

Inclusive Care Teams

People with learning difficulties become colleagues



Issue 3

Dear readers,

We are proud to present the third E-letter of the IBB2 project. In this issue, we would like to share some information about the progress, recent achievements and important forthcoming activities related to the project, while particularly focusing on the recent developments of the last training courses in diversity management and the mentoring process organised by the project partners.

Please feel free to contact us if you wish to receive more information about the project. For additional information about the project please visit www.lebenshilfe-guv.at/ibb2.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter!

Final Seminar: 'IBB2 – Inclusive Care Teams – New Paths to Employment in the Social Sector for People with Learning Disabilities'. Brussels, 19th June 2012

Our two-year project is coming to an end. We are thrilled with the progress we have made in developing the project, especially since it has been confirmed by the positive results in the last diversity management and mentoring training courses as well as by the positive feedback the National Agency on Lifelong Learning from the European Commission has given us. In light of this, the final IBB2 seminar will take place sooner than initially anticipated, on the 19th of June 2012, in Brussels.

The aim of the closing seminar, organised by two of the project partners, EASPD and the Austrian partner Lebenshilfe Graz und Umgebung – Voitsberg, is to present the project results as examples of good practice to the target group and thus to open the social sector as a field of employment for people with intellectual disabilities. The target group consists of representatives of social institutions, particularly employers operating in the disability care sector, heads of vocational training institutions offering training in the social field, political decision-makers operating in the disability sectors and, of course, people with learning disabilities.

During the seminar, special attention will be paid to the employment of persons with learning difficulties in light of the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The role of diversity management will also be discussed. Eventually, the event should result in the identification of challenges to be addressed in the near future. The IBB2 handbook, containing project results and suggestions for the implementation of the concept of job entry trainee support for people with disabilities, will also be presented during the seminar. We are also currently compiling a CD-ROM with training material, which will be made available in September.

For more information about the details of the seminar programme and registration please contact Sonia Staskowiak: sonia.staskowiak@easpd.eu

Recent Developments: “Train the Trainer/Diversity Coach Mentoring Training” in Austria

July 2011 marked an important month in the development of the project: The graduation of the first inclusive care workers in Graz, Austria, qualified as support workers in the social field. Enabling people with learning disabilities to assist other people with disabilities: that is the overall challenge of the project. Ultimately, the employment of three inclusive care workers in the primary labour market is the project’s main goal. Since the government’s current fiscal restraint programme has had severe repercussions for organisations for people with disabilities, and the legal status of inclusive care workers has not been entirely determined, this endeavour proved even more difficult.

One inclusive care worker started to work at Lebenshilfe GUV in November 2011. She has become a fully-fledged member of the team and does her job with care, responsibility and commitment, completing mutually-agreed tasks autonomously. In terms of preparation, the team participated in a Diversity Workshop and a mentor was provided for the inclusive care worker. These two support measures were developed as part of the IBB2 project and facilitated the worker’s job entry.

Another inclusive care worker started his traineeship in a day-centre in January. However, this endeavour proved quite challenging as well: The work environment was not structured enough for the inclusive care worker, there were misunderstandings in communication, and his role was insufficiently defined. In the end, there was no permanent employment.

Consequently, the Austrian project team consulted with his work assistant on several points for improvement, leading to the following conclusions:

- Every inclusive care worker is suited for specific tasks, which have to be tailored to his or her specific skills;
- The Diversity Workshop is a good way to prepare the team for the tasks ahead;
- The presence of mentors on location facilitates the integration into the team;
- The additional support of a job coach is sometimes necessary to practice certain processes;
- The work environment should presently be expanded to social care professions;
- Arrangements and meetings of project partners, training organisations, inclusive care workers and work assistants are necessary;
- “Helpers” have to coordinate well.

Subsequently, the inclusive care worker started a second traineeship as a support worker in a large care centre where his tasks were clearly defined and structured.

The third inclusive care worker starts working in a day care center at the beginning of May 2012.

We are currently in negotiations with several organisations for people with disabilities for more traineeship opportunities and possible job employment opportunities for inclusive care workers.

Despite the difficulties inclusive care workers are currently facing upon job entry, we at IBB2 are eager to elaborate on the current results far beyond the end of the project. We are continuing to offer people with learning difficulties the possibility to become inclusive care workers.

The project partners are currently working on an IBB2 handbook, which will contain all project results as well as suggestions for the implementation of the concept of trainee support for the job entry of people with disabilities.

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Project coordinator, Lebenshilfe Graz und Umgebung – Voitsberg, Austria

Ute Gudera
Project partner from Ausbildungszentrum für Sozialberufe Wielandgasse, Graz, Austria

Recent Developments: "Diversity Workshop – Mentoring Training" in Germany

In the period between December 2011 and February 2012, we organised two Diversity Workshops and Mentor Trainings in Germany. During the first workshop in December, two Diversity Coaches met six childcare workers with experience in working with people with disabilities to be trained as mentors. A mentee, who wanted to work in the social field later on, was also present at the workshop.

During the workshop several significant issues were addressed, such as the inclusion of people with disabilities in social jobs, the initial tasks to be performed by the mentee, and possible ways of facilitating an optimal integration of the mentee. To become familiar with the job and its setting, the Diversity Coaches and mentors agreed to let the mentee accompany the mentors in their daily work in order for the mentee to get in contact with the teenagers and children and to facilitate the learning process. In this regard, it was agreed that, in the beginning, the focus of the mentee's work should be less pedagogical, but should revolve around the organisation of leisure activities for the teenagers and children. The aim was to show the teenagers and children with disabilities that they could enjoy their rights and participate in society as active citizens as illustrated by the positive example of the mentee. We have also planned to include alternative learning methods which the mentee can put into practice with the teenagers and children. The tasks covered by the mentee will be gradually increased based on his results and achievements.

With the second Diversity Workshop and Mentor Training in February 2012, new interesting aspects of the mentor-mentee relationship were explored. One of the main concerns was to make clear that the mentor is a person of trust for the mentee. The mentor – together with the mentee – has to work out realistic goals the mentee wants to reach. Moreover, the mentor has to be responsible for the mentee's social integration. Whenever the mentee faces a problem, the mentor should act as his person of trust who works out a solution together with the mentee. The mentee's independence and autonomy has to be secured. In this regard, the best way to ensure an effective and steady mentor-mentee relationship is by working together regularly.

During the workshop, a mentee was introduced to her mentor in the food-catering sector. The mentee was already familiar with several aspects in this line of work and will receive further instructions by her mentor with the use of a detailed folder including pictures, games, descriptions, and step-by-step instructions. In the future, the mentee will assist in the kitchen and will be responsible for two tasks per day. Depending on her learning progress, the mentor will work with her on these tasks as long as necessary. The Diversity Coach, mentor and mentee also discussed other possible new tasks, such as helping people with disabilities come to the dining room and helping them eat and wash up.



Training workbook for the mentee

Ileana Hamburg

Project partner from the Institut Arbeit und Technik, in Germany

Recent Developments: "Diversity and Mentoring Training" in Poland



Mentees preparing dissemination material

Two Diversity Workshops and Mentor Trainings were conducted in Warsaw on the 29th and 30th of September 2011 with a total of 17 participants. Among them, five people have decided to continue their participation in the IBB2 project and to become Diversity Coaches: one teacher from a vocational special school and five job trainers from NGOs working in the field of intellectual disability. Barbara Szostak, the coordinator of the Polish team, decided to take on this new challenge, wherein she can act as an expert and also gain new experience by becoming the sixth Diversity Coach.

The Diversity Coaches prepared thoroughly: They had two meetings with experts on the 28th of October and the 24th of November 2011, in which they discussed aspects of the mentoring process, focusing on the values connected to the support given by mentors.

The next step involved choosing institutions where the trainings for future mentors were to take place. They spoke with employers and set the dates for the trainings.

The mentor trainings took place in six institutions. Two of the institutions were part of the trade sector: a warehouse (where a person with intellectual disabilities, who worked as a leader of a team of four people with intellectual disabilities, was trained as a mentor) and a carpet shop (where four individuals were trained). Four institutions were in the social sector: a centre for teacher education and training (where four individuals were trained); the health and fitness hotel "Agrykola" (where one person was trained); a public preschool (where eight individuals were trained), and a home for elderly people (where three individuals were trained). The mentor trainings in these institutions lasted from the 6th to the 15th of December 2011.

The Diversity Coaches were in permanent contact with the experts and the coordinator. They used materials from the Diversity Coach training as well as their own professional experience. After the trainings in the institutions, a final meeting took place between the Diversity Coaches, experts and coordinator, in which their recent experiences were summed up and discussed. By and large, feedback about the trainings was highly positive: Trained employees do not show any fear of or resistance to meeting and cooperating with co-workers with intellectual disabilities.

After the training, they are more aware of mentoring as a system of support which brings positive changes to all the parties, and thus not only to people with intellectual disabilities. Employees showed particular interest in the concept of diversity as a more realistic notion than equality.

Generally, all employers involved have had a positive attitude toward the IBB2 project. It is clearly important to note that these employers have already had previous experience with people with intellectual disabilities as workers and/or trainees.



Trainee working at the ZOO

Barbara Szostak

Project partner from the Special School "Dac Szanse", in Poland

"Diversity and Mentoring Training" in Spain

Project AURA had its first Diversity and Mentoring Training in September 2011 and shared it with all the Catalan Associations/services that work for people with learning disabilities using the Supported Employment methodology.

The content of the training included:

- An introduction of each participant: service, background, experience, etc;
- The introduction and objective of the training;
- A debate about the concept of 'diversity': what is diversity? What does the management of diversity imply? Which tools are used? How can we prepare ourselves? Which benefits does diversity have? What are the difficulties and barriers? How can we plan a long-term strategy in diversity?

The second part of the training focused on mentoring. All the participants were experienced job coaches who were used to working with the concept of supported employment. For them, the mentor figure was similar to the reference person in *natural supports*.

All the participants were highly interested in sharing their experiences which led to fruitful debates around the following topics:

- The ways in which the job coach/diversity coach should introduce himself/herself in the company: dependent on the company (size, sector, etc.) and on the relation between the company and the agencies.
- The diversity coach should establish his/her tasks, identify the adaptations required at the workplace, know the environment and the colleagues, etc;

- The diversity coach is the person who will train the mentor and the rest of the colleagues (in diversity, in the methodology she/he will use, in working with the candidate, etc.)
- Who chooses the mentor? Does the company decide? Or is it a personal choice?
- What are the exact responsibilities of the mentor? Where are the boundaries between him/her and the diversity coach?
- Competences of mentors: empathy, desire to be a mentor, facilitator, etc.



Erika (mentee) with her colleagues

The final part of the training focused on how people with learning disabilities could gain access to the social sector.

All the diversity coaches were interested in implementing the mentoring training, but only four of them worked in social institutions:

- one person worked in a hospital;
- one person worked in a kindergarten;
- one person worked in a residence for elderly people;
- one person worked in a psychological and psychiatric center.

The overall feedback on the trainings has been extremely positive, as reflected in the interviews with the people involved. At all times, there was continuous contact between the mentors, job coaches/diversity coach and the project coordinator, sharing in all the steps.

Ultimately, all stakeholders highlighted the importance of the mentor, of natural supports, and of direct contact in order to maintain and perform the job in a qualitative fashion and achieve a successful integration process.

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