



Transfer of Employment Support Tools for People with Disabilities

T-EST

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ANNEX

Adaptation potential summary report



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Conclusions concerning the adaptations of the SE Toolkit

The main findings of the interviews for this analysis are showing the willingness for integration of people with disabilities on different levels. On the one hand people with disabilities pointed out that they desire to work, but have problems with limited workplaces, employers' attitude or no available support organizations. On the other hand company leaders confirmed that people with disabilities can produce similar performance as a person without a disability (see p. 26). As well interviewed members of NGOs or other institution for people with disabilities mentioned the positive influence of the concept of Supported Employment, but also described the barriers or challenges.

An active contact between people with disabilities and companies is needed and useful, because the analysis showed if companies have experiences with people with disabilities, almost all reported a positive view on the work-performance of people with disabilities. If it is possible to bring companies to the topic "employment of people with disabilities" and if there is a good job matching (see assessment of the potential of people with disabilities, p. 26), it will work. Secondly Romanian experts (NGOs, institutions) in this working field also said in the interviews that employers have a fear for the unknown – an active contact or an awareness raising campaign makes "it" known. Of course in this analysis we can only mention this as a not significant relation, but within our interviews it is a clear one: *"Company managers without experience are having doubt about the ability of persons with disability to perform specific task required by the job."* (see, p. 26).

A few company managers and as well the interviewed experts in this working field mentioned that information of possible workplaces for people with disabilities is missing. There is a lack of mediator organisations which could be the crucial point between these two sides, companies and people with disabilities. Implemented Supported Employment workers could extend possibilities in this sense of spreading information and raising awareness.

As a conclusion we can say, that more sensitization for companies concerning people with disabilities with a mental or sensory disability is needed, because also companies without experiences with people with disabilities think that physically impaired people can work within more workplaces (see, p. 25). On the other hand as NGOs and institution members mentioned people with physical problems face prejudices concerning workplace adaptations, which often won't be paid by a new employer. Special information of each kind of disability is needed because employers should know about the specifics of different challenges.

Company leaders in all three countries would accept SE workers at the workplaces and while seeking a job. This shows a willingness of companies to think of hiring people with disabilities, it can be seen as a good first step and of course shows the possible implementation of SE services in all three countries. Companies also noted that some disabled employees need more time for training at the beginning after their recruitment – this problem can be solved with the support of a Jobcoach directly at the workplace. Furthermore people with disabilities and NGO members showed in their interviews the interest towards the SE services as well. Of course the most critical point is a possible financial support to establish such services. This would be an important factor concerning to the implementation period in the T-EST project and a great task for national policies.

Five stage process in the Supported Employment Toolkit

As a next step we will conclude our results from this analysis towards to the adaptation of the Supported Employment Toolkit.

1. Client Engagement

In some cases the motivation of the people with disabilities to work is missing. In the interviews of Bulgaria for instance it is shown that people with disabilities with “*a degree of disability of 50% to 70% are most active and motivated to use the various services of the Job Centres*” (see, p. 18). It is not possible to give a valuation how many people would definitely join such supporting institutions, but in fact the support of one person with disability is a success and should be focused.

The analysis shows that under the degree of 50% of disability special benefits exist for people with disabilities which restrict the desire for work, because of the fear of losing these benefits. You can find a similar problem in Romania, because “*theoretically people with disabilities should be motivated because benefits are not enough to conduct a decent life*” (see, p. 19), but people who lose 50% or more of their work ability obtain an incapacity benefit from the state. “*Although it’s allowed work part-time, they are at risk to lose the financial support*” (see, p. 7) and this is a possible reason for staying inactive. Enlightenment of their possible ways of getting employed or losing their benefits is one of the most important consultant issues in those cases.

Client Engagement is very important stage of the SE process, because after a first contact and initial meeting you are working with the people with disabilities on a action plan of working together and finding an appropriate job. Raising the motivation of the people with disabilities is as well an important step during this stage. The person with disability should make an informed choice after all counselling concerning his/her wish of being supported by finding a job. Especially in case of different disability funding systems this choice finding process is important in order to identify the goals of the person with disability.

2. Vocational Profiling

People with disabilities often have a low level of education and additional to this our survey shows that only 11% of 31 interviewed people are employed. The lack of education and experiences at the open labour market also makes it harder to achieve a clear view of possible working places. In Bulgaria for instance “*39% of the target group hasn’t any qualification, and 41% has primary or lower education*” (see, p. 6), so maybe a vocational training or job tasters/ working experience placements could be a first step of the integration on the open labor market.

The NGO representatives points out that “*the current educational supply does not correspond to the expectations of working fields*” (see, p. 19). This is actually a problem of many European countries and is a task for the policy makers as well. Apparently the education system itself is missing a strategy to meet actual needs of the economy. There should be a concrete plan to educate people with disabilities to promote their potentials and possibilities. The education system has the responsibility of this first step. After that vocational training, which is already missing in Romania and Bulgaria, is further important.

It is also necessary to mention in this paper the needs of training, because it is also a required element of the employment of people with disabilities. As the analysis showed (see, p. 14) training helps people with disabilities on a practical level, because a behavioral adaptation to social situations and conditions has to be trained. It is still reality that people with disabilities are segregated from the society, so communicational and behavioral pathways develop also differently. It is a first step of integration among to other jobseekers, that someone is using the same communication level. It is comparable with the communication with companies (see, Employer Engagement, EUSE Toolkit, p. 31), because compliance on the same level of argumentation, communication is also needed. One of the respondents of the interviews in our analysis, who is working with people with disabilities, points out that one key feature of their work in the day- care center is to work with the people with disabilities on their social skills (behavior, how to give respond, how to manage social situations, etc.). Training of social skills is also very important to reach employment.

Education and training are basic requirements in order to do vocational profiling. But for instance in the Romanian law (No. 448/ 2006) for rights of people with disabilities it is mentioned that vocational profiling should be done by an evaluation commission of people with disabilities. Unfortunately there is no concrete implementation of such a commission and there are no methodological norms how to realize such profiling. One benefit of such a profiling system could be the inclusion of non-formal education forms in to the competencies profile of the person with disabilities.

It is important to see the differences between training outside of an employment context and support directly at the work place – Supported Employment providers should concentrate on paid work and possible ways to achieve it. But of course to draw attention to the situation of the educational system for people with disabilities is valuable and important.

A comprehensive vocational profiling during the SE process is important to identify the motivation, interests, work attitudes, resources and support needs of the person with disability and especially necessary if there are that much national influences in the different countries.

3. Job Finding

*“Most of the respondents in the three transfer country have the **desire to work**, but realistic view on the social economic situation prevents from having positive future expectation. All the three countries respondents indicate that accurate job opportunities are limited”* (see, p. 15). This is one of the essential remarks from the interviewed people with disabilities, because the desire to work is expressed “only” the possibility to find appropriate jobs is limited. The SE methods include job finding strategies and possible templates for an action plan (splitting the responsibilities of the SE worker and the person with disabilities). Such job finding strategies could be introduced to the people with disabilities as well to raise their awareness of possible working places.

As well the interviewed NGO representatives have a negative view on the local labour market and the possibilities for people with disabilities. The Awareness Raising Campaign of the T-EST project should provide best practice examples of other countries and the extension of the possible regional differences. And of course it is important to keep in mind, that companies are open to integrate a person with disability in their working field, if his/her performance suits their requirements.

4. *Employer Engagement*

As we showed in the general conclusion companies with experiences towards the employing of people with disabilities have a positive view on the performance of them. A summary of such positive cooperation examples could be collected in the three transfer countries and could be used for the Awareness Raising Campaign as well. If possible new employers for people with disabilities could revert to the experiences of other companies, a possible change of paradigms could be initiated.

The interviews clearly showed that current legislation, employer/ society attitude and the motivation of people with disabilities are crucial points in the employment process of people with disabilities – policy makers are asked as well to provide a framework for SE workers. A raising awareness campaign should also lay a focus on policy makers.

5. *On and Off the Job Support*

The contact between SE worker and company is in this stage very close. Therefore transparent roles and responsibilities are important. During the interviews company leaders point out, that there is a *“need of some disabled employees for more time for training at the beginning after their recruitment”* (see, p. 27). The information about the possible support of a Jobcoach can invalidate this argument. A Jobcoach supports directly at the workplace, supports the co-workers and the support is planned in order to close the gap between the abilities of the person with disability and the requirements of the working place. This planned support actions have to be transparent for every concerned person and should be reviewed regularly. The co-workers should be like mentors or natural supporters directly at the working places and should be the direct contact person for the new employee in case of open questions.