

Inclusive Care Teams

People with learning difficulties
become colleagues

The logo for IBB2, consisting of the letters 'IBB2' in a stylized, red, handwritten-style font.

Issue 4

Dear readers,

Welcome to our fourth and final E-letter of the IBB2 project. This issue will focus on the highlights of the IBB2 seminar – an event which successfully marked the closing of our two-year project. Additionally, we would also like to share our final thoughts in regard to the overall developments of the project, our experiences as well as some challenges that should be addressed in the future.

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!

Highlights of the Final Seminar: 'IBB2 – Inclusive Care Teams – New Paths to Employment in the Social Sector for People with Learning Disabilities'

After two years of hard work and commitment, we are proud to say that the IBB2 project has managed to tick the box of its most important goal, which was to create and implement new paths toward the inclusion of people with learning disabilities in the labour market. Preparations started ten years ago with the first IBB project developing the first inclusive vocational training model in the social service sector in Europe. In order to smooth and strengthen the transition between vocational training and career entry, IBB2 represented only a natural next step toward a society based on equal opportunities. The implementation of the diversity management and mentoring training courses in the partner countries proved that prejudices can be challenged and that there are practical ways of guaranteeing a successful integration of people with intellectual disabilities into the labour market.

The closing seminar in Brussels on June 19th, 2012 presented a perfect opportunity to present the project's results and to foster a debate amongst the stakeholders in the disability sector about the integration of people with learning difficulties into the labour market. We would like to share with you below the most important points and conclusions of this closing event.

'New Paths to Employment' – A Brief Overview of IBB2

The social sector has experienced a steady growth in demand for both highly qualified staff as well as for less qualified employees. At the same time, the preliminary work conducted by the project partners showed that the social sector represents an attractive field of work for many people with learning disabilities in various organisations. Gudrun Stubenrauch, of project coordinator Lebenshilfe Graz und Umgebung – Voitsberg, identified these two premises as the trigger of the two IBB projects. While the previous project aimed at introducing people with learning disabilities into the labour market, specifically, the social service sector, IBB2 was motivated to guarantee and create a sustainable work environment for them. This resulted in the development of the IBB2 support model, which takes into consideration all the needs on all levels of all participating systems (employers, inclusive care workers, and colleagues of the inclusive care workers).

Gudrun Stubenrauch's key messages:

- *"Arranging inclusive teams creates a win-win situation based on prospects of fairness. Diversity becomes a positive resource for all people involved, with positive effects on human resource development as well as on the quality of the service itself."*
- *"The goal of our work in the next years is to make further options accessible – step by step".*



EU Disability Strategy and Employment

The EU disability policy framework was briefly presented by Luca Mangiat, of DG Justice – Unit 3, Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Focus was placed on EU activities in the area of employment and, particularly, the instruments making supported employment possible. He also provided several recommendations for the improvement of supported employment and of the levels of accessibility for people with disabilities in the open labour market.

Luca Mangiat's key message:

- *"In order to guarantee access for all, a supporting policy framework should be created. This implies, among others, support and training for professional job coaches, incentives for employers, and support for life-long learning as well as a periodic monitoring and collecting of statistics."*

Diversity Management in the context of labour market entry of persons with disabilities

Beatrice Achaleke from Diversity in Leadership & Consulting explored the concept of 'diversity management'. As a definition, diversity management refers to all the strategies and concepts that should foster diversity as a positive value in enterprises, organizations and associations, and to related measures that support this acknowledgment of differences. In short, 'diversity' should be viewed as a potential, not as a problem, while 'diversity management' should be understood in a simple manner as a 'responsible way of dealing with differences'.



Beatrice Achaleke's key messages:

- *"No one is as different as you are. Diversity already starts from the difference from you and me and is enabled through interaction. From its very onset, we should look at this difference as a potential, and not as a problem."*
- *"The necessary steps of promoting diversity management in the social sector imply awareness-raising in order to move away from our 'comfort zone' and changing the mind-set of society and authorities; identifying target groups; resources (human resources, financial aspects, infrastructure, and environments), communication (with stakeholders) and evaluation (of the targets, reflections)."*



Links between the UN Convention and Restricted Access to Work/ Employment for People with Disabilities

Simona Giarratano, Social Policy Officer of the European Disability Forum, discussed the links between the UN Convention and restricted access to work/employment for people with disabilities. She focused on the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and, specifically, Art. 24 on Education.

Simona Giarratano's key message:

- *"The implementation of inclusive education is needed for persons with disabilities to have the best possible chances of pursuing a career."*

A success story: a user's experience as an inclusive care worker

Ursula Nebel is one of the two people with learning disabilities who did the vocational training developed in the previous IBB project. She now works at Lebenshilfe Graz und Umgebung – Voitsberg as an inclusive care worker by carrying out tasks related to the assistance and care of people with disabilities. During the seminar, she shared her experiences in a video.

Ursula Nebel's key message:

- *"Being part of the training and having this job gave me more confidence in my own skills. I believe that people with disabilities should be given the opportunity to work in the social sector, as it is a very rewarding field. I strongly encourage others to do the training."*

Finally, the project partners presented the IBB2 support model as a best practice model. The following three-module support concept was developed for the successful integration of the inclusive care workers and the development of an inclusive care team.



First, the project partners highlighted the importance of determining basic conditions such as knowing the tasks and competence

profile of inclusive care workers. This helps all parties involved to determine the scope of activity and the respective roles. The legal framework also needs to be analysed further.

Second, the integration of people with learning difficulties into the labour market, in our case in the social sector, requires an awareness-raising process within the team. Therefore, the project partnership developed a diversity team workshop focusing on the development of diversity competences and the introduction to the mentoring model. The team workshop is conducted by a trained Diversity Coach. The workshop contributes to the definition of roles and facilitates communication processes within the team.

The third and last component of the model is the mentoring process, which enables the inclusive care worker to find his or her way into the new job and the new working environment more quickly.

The IBB2 support concept was tested and evaluated in Austria, Germany, Spain and Poland. It was mainly tested in different branches of the social field, such as in disability care institutions, residence for elderly people, kindergartens and school.

After testing the support model, the participants were asked for their opinions and their suggestions for improvement. The results were very positive and the model proved to be quite useful for the job entry of people with learning disabilities and their future work environment. Especially the determination of basic conditions and the team workshop was very fruitful. The model has been developed specifically for the implementation in the social field. However, with some adaptations it could also be applied in other sectors.

The final project results got high approval ratings from the audience in Brussels and the event ended successfully.

Final thoughts on the project

The project partners are in agreement over the relevance of the IBB2 support model. They will continue to work on the implementation of the IBB2 model on a national level and on translating it to other branches of the social field.

Along with this good news, it should be stated here that much work still needs to be done, since the path toward the integration of people with learning difficulties into the labour market still has various barriers. In particular, the restricted access for people with learning disabilities to vocational training, their limited information flow about trainings, and the attitude of businesses toward hiring people with disabilities are major obstacles.

Nevertheless, the IBB2 model can be seen as an important step forward in the inclusion of people with learning difficulties in the labour market.

Lastly, with this final e-letter the IBB2 project partnership would like to thank all experts who have collaborated on this project as well as all the people interested in the project. We also wish to thank the National Agency for Lifelong Learning in Austria and our national sponsors, who have provided the financial means necessary for the realisation of this project.

Best wishes,

The IBB2 project team



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