



N 34 MANUAL

Supported Employment in Bulgaria (BG)

LIFE LONG LEARNING PROGRAM
Leonardo da Vinci / Transfer of Innovation

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T-EST Core- Partner Organizations

Country	Organization
Austria	Jugend am Werk Steiermark GmbH
Belgium	European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)
Bulgaria	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Dobrich (CCI)
	Marie Curie Association (MCA)
	Zgura- M
Italy	Formazione Co&So Network
Romania	Directia Generala de Asistenta Sociala si Protectia Copilului Harghita (DGASPC)
Turkey	Konak District Governorship

EUSE preface – European Union for Supported Employment

by Robert Elston

When we began our careers in the 1980s, it was a commonly-held belief that, for many people with a disability, work was an unachievable dream. Supported employment has done a great deal to change things. It has proved that, with the right support, very many people can gain and retain employment. For those people with disabilities who have moved into work and become valued employees, we know that this improves their independence, their health and their sense of wellbeing.

In recent years we have been heartened by the increasing focus on quality in the supported employment sector. This was helped by the set of quality standards which were published in 2005 by the European Union of Supported Employment.

Those standards led naturally to the Supported Employment Toolkit for Disability. The Toolkit, a series of 'How To' guides, position papers and training materials, has helped to promote supported employment across 14 European countries. EUSE has also gone on to create the Supported Employment Toolkit for Diversity which explores how to adapt the approach to meet the needs of other disadvantaged groups. These toolkits are all available at www.eusetoolkit.eu.

These Toolkits have spurred on many countries to develop their own National Occupational Standards and accredited training for supported employment, and this has dramatically improved the quality of supported employment.

We are therefore delighted that the T-EST project is now expanding the impact of the Supported Employment Toolkit for Disability to a series of countries that are just beginning their supported employment journey.

It has been exciting to be involved in the T-EST project. We are sure that putting quality at the heart of our profession, as the Toolkit does, will help to convince policy makers and other stakeholders in a new series of countries that supported employment is the most cost-effective and efficient way of helping people with disabilities to gain and retain work.

Robert Elston

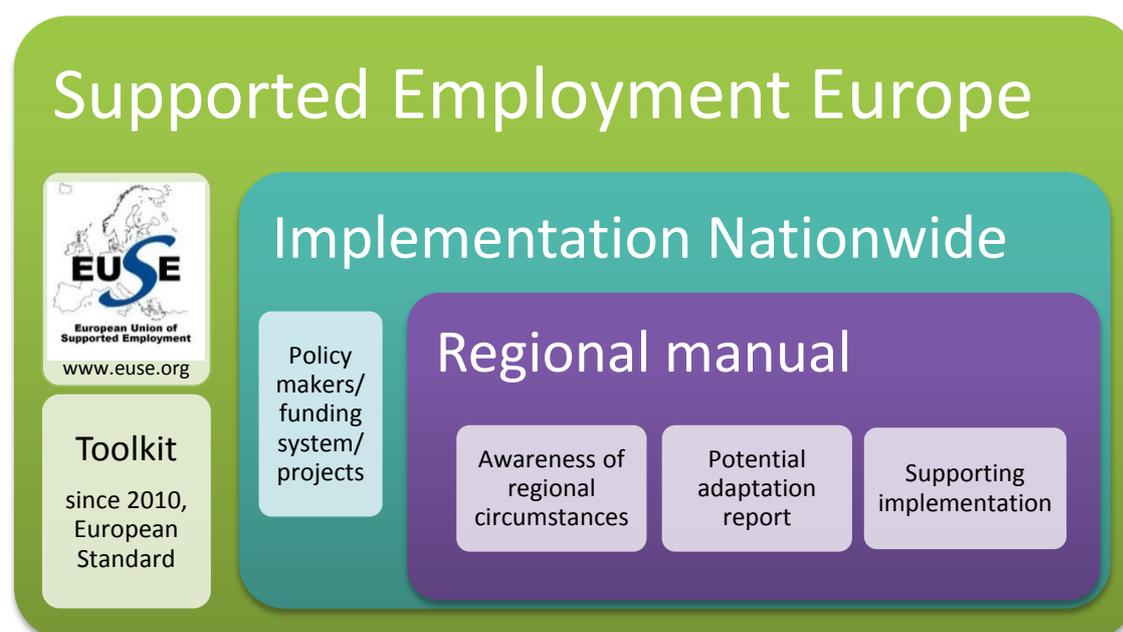
Vice President European Union of Supported Employment

1. Foreword

T-EST – Transfer of Employment Support Tools for People with Disabilities is a Leonardo da Vinci/ Transfer of Innovation project funded with the financial support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. It is one of the key areas of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to allow full accessibility to education as well as to the labour market for people with disabilities. The T-EST project aims to transfer Supported Employment (SE) approaches and tools to countries that lack efficient vocational support services for people with disabilities, especially to Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. The baseline product for planning and implementing Supported Employment in the three transfer countries is the Supported Employment Toolkit, which was developed within a Leonardo da Vinci Partnership project. The aim of this partnership was to define the main values, principles and standards of Supported Employment providers in Europe and determine the professional best practice in working with people with disabilities in order to achieve a paid working place. On the basis of these European values a transfer of the SE concept should be core aim of the T- EST project.

In accordance with the project's objectives the national backgrounds were ascertained with regard to employment support for persons with disabilities and the adaptation needs of a manual for an implementation.

How to use this manual?



This chart above should show the way of using this current manual. Supported Employment (SE) has been successfully used in different European countries since the late 1980's. The EUSE (European Union of Supported Employment)¹ formed in 1993 provides a Toolkit² of SE which can be seen as a common basis of working with people with disabilities in order to achieve paid and secure working placements for them. The Toolkit, achieved through a European partnership collaboration, was written in 2010 and aims to an Europe- wide consensus of SE. This European values, standards and principles are the methodological superstructure for national implementations of SE services.

For nationwide implementation of SE services funding systems of social services and support systems of service providers have to be developed. Especially policy makers are asked to further this kind of support services for people with disabilities. The Toolkit of SE points out how to convince policy makers and describes it in an own chapter (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 44- 46).

This current manual is created to use it on a regional level to implement SE services. What are the regional circumstances for employing people with disabilities? At first the T-EST project team has been conducted a study to identify the national backgrounds with regard to employment support for persons with disabilities in the transfer countries and the adaptation needs of the toolkit. To assure a successful and effective transfer and implementation of the SE concept we have included parts of this investigation in this current manual to see the national context (in subchapters "*national challenges*").

This current manual still refers to the original EUSE Toolkit, but can be described as a practical, national conception for SE implementation and united SE principles with national circumstances. Therefore it is not an adaptation of the original toolkit, but a practical application for Bulgaria.

¹ <http://www.euse.org/> (23.09.2013)

² <http://www.euse.org/supported-employment-toolkit-2/EUSE%20Toolkit%202010.pdf/view> (23.09.2013)

2. Fundamentals and elements of Supported Employment

“Supported Employment is a method of working with disabled people and other disadvantaged groups to access and maintain paid employment in the open labour market”

(EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 9)

This approach for people with disabilities involves the concepts of empowerment, social inclusion, dignity and rights for individuals. Main fundamentals are: individuality of each person with disability, respect, self-determination, possibility of informed choices, empowerment, confidentiality, flexibility of Supported Employment providers and full accessibility to their services on all levels.

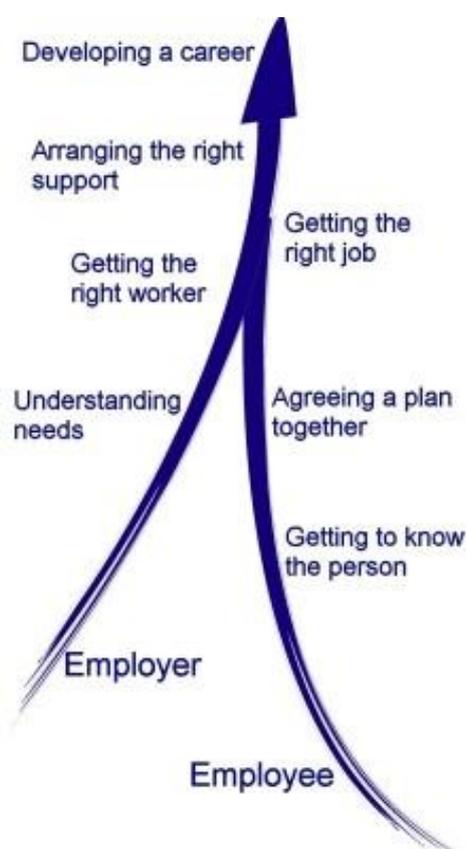
The access to work is a basic human right for all people and especially the UN convention on the rights for people with disabilities mentions that states has the responsibility to assure *“the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities”* (UN Convention, 2006, Art. 27/ 1, p. 19). Equal basis means same conditions as other state members including payment at a contracted going rate, equal benefits, safe working conditions and opportunities for career development. The achievement of paid work for people with disabilities is one of the most important principles of the SE approach. Equal payment and equal possibilities as an achievable goal for people with disabilities in the same way as it is for not disabled people in our society. From the perspective of the EUSE, the three main basics of SE are **paid work** (as opposed to working experience placements, job tasters, voluntary work, vocational training), **open labour market** (regular employments privat/ public), **ongoing support** (on a needs basis for employee and employer). An ongoing support refers to a support during job seeking, employment and progress in an existing working place. It is important to identify natural support in a real working environment in order to achieve an inclusion in the respective company.

The general topic is to follow a “place- train- maintain” strategy rather than the “train- place” methods of other supporting services, because training and learning of skills is more efficient in real context of a company. The motivation of the people with disabilities is also higher if they are employed from the beginning. Many people with disabilities don’t have a lot of vocational experiences or have not been in employment ever, so as an instrument of achieving a paid job **working experience placements** can be helpful. They *“should be viewed as a means to an end and not as the end result”* (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 26).

2.1. The beneficiaries

The model of Supported Employment is a flexible and continuous process, designed to meet all anticipated needs from all the customers of the SE providers. During the SE process beneficiaries are on the one hand people with disabilities, supported by getting a working place or maintaining one, and on the other hand the possible employers of the people with disabilities.

Figure 1: Differing customers' needs³



In order to achieve a successful inclusion of people with disabilities on a work place, to be effective and sustainable the SE process has to keep in mind both needs (employees and employers). It is important to understand the fears and the resulting needs of the employers and getting the right worker for them. The arrangement of the right support during the hiring is needed and special support offers could include “*disability awareness training, knowledge of government support/ funding programmes and practical solutions to health, safety and disability employment issues*” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 32). As well the job support of the person with disability and its co-workers has to be planned in agreement with both beneficiaries. This job support directly at the working place of the person with disability is strongly linked with the company environment and the given space for the training at the working place. For instance it is important

to consider how long it is allowed staying in the company for the SE worker; who has to be asked for; who is responsible for answering questions; etc. So planning of training at the working place can not be separated from the employers⁴ and co- workers (colleagues at the workplace of the person with disability). The cooperation with these beneficiaries is obligatory.

³ <http://base-uk.org/bases-history-aims-and-structure/about-supported-employment> (28.06.2013)

⁴ „a person, business or public body that employs workers. In the context of Supported Employment this term is used for a person, business or public body that is actively involved in the Supported Employment process in order to employ a person with a disability or disadvantage or to maintain the work for this person” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 114)

The aim of SE services is a secure long term sustainable employment of people with disabilities. A right “job matching” (individual strengths and needs matched with the requirements of the job) is done correctly if it leads to a win-win-situation where both, employer and employee achieve their goals. Work experience placements⁵ can be seen as a tool to help individuals to find and maintain a paid job (see, EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 23) or preparatory (vocational⁶) trainings for people with disabilities can also be useful and effective activities, which influence directly or indirectly the way of getting a secure and paid job in the open labour market.

SE services are directed to both beneficiaries and of course beside a good preparation of the person with disability also possible employers should be convinced about an employment of people with disabilities. For instance an awareness of the benefits for employers should be raised by the SE service providers: free support from SE service providers, free advice concerning disabilities and inclusion, sensitization of co-workers, guidance through financial funding systems, support during the job matching period, etc. Of course there is as well a positive impact on the current team and the employment of a person with disability can also be seen as a promotion of the company`s social responsibility. Experiences of other European countries and a lot of positive case studies show the high productivity and efficiency of people with disabilities in their working places. If job matching and team integration are appropriate, there is in most cases no performance difference from the person with disability to his/ her co- workers.

Supported Employment is a *“proactive, individual- orientated method to enable people with disabilities access their right to work”* (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 47) and has to be a core topic for all policy makers in all European countries. There is as well a position paper from the EUSE to reach policy makers (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 44) and to convince them about the advantages of SE methods.

⁵ „Are unpaid and can be for any amount of hours per week. A work experience placement should be time-limited to avoid exploitation of the job seeker and EUSE would recommend that 8-12 weeks is a sufficient time period to meet the objectives of the placement” (EUSE, Toolkit, 2010, p. 118)

⁶ „vocational education or training prepares persons for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic, and totally related to a specific vocation” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 118)

2.2. Regional legal framework

In order to get an overview of the possibilities for people with disabilities at the open labour market, it is also important to have an eye on legal framework in the country. In this chapter we will summarize main points in order to focus on the key issues during an assistance support for people with disabilities on their way to employment.

Legal policies and fundamentals play an important role for vocational integration of people with disabilities. In Bulgaria the Constitution⁷ of the Republic of Bulgaria determines fundamental rights and duties of citizens (Article 48, Paragraph 2: Rights of Persons with Disabilities for Employment). The Labour Code⁸, Law on Protection against Discrimination⁹, Law on Integration of People with Disabilities¹⁰ and Law on Employment Promotion⁶ constitute the special protection of persons with disabilities.

Employers of people with disability also can get **financial support** from the government in Bulgaria. It is important to check out this financial information for the employers in order to raise their interest of employing a person with disability. For current information of financial support for employers look in the annex of this manual.

Quota arrangements are common to stimulate the employment of persons with disabilities. In Bulgaria regarding to the Labour Code⁸, Article 315 (amended – SG, No. 2/1996): An employer with more than 50 employees shall provide annually jobs suitable for reassignment of partially incapacitated persons for 4 to 10 percent of the total number of jobs depending on the economic sector. The concrete percentage shall be specified by the Minister of Labour and Social policy.

In Bulgaria there are also financial resources for environmental and office adaptations for employers, the adaptations are paid by government.

Subsidized employment is one approach to assure the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities in Bulgaria. There are many forms and they are provided with support from the state. Bulgarian sheltered employment is common for specialized factories, cooperatives, and disabled unions activities get also support from the municipality.

⁷ <http://www.parliament.bg/bg/const/> (07.11.2013)

⁸ <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/index.asp> (07.11.2013)

⁹ <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/equal/equalen/anti-discrimination%20law%20en.doc> (07.11.2013)

¹⁰ <http://www.bcnl.org/> (07.11.2013)

2.3. Implementation and Service Providers

In order to achieve a good quality in working with Supported Employment methods, it is needed to have right SE providers and workers to reach the aim of employment for people with disabilities. SE workers are faced with different roles within their daily working routine. Beside training and guidance skills to support people with disabilities, they also have to do networking, marketing, mediation and have to be equipped with employment law knowledge in order to inform employers and employees. SE worker's attitude towards his beneficiaries has to be customer orientated. Self-determination and empowerment are two key features in working with the people with disability and lead to an assistance attitude towards them. This concretely means enablement of independence and assistance only when it is needed.

In some European countries, like in Austria, the tasks of the SE workers are splitting in two specialized roles. First the *SE worker* is responsible for looking for a job and does the job matching between employer and person with disability. If the work on the new working place of the person with disability starts, the on-the-job support from a specialized *JobCoach*¹¹ starts. There is a strong link between them and of course a good cooperation is needed. In other countries SE workers are undertake both working fields and include the JobCoach-tasks in their work. The point to highlight in this manual that it is important to discover how it will work best for Bulgaria, because services always redevelop and should be seen flexible. In comparison with other European countries Austria has limited **support durations** in Austria (max. 1 year SE worker; max. 6 months JobCoaching), so the funding system restricts the support possibilities in terms of time. Other countries don't have this time restrictions and it is important to keep it in mind when it comes to project applications for SE services.

Country **funding structures** are also different. Some support systems are organized in a top-down structure, like in Austria where the federal social service offices as contracting entities give an assignment to support services. In other countries SE services are funded by regional, municipal entities and can be described as bottom-up structured. The possible and best way for Bulgaria has to be found.

The main focus of the manual lays on the attitude of the SE workers towards people with disabilities, their working possibilities and the setting of being an assistant, but for a project implementation it is important to keep frameworks in mind as well.

¹¹ „EUSE defines JobCoach as a role specific to providing in-work support and this term is therefore only applicable to a part of the Supported Employment process” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 115)

3. Process and Methodology of Supported Employment

SE can be described as a five stage process, which is flexible and orientated on the individuals' needs and abilities. The EUSE Toolkit for SE provides basic and useful information concerning these five stages, gives advices and tips regarding to methods in this working field and it is not definitive but rather *“illustrative of the process and methodologies to be considered in the delivery of Supported Employment services”* (see, EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 53).

Figure 2: Five stage process of SE



In order to reach the implementation of this method in Bulgaria, we will now discuss all five stages in detail. How to work with people with disabilities against the background of SE principles? How to do a vocational profiling? How to get in contact with possible employers and how to link them to the idea of employing people with disabilities? And finally how can you support people with disabilities directly at their working places?

This manual shows possible ways of working with SE methods, but it is an ideal- typical stage process, which has to be adapted to the service circumstances. Furthermore the attitude towards people with disabilities and their employability is crucial.

3.1. Stage 1: Client engagement

In this stage people with disabilities should be informed about their chances, possibilities, rights and possible supports in order to make **informed decisions**. After this stage they would find a decision to the question if they wish to use Supported Employment tools to find a paid working place and further they will have an agreed action plan of the usability of particular services within this SE support. *“The activities in this stage must be relevant, person centred and part of an agreed plan of action to ultimately support the individual into open employment.”*¹² Client engagement will always be different for individuals, but it is important to reach a concrete plan of working together between the job seeker and the SE worker.

First of all a publicity materials are very important for SE providers to the effect that possible job seekers will be prepared for a first meeting or can get information about the SE services and other possible services for them. The **first contact** to the SE provider should be low-threshold, for instance different possible ways of contacting (phone, E-Mail, face-to-face, etc.) should be possible. Within this first contact a face-to-face **initial meeting** should be arranged. After this first contact the co-operation between the job seeker and the service provider will be started in the initial meeting. Ideally this initial meeting is face to face and all needs of the job seeker, the person with disability, has to be considered (social environment, quantity of information, length of the meeting, etc.). This session should ascertain all relevant information concerning the person with disability and will include as well information about health, housing, income matters, personal circumstances. Further it is important in this phase to build up trust and respect and to make sure, that all needed information is given by the SE worker. The job seeker has to be involved in and has to give his agreement for all discussions or conversations about this support, even if the SE worker is talking with other stakeholders. The principles of self- determination, empowerment, individuality and respect always have to keep applied.

After such an initial meeting a **planning discussion** will lead to a consensual agreement. For instance *„Personal Future Planning”*¹³ can be an appropriate person-centred method of doing such a planning discussion.

Person- centred methods are good methodical tools for working with people with disabilities on their aims and wishes for the future. Especially this person- centred attitude is inevitable for working together with job seekers with disabilities, because what we believe and think

¹² <http://www.euse.org/process> (28.06.2013)

¹³ For further information, see: <http://www.inclusive-solutions.com/pcplanning.asp> (28.06.2013)

about people with disabilities shapes their opportunities in developing and of course the way of assistance we provide. So it is important to reflect: How can we make sure that support services respond to the individual needs of persons with disabilities and help them live included in the community?¹⁴

Figure 3: Client Engagement¹⁵



Efficient and understandable communication between job seeker and SE worker is needed during this client engagement phase in order to get a basis for further working together and of course a commitment of an agreed action plan. An **action plan** will include following points: „*What shall be done? Who is responsible for the realisation of the actions? When will the actions be realised? Who will ascertain that the action was realised?*” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 60). Commitment and reciprocal agreement is a key point in the whole SE process. An active participation of the job seeker, person with disability is needed during the SE process. It's important to underline, that the person with disability will not just benefit or receive a service, but the person also has to take responsibility.

3.1.1. National challenges

In some cases the motivation of the people with disabilities to work is missing. In the T-EST interviews from 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*” (T-EST Report N26, p. 18). Under the degree of 50% of disability exists special benefits for people with disabilities which restrict the desire for work, because of the fear of losing these benefits. 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 crucial for the whole SE process and to identify the motivation of the people with disabilities to work is most important in this stage. The person with disability should make an informed choice after all counselling concerning his/her wish of being supported by finding a working place. Especially in case of different disability funding systems this choice finding process is important in order to identify the future goals of the person with disability. Raising awareness of this controversial national benefit system is needed.

¹⁴ Further information: <http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/> (07.11.2013)

¹⁵ Compare: EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 54- 61

3.2. Stage 2: Vocational Profiling

In this stage the goal is to **collect all relevant information** from the job seeker, person with disability in order to identify his/her motivation, particular interests, work attitudes, resources and needs of support. It is important to work together with the job seeker, as an active partner, on a realistic view on possible working places and ways for career development. This is a process of getting to know the person with disability in relation to work – expectations, learning needs, former working experiences, job preferences, education history, trainings, personal skills and abilities (daily living skills, communication, social skills, weekly routines, etc.)¹⁶. A holistic picture of the job seeker is the aim in this stage, as well for the person with disability himself/ herself in order to make appropriate decisions. It is an ongoing discussion between the person with disability and the SE worker and this process needs a few meetings between them. *“The profile informs the practical job finding and makes it more likely that we find a high quality job match.”*¹⁷

Of course it is important to discuss about **information disclosure**¹⁸ with the person with disability and to find an agreement between the job seeker and the SE worker about it. It is essential to think about new working places in context of the particular disability and what information have to be disclosed, respectively what kind of information have not.

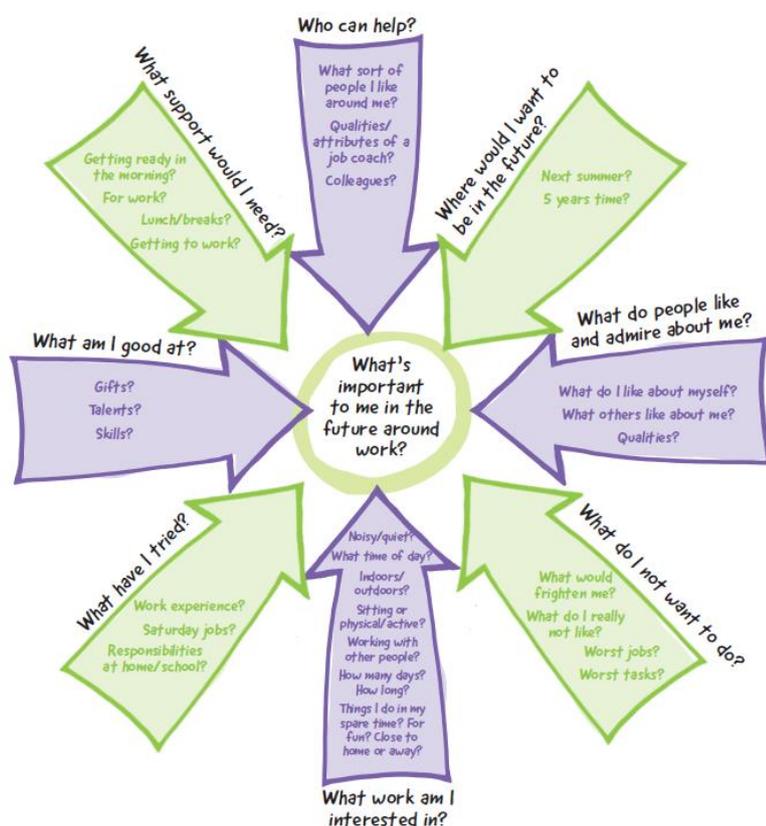
After the collection of the relevant information **career planning and support strategies** are necessary next steps. A realistic view on possible workplaces is important and also a clear view on the support needs on and off the working place of the person with disability. For instance, if legal frames allows, job tasters¹⁹ or working experience placements could be used as instruments of getting a concept of different working situations. For Bulgaria such ways of job tasting does not exist, but this would be massive achievement on the way of employing people with disabilities. Policy makers have to be informed about the background, main issues and European standards of Supported Employment in order to provide such possibilities for people with disabilities. Sheltered workshops, voluntary work or vocational trainings can be seen as preparatory step for integration in the open labour market, but working experience placements often enables an employment in a company.

¹⁶ EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 77

¹⁷ <http://base-uk.org/bases-history-aims-and-structure/about-supported-employment> (03.07.2013)

¹⁸ „The individual must give their consent for information to be disclosed and it is important that disclosure provides only information that is relevant to the job situation. For some job seekers it is important to prepare what kind of information is necessary to disclose before approaching employers” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 65)

¹⁹ „short periods [last no more than one week] of usually unpaid work are used in the vocational profiling process for clients with little or no working experience.” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 115)

Figure 4: Person- centred arrow template²⁰

In this stage it is needed to clarify the support needs of the person with disability. For instance it is possible to use again person-centred materials (Figure 4) to get an idea of what is important for the person with disability in the future work. There are different person-centred methods for vocational profiling, but there exists a lot of differing tools of profiling, which also can be used in this stage. Various questionnaires deal with profiling or especially developed computer tests are as well available.

The consequent next step is the creation of an **action plan** to move on to the “Job Finding” stage. This action plan should include the objectives, responsibilities (job seeker, SE worker, social network of job seeker, etc.), concrete timeline, future achievements and should regularly be reviewed. It is important to involve relevant people in planning this action plan. The responsibilities for each step should be divided and concretely named and all in the action plan included persons should be involved in the planning session. Aims of an action plan have to be in accessible language, concrete, measureable and originated from the consensual discussion. The monitoring of such action plan is needed to ensure the agreed common way and to illustrate alternative possibilities if one aim could not be achieved.

3.2.1. National challenges

People with disabilities often have a low level of education and a lack of experiences at the open labour market also makes it harder to achieve a clear view of possible working places. In Bulgarian interviews for instance “39% of the target group hasn’t any qualification, and 41% has primary or lower education” (T-EST Report N26, 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. These educational problems are complex and vocational trainings

²⁰ <http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/media/39678/arrowtempfilledin.pdf> (07.11.2013)

are needed, but 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 for development at all.

3.3. Stage 3 + 4: Job Finding and Employer Engagement

This is a crucial stage in the process of getting a job for people with disabilities. The process starts with **preparatory work** – accomplish a curriculum vitae, looking for a support network (key players: job seeker, employers, SE workers, funders, family members, social network, service providers) and working on realistic goals in the open labour market (see, EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 80). In the annex you can find examples and tips for accomplishing the curriculum vitae. As an advice you should also do an internet research of CV writing in different business areas and keep the question in mind: which kind of company do you want to reach with what kind of CV? The extent of the preparatory work differs from every person and it should be done person- centred like all other stages. This preparatory work might also include training of job interview sessions, working on the image of the job seeker during a job interview and so on.

The figure below illustrates the typical process in between these two stages:

Figure 5: Employment process²¹



The **job search** starts with the analysis of the vocational profile to point out the employment possibilities. Maybe support networks of the person with disability can offer other working fields as well or have contact to possible employers. In this stage the regional labour market opportunities have to keep in mind (regional differences, urban, rural, etc.). The job search should accompany with gathering information of these possible companies (size, structure, decision makers or general business information). The focus of the job finding stage should lie on both beneficiaries of SE services, employers and job seekers. Furthermore job search is not only focused on advertised free working placements, but should also include support

²¹ EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 80

networks, as mentioned before or as well the offer of job carving possibilities for different companies the job seeker wants to work in. Job carving or job creation means “a job [that] is created by identifying parts of a job or tasks that the employer needs completing and can be completed by the job seeker” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 28). This is a creative task for employers, job seekers and SE workers, because such job descriptions does not exist and maybe can be created for the new employee with disability.

The stage of “**Approaching Employers**” starts with concrete gathering information concerning the companies and their businesses. The way of contacting the employer should be agreed between job seeker and SE worker and is possible differently by letter/mail, by phone, by dropping in, through another person within the company or another way (see, EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 83). Meeting the employer is also a matter of agreed action – how is the preparation, who joins the job interview (job seeker alone or SE worker supports the communication) and of course the relevant business language of the employer is needed and therefore communication adapted. Most of all it is helpful to prepare arguments for employers why working with people with disabilities is valuable. For instance it is important to highlight the high performance of the person with disability in the company (referring to CV), the social impacts (working atmosphere, image of the company, advertisement, changed perspective of co-workers concerning people with disabilities, etc.), the support system (free SE worker for consulting, wage subsidies, tax reduces and savings, etc.) or as well the personal benefits which will arise for the employer (networking, personal satisfaction, personal experiences, etc.).

A close engagement of the employers helps them to get to know the person with disabilities and the specifics of working together. If the meeting and approach is successful, an agreement between the employer and job seeker concerning the next steps (employment, working hours, beginning, etc.) is needed. Of course if for instance a job interview is unsuccessful, the person with disability should be supported by dealing with these objections. *“Once we secure employer commitment, a job analysis is usually undertaken. This checks out any assumptions made in the job description and thoroughly investigates the job on offer so that we can describe all its aspects and those of the work place, including health and safety.”*²²

A **job analysis** should show a holistic view of the future working place of the person with disability. What kind of duties, tasks, key features (physical, cognitive, emotional, environmental, social, etc.), quality standards, worksite environment, wage, working hours, company culture, transport considerations, accessibility, support opportunities and of course

²² <http://base-uk.org/bases-history-aims-and-structure/about-supported-employment> (03.07.2013)

in which way the job seeker can deal these requirements. The general topic is to follow the “place- train- maintain” strategy rather than the “train- place” methods of other supporting services, because training and learning of skills is more efficient in real context of a company (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 23). The motivation of the people with disabilities is also higher if they are employed from the beginning. At this job analysis stage it is important to look at the needs of the employer as well, because now also the employers support tools has to be planned and further implemented.

Job matching is the used word for combining the requirements of the employer and the possibilities of the job seeker. “*Successful job matching meets both the job seeker’s and the employer’s needs*” (see, EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 115). In some way it is an ongoing process at the on- the- job support stage to point towards ways of carving together different parts of job descriptions for the special abilities of the job seeker. It is important to have a clear communication with all involved partners in order to point out roles and responsibilities. This job matching period is very specific and individual – some jobs don’t have to be adapted for the person with disability, others completely. The willingness of the employer and the whole company (co- workers, environment, etc.) is a necessary precondition to create new working fields in their company.

Concrete agreements between employer and employee are needed to **secure a job** and this agreement includes as well what kind of support from the SE worker is needed. Clarifying the responsibilities and the tasks of all three affected parties is important. Sincerity concerning the needed support of the person with disability, the possible support offer and duration and the details of process for all involved people is always inalienable. This agreement of securing the new job leads to the stage of on and off job support and possible career development.

3.3.1. Dealing with rejections

Looking for a job is a hard work (job seeking, convincing employers, job matching) and linked with rejections. Often the job seekers have the needed skills for a job but a fear of rejection, so their past history needs to be addressed to ensure continued participation in the whole process. During the common preparation of SE worker and job seeker for the job interview or the meeting with the employer possible rejections have to be discussed right at the beginning of seeking for a job. Strengthening self- esteem and self- confidence is very important during the whole SE process and especially in this stage. An open discussion about possible rejections or objections is needed, because the job seeker won’t be surprised if the job

interview turned out that way and maybe some arguments against worries of employers could be contributed. Dealing with concerns and worries of employers in a professional manner is one of the key skills of a SE worker and if it ends with a rejection the SE worker has to empower the job seeker that he/ she should never take a rejection personally! It is a matter of rejecting a particular request/ application, not the job seeker as the person itself. It is helpful to ask reflective questions, think of hypotheses why the employer took this decision and one main aim should be that the job seeker is encouraged by the SE worker to ask the employer for a feedback if he/ she were unsuccessful at the interview. It is important to reach a constructive way of dealing with such feedback in order to be prepared for the further interviews. It is easy to speak about dealing with rejections (focus on strengths, keeping a positive attitude, focus on the next opportunity), but a negative emotional linkage to it is hard to overcome, so therefore *“be careful how you give advice – ask the questions and let the employee find the answers themselves”* (EUSE Toolkit, p. 93).

3.3.2. National challenges

An active contact between people with disabilities and companies is needed and useful, because the T-EST analysis showed, if companies have experiences with people with disabilities, they 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, it will work. *“Company managers without experience are having doubt about the ability of persons with disability to perform specific task required by the job.”* (T-EST Report N26, p. 26).

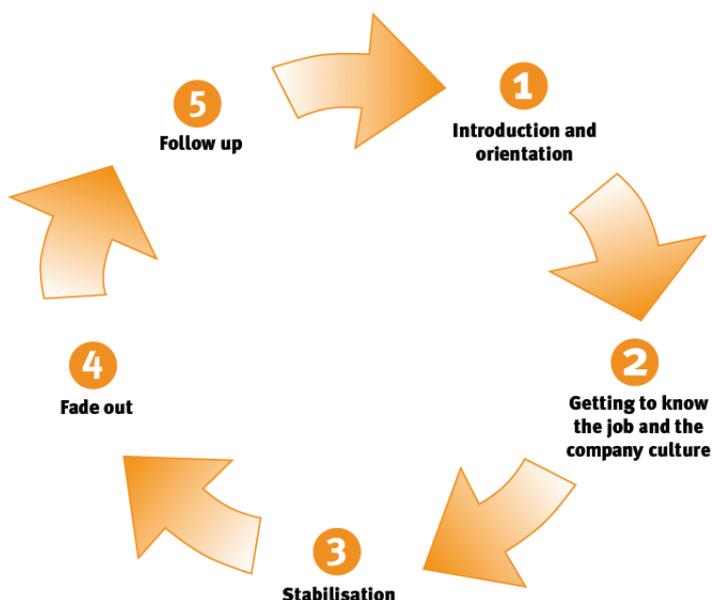
3.4. Stage 5: On and Off the Job Support/ Career development

After the job analysis and the agreements towards it the support directly at the working place begins. On the one hand the new employers should be supported as much as needed concerning to their resources/ abilities and on the other hand the employers or exactly the co- workers of the person with disability should be supported to train the new employee and learn to deal with his/her disability. This natural support²³ directly at the working place is very important – first to identify possible supporters, secondly help them to undertake the tasks of mentoring (further definitions, p. 21). The role of the SE worker at the working place has to be defined and should be transparent for all involved people. The support is individually planned, targeted, flexible and of course has to be reviewed on a regularly basis and should help to maintain the job for the person with disability. Job support is often higher at the start of a new job and this time aspect should be calculated in support planning. The amount of support directly at the working place differs from company to company, so the SE worker has to keep in mind company's requirements and his/ her own restrictions (support duration, time possibilities, etc.).

The SE worker should recognize the company requirements, should provide guidance for possible adaptations and *“should be able to provide mediation between the employee, co-workers and the employer”* (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 38). There are two possible ways of support, directly at the work place “on the job” or outside the work place “off the job”. “On the job support” is described later on and the ideal- typical procedure is shown in figure 6 (p.18). If it is needed an appropriate support of the person with disability outside of the working place is also a possible way of external training in order to achieve a better position in the company. Career development is often missed for people with disabilities, but has to keep in mind from the SE worker. Present labour market is characterized by changing working places and not many people stay in the same job their whole working lives. So in order to improve the working position of people with disabilities SE workers should encourage a career development (further training options or increasing the responsibilities at the actual work place).

²³ „support offered by the co-workers at the workplace, by employers and important others in he persons professional and private network” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 116)

Figure 6: Process of Job Support (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 94)



In the figure beside a suggested model of actions in this stage is shown. The first **introduction and orientation** period starts at the beginning of the employment of the new employee. Introduction to the co-workers, receiving the tasks and responsibilities, get in touch with the important aspects (organizational, social inclusion, etc.) and involvement of the person with disabilities in the working field. Directly from the beginning of this phase the SE worker should

identify possible natural support (co-workers, supervisors, etc.). The support from the SE worker 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 general attitude during this first introduction and orientation period is again person-centred, that means there is a focus on the abilities and possibilities of the new employee with disabilities and his co-workers and it can be seen as a work on a development of potentials of all employees.

Getting to know **the job and the company culture** is also a very intensive phase. The aim is to learn/ train the tasks (empowerment to achieve the tasks) and build working relationships with co-workers (be a part of the work team) (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 96). Social inclusion is as much important as practical enrolment. If there are any problems with the tasks or the performance of the person with disability the following strategies could adjust the working place: Job carving²⁴, Job stripping²⁵, Job enrichment²⁶. Of course all three strategies could only be successful if the employer and the co-workers agree.

²⁴ „the tasks of the new employee are taken from the job descriptions of different existing jobs in the company“ (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 97)

²⁵ „taking away some tasks from the regular job description that are difficult to do for the employee because of his disability“ (ib., p. 97)

²⁶ „adding of new tasks to the job description according to abilities of the employee or to foster inclusion in the company“ (ib., p. 97)

In this stage there are different forms of possible support like consultancy, counseling, advice, learning, training, assistance, restructuring²⁷ and it should keep in mind that both employers and employees should be reached. *“The issues may vary and it is imperative that the Employment Support Worker maintains their professionalism at all times”* (EUSE, Toolkit, 2010, p. 98). An expertise of the SE worker is therefore very important, on the one hand to really know the person with disability he or she is working with and on the other hand to know about all relevant information for all involved partners.

During the **stabilisation** phase the new employee now can perform all tasks correctly. Working together with the co-workers and the possible problems should be discussed with all involved people in regular meetings. 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. Mentoring can be defined as *“a one-to-one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual mentor voluntarily gives his/her time to support and encourage another”* (Home Office, UK, 2001). As well the support of the SE worker can be evaluated and reviewed at this stage – what kind of support was useful, what should be continued? Also the next period should be planned, how long the support will continue/ is necessary and the fade out²⁸ period starts.

Empowerment and self-determination are goals of a SE process and therefore a **fade out** of the support at the working place is necessary to achieve them. *“This can be done by encouraging independence at all times and involving co-workers e.g. as mentors”* (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 101). A further contact to the SE worker is possible, if required for instance in case of problems or crises. This stage is directly linked with the **follow up** phase, while the SE worker is available when needed. Maybe if the employee with disability wants to move to a better position in the company in the future, he/she could contact the SE worker again. An ongoing contact to the employers and employees could maintain a positive partnership for common future actions.

This process of job support is also related to maintaining a job of a person with disability, if there are problems in the company or a risk of losing a reached job. So this following up work is also very important. Sometimes a crisis intervention is needed or maybe an ongoing

²⁷ „Apadations can include:

- Help for structuring (symbols, photos, colours instead of writing)
- Supports for orientation (task flow charts, plan, task cards, to do list)
- Technical tools (such as a calculator, talking clock, dictaphone, etc.)
- Help for remembering
- Self evaluation tools (such as self control tools, checklists and competence grids, work diary)”

(EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 100)

²⁸ „In some countries the duration of job support is limited by the funding agency, whilst the concept of Supported Employment states that the support should be available as long as necessary“ (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 100)

support for the person with disabilities. For instance a person with disability is working at his/ her working place for a few years and now a support is needed to learn a new task or he/ she needs support outside of the work place (changes in mobility, private circumstances, etc.). Or also training outside of the working place can help to progress the position in the company. Assistance for the employee with disability should be available.

“Supported Employment services should see career development and job progression as an integral part of the Supported Employment process and seek to resource this activity appropriately.”

(EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 101)

4. Recommendations on SE process

The SE process provides a clear structure and procedure of supporting people with disabilities and all included values, principles and standards build a framework of possible forms of implementation. During the T-EST project and especially during the implementation period general recommendations to the SE process were developed. The draft manual was used and reviewed by all implementation coaches during the implementation period (February – July 2014) in Bulgaria. Throughout the project partnership discussions in the project we agreed on following discussable matters:

- **Working groups:** while the principle of individuality underlines that SE workers have to regard *“each individual as unique, with his/ her own interests, preferences, conditions and life history”* (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 10), we also identified the need of working in groups as well. Individuality is the basis, but for instance application training, social skills training, communication training, etc. can be realized in working groups as well. For some people with disabilities such groups are also a possibility for sharing experiences, getting in contact with others and training as well their social behavior in groups. In terms of a good relationship and trust a constant support person is the best possibility to reach commitment and to support the person with disability in making informed choices. Therefore in general during all SE stages an one-to-one/ face-to-face support is needed, building up trust and personal regular meetings are necessary to achieve agreed targets, but in some cases group working could enhance the process.

- **Splitting the process:** during the implementation period we ascertained the difficulties of fulfilling all five stages of the SE process for new service providers. The variety of support possibilities/ necessities – preparing people with disabilities for a job, support in different living situations in order to reach a job, looking for a job, on the job support – couldn't hardly be incorporated by one person. The responsibilities are also hard to define, if no clear assignment is given. For instance the Austrian separation of Employment Support worker²⁹ and Job Coach³⁰ is as well sometimes confusing in terms of responsibilities. On the job support, directly at the working places of people with disabilities is realized in Austria throughout JobCoaching. Therefore it is important for future implementation of SE in new countries to identify possible structures for splitting the process or realizing it in one hand.
- **Supervision:** beside one-to-one support with people with disabilities the reflection of the whole supporting process in a team of professionals is very important. The five stage process is adaptable during the coaching, but to reflect how to do this a specialised exchange is essential. The original EUSE Toolkit and this manual as well give methodological overviews how to implement SE services and shares national circumstances, but concrete templates and testing materials should be created or used by the service providers themselves. There are different examples for instance for vocational profiling on internet basis³¹, but to find appropriate materials also the existing organisational circumstances of the support service providers has to be considered.
- **Proof of attendance:** all participants could receive a dedicated proof of attendance with the features of the projects as well as a list of learning outcomes achieved through the participation in coaching process. Bearing in mind the lower qualification of people with disabilities a proof of attendance is also a way of value somebody's commitment in the SE process and can also be used as a proof of the willingness of finding/ getting a job.
- **National case studies:** The annex of this manual comprises general case studies of the implementation period. Case studies related to specific stages of the SE would make the manual more practical. These examples should be taken out of whole support

²⁹ „Person working as a guide with people with a disability for a Supported Employment service provider throughout the 5 stages of Supported Employment. Professional backgrounds and job descriptions may differ throughout Europe as well as respective terms in different countries.” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 109)

³⁰ „EUSE defines JobCoach as a role specific to providing in-work support and this term is therefore only applicable to a part of the Supported Employment process” (EUSE Toolkit, 2010, p. 115)

³¹ <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/tests/spatialtest.htm> (07.11.2014), <http://nonverbalreasoning.net> (07.11.2014), FIT – picture interest tests (<http://www.berufsfotos.ch/bilder/Webqa/BF2/index.html>, <http://www.berufsfotos.ch/bilder/Webqa/BF5/index.html>, 12.11.2014), regional job centers/ employment agencies tests of job interests

context and focus just on the method used in the current stage. This recommendation shows that this manual builds up a current situation, should be practically used in future, whereby a further development could be achieved through national case studies and methodologies.

- **Specialisation:** During the implementation it was obvious that specialised coaches are needed to realize such support services for people with disabilities. Therefore special trainings for SE worker should be installed and such services have to get a secure national long term funding. Only if training and funding of support services are granted sustainable support for people with disabilities on their way in the open labour market is viable.

ANNEX

I. Financial support for employers

There are some benefits for the employer if they hire a disable person (National Employment Strategy) – current information please get from the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy ³².

“One year the Government will pay the salary if the employer sustains the disabled employee for a minimum an year after the first. Self-employment support – up to approximately 5000 Euros” (T-EST Report N25, effective 07.12.2012).

II. Details to quota arrangements

Article 315 of the Bulgarian Labour Code³³:

Art. 315 (Amended, SG100/1992)

(1) (Amended, SG 15/2010): An employer with more than 50 employees shall be obliged to designate annually jobs suitable for occupational rehabilitation, from 4 to 10 per cent of the total number of jobs depending on the economic activity.

(3) (Amended, SG 61/2011) The proportion of the total number of employees under paragraph (1) by economic activities shall be determined by the Minister of Labour and Social policy and the Minister of Health.

Factory and Office workers' Occupational Rehabilitation

Article 317

(1) The need to transfer a factory or office worker to another suitable work or to the same job under relaxed conditions, the nature of the work done, the work conditions and the period of transfer shall be determined under a prescription of the health authorities.

(2) The occupational rehabilitation prescription issued by the health authorities shall obligate the factory or office worker not to execute the work from which he/she is transferring and the employer not to admit the said worker to the said work.

(3) The employer shall be obliged to transfer the factory or office worker to a suitable work in accordance with the prescription of the health authorities within 7 days after receipt of the said prescription.

(4) Upon failure to fulfil the prescription of the health authorities by the employer, the employer shall owe the factory or office worker compensation under Article 217.

³² <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/index.asp> (07.11.2013)

³³ <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/index.asp> (07.11.2013)

III. Case Studies Bulgaria

The following case studies were collected during the implementation period of SE methods in Bulgaria. The case studies give an overview concerning the support process, the common agreements and the reached aims.

Case Study 1 – Coach: Rositza (female) Client: Plamena (female)

Rositza and Plamena met each other in Complex for Social services “St.George” where Plamena is using the services of the daily centre. She is 24 years old, single and she is living in her own flat together with her mother.

Plamena has epilepsy – a condition which makes her education quite challenging. She graduated high school and then continue as a student in Agricultural University – Plovdiv, subject Botanical Biology. Unfortunately she was forced to suspend her education because of her disability which has deteriorated. She has never worked before but she is really motivated to find professional realisation in the area where she have been trained in the university.

Rositza is a manager of a daily centre for people with mental health problems within the Complex. She is a psychologist with more than 15 years’ work experience. Rositza was very motivated to take part in the implementation phase because she knows Plamena very well and consider her as very suitable for such kind of support. Both Plamena and Rositza participated in coaching process on voluntary base. They know each other very well and the matching phase took less time and efforts in comparison with other couples. The two ladies defined the goals of the coaching process as follows: to make Plamena more confident and less shy; to provide Plamena with professional orientation because she has a lot of desires and ideas towards her career; to reduce Plamena’s unrealistic expectations; to prepare Plamena for the future meeting with employer. From the other hand Rositza also wanted to try a new method in her daily work. She already has heart about the coaching before however she never used this method. They agreed to meet for the period of 5 months, once a week for two hours in the premises of the complex.



After the first sessions Rositza noticed significant success in the development of soft skills of her client. Plamena became more open towards her peers. She already easily communicates even with unknown people. Furthermore now she gives clear answer to the question “What she can do better?”. Rositza also made efforts to orient Plamena towards potential and appropriate for her job opportunities. Together they identified suitable for her abilities job occupation “landscape practitioner”. At the final stage of the process they tried to contact several employers in the mentioned field however there

is no job vacancies up to the moment. Therefore Rositza has encouraged her client to continue her education in the preferred subject. From September she will attend a special VET course in gardening.

At the end of the programme both Rositza and Plamena shared their satisfaction from the process and even willingness to participate again in similar programme. Plamena said “The coaching was really a great deal for me. It changed my life perspectives and I do believe that soon I will find a good job for me”.

Case Study 2 – Coach: Diana (female) Client: Eleonora (female)

Eleonora is 37 years old and she has moderate learning difficulty. Now she is living in Sheltered House for women with mental health problems in Sliven. Despite the fact that Eleonora does not complete formal education she has been involved in various informal training courses such as mentoring and internship. In addition she has work experience as hygienist, shop-assistant and chef-assistant.

Since 2008 Diana is working in the sheltered house as a social worker. Within her work Diana is using various innovative methods to provide active support to her clients. That is why she was really willing to participate as coacher in T-EST implementation phase.



After the induction training which Diana attended at the beginning of February 2014 she immediately started the coaching process with Eleonora. They agreed to meet 2 or 3 times a week and the meetings normally lasted one hour.

The first task was to identify the Eleonora's strengths. Normally she maintains good appearance and she is also good at cooking and maintenance of personal and environmental hygiene. She is calm and friendly. In addition according to her coacher Eleonora has good time management skills and ready to follow rules and

instructions. One of her peculiarities is that she is shy toward unknown people while she can be trustful with her acquaintances and friends. Together they identified Eleonora's expectations and desires related to work as chef-assistant.

The agreed action plan has included: support in development of her own skills and adequate self-esteem; support to select appropriate job placement; preparation of job applications; meeting potential employers.

The most intensive parts of the coaching process the couple has worked on: development of positive image and behaviour for the job interview and coping with stress on the work place. During the last stage of the process the coacher has organised meetings with counsellors from employment agency in Sliven as well as with potential employers. At the end of the process Eleonora has been appointed as shop-assistant in a supermarket near to the sheltered house where she is living. In the first month Diana has visited Eleonora's workplace to support her and to communicate with the other colleagues and the manager. Thanks to the efforts of the coacher Eleonora retained her job and now she has a part-time working contract.

Eleonora shared: "I found my desired job thanks to the T-EST project and I am very grateful to Diana for her dedicated work. I believe that projects as such will help to other people like me".

IV. Supporting documents

In the following section you can find supporting documents/ templates/ tips for supporting people with disabilities during the SE process. The following parts are useful and adaptable for different stages during the SE process, therefore please use them as suggestions and adapt them for your own purposes.

a. Preparing a CV

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) outlines your personal details, relevant skills, experience and qualifications. It is used to help you “sell yourself” to a prospective employer by highlighting your strengths and achievements. The aim of a CV is to get you an interview. Writing and updating a CV is a useful technique during job search as it helps you to keep track of your skills and experience in one document. Putting a CV together can also help you think about what you have done in employment, education or leisure activities.

The two most common types of CV are:

<i>Chronological</i>	<i>Functional</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A traditional format where work experience is organised in date order. • Use this if you're staying in a similar field, your job history shows career development or if your last employer's name may be advantageous. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasises your transferable skills and experience gained, avoiding any reliance on work in date order. • Use this format when changing careers, your skills are more impressive than employment history, or you have had a range of unconnected jobs.

General tips

- Limit it to a maximum of two sides of A4 – keep it concise.
- Keep it clear and specific – simple language works best.
- Use positive and active language.
- Highlight your selling points clearly.

Buzz words

Through a CV you are saying to an employer “I can do this job” and “interview me”. This means that you need to present yourself in the most positive way possible. One way you can do this is by carefully selecting the words you use to promote yourself. The following work areas and associated words may help when putting together your CV:

Coping with routine

Conscientious, Consistent, Controlled, Coped, Dealt with, Efficient, Managed, Performed.

Working with others

Advised, Co-operated, Counselling, Facilitated, Guided, Managed, Negotiated, Participated, Presented, Supervised.

Achievements

Accomplished, Achieved, Co-ordinated, Created, Developed, Formulated, Revitalised, Recommended.

Problem-solving

Implemented, Improved, Instigated, Interpreted, Initiated, Inspired, Introduced, Investigated.

Initiative

Created, Designed, Developed, Devised, Directed, Established, Formulated, Innovation, Motivated, Negotiated, Organised, Originated.

Skills and achievements

This section of your CV allows you to sell yourself through listing your main skills and experience. You can use the following outline of skills to help you describe your abilities:

Skills with individuals

Communicate well using the telephone, Persuade or sell to individuals, Deal with customers, Manage and supervise individuals, Delegate work to others.

Skills with groups

Communicate to small groups, Lead seminars, Perform or entertain people, Persuade a group, Take part in group debates, Brief a team, Chair meetings.

Commercial skills

Manage or run a business, Spot potential markets, Develop a new business, Design a marketing campaign, Look after customers well, Develop new sales initiatives, Promote or sell by telephone.

Skills with information

Search for or research, Gather information by interviewing people, Check information for errors/proof read, Analyse information, Organise or classify data, Retrieve information, Write reports.

Physical skills

Manual dexterity, Ability/strength/speed, Craft/sewing/weaving, Painting/finishing/restoring, Washing/cleaning or preparing, Setting up or assembling, Growing/tending.

Personal profiles

A personal profile introduces you as an applicant. It is one paragraph outlining your key strengths, achievements and goals. The following examples offer an outline of the different styles you can use:

- A college leaver with excellent computer skills. My college course work and work placements have enabled me to gain good research and presentation skills and an ability to communicate with the general public. I also see myself as an enthusiastic and reliable team player who is willing and able to develop new skills quickly.
- A reliable and conscientious employee with good customer service skills and a proven record of achieving targets and goals, looking to move to a more frontline management role.
- I regard myself as a cheerful and friendly person, who is reliable and trustworthy. I am keen to learn new skills and use my considerable abilities within a garage/car business environment.
- I am currently looking for work in the computer industry. I am very familiar with most aspects of computing and have used computers for many years, and am always confident of learning anything new.

Check your CV

Your CV has around 10-15 seconds to impress a potential employer. It is vital that you sell yourself effectively by using positive language and by easily highlighting your key skills and achievements.

Covering letters

When should I use a covering letter?

A covering letter should always be included when you are sending out a CV or returning a completed application form. It should generate interest and motivate the employer to want to know more about you. A covering letter is even more critical if your application is speculative, that is not in response to a specific vacancy.

Structure

Base your covering letter on the following outline structure:

Paragraph one

Introduce yourself, state what you are applying for and where you saw the vacancy.

Paragraph two

Outline why you are applying. What in particular has made you send your CV or application form for this particular job? Try to demonstrate how enthusiastic you are about the job. At this stage you can also demonstrate any research you have done.

Paragraph three

This should be a summary of the key points of your CV or application form. What are the two or three best reasons for giving you an interview?

Paragraph four

This paragraph is flexible, and it is your opportunity to explain any gaps in your career. It is also a good place to disclose your disability or mention any adjustments you may need at an interview or test.

An example:

Address

Mr Editor
The Gazette
Fleet Street
Anytown
A0 0ZZ

15 November 2007

Dear Mr Editor

Re: Assistant Press Officer

I am writing in response to your advertisement on 12 October for the above position and enclose my Curriculum Vitae for your consideration.

Reading your company literature and speaking to some of your employees at the recent Anytown Recruitment Fair has convinced me that working for The Gazette will be a challenging and exciting experience. The role of Assistant Press Officer will allow me to develop my existing skills in a commercial environment.

You will see that I have had considerable experience of press officer work during my years at University. I was responsible for all press contact for our student union and for the production of press releases for a number of events. My work experience during vacations has developed a number of the skills mentioned in your advertisement, particularly teamwork and meeting deadlines.

As you will note from my CV, I am partially sighted and will require screen magnification software if there is a PC-based test as part of the selection process. I am happy to utilise my laptop if required. The government's Access to Work scheme will cover the majority, if not all of the costs of any additional equipment required.

Yours sincerely

b. Useful tips

Appearance/Image

What is image?

Image can be defined as:

- the impression we give to others
- the perception that others have of us
- the mental conception we have of another
- the impressions we form when meeting someone new

What makes up our image?

Image consists of our:

- Facial expressions
- Posture
- Appearance
- Speech
- Actions
- Attitude

Fact!

Psychologist, Prof Meridian, carried out research into why we form first impressions. He found:

- 55 per cent of a first impression formed about you consists of how your appearance is perceived
- 38 per cent consists of how you non-verbally communicate, and how it is perceived
- Staggeringly only seven per cent of a first impression formed about you consists of what you actually say.

So 55 per cent of someone's first impression of us is based on our appearance, which consists of:

- height
- weight
- colouring
- hairstyle
- accessories
- clothing
- in the case of women this also includes make-up.

Image is also important because it affects how we feel about ourselves. When we feel we are presenting ourselves well, we gain in confidence and self-esteem. This process is called the cycle of success.

When selecting clothes and accessories, consider the following:

- Quality – this indicates your status. Being well-made with good quality fabric is more important than brand or label.
- Fit – choose something comfortable and smart to wear that you can move about in confidently.
- Care – is it a practical washable fabric that you will be able to keep in good condition?
- Clothing in harmony with your personal skin colouring, body size and shape, and personality
- Finishing touches - carefully chosen accessories demonstrate attention to detail

Business image

If we want to be taken seriously in the world of work, we need to give ourselves an edge. Our image therefore should match our abilities. There's no substitute for taking a good friend shopping with us, who will be able to give us honest, friendly advice.

Tips for a successful business image

- Dress well; know what suits you
- Always be immaculately groomed
- Choose the best quality clothes and accessories you can afford
- Understand your body language and use it to your advantage
- Use your voice effectively

Men and women have different considerations when creating their business image, so the following sections offer style tips for each.

Do checklist

Dress appropriately

- For the type of organisation, dress culture, your role, the occasion or event
- Neither over-dressed nor under-dressed
- Neither too traditional nor too modern
- Neither too authoritative nor too approachable

Wear quality

- Cheap clothes and accessories never say "integrity" or "credibility"
- There is no real substitute for quality

Look current

- If you look up to date on the outside, your thinking and ideas are seen as up to date
- Successful people embrace change and are forward thinking

Be impeccably groomed

- Gaining respect from others starts with showing respect for yourself
- Anything that isn't covered by a garment should be impeccably groomed

Have personal style

- Dress in styles and colours that suit your body shape and colouring
- Wear clothes that fit properly
- Clothes should express your personality and your professionalism

Don't checklist

Dress inappropriately

- Inappropriate clothes make you look like you're in the wrong company, wrong job, or at the wrong level.

Lack quality

- Good clothes and accessories are investments that pay excellent dividends
- Look old-fashioned
- In this fast-paced competitive world you cannot afford to lag behind

Poorly groomed

- A scruffy appearance always translates as a scruffy approach to work and life.

Little personal style

- Not knowing what suits you and falling into the "cloning syndrome" can send out a message that you lack personality or individuality

Non-verbal communication

Introduction

Non-verbal communication means the messages we give known as body language. Our posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact give messages about what we are thinking and feeling.

We can convey a lot about ourselves to others by our non-verbal communication and we can equally learn a lot about other people from their body language. If you are blind or partially sighted, reading other people's body language is not always possible. For this reason this factsheet concentrates on how you can project a positive image with your own body language.

Why is body language important?

- Most of us don't take much notice of our body language and yet it can speak volumes about us.
- If there is conflict between the words you say and the message communicated by your body, the body is more likely to be believed.
- Body language is often a reflection of a person's state of mind. If a person is confident and happy, their body language reflects that. The opposite is also true.
- With a little understanding about non-verbal communication you can change your body language to match how you'd like to feel or appear to be feeling. This can be very useful for an interview situation.

What does your body language say about you?

Posture

- A confident posture makes you appear confident, but also makes you feel confident.
- Sitting up straight and leaning forward in a chair can say a great deal about you. It shows you are interested, engaged and involved in the conversation.
- You should sit towards the front half of your chair. This makes you appear alert and interested and makes getting up easier as well.
- Conversely, a slumped posture suggests low spirits and energy and disinterest in a conversation or situation.
- Good posture does more than just give you an authoritative presence. It is also good for your muscles and bones.
- Standing up straight and walking purposefully can give, even the smallest or most nervous person, presence. Try it; you will feel the difference.

Gestures

- Gestures often illustrate how you are feeling and what you are thinking. Using gestures when you talk helps make your conversation or business presentation more animated and interesting. Gestures stress the most important parts of what you are trying to express.
- Be aware that gestures can be misleading. They sometimes suggest feelings to other people that may not be accurate. For example, if you stand or sit with your arms crossed you may be seen as cold, aloof, or angry.
- Many gestures like crossed arms are unconscious, so it may take someone like an image consultant to identify inaccurate gestures and advise on more suitable replacements.

Facial expressions

There are seven basic emotions which humans express in the same way, no matter what culture they are from. These emotions are: happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, anger, disgust and embarrassment. When one of these emotions shows clearly on someone's face, we instantly understand it.

It is possible to learn to mask some of these feelings to avoid offending someone or expressing an emotion or opinion that you would sooner keep to yourself. Some facial expressions are more difficult to hide. Tightening the jaw and lips is often unintentional and can signal feelings of anxiety or anger. Furrowed eyebrows can show feelings of confusion or surprise. By becoming aware of and mastering your facial expressions you will give others a more positive impression of you.

If you forget everything else...don't forget to smile. It seems simple, but a smile goes a long way in business as well as in personal relationships.

In most situations, a smile puts people at ease and tells those around you that you are enjoying being with them. It will also help to relax you and will serve to put an interviewer at ease.

Eye contact

Eye contact establishes rapport and trust — two very important attributes when meeting a potential employer.

As a speaker, good eye contact helps exhibit confidence. As a listener, eye contact shows respect and interest in what is being said. However, 100 per cent eye contact is intimidating. In a typical conversation, the speaker makes eye contact about 40 per cent of the time, while the listener makes eye contact about 70 per cent of the time.

Eye contact may be a bit harder if you have sight impairment, but it is not impossible to give the illusion of eye contact. Giving the illusion of eye contact can be achieved by looking in the direction of the speaker's voice, and adjusting your gaze depending on whether the speaker is sitting or standing. You tend to improve the accuracy of your gaze as the conversation progresses.

Top non-verbal communicative tips for interviews

Non-verbal forms of communication can be particularly powerful in face-to-face communication such as an interview.

1. First, approach an interviewer with a smile on your face. This will give you confidence and give the interviewer a warm introduction to you. Do this regardless of how nervous you are feeling.
2. Be sure to make eye contact as you approach the person.
3. When you feel confident, introduce yourself and ask the other person what their name is. It may be preferable to ask this before they ask you, as then you are in control of the conversation. This prevents a situation where you are not sure if a person is addressing you or someone else.
4. It may be an idea when entering an interview situation to extend your hand when the introductions are being made. You may want to instigate a handshake on arrival and on leaving. This will make you look confident and avoid you not realising that someone has extended their hand towards you.
5. Regardless of the other person's gender or status, extend your hand and present a firm grip. As a rule you should try to match the other person's firmness.

Verbal communication

Why should I work on my voice?

Voice is so often the first point of contact in business and other interactions, and speaking well gives a great boost to your confidence. A large part of the first impression you make anywhere is to do with your voice. Don't believe me? Think back to school and how much you inferred from the first words you heard a new teacher speak!

Top tips for voice production

- Drink plenty of water – drinking plenty of water (not coffee, tea, etc.) is the best and simplest way to keep your voice healthy. Vocal health is directly related to your body's hydration levels.
- Breathe – your voice should always be supported by plenty of breath beneath it as you speak.

Exercise one

Try this exercise for practising your breathing.

- Stand up and place a hand on your stomach.
- Breathe out fully, feeling the way your stomach assists by pushing out the air.
- Then simply release all tension in your stomach muscles, and allow this release to be the start of a deep inhalation.
- Practise repeatedly until it becomes second nature!
- Sing – when you're at home, travelling in a car, whenever you can! Singing freely and comfortably (never force the volume) will strengthen your voice.
- Chant and speak.

Exercise two

- Take a poem or a song you know by heart and chant it slowly.
- Do this, like a monk, on only one note, making the most of every sound. Enjoy the sensation of sound filling your mouth.
- Chant through at least once. Then, starting again, chant one line then speak the next!
- When speaking, allow the energy of chant to carry through into speech.
- Talk Nonsense! – practise the following exercise with friends or colleagues.

Exercise three

- Hold conversations without using real words – this way only tone of voice will be able to convey meaning.
- Play like this for a good period of time, then go straight into talking with words but ask yourself to allow the same variety of tone and pitch.

Pre-interview tips

Why the interview is so important

- Your CV creates the interest – it's your personality that gets you the job.
- A job interview has been likened to a first date. It could be "the start of something big" or be "over forever" after 30 minutes or less.

Points to remember

- The interview is a form of sales pitch; you are both the salesperson and product. In a short space of time you and the interviewer need to find out whether you are the right person for the position and if the job is right for you.
- You need to allow the interviewer to gain insight into who you are, what motivates you, both personally and professionally. This will enable the interviewer to assess your suitability.

- Remember the interviewer is an ally, not the enemy, and the meeting should take the form of a two-way conversation, rather than a question and answer session.
- It is worth reminding yourself that the interviewer is keen to fill the position and hopes that you will be the one.

Practical tips

- Where possible, give clear examples of situations you have been in and how you handled them. That way the interviewer will be able to judge how well you work alone or with others, pick up information and/or take action.
- Careful preparation before the interview will ensure you do yourself justice and show yourself in the best light. It demonstrates to the interviewer that you are serious about the job.
- Greet the interviewer with a smile and remember to smile during the interview.
- Listen carefully; if you haven't heard or understood the question, ask for it to be repeated. Take a moment or two to think before replying; that way you don't shoot yourself in the foot.
- Speak clearly with energy and conviction.
- Pay careful attention to body language, voice projection (your voice denotes confidence) and avoid any mannerisms which may irritate people. (See Module two: Making yourself more marketable, for assistance with all of these). Most importantly try to be natural.
- It is usual practice for an interviewer to ask you at the end of the interview if you have any questions. Therefore it is important to come prepared with at least three or four.

They could be:

- Is there a probationary period?
- What training opportunities are available?
- How soon can I expect to hear if I have the job?
- Does the company offer a season ticket loan?

At the job interview

Arriving at reception

As soon as you arrive you should behave as though the interview has started. Sit up as straight and as attentively in the reception area as you would in the interview room.

In the interview room

Be polite, courteous and respectful. Thank the interviewers for seeing you. Sit up and appear interested, alert and enthusiastic. Be positive; you have been successful in achieving an interview when others were not. Smile and look at the person to whom you are talking. Listen carefully to the questions and think before answering. Ask if you don't understand and re-start an answer if you make a mistake.

It is also important to end the interview confidently. This will be the last thing that an employer remembers about you, so you should try to be positive. For example you could say:

“I have been really impressed by what you have told me about your organisation. I really feel that it would be the type of environment that I could succeed in”.

Dealing with specific questions

The following is a list of questions that you might be asked at an interview. There are some suggestions that you may like to use to prepare your own answers.

Why do you want to work here?

- It will give me a chance to do the work that interests me.
- Good reputation of the company.
- Good training opportunities.

What would you like to be doing in five years time?

- Explain that you would still like to be working for the company, but have developed within it.

What are your weaknesses?

- Describe aspects of your last job that you found hard and how you overcame these difficulties.

What makes a good team member?

- Good communication
- Flexibility
- Co-operation
- Adaptability
- Talk about how you demonstrated the above in previous work or activities.

How long have you been out of work?

- If you have been out of work for some time, try and be positive. Describe any job search, voluntary work, training or leisure activities that you have been involved in.

How do you manage your deadlines?

- Prioritising
- Planning
- Communicate any difficulties
- Talk about how you demonstrated the above in previous work or activities.

What is your experience of providing information to others?

- Perhaps producing leaflets, writing content for a website, organising an event.
- Signposting to other information providers or giving advice.
- Use examples from a work, social or educational setting.

Stay positive

Confidence comes from practice and preparation. Even if you do not get the job this time, each interview gives you an opportunity to learn something for the next interview.

с. Example templates – anamnesis, action plan, progress reporting

✓ **Забележка:**

Цялата информация е напълно конфиденциална и ще се използва само за доказателство при одит по проекта „ТЕСТ“!

Моля, отбележете, където е необходимо със знак

Лична информация

Име: _____

Фамилия: _____

Адрес.: _____

Град: _____

Домашен Телефон: _____

Мобилен телефон: _____

E-mail: _____

Дата на раждане: _____

Гражданство: _____

Място на раждане и
местоживеене _____

Пол: жена мъж

Образование и кариера

Завършена образователна степен:

Специално училище СОУ

Университет Професионално училище

Стажанство:

Друг тип обучение:

Квалификация (професия):

Трудов опит

(Посочва се трудов опит, практически обучения, стажове, допълнителни курсове, професионално консултиране и ориентация и др.)

По възможност се прилага и копие от Автобиография или се създава така с помощта на супервайзър от страна на проекта или трудов коучър.

Информация за трудовата заетост към момента

безработен от: _____ в процес на обучение: _____

търсещ работа в очакване на решение: _____

трудово зает/а във фирма/
институция: _____

Лице за контакт: _____

Временна заетост Фиксирана заетост по договор до: _____

Друго (моля, посочете): _____

Информация за фактори влияещи на заетостта

Силни и слаби страни

**Поставени цели за трудова заетост (интереси, желания, нехаресвания)
Къде би искал бенефициента да работи, какъв тип работа и от какво се интересува?**

Информация за идентифицирани свободни работни места (работна позиция и име на компанията)

Информация за мобилност: Личен автомобил Градски транспорт Шофьорска книжка: _____ Друго:**Желание да получи настаняване на месторабота****Възможност за максимален брой работни часа на седмица / желано заплащане****Относно увреждане****Диагноза, медицинска история, приемани медикаменти и др.****Социален контекст****Семейно положение, условия на живеене, финансово състояние****Социални контакти / членство в клубове по интереси**

СПОРАЗУМЕНИЕ ЗА ЦЕЛИ НА СЪТРУДНИЧЕСТВОТО

Моля, отбележете, където е необходимо. Посочете конкретни цели и очаквани резултати и посочете крайни срокове.

ТЪРСЕНЕ НА РАБОТА

Трудови перспективи

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

ЗАДЪРЖАНЕ НА РАБОТА

Мерки

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Друго (допълнителни обучения, курсове и др.)

Мерки

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Дата:

Подпис на бенефициента

Подпис на коучъра

Договорена дата за ревизиране на споразумението и поставените цели и задачи:
