education students' equal access to learning environments



SWING Final Report By:

Jacqueline Cawston, MBA – Coventry University – March 2016

[www.swingproject.eu](http://www.swingproject.eu)



Deliverable / Activity Ref. N°	Activities	Type or Nature of Deliverable	Partner
1.1	Needs assessment of Accessibility Centres in PC	Report	UA
1.2	Best Practices of Assistive Technology (EU)	Report	UA
1.3	Gap analysis and planning	Report	UA
1.4	Workshops about Best Practices	Events: Conferences and Seminars	UA
2.1	Accessibility Centre model	Report	CovUni
2.2	Design of an e-learning environment	Other products	FE
2.3	Employment modules for vulnerable groups	Teaching Material	CovUni
2.4	Advisors' training handbook	Learning Resources	CovUni
3.1	Organisation of seminar program	Methodology	UNIBO
3.2	Development of training material	Teaching Material	UNIBO
3.3	Preparatory actions for training seminars	Training	UNIBO
3.4	Transferring and translating teaching material	Training	UNIBO
3.5	Selecting suitable Partner Country academic staff	Report	UNIBO
3.6	Training of Partner Countries' academic staff	Training	UNIBO
4.1	Integration of an "assistive IT" system	Learning Resources	FE
4.2	Training of career advisors and university staff	Training	FE
4.3	Seminars for Accessibility Centre staff	Events: Conferences and Seminars	FE
4.4	Report on User Trials & Evaluation Findings	Report	FE
5.1	Dissemination portfolio	Report	UA
5.2	Dissemination actions	Events: Conferences and Seminars	UA
6.1	Exploitation and sustainability plan	Report	UNIBO
7.1	Project Quality Assurance plan	Report	CovUni
7.2	1st Annual Internal Evaluation Report	Report	CovUni
7.3	2nd Annual Internal Evaluation Report	Report	CovUni
8.1	Project management plan	Report	CovUni
8.2	1st Annual Official Progress Report	Report	CovUni
8.3	2nd Annual Official Progress Report	Report	CovUni
8.4	Final Report	Report	CovUni



**The SWING Project funded by the EU Tempus programme was a collaboration between the UK, Italy, Spain, Greece, Morocco and Egypt. The project led by Jacqueline Cawston of the Disruptive Media Learning Lab, Coventry University ran for two years and finished in January 2016.**

The project objectives were achieved. The team adopted a spirit of co-creation, partners from the EU worked with, and supported, partners in Egypt and Morocco to develop Accessibility Centres for students with disabilities. The results showed that the project has enabled staff to support their students through study and provide careers guidance. It has also empowered students to support themselves and each other.

**The elements of the project were:**

- Research into the needs and gaps in provision for students with disabilities in the Universities in Egypt and Morocco
- Observations of best practice in Europe by the North African staff visiting EU Institutions
- Development of the first ever Accessibility Model
- Creation of 10 training modules and the SWING Advisors' Training Handbook
- Set up and establishment of the first physical Accessibility Centres in Morocco and Egypt
- Training of staff and students in the modules
- Dissemination and publication of the activities and results of the project
- Exploitation of the project results through policy change and governmental networks
- Sustainability through high profile publicity, University senior management support and student empowerment.



SWING project is funded with support from the European Commission. This document reflects the view only of the authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.





## Outcomes

### WP 1. Needs Assessment and survey of Accessibility Centre best practices

- Needs assessment of Accessibility Centres in Partner Countries (PC)
- Best Practices of Assistive Technology (EU)
- Gap analysis and planning
- Workshops about Best Practices

### WP 2. Design and development of a model for Accessibility Centres in Partner Countries

- Accessibility Centre Model
- Design of an e-learning environment
- Employment modules for vulnerable groups
- Advisors' training handbook

### WP 3. Training for Partner Country University academic, support, technical staff on Accessibility Centres in EU Universities

- Organisation of seminar program
- Development of training material
- Preparatory actions for training seminars
- Transferring and translating teaching material
- Selecting suitable Partner Country academic staff
- Training of Partner Countries 'academic staff

### WP 4. Instantiation (establishment, modernisation and reform) and trial testing of Accessibility Centres in Partner Countries

- Integration of an "assistive IT" system
- Training of career advisors and University staff
- Seminars for Accessibility Centre staff
- Report on User Trials & Evaluation Findings

### WP 5. Dissemination of project results

- Dissemination portfolio
- Dissemination actions

### WP 6. Exploitation of project results

- Exploitation and sustainability plan

### WP 7. Quality Control & Monitoring

- Project Quality Assurance plan
- 1st Annual Internal Evaluation Report
- 2nd Annual Internal Evaluation Report

### WP 8. Project Management

- Project management plan
- 1st Annual Official Progress Report
- 2nd Annual Official Progress Report
- Final Report

## Aim

The main aim of this project was to offer disabled students equal access to university education and future career opportunities by using accessible, assistive technology.

### The project's more specific objectives were:

- 1) To utilize the EU e-accessibility best practices in order to achieve greater levels of Web accessibility across the Partner Countries' Universities
- 2) To design and establish a model for Accessibility Centres in Partner Countries
- 3) Train academic, careers, support staff and technical experts from the Partner Country Universities in Student Accessibility
- 4) Promote the adaptation of specialized "design-for-all" policies (universal design approaches) by the Universities through the development of sustainable Accessibility Centres
- 5) In addition the project will develop and disseminate recommendations for other Universities based on EUROPA Web Accessibility Policy and WAI standards.



# Achieved Results

The SWING project has addressed a key area of the need to modernise Higher Education (HE) in the neighbouring Southern Mediterranean region of North Africa: the provision of support for the integration of students with disabilities into mainstream HE and the development of strategic tools to enable this process to continue in the future.

The project was ground breaking in the implementation of Accessibility Centres in Morocco and Egypt and the development of the Accessibility Model that can be used in any higher education institution either within or outside of North Africa or the EU.

**SWING is a perfect example of Tempus philosophy**

**“To promote collaboration and cooperation between institutions within the EU and surrounding countries focussing on the growth and reform of higher education systems. Promoting voluntary convergence of the higher education institutes, fostering a spirit of collaboration in a “people-to-people approach”.**

The project results have been achieved through collaboration and co-creation. Throughout the project an iterative approach was taken that enabled the team to adapt the training and the development of the Accessibility Centres in accordance with the needs of the partners. The main aim of this project was to offer disabled students equal access to University education by using assistive technology and therefore improve employment opportunities.

**‘The most important thing for me after graduation is to find a job.’ Student**

We have achieved our objectives and over achieved in many cases, apart from where there were challenges with the political situation in Egypt beyond our control. The project team feel that the most important achievement was that of student empowerment. In both Egypt and Morocco the students were instrumental in pushing for further change.

**“The students also have a role to play in improving things and also I feel the staff now better understand their needs” – Member of staff Arab Academy**

# The project made an impact nationally and internationally:

## National Level

- Increased awareness of accessibility issues for students with disabilities
- Development of first ever model for Accessibility for Higher Education Institutions
- Development of Advisors’ Training Handbook that can be used in any country to set up an accessibility centre
- Training of academic, student support, technical and careers staff
- Set up of two accessibility centres in Morocco
- Set up of two accessibility centres in Egypt
- Policy change in Morocco
- Recommendations for change in Egypt
- National Conferences in Egypt and Morocco
- International Conferences in Egypt and Morocco
- Empowerment of students with disabilities to set up their own student groups

## International Level

- Development of first ever model for Accessibility for Higher Education Institutions
- Development of Advisors’ Training Handbook that can be used in any country to set up accessibility centres
- International Conferences in Egypt and Morocco
- Pledges to spread the project throughout the Arab League
- New contacts with Saudi Arabia and Dubai to set up Accessibility Centres
- Follow on Erasmus project “MUSE” to set up accessibility Centres in Latin America
- SWING Conference papers
- SWING Journal papers





# Achievement Highlights

## Student Empowerment

When the project was discussed in Morocco the Students decided to set up their own disabled club. The older students supported the younger students and they formed “le disabled students Club” this empowered the students to lobby for change and inclusivity within the University and externally to the Government. The Presidents at Abdelmalek Essaadi University and at Ibn Tofail University are very supportive of the student clubs.

In Egypt during the international conference one of the breakout sessions was to make recommendations. The disabled students were encouraged when told about the student club in Morocco but they decided they did not want to have a separate club from the non disabled students. The student president of the “Rise” student club at the Arab Academy of Science Technology and Maritime Transport was present at the meeting and immediately invited the students with disabilities to join them. They all agreed they would work together to improve access and equality for students with disabilities. Students have been instrumental throughout the project in pushing for change in the Partner Universities.

**“I have gained a lot of benefits from the training, it taught me the technologies so that I know more when I am using my laptop” – Student**

## The SWING Accessibility Model

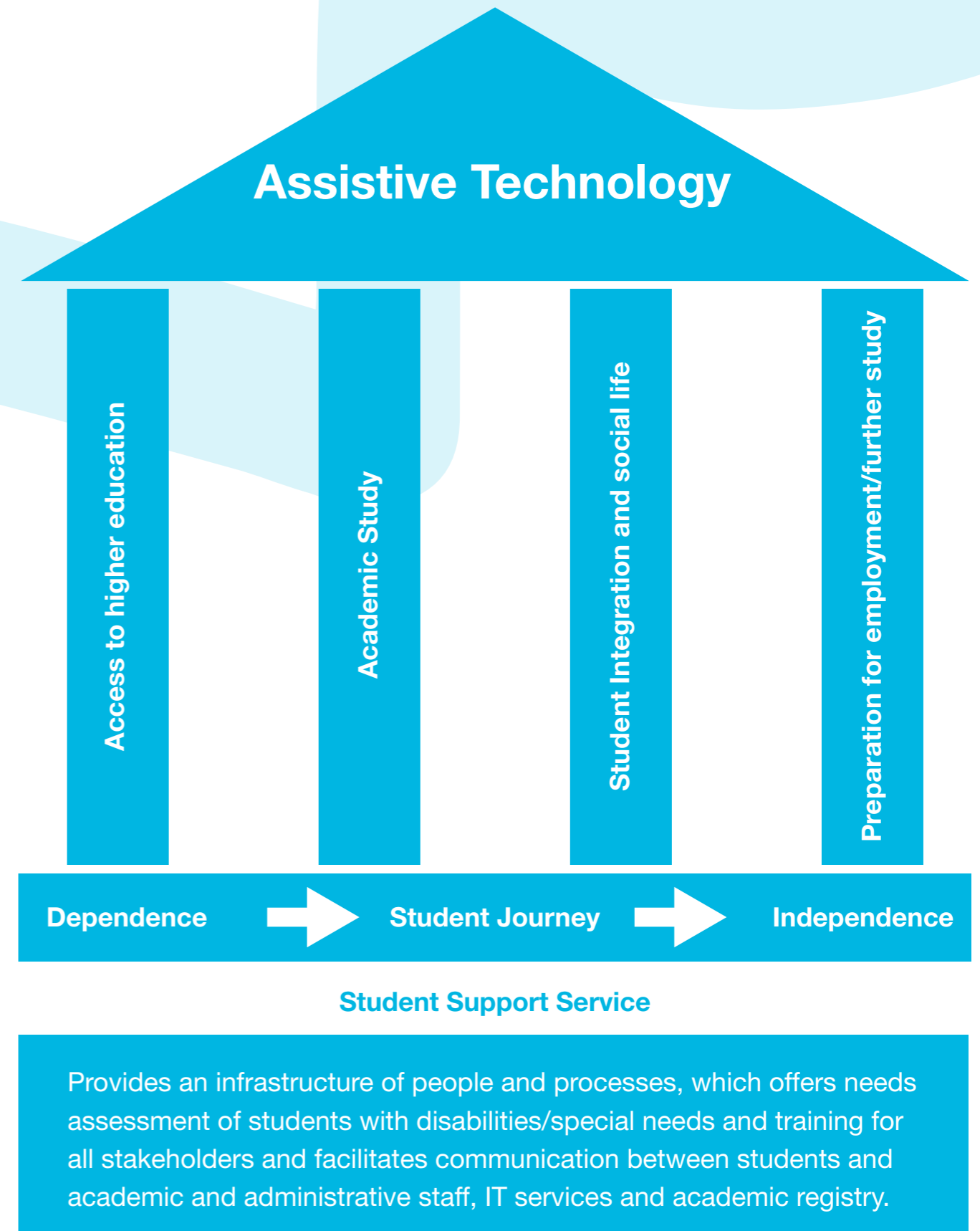
One of the main outputs from the project was the development of the unique Accessibility Model that underpins all aspects of the SWING project. This was a joint development with all partners. An holistic view of assistive technology was taken realising that it was not enough to just provide Assistive Technology without looking at the needs and requirement of disabled students.

It was clear that Access to University involves much more than using Accessible IT, therefore the team developed the Accessibility Centre Model which involves 4 pillars:

- 1) Access to higher education**
- 2) Academic study**
- 3) Student integration and social life**
- 4) Preparation for employment/ further study**

The pillars are supported by Student Services under the shelter of assistive technology, the model tracks the student journey through University to a career or further study. The training modules and the Advisors’ Training Handbook were based on the SWING Accessibility Model.

The SWING model report was developed by all the partners and coordinated and written by the Coventry University team.





# Achievement Highlights

## SWING Advisors Training Handbook

The project team decided that they would embed the model into the Advisors' Training Handbook and carry on adding to the Handbook so that it would be a living document relevant to the users.

The SWING Handbook can be used as a record, a manual and a reference for anyone who wishes to set up an Accessibility Centre. The handbook gives guidance about setting up an Accessibility Centre for disabled students, including: supporting disclosure of disabilities, assessing student needs, choosing appropriate assistive technology and preparing training.

In addition the handbook details the 10 modules developed by the SWING project team. All partners were involved in the development of the training modules in the handbook in order to give not only instructions but also a model/example for further sections of training. The modules are divided into relevant sections but at the same time create links between the different users. The Partners in the team used the Handbook for training staff and students.

## Module 1 Support Structures for Disabled Students

Partners in Egypt and Morocco introduced the terms of disability and its different typologies and gave an overview of the national laws and the UN convention of the rights of the persons with disabilities, and a sketch of their University strategy.

## Module 2 Supporting Students to Support Themselves

The Partners presented an overview of assistance that they have within their Universities and externally. In this Module the students also explored the institution's Moodle platform and any counselling, student union or social activities. They were shown where to find information on accessibility on social media such as; Facebook.

## Module 3 Assistive Technology: An Introduction

This was a short overview of the use of technology provided by the institution and that which is accessible to students outside of their University – students learned how to find and access such technology.

## Modules, 4, 5 and 6 Practical Assisted Technology Sessions

The purpose of this module was to introduce disabled students to the different equipment made available in the Accessibility Centres. Providing effective and appropriate learning activities; the three sessions gave students the opportunity to have in-depth, hands on experience of assistive technology tools.

## Module 7 Key Employability Competency Awareness and Self-awareness

Partner staff presented an overview of the professional integration of disabled persons in accordance with the Moroccan and Egyptian law and the unemployment rate of people with disabilities. Students were introduced to the different stages of the employment process: Knowing oneself, knowing the job market and knowing the different Job Search Techniques (CV, cover letter, job interview).

## Module 8 Practical Employment Skills

Through simulations, students practiced writing different documents. For example, using their knowledge of the different types of CVs, students were asked to write a chronological CV in response to a job advert.



They were asked to write different types of cover letters: 1) application letter 2) spontaneous/speculative letter and 3) networking letter. Professors, acting as recruiters, invited students to sit for an interview. The purpose of this activity was to initiate students into the techniques of interviewing and to help them manage stress.

## Module 9 Develop Global Awareness

Students were helped to explore issues relating to the development of global graduate capabilities and their online presence. They were also provided with opportunities to reflect on their current online presence and were given guidance to improve them.

## Module 10 Post-graduate Education Opportunities

This module focussed on information about further study so that students were aware of post graduate courses (Master and PhD) Information was given and discussed. Students were instrumental in informing each other and sharing knowledge about opportunities.



# Achievement Highlights

## Accessibility Centres

The project team set up the first Accessibility Centres in Egypt and Morocco. The purchase and set up of equipment was decided upon during work package three by the Partner Country staff with the support of the EU team members. The list of equipment was then discussed with students and staff in the institutions in Morocco and Egypt to ensure that it was appropriate for their needs. The equipment in all universities was made available to all disabled students. One student gave feedback that the project was very important in improving their skills to use accessible software on their laptops.

Staff in the Universities in North Africa set up the equipment and the processes for the Accessibility Centres initially. Staff from the EU partners then visited partner Universities in Egypt and Morocco to help support the set up of the Accessibility Centres and implement the training. 30 staff from the EU travelled to Morocco and Egypt. Each Partner University used the SWING Advisors Training Handbooks to prepare tailor-made training material in order to support their own assistive technology equipment and services.

**“The students were excited about the project and although initially reluctant to get involved because they doubted it would result in change they have learned to trust the project staff and are now fully committed”**

*Abdelmalek Pre-Training Feedback*

Accessibility staff, careers staff and academics undertook the training within the handbook and then trained students. During the training, the students were particularly concerned about how their use of assistive technologies might enhance their employability, and how employers might respond or support them. Feedback was provided with reference to particular Assistive Technologies. During this time staff from the EU partner countries attended the training to offer support and experience in the field.

## Policy Change Morocco

During the SWING conference in Morocco and after meetings with University staff, the representative of the Moroccan Minister of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development announced the approval of the law number 97.13 by the Council of Ministers and the House of Councillors **“supporting social cohesion fund and includes the following theme:**

**\*To Give scholarships to students schooled in the status of disability in all educational levels (1.000 Dh) per month, To give Support granting non-refundable for holders of income for school projects through the creation of a company, Technical and equipment aids for students with a disability and the Creation of centres belonging to the institution (The National Cooperation) in all cities for the reception and guidance of Disabled persons.”**

This is a new law and shows the commitment of the Government to support disabled people in Morocco and the impact of the SWING project.





# Achievement Highlights

## Recommendations Egypt

The President of the Arab Academy of Science Technology and Maritime Transport pledged to disseminate the SWING project results to the Arab League, which is an organisation of 22 countries. In addition at the IC-SWING conference in Egypt recommendations were put forward by the participants, the main recommendations are:

### University

1. Learners should be admitted to study in varied disciplines such as sciences, information technology, engineering, mathematics, so that their admission is based on their merits and educational accomplishments
2. Learners with disabilities should be encouraged to join societies at universities, these societies aim to develop learners' skills, call for the provision of equal chances for learners of all categories, and will ensure continuous fighting for their rights
3. Share of scholarships to be allocated to learners with disabilities
4. Provide comprehensive training programs for faculty members as well as employees at institutions, universities, and schools to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that enable them to provide effective support for learners with disabilities

### Government

5. Government to allocate a budget for enhancing scientific research in the field of assistive technology and curriculum development for individuals with disabilities
6. Exams and curriculums for learners of all categories, whether with disabilities or without, to be unified and tailored to suit all different types of disabilities and to allow for the use of assistive technology
7. A booklet on the accessibility requirements or standards for the work environment of persons with disabilities should be developed and disseminated across civil society, so as to enable disabled people to overcome social, environmental, or vocational obstacles

### Society and Work

8. Approach the media to increase their awareness of the concerns of persons with disabilities. Facilitate the communication with persons with all types of disabilities through different media
9. Positive action by companies and organisations has to be rewarded through publicity, as well as providing badges, medals, and certificates
10. A league table of positive companies can be formed, where companies can be credited for providing equal job opportunities for individuals with disabilities
11. Training and information for companies, to help them take appropriate decisions regarding offering equal job opportunities to persons with disabilities
12. Gain feedback from employed people with disabilities. A case study can be prepared about their experience and feedback, as well as feedback from employers



# Achievement Highlights

## Press and Publicity

Dissemination was mainly conducted during the latter part of the project. Partners maintained a steady flow of dissemination through social media, blogging and newsletters, 56 items were produced. Marketing material was designed in the form of leaflets and banners. Partners also conducted face to face dissemination by presenting at 28 conferences.

The website **www.swingproject.eu** was established at the beginning of the project but was revamped during the second half of the project to showcase work and the conferences. Booklets were produced which detail 1) The SWING Model Report 2) The SWING handbook 3) The Final Project Report

A dissemination report and table of outputs have been produced. The two International Conferences were a great source of publicity with 5 TV interviews, 25 press reports and 12 Social media items. They also resulted in the news of the Accessibility Centres spreading throughout Morocco and Egypt. Partners have been contacted by other Universities in the region to present and talk about the project. Coventry University advertised in two magazines "Able" and "Enable" which resulted in them being contacted by the Royal National Institute for the Blind who are helping a University in Saudi Arabia set up an Accessibility Centre.



# Summary

The project was very successful due to EU Tempus funding. The setting up of Accessibility Centres in Morocco and Egypt would not have been possible without this organisation and finance. Apart from political issues which were beyond the control of the project team, the deliverables have been met and in many ways the SWING project team have over delivered.

The partners all worked very well together with enthusiasm and passion united by the common goal of improving equal opportunities for students with disabilities. There have been some challenges with the shortened time frame, the situation in Egypt politically and the distance between us. Language has not been a barrier because the partners all speak very good English but online communication was difficult.

In the beginning we found communication by Skype and Google hangout very difficult with drop out and poor internet connections. We managed to overcome these problems with a purchased teleconferencing system, it was at this point that we realised we needed more face to face meetings.

The Coordinator kept to deadlines and reminded the partners of deliverables and quality at each meeting. Internal evaluation was threaded through the project with a final quality report evaluated by an external consultant, experienced in EU project management and quality requirements.

All partners were made aware of the quality demands of the Tempus Project. Reporting and quality was thorough in adhering to Tempus guidelines. In addition conference and research papers have been produced which are open to peer review for publication.

The impact of the project has been surprising, the Accessibility Model was ground breaking as the first of its kind and the Accessibility Centres were the first in Egypt and Morocco.

The project inspired the disabled students to set up their own organisations or join other student organisations to gain support. Political change has taken place in Morocco and there are recommendations in place to do the same in Egypt. This bottom up approach combined with the pledges and commitment from the University Presidents will ensure the sustainability of the Accessibility Centres.

The achievements are due to the enthusiasm and willingness of all staff and students of the project institutions. We have already started another EU Erasmus Plus project to follow on from SWING and will take the model and the modules forward to help disabled students in Latin America. The research outputs are extra to the project but will valorise our efforts and disseminate the project across the educational community globally. Sustainability is assured through the development of the SWING model and the policy change within the two countries pushed forward by the students themselves who were empowered by the project and the funding by the EU Tempus scheme.



# Future Developments

## Future projects

MUSE is an Erasmus Plus project which has now started. It mirrors the aims of SWING but is helping Universities in Argentina, Chile and Mexico to improve access, ensure suitable learning conditions and develop employment opportunities for HEIs' disabled students via modern inclusion practices and networking. The SWING model will be used as a basis for the project aims and the SWING Handbook will be used to develop Accessibility Centres in the MUSE Higher Education institutions. All of the EU partners involved in SWING are also partners in MUSE.

## Networks

All partners are strengthening networks, for example: Coventry University is helping the Royal National Institute for the Blind to set up Accessibility Centres in Saudi Arabia and working with the Aeronautical College in Dubai. Abdelmalek Essaadi is in Collaboration with many associations in the Tangier-Tetouan region for the follow up of disabled students. These include 'hanan' organization for physical disability, 'Louis Braille' institute for visual disability, 'Al Hamama al Baydae' for helping disabled youth. Partners in North Africa will continue to work together to increase access for disabled students.

## Student Clubs

Students in Morocco have formed their own clubs and students in Egypt have joined existing student clubs. All clubs will work towards equality of opportunity for disabled students in University and in work.

## Dissemination

Research journals and Papers are being written about the project and conferences will be attended to carry on the dissemination. Coventry University will be presenting to the All Party Moroccan Group for the UK Government at Westminster, London.

(The all party parliamentary group on Morocco promotes good relationships between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Morocco, particularly their respective parliamentary assemblies within the framework of Inter-Parliamentary Union).



## The SWING partners:



**Coventry University,**  
United Kingdom,  
Coordinating Institution



**elements**

**FOUR ELEMENTS, Greece**



**Alexandria University, Egypt**



**Ibn Tofail University, Morocco**



Universitat d'Alacant  
Universidad de Alicante

**University of Alicante, Spain**



**Alma Mater Studiorum**  
Universita di Bologna, Italy



**Arab Academy for Science,  
Technology and Maritime  
Transport, Egypt**



**Universite Abdelmalek Essaadi,  
Morocco**

## Coventry University Team:

Jacqueline Cawston, MBA  
Professor Lynn Clouder  
Dr Gemma Tombs  
Dr Katherine Wimpenny

Debra James  
Lucy Wilson-Whitford  
Steven Ball  
Andrew Brooks

**[www.swingproject.eu](http://www.swingproject.eu)**