

# T-EST

## Transfer of Employment Support Tools for People with Disabilities

Project N°2012-1-AT1-LEO05-06976

Agreement N° - LLP-LDV-TOI-12-AT-0011

### NEWSLETTER 4/ 2014

*The project has almost come to an end. With only two more months to go, we can already proudly announce that all project goals have been achieved successfully. In this last Newsletter, you can find the final deliverables of the project.*

*Enjoy the reading!*

*The T-EST Partnership*

institutions and NGOs working in the field of disability.



*Key note speakers of the conference: Vasilka Sabeva (partner from Bulgaria), Zoltan Elekes (partner from Hungary), Güldan Kalem (partner from Turkey), Kamile Canbay (guest speaker from Consultancy Istanbul, RACE project) and Robert Elston (Guest speaker EUSE, Great Britain), Christine Pilz (coordinator from Austria)*

### Final Project Conference in Izmir



*Conference participants*

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the final Conference of T-EST took place in İzmir, Turkey with the participation of 95 stakeholders from the partner organisations, public bodies, employment agencies, universities and research

The conference began with a welcoming speech of the Turkish partner's representative, Mr. Ahmet ÖNAL, District Governor of Konak. Keynote speakers and the Vice President of the EUSE (European Union on Supported Employment) Mr. Robert ELSTON gave a presentation on the European Strategy of the Supported Employment methodology. The activities and achievements of the T-EST Project were also presented by the coordinators -



*Group picture of the T-EST partners and trainers and the conference speakers*

Michaela Meier and Christine Pilz.

The morning session of the conference was dedicated to the implementation of Supported Employment in transfer countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. After the presentation of the Supported Employment process in Romania, two job coaches shared their experiences and gave information about three case studies. Two job coaches from Bulgaria also presented their implementation activities and two other case studies. The Turkish partner presented the on-going implementation in Turkey and also shared four case studies they are currently working on.

The afternoon session of the conference was divided into two parts. During the first part, similar projects related to Supported Employment were presented by Sonia Staskowiak from EASPD ("Pass It On" project) and Kamile Canbay from CRM Consulting (RACE project). The second part of the afternoon session was dedicated to a panel discussion. The audience was strongly interested in the discussion. During this session, participants had the opportunity to ask questions to all partner representatives and speakers, to the implementation of Supported Employment.

## **Implementation phase in Turkey**

The Supported Employment process in Turkey started right after the coaches' training in June. Six coaches from Konak İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency) participated in this training. They work as Job and Career Consultants at Konak İŞKUR and their job is to help people with or without disabilities to find jobs in the labour market. Companies seeking for employees would register at İŞKUR and post their vacancies via the İŞKUR system.

The implementation process involved a total of 19 persons with disabilities (4 female and 15 male). Their ages ranged from 16 to 53. They have different types of disabilities such as hearing impairment, physical disability, intellectual disability, internal diseases, heart problems etc.

The coaches started 'client engagement' with face-to-face meetings where they provided people with disabilities with information regarding Supported Employment services as well as the T-EST project. The coaches also invited them to join the collective job interviews between one employer (who had one or more open positions for people with disabilities) and several persons with disabilities as

candidates. The representatives from companies interviewed applicants and in most of the cases, they offered jobs to some of the applicants. İŞKUR coaches monitored this collective interview process and helped disabled job seekers during the interviews where necessary.

There are six clients who have already been placed into paid employment. One of the clients started a vocational course with a guaranteed employment. The Supported Employment implementation process in Turkey will finish at the end of the October.

### Case study from Turkey



*Mr. Y.A. (left) during the collective job interview with company representatives.*

**Mr. Y. A.** is 22 years old, dropping off vocational high school but having computer literacy. He has 64% disability by hearing loss in his right ear (using a device) and visual impairment. Previously, he worked at a cleaning company where he had to work up to 12 hours per day without overtime paid. When he applied to the Turkish Employment Agency (İşkur) Konak Branch, Mr. Y.A. met the job coach Ulaş Kaya at the first day and accepted to take part in the Supported Employment process. At that time he was working at a

touristic camp's kitchen as a dish washer, which was a seasonal job.

Coach Ulaş Kaya first informed him about the open position at a cargo company. Yakup went for the interview but he said it was not good for him. The day after, the coach invited him to the İşkur office to talk about what went wrong. He explained that it was a very demanding job and would require overtime work, and the workplace was too far. The coach then invited him to take part in a collective labour interview. The company, ISS Global, which is one of the world's largest subcontracting services provider was looking for 6 persons with disabilities for their open positions. Two company representatives were present at the interview. They explained the characteristics of the open positions. Mr. Y.A. accepted to work as a cleaning staff.

Until now, he has been working at a private hospital as a cleaner. There is also a future opportunity for him to work in the front office where he may use his computer skills.

### Case study from Romania: Support Employment in Action

Peter is 24 years old with physical disability using a wheelchair. He finished high school and since then he has been very eager to find a job. Because of the shortage of accessible working places, he prepared himself to accept any jobs that he was able to perform. He even attended a sewing course. Eventually he got employed as a packaging worker which he was very proud of.

Due to the financial constrain, the company had to cut down the employees, and thus Peter was forced to leave his job. He was very disappointed. He then got to

know Zsuzsi – a coach working at the organization that offered Peter the training: seeking for help. With the help from the support network that has developed during the T-EST project, Zsuzsi was able to provide legal advices related to the termination of work-contract. As a result, Peter has now an as the incapacity pension which he could have lost without having the proper information.



*Romanian coaches at the conference in Izmir*

In the implementation of supporting employment, they started to evaluate his potential, difficulties and elaborated an action plan according to this methodology. As it turned out, Peter was affected more than expected by his negative experience, he lost hope and confidence, while still had the inner wish to work. As a part of his training, they met once a week for one or two hours. Occasionally, his friends and family were invited to help him on his way of recovery.

Afterwards, they started gradually to engage employees. They exercised possible scenarios of contacting employers and job interviewing. However, in reality, Peter had a very hard time contacting employers, as he interpreted the companies' refusal as negative responses towards his person.

Zsuzsi was always by his side; she provided guidance and emotional support; as well as tried to mediate between her client and employers. With the help of his coach, Peter then realized that the main cause of the employers' refusal was related more to accessibility and adaptation issues rather than to his sentiment of failure.

Now Peter is a happy young boy again. He is confident that he will get a new job soon. He still keeps in touch with Zsuzsi.

Both Zsuzsi and Peter appreciate the Supported Employment methodology as a good experience. They consider it as the only way to assure employment for people with disabilities. They also emphasize the importance of raising awareness on the potential of people with disabilities, not only among employers, but also among peer groups.

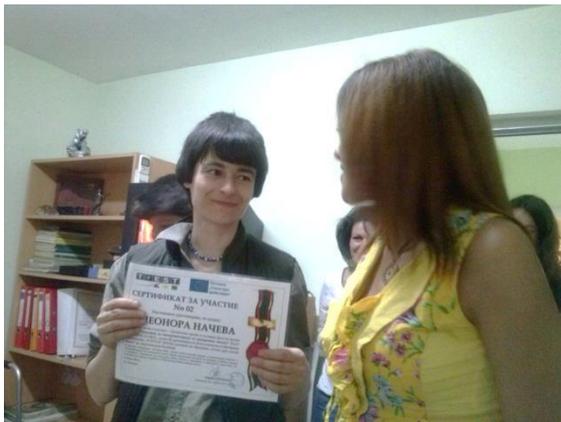
### **Case study from Bulgaria**

Eleonora is 37 years old and she has a moderate learning difficulty. Currently, she is living in a sheltered house for women with mental health problems in Sliven. Despite the fact that Eleonora did not complete formal education, she has been involved in various informal training courses such as mentoring and internship. In addition, she has worked as a hygienist, a shop-assistant and a chef-assistant.

Since 2008 Diana has been working in the sheltered house as a social worker. During her work, Diana uses various innovative methods to provide active support to her clients. Therefore, she was really willing to participate as a coach in T-EST implementation phase.

After the induction training in early February 2014, Diana immediately started the coaching process with Eleonora. They agreed to meet 2 to 3 times a week, one hour per each meeting.

The first task was to identify Eleonora's strengths. Eleonora is good at cooking and maintaining personal and environmental hygiene. She is calm and friendly. In addition, according to her coach, Eleonora has good time-management skills and appreciates rules and instructions. One limitation is that she is very shy with strange people. Together they identified Eleonora's expectations towards her desired work.



They agreed that the action plan should include: the support to improve her skills and adequate self-esteem; support to select appropriate job placement; preparation of job applications; and meeting potential employers.

The most intensive parts of the coaching process were to develop a positive image and skills for job interviews, and coping with stress on the work place.

During the last stage of the process, Diana organised meetings with counsellors from employment agencies in Sliven as well as with potential employers. Finally, Eleonora is employed as a shop-assistant in the

supermarket near by the sheltered house where she is living. In the first month, Diana visited Eleonora's workplace to support her and to communicate with the other colleagues and the manager. Thanks to the efforts of the coach, Eleonora was able to retain her job; and now she has a part-time working contract.

During the certification event, 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 similar projects are helpful for many people like me".

### Next steps

The implementation of the Supported Employment concept is finished in all 3 transfer countries. Until the end of the project in December 2014, the revision of the national manuals for Supported Employment will be realized.

The final versions will be published as paper books and are available for free in Turkish, Hungarian, Romanian and Bulgarian. The good cooperation with the EUSE (European Union for Supported Employment) led to an inclusion of the Bulgarian version of the original Toolkit and the national manuals on the EUSE portal. Overall we reached an excellent sustainability in all three transfer countries, since either that projects on national level were developed or further EU projects already started.

Finally, we as coordinators want to thank all involved partners for their highly motivated work during the two years of cooperation! (Michaela Meier /Christine Pilz, Jugend am Werk Steiermark, AT).

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

**In Association with:**

Sozialministeriumservice Landesstelle Steiermark, Austria  
Child's Heart Association Dobrich, Bulgaria

COMUNE DI FIRENZE, Italy

CONF COOPERATIVE TOSCANA, Italy

MGK CONSULTANCY, Turkey

Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family and Social Policies  
General Directorate for Elderly Services and Disabled Persons, Turkey