

Persons with learning difficulties working as IT trainers

Germany - PIKSL Laboratories, In der Gemeinde leben gGmbH

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Through this project people with learning difficulties use their IT knowledge to train senior citizens living in their neighbourhood. The concept has been developed by people with learning difficulties themselves and is implemented by the PIKSL laboratories in Düsseldorf. Each eight-week course (with morning and afternoon sessions, for which participants pay a reasonable fee) is jointly developed by eight participants and four teachers. Assistants from the PIKSL laboratories prepare the training sessions each day. The IT courses are action-orientated, and include examples from daily life.

QUOTE:

“People with learning difficulties become teachers and earn the respect of their community.”

— Mr. Benjamin Freese, Head of Project

FACTS & FIGURES

- The programme’s eight trainers are people with learning difficulties.
- There have been 20 courses held to date (initially without charge, then at an introductory offer of EUR 40 per course as an introductory offer, and after that at EUR 99 per course)
- Approximately 140 senior citizens have attended the courses so far.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

The “digital divide” is an increasing problem in our communities. People with learning difficulties and senior citizens are virtually excluded from the use of modern information and communication technology unless properly trained. Moreover, many people with learning difficulties face major difficulties when trying to enter the job market.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The project works to give people with learning difficulties a job in teaching, whereby they can pass on their IT knowledge to interested senior citizens. In addition to the positive effects of having employment, it provides them with the possibility to earn respect and recognition through their teaching activity. PIKSL targets possibilities for people with disabilities to participate in ICT activities and to remove interdisciplinary barriers so as to facilitate inclusion. The ultimate aim is “digital participation.” There is no fixed curriculum, and instead the content of each course is defined by the

particular interests of the senior citizens involved. Moreover, this process allows the “teachers” to learn more about their “clients,” which leads to the removal of barriers and better understanding. The small group size and the close cooperation foster a family-like atmosphere – one in which both sides feel comfortable to make mistakes.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Through peer counselling, the trainers are able to spread their knowledge to other institutions and organizations. “PIKSL mobile” – that is, the process of bringing the courses to various neighbourhoods – offers the possibility for senior citizens to book local courses. Going forward, the course concept will be enlarged by special tablet courses, which will be offered in the PISKL laboratories, as well as through mobile courses.

Photo: Yes

Life story: No

CONTACT

PIKSL - In der Gemeinde leben gGmbH

Mr. Tobias Marczinik

Mr. Benjamin Freese

Ludwig-Erhard-Allee 14

40227 Düsseldorf

Germany

+49 211 91364-104

+49 211 91364-118

tobias.marczinik@igl-duesseldorf.de

benjamin.freese@igl-duesseldorf.de

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