



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY DISABILITY BULLETIN

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Empowered Society: Monitoring for All

Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Awareness

The Turkish Cypriot Association for the Orthopedically Disabled hosted an Artificial Intelligence and Inclusion Workshop in 4 November 2025. Without artificial intelligence applications, there can be little progress towards sustainable development in process and new trends. In this context, the significance of artificial intelligence has gained widely global attention increasingly to foster inclusiveness in specific all fields. However, there are still many problems need to be explored in detail. Therefore, we invited experts were shared their insights about the current status of artificial intelligence in their contexts and how inspection can be done and implemented for inclusiveness.



The workshop focused on the future of artificial intelligence and its impact on the participation of individuals with disabilities in social life, education, and employment opportunities.

Association President Dr. Günay Kibrit addressed the need for training seminars on artificial intelligence applications,

advocating for the development of policies to enhance inclusivity and service quality in local governments. The event, which featured invited speakers, planned to provide a seminar on basic artificial intelligence applications for individuals with disabilities within the framework of capacity-building policies.

Inclusive Learning Environments

Prof. Dr. Mukaddes Sakallı Demirok

Social Awareness in Special Education: A Strategic Necessity for an Inclusive Society Ensuring equal access to education, social life, and services for individuals with special needs is a primary responsibility of modern societies. Studies in the field of special education are not only a pedagogical imperative but also a significant indicator of a human rights-based approach and inclusive policies. New research shows that many of the challenges faced by individuals with special needs stem not from disability, but from misinformation, prejudice, societal attitudes, and a lack of awareness. These developmental delays, often difficult to compensate for, arise from families delaying access to support, lacking information about accessing services, and viewing special needs.

Therefore, the importance of early intervention programs becomes even more evident. Interdisciplinary collaboration can increase public awareness in special education. Awareness and inclusion policies are implemented by educators, health professionals, social workers, local governments, and civil society organizations.

Educational institutions contribute to students; social and emotional development by creating a school culture where differences are accepted as natural.

Making visible the work being done to support individuals with special needs is crucial. Scientific research, examples of good practice, and social policy recommendations strengthen university-community collaboration, raise awareness, and accelerate transformation. Disseminating knowledge helps all members of society take responsibility.

Social awareness is not limited to education; it also requires a transformation process based on equitable, sustainable, and inclusive policies. International agreements guarantee the right to education, access to support services, and participation in community life for individuals with special needs. Consequently, social service models, public policies, and education systems must be developed in accordance with this perspective.

Ultimately, greater public awareness of special education not only helps those with special needs but also helps us create a better, more caring, and more inclusive society. Our institutional responsibility is to continue academic research, fieldwork, and public awareness efforts in this area to strengthen university-community interaction.



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Disability Rights

Famagusta Special Education and Vocational Training School: Evaluation of the Problems Encountered by Workshop Teachers and Sustainable Solution Proposals

Contemporary education systems increasingly emphasize technology integration, digitalization, and experiential learning approaches. Within this framework, workshop-based learning environments offer students opportunities for active participation while considering their individual differences. Particularly in the education of individuals with special needs, workshop practices grounded in experiential learning have been shown to support more permanent and functional knowledge and skill acquisition (Özyılmaz, 2009).

Such environments also contribute to students' sense of happiness and freedom by allowing them to observe their own capabilities and achievements (Summerhill School, 2019), while facilitating the transfer of acquired skills into daily life (Girgin, 2019). Similarly, UNICEF (2020) recommends incorporating workshop-based learning activities across all levels of education in order to develop essential competencies in students, taking into account their talents, interests, temperaments, and developmental needs.

The present study, conducted at the Gazimağusa Special Education and Vocational Training School, aims to evaluate the challenges faced by workshop teachers and to propose sustainable solutions to enhance workshop-based educational practices. The findings reveal several key issues:

1. Teachers assigned to workshops require sufficient knowledge and competencies in special education and in working with individuals with special needs.
2. Each workshop should have an independent budget, ensuring continuous and uninterrupted access to necessary materials.
3. A dedicated external venue is needed for the regular exhibition and sale of workshop products.

4. Parental involvement should be encouraged to support workshop activities at home in order to contribute to sustainability.

5. Students should be provided with opportunities to engage in work-based learning and gain job experience in environments outside the school setting.

6. Effective policies and practices in the field of special education should be strengthened and implemented.

7. A workplace coordinator should be employed to oversee job placements and related processes.

8. Workshop safety, including insurance coverage, must be ensured for both teachers and students.

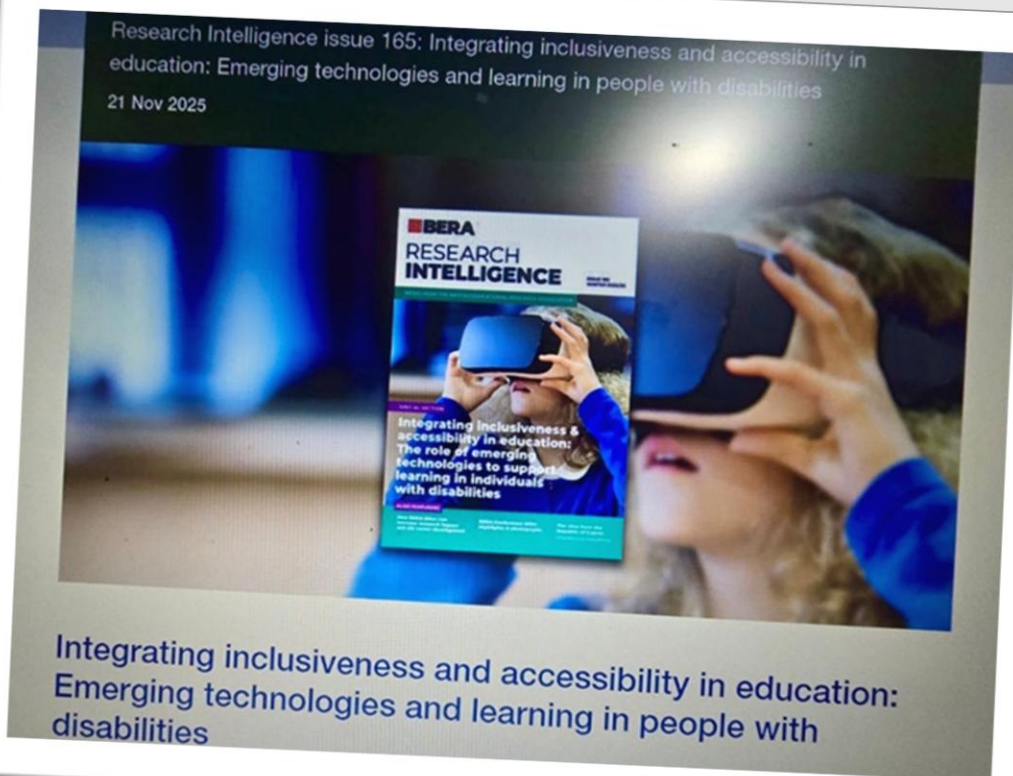
Based on these results, the study proposes several recommendations for fostering a healthy and sustainable workshop education environment. First, teachers who are not trained as special educators but are assigned to workshop positions should receive in-service training in special education. Second, a comprehensive workshop curriculum should be developed, accompanied by necessary legal regulations—particularly those concerning occupational safety insurance for teachers and students and the provision of workplace learning opportunities for students. Third, structured and effective collaboration models should be established with parents to strengthen home-based support. Fourth, social entrepreneurship initiatives that provide opportunities for the sale of workshop products should be encouraged and supported. Finally, considering the positive impact of workshop activities on students with special needs, new workshops aimed at cultivating life skills, vocational-technical abilities, and artistic perspectives should be established, along with measures to ensure their

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

5th International Societal Research and Development Symposium was held in 19-20 November with the collaboration of University of Kyrenia. Symposium covered the section on disability and sustainable development goals in decreasing inequalities. Symposium addressed the art, therapy, well-being, social inclusion and rights for people with disabilities. Symposium also leads strong bones of collaboration with non-governmental organisations for policy making process.



Beside the symposium, our university scholars addressed the inclusiveness and accessibility in guest editorial for equal opportunities of people with disabilities. The Research Intelligence Guest Editorial which is affiliated by British Educational Research Association, November issue was done by Prof. Dr. Zehra Altınay, Prof. Dr. Fahriye Altınay has prepared this issue which covered inclusiveness, accessibility and best practical models and studies all around the world. The issue provided concrete examples and road map for the scholars.



The Near East University Indoor and Outdoor Innovation Prof. Dr. Sezer KANBUL



Artificial Intelligence for Inclusive Education and Society: DEBIM's Strategic Initiatives the Near East University, Digital Education and Informatics Unit (DEBIM) continues to undertake innovative initiatives aimed at supporting the digital transformation of individuals with disabilities.

Within this scope, the event titled "Artificial Intelligence Technologies and Inclusivity" was held in collaboration with the Cyprus Turkish Orthopedic Disability Association, focusing on the role of artificial intelligence in fostering equitable participation in society.

With Prof. Dr. Aras Bozkurt as the keynote speaker, the event emphasized that artificial intelligence literacy can strengthen the digital citizenship rights of persons with disabilities.

In line with this mission, DEBIM announced that new educational opportunities on artificial intelligence tools will be offered to association members in the forthcoming term.

As part of this collaboration, an additional major goal has been defined: the development of an AI-supported avatar capable of communicating through sign language.

The project aims to improve access to education, media, and digital platforms for individuals who rely on sign language, thereby removing communication barriers that often hinder participation.

By contributing open-access sign language data to AI models, the initiative proposes a pioneering approach to sustainable, community-driven artificial intelligence production within Cyprus.

Within the university setting, DEBIM will organize the "Accessible Campus Artificial Intelligence Hackathon," bringing together students, academics, and disability organizations.

The central objective of this hackathon is to design innovative solutions that enhance campus accessibility. Prototype developments may include instant captioning systems, AI-based navigation tools for visually impaired students, and inclusive digital design assistants tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The event is intended to serve as a guiding model for building accessible and inclusive university environments.

Another forthcoming initiative is the workshop "Producing Accessible Digital Content with Artificial Intelligence," designed to empower individuals with disabilities to engage actively in digital content creation.

The workshop will provide practical training on generating accessible written content with artificial intelligence, preparing alternative text descriptions, designing visual explanations, and producing sign language-supported digital outputs.

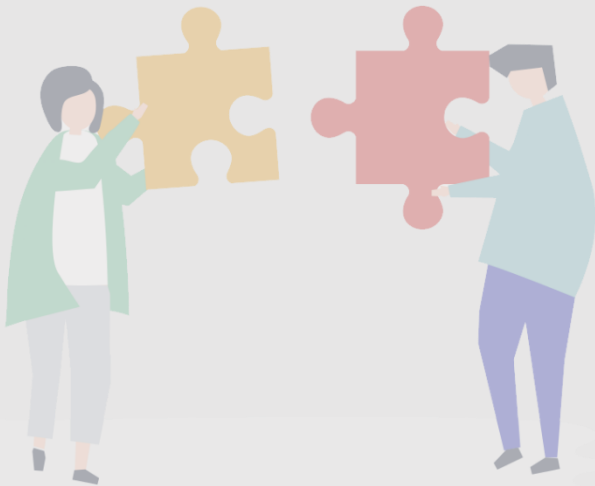
This initiative encourages individuals with disabilities not only to be consumers of digital content but also to become active creators who contribute to digital culture. The final component of this strategic plan is the panel "Artificial Intelligence-Driven Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities," which will explore new forms of work and professional transformation shaped by artificial intelligence. The panel will address AI-supported remote employment, freelance opportunities within the digital economy, and emerging professional fields that can empower individuals with disabilities to participate more independently and competitively. Through these initiatives, DEBIM underscores that higher education must not only generate knowledge but also uphold equity, accessibility, and social responsibility.

Guided by the principle of "Equal Vision, Equal Lives," DEBIM will continue to promote the full and unrestricted participation of individuals with disabilities in the digital world.

COLLABORATION



Societal Research and Development Center has renewed protocols and collaboration with Cyprus Hearing and Speech Impaired Foundation, Cyprus Turkish Orthopedic Disability Association, Disabled Persons Solidarity Association, Disabled Lifeline Association for monitoring rights on disability.



Health & Well-being

Tips and news related to mental and physical health, inclusive healthcare practices, and personal stories on managing health.



The Near East University Hospital and Dentistry Hospital

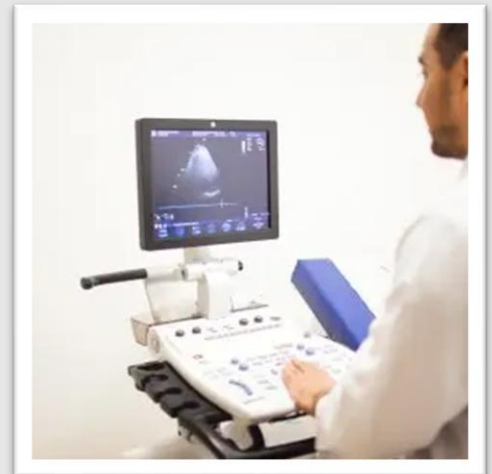
The Near East University Hospital and Dentistry Hospital, located on the Near East University campus, provide students with 24/7 healthcare services.

Situated within the university campus, the Near East University Hospital covers a 55,000 square meter indoor area and consists of three main blocks with three, four, and nine floors. The hospital includes 209 single patient rooms, 22 of which are VIP, along with 8 operating theatres, 30 intensive care units, and 17 neonatal intensive care units.

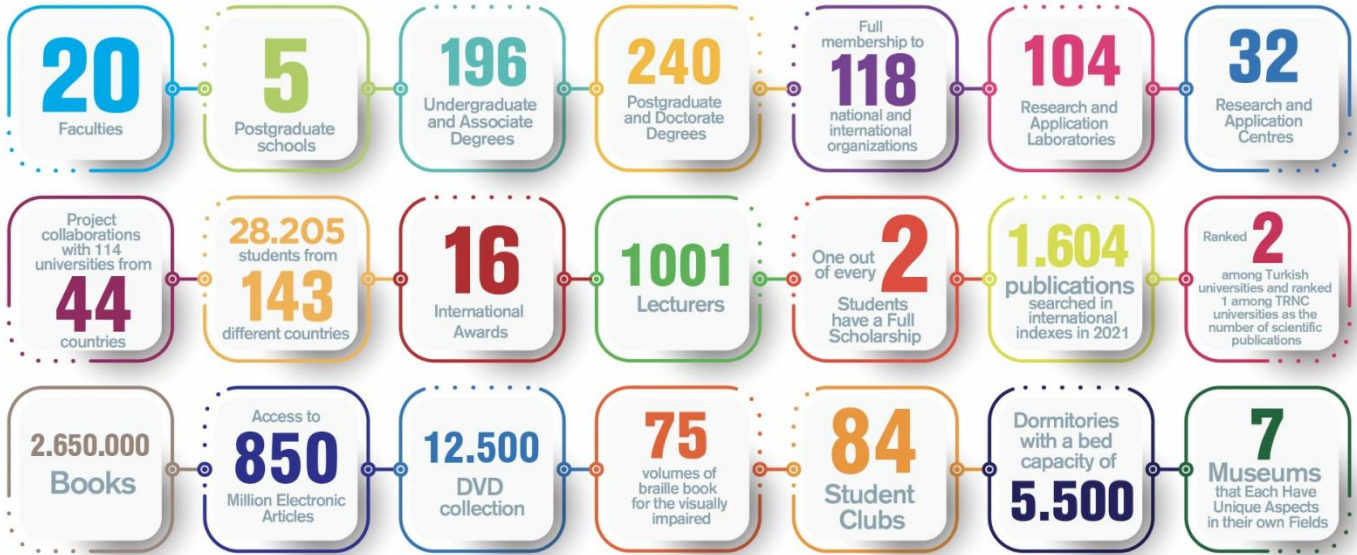
Equipped with advanced facilities, the hospital features analysis laboratories where all types of medical tests can be conducted, a Radiology Centre with state-of-the-art imaging technology crucial for diagnosis, and a Nuclear Medicine and Radiotherapy Centre specializing in cancer diagnosis and treatment. Additionally, with 84 fully digitalized doctor examination rooms, the hospital offers outpatient services in a secure and high-quality environment. Built to meet international standards, the hospital adheres to "Joint Commission International" (JCI) accreditation criteria, ensuring that patients' medical and other needs are met in accordance with these global benchmarks.

Placing patient safety and rights at the forefront, Near East University Hospital delivers top-tier healthcare with its advanced medical infrastructure, highly skilled staff, and cutting-edge technologies. It serves both local and international patients, particularly those from Cyprus, Turkey, the UK, and other countries.

The "International Patient Coordination Centre" at the hospital facilitates services for foreign patients, including organizing their travel to Northern Cyprus, arranging accommodation, coordinating tours and transfers, and providing language support within the hospital. This centre also ensures patients' safe return to their home countries after their treatment.



Our University in Numbers



Editors

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USNews & WORLD REPORT

2025-2026



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338. ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING

807. CHEMISTRY

468. PHYSICS

946. CLINICAL MEDICINE

472. ENVIRONMENT ECOLOGY