



## Finalist's case study



## NEOMA BS

### Disability and Learning

PHARES scheme (overcoming disability to succeed in higher education) led by the PREPA REMOIS student society



**Profile**

- Business School
- Students: 8980
- Total staff: 568

### About the project

#### Summary

Prépa Rémois is a NEOMA Business School, Reims Campus, student society, a certified member of the French national Cordées de la Réussite scheme, which promotes equal opportunities for young secondary pupils and students. We organise workshops for small groups of youngsters to develop their general culture, help them plan their future studies, and promote their personal development. The society is divided into different sections for secondary school pupils, students, and the Phares scheme. The Phares scheme (Overcoming disability to succeed in Higher Education) helps disabled youngsters to undertake higher education studies.

We organise workshops twice a month for the youngsters and their tutors. For the workshops, the pupils are divided into small groups by age, accompanied by tutors (from 14 year olds to post-high school; we have included post-high school students for the first time this year). In addition to the workshops, we organise theatre or opera visits.

#### Project partners

The Phares project is funded by the region, by FEDEEH, a national movement for young disabled students, by NEOMA Business School, and by private partners, including SNCF foundation, Crédit Agricole, Cabinet EY, and Greater Reims.

### The results

#### The problem

In France, 80% of the disabled do not graduate from high school, and the unemployment rate for the disabled is twice the national average.

The PHARES scheme is a response to this problem, taking an in-depth approach to overcoming the obstacles that prevent young disabled people from targeting higher education.



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## The approach

Most *Cordées de la Réussite* schemes do not have a disability section; usually there is a separate organisation for disabled students. *Prépa'Rémois* consider it essential to link the two areas, because our aim is to help both groups in the same way, by promoting equal opportunity and improving their future perspectives. This can create additional organisational problems, but we believe it is crucial to our mission.

## Our goals

We aim to develop the young people with multidisciplinary skills, an appetite for studying, increased self-confidence, and more ambitious career plans.

We aim to provide our volunteer tutors with a rewarding experience in human relations and an opportunity to develop a new approach to management.

## Obstacles and solutions

OBSTACLES	SOLUTIONS
Identification and recruitment of young disabled pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support from the local education authority</li> <li>- Meet and convince the teachers and management of different schools</li> <li>- Promote the scheme with specialised associations (APEDYS, PIPA, etc.)</li> <li>- Promote the scheme with medical and para-medical professionals (psychiatrists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.)</li> </ul>
Funding of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional institutional partners: Greater Reims</li> <li>- Corporate partners: EY, Disneyland Paris, etc.</li> <li>- Cultural partners that charge special prices for students and the disabled: museums, theatres, etc.</li> <li>- Awards: SNCF Foundation, FEDEEH, ...</li> </ul>
Development of activities, pedagogical choice of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing ideas with <i>Cordées de la Réussite</i></li> <li>- In-depth work with regional cultural centres</li> <li>- Professional outside speakers (actor, slam poet, personal development advisor, etc.)</li> <li>- Involvement of other NEOMA BS student societies (HeForShe, Oïkos, International Student Committee, etc.)</li> </ul>



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## Performance and results

- Increased knowledge of different types of disability,
- Experience in managing these disabilities,
- We have managed to break down taboos inherent to the issue of disability,
- Increased awareness of culture in young people,
- Increased the confidence of both beneficiaries and tutors,
- Promotion of higher education and equal opportunities.

We take a long-term approach, monitoring the youngsters we support regularly, during visits or workshops, although our tutors also meet them at other times.

In 2013, PHARES Reims launched a pilot scheme with 3 disabled youngsters supported by 3 student tutors. Today, the Reims scheme comprises 25 young people aged between 14 and 19, supported by 11 student tutors, a student coordinator, a person on a civic service mission, and the NEOMA BS Disability support officer for the administrative management.

We always aim to help the beneficiaries make rapid, sustained progress, but sometimes their progress is unexpected, especially when a tutee suffering from autism opens up to the tutors very quickly. Another unexpected benefit is related to the tutors. The students who support the young disabled pupils gain hugely in self-knowledge. Often, they had never really been confronted with disability, and this direct experience can help them break down taboos and learn more about themselves.

We meet regularly with the other *Cordées de la Réussite* projects in the Champagne-Ardenne region, and even if they do not launch their own Phares scheme, it is interesting to talk about how we operate and try to inspire them to undertake the same work.

For example, Troyes Business School is very interested in the project, and we have put them in contact with the national FEDEEH project.

The Phares project is supported at national level as part of the process of developing equal opportunities. The project is extremely relevant to NEOMA BS, since it responds to the School's desire to be strongly rooted in the local area. The young people we support live in and around Reims. The project is also meaningful for the schools and families that send us their pupils/children, since the youngsters become more open-minded and discover new things.

In addition to providing educational support for our beneficiaries, the Phares project benefits every one of its participants in many ways. Personally, the youngsters we support develop their general culture, their knowledge of local culture, and learn about themselves.

Employers are always interested in students' experience in clubs and societies, but not just any experience. Our scheme gives both tutors and beneficiaries greater open-mindedness, understanding of problems in our society and of the world in which they live, and above all helps them develop their career plan.



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The tutors, who are members of Prépa'Rémois and the Phares scheme, learn to pass on information in an appropriate manner, to adapt to unfamiliar situations, and to improvise without getting anxious. In addition, they learn the meaning of commitment to a project and of managing their schedule of classes and work for the scheme. For example, one tutor in the Phares scheme, who had not previously worked with disabled people, discovered he had a vocation for it, and has decided to focus his career on the field. He will already have experience of working with disabled people thanks to the training he has received and his year of tutoring.

With regard to the young disabled people, we support them with training and events based on career orientation, which enables them to clarify their career plan. In addition, they learn more about the world of work through company visits and talks by professionals.

## CO2 savings

N/A

## The future

### Lessons learned

NEOMA BS has firmly established its local roots through actions that make sense through their social impact in the region. Schemes such as PHARES create links between students from a wide variety of geographical origins and the region, while their actions are meaningful both for the students involved, in terms of their studies and future careers, and the young beneficiaries who discover new possibilities and develop ambitious plans for the future.

The direct involvement of the association *Prépa Rémois* in support of the School's objective of working within society means that the students cooperate closely with NEOMA BS administrative staff and discuss joint actions to raise awareness about this work.

### Top 3 learnings from implementing your project

- The involvement of our students: 12 students from the association *Prépa'Rémois* have joined the scheme, and work tirelessly to organise top-quality workshops and provide tangible support for their tutees. Without their involvement, the project would not be possible. All the workshops are held on Saturday afternoon, which demonstrates their commitment even more clearly.
- The message we are attempting to spread: the issue of disability remains a taboo in France. Through our action, we want to show that everyone, whatever their disability, can succeed if they are given the opportunity.
- The support of our partners: we have many public and private partners, and they have supported us from the outset. The project was awarded SNCF Foundation Award last year, and it has grown constantly since its launch. Phares also won the ATOS-FEDEEH "Coup de cœur" award in 2015 and 2016.

### Sharing your project

The communication organised by PHARES has three very precise objectives:





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- To make young people in the region who could benefit from the scheme aware of its existence and encourage them to join.
- To encourage as many NEOMA BS students and staff as possible to become involved in the project.
- To encourage professionals to support us by speaking to the youngsters.

## What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

We are very proud of having won this award. It provides recognition for our action, and will provide us with additional publicity and visibility.

We believe that our project enables faster progress to be made with regard to disability issues. The topic has been taboo for too long, and a number of prejudices are too firmly rooted in people's consciousness. It is important to discuss these questions openly.

We would like to understand more clearly the actual impact of our action on society. Thanks to our action, we see the youngsters that we support moving forward. They are much more open than at first, become more self-confident, and above all make plans for the future. The young people we support want to get to university, and their skills will make a real contribution to society. With regard to our tutors, we train students who are not used to helping others to develop, and we train students who will understand disability issues. If they work in positions of responsibility in the future, they will remember the lessons they are learning now when they have to recruit and train new staff.

## Further information

[www.neoma-bs.fr/](http://www.neoma-bs.fr/)

<http://programme-phares.fr/programme-phares/neoma-business-school-campus-de-reims>

<https://www.facebook.com/preparemois.neomabs/>

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