

Montpellier Business School

Diversity Challenge project

Handicap people & Sup de co

M1 BSCM

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The views expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect policies of The Montpellier Business School.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sup de Co Montpellier Business School is an institution which offers a unique education method, where the interaction with people and daily life business tasks are essential for the formation of their students. Cross cultural awareness, acceptance of diversity, international connections and management responsibilities, are some of the values and principles Sup de Co offers.

Actually in their own words, Sup de Co is a: “Empreinte sociale avec une élaboration des enseignements inspirée par les valeurs de diversité et des responsabilités globales, dans l’objectif de former de futurs cadres responsables et performants”ⁱ

Nonetheless right now it is failing in one of their principals, about accepting and embracing diversity, because every year the amount of disable students interested in Sup de Co is not very significant and almost no body applies for a job in this institution. Based on this, we will try to understand the reason why Handicap people are not interested in this School, what are the mistakes and reason for the failure of this project. With this information in mind we will try to give some recommendations on how it can be improved, ways of motivate people to enroll in Sup de Co and apply for jobs in here.

2. INVESTIGATION RESEARCH

For this project we based the research taking into account our own origins, that's why we focus on America and Europe. We analyze more than 30 universities, in these two continents and two international organizations (European Disable People and United Nations), that where concerned about the inclusion of disable people into higher education.

In fact, the Education Disable People Organization (EDP) found out that the problem starts by a misunderstanding of the word inclusion by Universities.

.....there is confusion between integration and inclusion. Integration is a matter of location-the placing of students with disabilities in mainstream schools where they have to adapt to existing teaching and learning and organisation of the school. Inclusion, on the other hand, requires adapting the system to meet the needs of the pupil/student with disabilities. The environment, teaching and learning and organisation of the school and education system are systematically to be changed in order to remove barriers to pupils/students with disabilities, so that they can maximise their academic and social achievements. Lack of progress to inclusion is also due to the fact that there is often a lack of technical and human resources in mainstream education.....ⁱⁱ

In this order of ideas, having in mind what really means been inclusive, and after reading how universities try to include handicap people into their programs, we found out six common areas, that every university that plans or has hanicap people at least shoud have, in order to be percieved as an inclusive university.

The first area is about politics, institutions should have specific policies in their constitutions for handicap people; the second area is medical assistance, which means having special personnel, volunteers, training sessions and a center for any kind of help if its needed. The third area is about infrastructure, they should have easy accessibility for does who have motor limitations, help for does who have visual limitations, audio limitations and physical

accessibilities (campus, signals, transportation, parking spots, deaf interpreters). Then the fourth area is the academic one, where they have to implement investigations, social groups and undergraduate program, adaptable to any kind of people no matter if they are disable or not.

Finally the last two areas are based on registrations and scholarships given by the universities, where they should have special ways to register, have specific test for handicap people, have scholarships for them and programs for job inclusion, where they feel empowered and really taking care off, justa as the ther alumnis of the institution.

With this said, we analyzed Sup de Co, and we took two universities that have good programs of inclusion, as examples of good working programs and as guides for improving the school.

2.1 SUP DE CO ANALYSIS

The Group Sup de Co Montpellier is the first institution which received the “Diversity Label”. It was given to the school by the French government in 2009, by implementing the guidelines which concern hiring personnel as well as admitting students with disabilities. In spite of increasing number of campaigns which main objective was to raise awareness, very few disabled students decide to attend the school and hardly any applicants take the examination to entrance to the school.

In September 2012 Sup de Co school launched a special program called PHARES (Par Delà le Handicap Avancer et Réussir dans l’Enseignement Supérieur). This project is dedicated to high school students with disabilities. The main objective of this program is to help them planning their educational career and to give them enough confidence to pursuit their goals.

Furthermore, to give the best support for its students, Sup de Co has volunteers who are identifying problems and are providing solutions in a collaborative way, having them as a contact point for students with disabilities.

In addition to meet with all the problems that students have, Sup de Co has developed a network of professionals, who are involved in the program. This is a group of psychologist, social workers and associated business partners along with association that helps students with disabilities and prepares activities that support them and integrate them into the Sup de Co community.

What’s more, in April 2013 Sup de Co organized a special event for disabled people- L’ODYSSÉE DE LA DIVERSITÉ. The event was led by 180 students. Participants were competing in different categories, including sport activities, cultural and artistic projects and teenagers could meet with teachers and partner companies.

In general, the event was a great opportunity for school’s stakeholders to speak with the students about the importance of the sport and intellectual engagement. At the event there was present Mr. Jacques Martin, the vice-president of the agglomeration and president of the Sports Commission. He said: “The city of Montpellier could not ignore such an event. We

have provided our structures because it was important for us to partner with such a beautiful project that fits perfectly into our concerns”.ⁱⁱⁱ

The bad side of Sup de Co, is that information is really hard to get, even for us enrolled students; we could not get hold of the volunteers in charge of PHARES, reach the marketing assistant to understand the marketing media plan for this program. Mails were sent, appointments were made, but we never could hold on any real and updated information of what was happening really with disabled students, disabled workers or any kind of program achievement.

With this in mind we decided to analyze successful universities, called inclusive ones and compared them with Sup de Co, in order to show which are the flaws in Sup de Co, what the school should drop, carry on, create or empower, to reach its goal of having a considerable amount of disabled people in the school. That's why we choose: University of Cambridge and University of Warsaw.

2.2 UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The comparison between Sup de Co and one of the leading universities in Great Britain (as an example we used University of Cambridge) doesn't look good. In comparison to that university, Sup de Co doesn't provide enough information about possible services and facilities for handicap students.

First of all, our school web page is not user-friendly. For us, as international students, it is almost impossible to find a relevant data. Our school has very good reputation and is well known by national and international organizations, there are a lot of international students, but still it doesn't have an English version. It is the same problem when it comes to information for handicaps. You have to be very patient and you need to search a lot in order to find useful information.

As soon as you type "Cambridge University" and "handicap" in your search browser, you get a list of web sites, which are dealing with this issue. In Cambridge every student interested in continuing higher education can obtain information in a special center, which is specifically addressed to answer and to help disabled people. This research center works as an independent unit, has its own site and Twitter account. Unfortunately, Sup de Co doesn't have a service like this.

If a person is considering Cambridge, he is advised to get in touch with Disability Resource Centre and a College admissions office as early as possible in order to discuss application and specific requirements. Every handicap person applying to Cambridge is strongly recommended to indicate its disability in university application. This allows university staff and services to make appropriate adjustments if required. The DRC also offers non-medical assistance. It is an additional support for students, who require it to complete their course. Support includes note taking, mentoring, library assistance etc.

2.3 UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

The University of Warsaw is the largest university in Poland, established in 1816. It employs over 6,000 staff including over 3,100 academic educators. It provides graduate courses for 56,000 students (on top of over 9,200 postgraduate and doctoral candidates). The University offers 37 different fields of study, and over 100 specializations in humanities, technical as well as natural sciences. And it offers all of those majors from different departments to disabled people.

The most important thing is that the university has a special office which is called Office for the Disabled, the office has special internet site which can also be shown in English for better communication with international students. There they offer all kind of information needed from the program of studies and the process of admission to the facilities and help that they are providing to the students. This information is the thing that Sup de Co is missing, as we already mention, It was very hard for us to do the research for this project. And at the same time they may feel like no one is going to really care about their presence in Sup de Co when they don't even bother to really emphasize the information about the program.

On the University of Warsaw site they are mentioning lots of benefits that they are providing for the students. They mention the scholarship that every handicapped student can apply for, they explain all the steps of the recruitment process, and they point out all of the facilities that they are providing. Such as: transportation system and support for the people with motor problems, translators of sign language and language classes for the deaf people, and special books and guides for blind people. They also mention all the things that they have done through the years to improve the system in the University.

Among them there are: 29 buildings that are architecturally adapted for the disabled people, specially adapted computer stations, transformation of the library for the needs of deaf and blind people and language classes provided for them, translators of the sign language during classes and adaptation of teaching materials in Brail alphabet, university transport, trainings of the professors and support of university psychologist and psychiatrist. All of mentioned above made the University of Warsaw increase the number of disabled students admitted to study there 25 times since 1996.

Moreover they have been working on several projects to help their students not only to study but also to help them in their professional life: preparing them for further work and helping them find it. Some of the projects were:

- **"Per linguas mundi ad laborem" ("Through world languages to work")**

Objective of that project was to help blind people finding the job by expanding their knowledge of English. They were providing free English courses. They were training teachers to be able to work with blind students.

- **MISARN - Young People Intellectually Abled with Motor disabilities**

Objective of that project was eliminating the discrimination of young people with motor disabilities but no intellectual disabilities.

- **Project „Education, disabilities, information, technology – elimination of the barriers in access of disabled people to education”**

The objective of that project was working on equal standards regarding teaching materials for blind, half-blind and people with reading problems; creating data base of teaching materials shared through internet and computer training for people with disabilities.

All of that information which is really appealing to the students was found only on the web page, but the Office for the Disabled has much more to offer. They are organizing events and meetings to encourage disabled students to use their opportunities not be stopped by their limitations. They try to assure students that workers of the University will take good care of them and they will have the same rights and possibilities as non-disabled students. At the same time they assure students that the studies are equal for all students not by making them easier for the disabled but by providing them with needed tools. Things that lack in Sup de Co or at least the information are not easy to get not efficient to use.

2.4 LATIN AMERICA UNIVERSITIES

In general in Latin America there are not specific Faculties or universities for handicap people, Nonetheless there has been some movements, towards creating standards for having an inclusive environment in this kind of institutions. Specifically a seminar for the integration of handicap people into higher education in latin america that took place in 2006.

In the seminar it was stablished that in order to be consider an inclusive university they should work on five areas. The first one is about politics, having specific policies in their constitutions for handicap people; the second area is medical assistance, which means having special personnel, volunteers, training sessions and a center for any kind of help.

The third area is about infrastructure, they should have easy accessibility for does who have motor limitations, help for does who have visual limitations, audio limitations and physical accessibilities (campus, signals, transportation, parking spots, deaf interpreters). Then the fourth area is the academic one, where they have to implement investigations, social groups and undergraduate program.

Finally the last two areas are based on registrations and scholarships given by the universities, where they should have special ways to register, have specific test for handicap people, have scholarships for handicap and programs for job inclusion.

However right now In Colombia it doesnt exist a specific policy in the constution for disable people, nor any real calculation or statitics of the number of disable people living there; thats the reason why only few cities have proper public infrastructure for them and when we talk about education, there are only few laws for primary and secondary, not for Higher education.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on what we learned from the other Universities approach, we saw the elements that Sup de Co is lacking. We also noticed the ones it needs to implement in order to make it work. First of all, in our opinion Sup de Co really needs to create one section, something like an office, or a place that would be committed only to the handicap people. This way the communication will be so much easier, and people interested in the program would have a clear view of where to go to get information.

Second of all, a web page is a tool that is essential nowadays. So creating one dedicated to the program and facilities for the handicap people would also provide them with lots of important information. Furthermore it would show that Sup de Co is really concerned and involved in all the things that it is providing for the disabled people.

The next thing to do is create a friendly place full of convenient facilities for handicapped and put a brighter light on everything that it was doing to encourage them to enroll. Make it more public and advertise it in the future for better recognition. To catch the attention and attract the local media to write about Sup de Co, they could organize sports event involving handicap people and create sports team.

4. MARKETING CAMPAIGN

By 2012 Sup de Co Business School announced the change of their location, a new and bigger campus, in OZ Montpellier Nature urbaine, that should start working by 2017 or 2018. Knowing this, we've decided to use his reopening as a great opportunity to create a proper environment for handicap people and show our interest in them; by introducing them to our unique programs, tough by a qualified team.

This re-launching would be the best opportunity to show disable people that Sup de Co is really an inclusive School, which is trying to create an open community where everyone has the right to be part of it, if they really want it. But how are we going to do this?

Basically by using a wow factor, a non-expected show that would make people talk about it for a long time, using the media that would be already there, interested on knowing the new campus facilities, we would like to do a FLASHMOB, involving all the students, with the help of the diversity group and the BDE members.

The FLASHMOB would be based on a hit single or memorable songs, where disable students would interact with non-disable ones, doing moves where it can see team work, coordination and good sense of communication between all the members, creating a great show and a big opening for the new campus expectations. People not only would be interested in the new campus facilities, but what is the connection between this presentation and the whole school launch.

4.1 BRIEF

WHO?

Sup de Co administration and students

WHAT?

Integration and care

TO WHOM?

Specially for the handicapped students to show them we really care about the internal integration.

WHICH MEANS?

Flash mob dance (including all of the students)

WHAT VALUES?

Unity, respect, solidarity

WHAT EFFECT?

Encourage handicapped students to enroll to Sup de Co and show them good conditions in school.

5. CONCLUSION

In order to increase the number of people Applying to higher education institutions, government should promote the integrations and acceptance of diversity, increase the budget for handicap people in order to have better facilities, more options and a sense of belonging in the community, that would encourage them to overcome their fears and carry on with their education projects.

As Ainscow said " an inclusive university its going to improve when he sees diversity as a opportunity instead of a problem, because then he would be more efficient with their available resources, for improving teaching methods, practices,existent knowledge and generating a unique language for the whole community" 2001

http://www.urosario.edu.co/urosario_files/aa/aa7a656b-30b9-4dec-87dd-6a174a507cba.pdf

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ⁱⁱ http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13348

ⁱⁱⁱ Jacques Martin, Vice-Président de la communauté d’agglomération et Président de la Commission des Sports