

De Link

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THE MISSING LINK

*increasing social inclusion by engaging
experts by experience*

Social exclusion has been found to be a persistent problem in practice. But it is the society that produces social exclusion. These structural mechanisms of exclusion are responsible for the fact that people who are social excluded stay deprived of basic rights and that they lose grip on their own lives and on social decision processes.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



The idea of an expert by experience in social exclusion is a response to the missing link. A missing link between the policy makers or the aid providers of all services with which the excluded persons are confronted, and the excluded persons themselves. This missing link is partly responsible for the fact that exclusion persists. Our point of view is that the function of experts by training is complementary to that of experts by experience, with who they co-operate.

People who are socially excluded have experience in exclusion. But to have the capacity to apply their experiences they need training.

Trained experts by experience in social exclusion are people who have personally experienced exclusion, who have coped with this experience and extended it to a broader experience in exclusion. They have acquired attitudes, skills and knowledge through training in order to apply the extended exclusion experience professionally in all areas of the fight against social exclusion.

Experts by experience play nowadays an important role in facilitating participation in society for all kind of groups who are excluded. Social exclusion is a problem for people living in poverty, for people with psychiatric backgrounds or addiction problems, and also for groups of immigrants. It is also a problem for society who declares to want a society with general well-being for everyone.

Program The Missing Link

The project contains four parts: preparation, training, employment and evaluation. The objectives are growing from the needs and the acknowledges of all the partners.

Preparation part

We'll make a description of the definition of the Experts by Experience and social inclusion, the training programs, the job profile, and the places where they are employed, their level and their position in the workplaces . It will be a description of the highest common factor of all the partners' projects.

The training

In this part we'll develop 4 products.

We'll develop "train the trainer" programs for the experts by experience (EE), the experts by training and for the tandems.

We'll develop a tool with 'examples of tandem working' in real work situations. This tool has two aims. It will be an instrument to stimulate the reflection of the tandem on the effects of their interventions on the growth of the excluded persons. This tool will also be an instrument to stimulate the reflection about the complementary roles of the experts by experience and the experts by training in the tandem .It gives us more knowledge about the complementarities of both functions also.

Working on the 'life stories' of the EE's is a crucial element in their learning process. We'll develop a tool for improving the learning process in the field of the 'life stories'. This tool will create a personal evaluation instrument for the students, so that they have the possibility to follow their own growth and empowerment.

We'll share experiences between trainees and tandems. Therefore we'll develop exchange programs between partners.

The employment

In this part we'll develop 3 products.

We'll create a methodology to address employers. Such a methodology consist of different steps and activities: describe the method, formulate guidelines, try out with one new employer and evaluate.

We'll seek and describe the organizational preconditions and the necessary organizational changes for the employment of the EE's.

We'll create coaching programs on the job for the EE's in the scope of HRM.

Evaluation

We'll develop special research instruments for describing results for the evaluation of the training program, of the coaching and of the effects on social inclusion. We'll describe the foundation of this approach and the underlying knowledge.

Further perspectives in Europe

This Pilot project could flow into a new co-operation between a wider partnership on the level of the European institutes, in relationship to the approach of the experts by experience and the experts by training as social inclusion workers

