

## TITLE

Empowering school girls with disabilities

United States: University of Oregon – Paths 2 the Future

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Paths 2 the Future, a project initiated by the University of Oregon, is a vocational education programme that empowers young women with disabilities. They are trained in self-advocacy and communication skills, preparing them for the future.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Beneficiaries:

- 60 girls in four high schools in 2010
- 110 girls in six high schools in 2011
- 137 girls in nine high schools in 2016

The program served students in 2010 and 2011 and then had a gap in services. The project started up again July 2015 with new funding.

## PROBLEMS TARGETED

Women with disabilities face barriers based both on gender stereotypes and disability discrimination, thus creating a “double jeopardy” situation that restricts their career and education opportunities.

## SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Paths 2 the Future (P2F) is a short-term vocational education programme for adolescent girls with disabilities aged 14 to 21 years old. Girls participate in an 18-week class in their high schools designed to teach vocational skills that will prepare them for future careers in a variety of professions. Programme participants include girls with learning disabilities, autism, intellectual disabilities, and other health impairments.

In each high school, a special education teacher or school counsellor provides additional instruction to a class of 12 to 18 girls. The curriculum covers four broad areas: self-determination, disability knowledge, gender awareness, and career and college readiness. The University is currently evaluating the impact of the model through a randomized controlled trial in 26 high schools in Oregon.

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

P2F was developed through a grant from the United States Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences. It was initially implemented in four high schools serving 60 girls, and in its second year was expanded to six high schools serving 110 girls.

In 2015, the programme received federal funding to extend the project to 500 girls with disabilities in 28 high schools over the following three years. Upon completion of the federal grant, local schools can adopt and sustain the P2F programme at minimal cost.

## QUOTE

“Ever since I have been in this class I am not afraid to say how I feel, to ask for help, or to talk about my future and my past.”

— Paths 2 the Future student

## CONTACT

Ms. Lauren LINDSTRÖM

+1 541-346-1399

[lindstrm@uoregon.edu](mailto:lindstrm@uoregon.edu)

## REFERENCES

- <http://www.dailyemerald.com/2015/09/16/uo-college-of-education-receives-11-5-million-in-ies-grants/>
- [https://education.uoregon.edu/sites/default/files/uo\\_coe\\_annual\\_report\\_2015\\_final.pdf](https://education.uoregon.edu/sites/default/files/uo_coe_annual_report_2015_final.pdf)
- <https://youtu.be/xN-0Noom7b8>