

T-EST

Transfer of Employment Support Tools for People with Disabilities

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State of Play

The T-EST project will transfer the concept of SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT, a well elaborated and successful methodology that provides full access to the labour market as well as to vocational training for people with disabilities.

After thorough research on the state of play of the employment support systems for disabled persons in the transfer countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, we are now working on a Supported Employment manual for these transfer countries on the basis of their identified background situation and needs.

During our successful second partner meeting in June 2013 in Romania we focussed on the development of the manual in alignment to the original EUSE Toolkit. We also planned the training of transfer and implementation coaches from Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, which took place in September 2013 in Graz.

Awareness Raising Campaigns

*"Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember.
Involve me, and I will understand."*
(Confucius)

The central message of our awareness raising campaign is communicated to its intended audience or audiences using a range of different techniques and approaches.

The transfer countries already included meetings with stakeholders and representatives of the target group to create a general awareness on the topic. This has to be done in coordination with other local events, publications and further dissemination activities. Awareness-raising is of crucial importance if we want to successfully implement the supported methodology.



Awareness raising in Turkey

As a part of the awareness raising campaign in Turkey, the Konak District Governorship organized on 25th of October 2013 a meeting in Izmir. During this meeting 25 employment coaches, working for the State Employment Agency İŞKUR, were introduced to the T-EST project and the Supported Employment methodology.

After the presentations the employment coaches had the possibility to express their concerns and opinions on supported employment and its application in Turkey.

The coaches stated that with the support of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy, and with establishment of a legal framework, İŞKUR and the employment coaches working for İŞKUR could successfully implement the supported employment methodology in Turkey.

Awareness raising in Bulgaria

During a fair in Dobrich Bulgaria, brochures of the T-EST project were successfully distributed between the 27th and 30th of August 2013.



CCI Dobrich also organized on 3rd of October 2013 an information campaign in the form of workshop where the T-EST Supported employment toolkit was presented to organizations of persons with disabilities.



Interviews in Bulgaria



Mr. Oleg Temelkov,
Chairman of the Regional Union of
People with disabilities – Dobrich, BG



Mr. Ivan Todorov – Chairman of
Hobisclub – Dobrich, BG

What is the employment situation of people with disabilities in Bulgaria?

According to the National Statistics Institute, the employment problem for people with disabilities is extremely serious. Around 90-95 % of them are unemployed and this leads to poverty. About one million people in Bulgaria have various degrees of disability. The disability pensions are around 140 BGN and this income is very important to them. In periods of economic crisis, employers are not willing to hire

disabled people, although the state provides a salary for an employee with a disability registered in the Labour Offices. The government pays for health and retirement insurance of the person for up to two years, as well as a fee for annual leave. One main problem is the complexity of the bureaucracy when applying, and the reporting of the activities has to be performed monthly.

What is the state of education for people with disabilities?

Integration is an expensive and complicated process that must start from birth. The main issue is that only recently schools have begun adapting to the needs of children with disabilities. After the 8th grade, students face the dilemma whether to continue to go to school, or to start working.

Education and qualification of people with disabilities suggest specific methods, varying according to the type of disability.

Besides this, very few training centres and universities are physically accessible for people with disabilities. This hampers their qualification and their possibility to seek work in the labour market.

Another problem is the lack of statistical data on people with disabilities. At present we use a variety of information sources - NII, NSI, TEMP, the employment agencies and social assistance. Currently the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" is preparing a register with the goal to make a profile of people with disabilities and to develop a policy for their needs.

What is in your opinion needed for the implementation of measures for supported employment in Bulgaria?

As you indicated in your presentation, access to employment is a fundamental human right and the government is responsible for ensuring *"the right of people with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to receive the opportunity of living by work freely chosen or accepted work in the labour market and work environment that is open, non-discriminatory and accessible to people with disabilities"* (See UN Convention, 2006, article 27, paragraph 1, item 19).

To make this possible it requires a clear and consistent government policy for people with disabilities. The employers have to learn about incentive measures for the employment of people with disabilities into the labour offices. The role of the CCI is to organize meetings of the corporate world and disability organizations. I think the implementation of measures for supported employment needs to start at the beginning of secondary education, covering career guidance of young people with disabilities and support for their professional training. Utmost attention should be paid to the adaptation of the workplace, the adaptation of transport and also particular attention has to be given to the inclusion of people with intellectual and mental disabilities.

T-EST connects and grows in Romania

The Social and Child Protection Department of Harghita County (DGASPC HR) hosted the 2nd project meeting, organized in Csikszereda/Miercurea Ciuc. The agenda was very rich, so partners worked hard during the two days to agree on the basic concepts of the adapted toolkit, as well as the next steps of the project.

Following the meeting, DGASPC HR started to prepare pathways for implementation. While presenting the concept and usage of the Toolkit on conferences, it was clear that supported employment is very relevant and needed in the region. Several organizations and institutes, who are trying to find solutions for the employment needs of people with disabilities, welcomed the concept and tool.



The first workshop for supported employment (SE) implementation coaches, organized in 23-25 September in Graz, Austria represented also a good opportunity to start a feasible dialog between the key social representatives on the employment of people with disabilities. The County Employment Agency,

Department of the Evaluation of Disabilities, and service providers as Caritas-Alba Iulia, Association of Physically Disabled in Harghita County, LIA Association targeted questions like how can SE can function as a social service, how to overcome (organizational, structural and financial) obstacles for a smooth implementation.

A next plan of the consortium is to send recommendations to the government for the legal recognition of the SE as social service.

EASPD conference on employment in Turkey and workshop on EUSE toolkit and implementation



The EASPD Annual Conference "The Employment of Persons with Disabilities: Raising Awareness & Employment Opportunities" was held in Istanbul on 27th - 28th of September 2013. The conference, which aimed to remove barriers and boost the employment for persons with disabilities by sharing challenges and best practices, was attended by 350 participants from all over Europe and beyond.

The conference workshops focused on the main challenges preventing people

with disabilities from enjoying fully their right to work. Experts from European countries discussed the current situation and future steps needed to facilitate access to the labour market for persons with disabilities. There were multi-stakeholders panels composed of persons with disabilities, policy makers, representatives of employees and employers, authorities and support providers.

One of the conference workshops was dedicated to the EUSE Supported Employment Toolkit and the use of this Toolkit in T-EST Project.

Mrs. Margaret Haddock President of The European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) gave a presentation about the Supported Employment Toolkit model in Europe and Ms. Güldan Kalem from Konak District Governorship (TR) presented the T-EST Project.



Next steps

At the end of November 2013 we will finish the manuals for Supported Employment for the three transfer countries. These manuals will be translated in Bulgarian, Romanian, and Turkish and should be used as a basis document for the implementation of Supported Employment services in these three countries. In December 2013 we will have our second training workshop in Graz, Austria for transfer coaches from Bulgaria and Turkey. After this last training we will start the implementation period in the three

transfer countries. This period will last until July 2014, where our fourth partner meeting will be held in Izmir. In January we will meet in Plovdiv, Bulgaria to discuss the implementation period, the support visits from Austrian coaches and the needs of the transfer coaches for Supported Employment.

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