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## Introduction



Based on the principles of Universal Design and Reasonable Accommodations embedded in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), INVESTT sets out to facilitate the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in the regular vocational education and training (VET) system, and support quality and innovation in the VET systems.

By now, our research team have finalised

the [research paper](#) and produced a [Strategy at European level](#) which extrapolates the local findings to help practitioners throughout Europe develop a teaching programme with a universal design in their own VET context! These findings were summarised in a short [dissemination paper](#), available in English, Dutch, German, Slovenian, Norwegian and Easy-to-read.

The partner schools, on their side, have been implementing the teaching programmes with a universal design for close to a year, and have some very positive feedback which allow them to finetune their programme for next year. They will you more about it in this newsletter.

If you would like any further information on this project or its national teams, visit the website [www.investt.eu](http://www.investt.eu) or contact Mr. Tim Ghilain, [timothy.ghilain@easped.eu](mailto:timothy.ghilain@easped.eu). You can also follow us on Twitter [@InvesttEU](#) or [#investt](#).



This project has been funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

**State of Play Research and Innovation in the INVESTT project** The whole process of research and evaluation is described in our “Research paper”; this research paper contains five main chapters. It starts with a general introduction which is followed by a chapter about the project. In this part you find a description of the INVESTT project and INVESTT’S overall objectives as well as the project partners.

The third part is about research, design and methodology. In order to evaluate the projects approach, we develop, design and plan the research using a four phases approach:

- 1) Research, design & planning phase,
- 2) Experience-based development phase,
- 3) Follow-up and optimization phase and
- 4) Evaluation & reporting phase

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**Dreams are born at Gand upper secondary's courses with extended work practice** Seagulls crying in the breeze at Jæren, in the county of Rogaland, on



the west coast of Norway. Six men working on a construction site on the outskirts of Sandnes in April, nothing special about this particular house being built. Two team leaders give their orders, sometimes discussing calmly with the other four adolescent lads about how to solve the next step, a roof being built on a tool shed.

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## Universal design, Slovenian style

The strength of a group is determined by its weakest member

*"You don't have to do anything, just sit here because you are such 'a poor soul'. We'll do it much quicker ourselves."* The latter was Špela's message to her classmate Tea. Note that Špela had her hand

bandaged, while Tea's eyes were completely covered so she couldn't see anything.

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## "Is this another Investt-lesson?"

Before New Year we gathered the teachers of our two selected classes to explain to them what the Investt-project deals with and to inform them on Universal Desing and Universal Design for Learning. In November we received their first lesson plans, which we then checked for elements of UDL.

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## "Introductory Course" at the SOB

As a partner of the transnational project INVESTT (Inclusive Vocational Education and Specialised Tailormade Training), the "Schule für Sozialbetreuungsberufe der Caritas der Erzdiözese Salzburg" started an „Introductory Course“ as a first step for people with disabilities in September 2013.

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**Other News** **European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education** The Agency started this year with the ambitious multi-annual

work programme for the period 2014–2020 and with the new name: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. Other administrative changes this year include the Brussels Office's move at the end of May to a new, modern office building in Brussels.

This spring is also the beginning of a ground-breaking co-operation between the Agency and one of its member countries, Malta.

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## **The ECHR increases the recognition of the UNCRPD**

On 6 February 2014, the European Court of Human Rights came out with a positive judgment in the case of *Semikhvostov v Russia* (Application no 2689/12) in which the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) had submitted a third party intervention to the Court in January 2013.

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## **ExchangeAbility project for university students**

Mobility offers young people opportunities for self-development and enhances their future employability. Participation in exchange programmes is a challenging for young people, as they are facing an unfamiliar environment, such as a new language and culture. It can be even more difficult for students with disabilities who may face inaccessible environments or disability-related stereotypes.

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