

Policy Recommendation

Name of Institution: Ilia State University

What was the situation before DARE in your institution regarding the TGs addressed in the project (students with learning difficulties/students from minorities/women students)?

Based on Law of Higher Education, to start university level education you need to pass national exams. In 2015 from 40000 enrollees near 400 requested special conditions for national exams and based on report among them mostly are students with sensory disabilities (hearing and vision) and motor difficulties. There is no statistics how many students requested special conditions based on their learning disabilities.

By 2016, when DARE project started, no one spoke out about students with learning disabilities at the university level.

Based on existed situation, the first task of the project was to raise awareness regarding learning disabilities at the higher education level, second task – to support the development of the screening and assessment tools for identification of this group of students and third task – to promote development of guidelines and consultation centre at the university level to support the students with learning disabilities.

What recommendations were presented to your institutions and to national bodies during the DARE project?

During DARE project, we conducted the survey to identify the students with learning related difficulties. The survey, which was conducted at different universities, revealed that 3%-12% of participants indicated that they have different types of learning related problems, mostly due to attention difficulties.

We prepared the training modules for administrative and academic staff to increase the awareness in this issue.

The authorities of the Ministry of Education and Sciences were informed about the results of the survey. As a result, the Ministry announced as its priority establishing of support system for students with learning disabilities and other special educational needs

at the higher education level by creating the guidelines and models for identification, assessment and support of this group of students.

What recommendations can now towards the close of the DARE project be presented to your institutions and national bodies?

First of all, it is very important to establish a specialized unit – consultation centre responsible for identification, assessment and support of students with learning disabilities. This unit will support administrative and academic staff in developing appropriate regulations and rules for the management of learning and teaching process of this group of students.

Second recommendation is to support on the regular base raising awareness campaigns – the university administration should support at the different levels regular meetings and actions toward increasing the awareness about learning disabilities. Through this type of activities there will be increase in understanding of the nature of this condition. This will aid all involved parties to seek the ways to overcome the challenges caused by the lack of knowledge in this regard.