

Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

- 1 Background- theoretical approach..... 4
- 2 State of the art related to “laboratories” for blind persons and persons with visual impairment..... 5
 - 2.1 State of the art of “laboratories” in Austria (specific focus on Styria)..... 6
 - 2.1.1 Preliminary remarks..... 6
 - 2.1.2 Basic methodological concepts 7
 - 2.1.3 Structural quality 10
 - 2.1.4 Quality of process 13
 - 2.1.5 Result quality 15
 - 2.2. State of the art in IT..... 16
 - 2.2.1 Conceptual approach 16
 - 2.2.2 Structural aspects 16
 - 2.2.3 Process aspects 16
 - 2.2.4 Result level 17
 - 2.2.5 Sustainability 17
 - 2.3 State of the art in SL 18
- 3 Study question..... 18
- 4 Methodology 18
 - 4.1 Sample..... 19
 - 4.2 Methods 20
 - 4.3 Instruments 20
 - 4.4. Data analysis 22
- 5 Results..... 23
 - 5.1 Conceptual requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons 23
 - 5.1.1 Key words on the conceptual level 23
 - 5.1.2 Clustering process 24
 - 5.2 Structural requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons 24
 - 5.2.1 Key words on the structural level 24
 - 5.2.2 Clustering process 26
 - 5.3 Formative (process-oriented) requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons 27
 - 5.3.1 Key words on the formative level 27
 - 5.3.2 Clustering process 28
 - 5.4 Result-oriented requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons 29
 - 5.4.1 Key words on the result level 29
 - 5.4.2 Clustering process 29
 - 5.5 Sustainability aspects..... 30
 - 5.5.1 *Key words on the sustainability level* 30
 - 5.5.2 *Clustering process on sustainability level* 31
- 6 Discussion 31

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

6.1 What do blind or visually impaired persons need related to their working places, especially within the crafts/art sector?	31
6.2 How does the current practice in the 3 partner countries address these needs?	32
6.3 What has to be done?	33
6.4 How can the project contribute to necessary changes?	33
7 References	34
8 Attached annexes	34
8.1 Interviews in AT:	34
Interview 1 in the Framework of the Viskilab Project	34
Interview 2 with Maximilan Pichler, an adolescent with very low vision	37
Interview 3 with Mrs. Rauer	39
Interview 4 with Christine Trummer, Special Educator	42
Interview 5 with G.U. (37 years old)	44
8.2 Interviews performed in Italy	46
Interview 1	46
Interview 2	48
Interview 3	49
Interview 4	51
Interview 5	52
Interview 6	54
8.3 Interviews performed in Slovenia	55
Interview 1: M.Ž.	56
Interview 2: J.P.	58
Interview 3: Employer A.V. about J.P.	60
Interview 4: T.D.	62
Interview 5: Employer A.V. about T.D.	64
Interview 6: H.V.	66
Interview 7: E.V.	68
Interview 8: Employer about E.V.	70
Interview 9: N.L.	72
Interview 10: Employer about N.L.	75

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

1 Background- theoretical approach

The study (in this specific context of working places of visually impaired persons) can be regarded as a process whether /or to which extend a certain framework (infrastructure/process of support for visual impaired people) is able to reach defined conceptual goals.

This study is seen as a process of “assessment”, – that means it is primarily a communicative process - depending on applied criteria (e.g. prevention, well-being of the person, person-centredness of a process, quality/sustainability of a product).

This study in the sense of communicative partnership models – therefore – requires a process of communication about and definition of useful criteria.

Beside the possible application of “objective instruments” (e.g. photos) – also within this study we have to be aware, that any kind of study process also relies on interpersonal objectivity (in the sense that a group of people creates it’s “reality” within dialogic exchange processes. The reality of a working place for a person with visual impairment therefore does not exist per se, but always represents an transactional process between the person and his/her environment. Therefore the description of working places or preliminary prerequisites (preparation for work, prevention of disability...) might depend – to a high extend – on the needs and the personal perception of the interacting stakeholders.

As pointed out above, up till now studies of working places in the field of persons with disability were very much goal/product-oriented (result evaluation). Especially in the field of people with multiple disability it is important to highlight, that many processes and results also focus on issue of empowerment, participation, well being or quality of life. So this study will also focus on these conceptual issues.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

During the last years – especially in the social field – an increasing interest in more general parameters in the evaluation of working surroundings for persons with disability could be observed:

What are the concepts related to support processes?

Which structures do we need for visually impaired persons to follow these concepts?

Which concrete processes can be identified to reach conceptual goals based on existing structures?

How can we describe concrete outcomes of these processes and ensure sustainability.

Therefore this study will focus on 5 levels:

- a) Conceptual evaluation
- b) Structural evaluation
- c) Formative Evaluation
- d) Result-oriented evaluation
- e) Sustainability

Following the concept of Nüssle (2000), Peterander (1996/1997), Pretis (1997/2001) this study process includes

- **conceptual questions** (including goals, key concepts...)
- **infra-structural questions** (analysis of the available and required facilities, human resources, tools..)
- **process oriented questions** (analysis of the working steps..)
- **result questions** (description of material/immaterial products...)
- Questions of sustainability (how do we assure qualitative and sustainable effects for visually impaired people in the labour market and before entering labour market.

2 State of the art related to “laboratories” for blind persons and persons with visual impairment

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

2.1 State of the art of “laboratories” in Austria (specific focus on Styria)

2.1.1 Preliminary remarks

The services within the legal frame of the Styrian Law on Disability do not differentiate between services related to specific disabilities. It means – related to the start of the art of craft-laboratories for visually impaired people – that the description of laboratories follows the general structure of these offers, with no specific focus on the needs of people with visual impairments.

Therefore laboratories for visually impaired people are designed as “creative/productive occupation”. These services therefore will be described in the following chapters for Styria.

The service of creative and productive occupation has to be aimed at and adapted for adolescents (after compulsory education) and adults with mental, physical, multiple or sensorial disability.

Individual or cumulative criteria for allocation

- Clients (including visually impaired people) who are able to do product and service orientated work, when provided with adequate work assistance and adjusted working framework.
- A vocational integration or participation within a qualification or education programme has to be impossible at the time of the official determination regarding the allowance for the service.
- Persons with mental illness, if the learning disability is predominant.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Reasons for exclusion

Clients who are not able to take part within product and service orientated working processes.

Service offered

The basis for the provision of service (also for visually impaired people) is an individual help and support plan which has to be based on the IHB-report (individual support assessment team). The service includes a broad spectrum of assistance and support in the area of living and aims at social integration.

2.1.2 Basic methodological concepts

Concepts constitute fundamental principles of integration as well as approaches of daily activities in the field of special education and the social psychiatric sector.

Principles and conventions of integration and participation (not specifically defined for visually impaired people)

- **Normalisation:** Equal access to and participation in the life of persons without disability. The living conditions of persons with disability (also visual impairment) are to a large extent parallel to those of persons without disability.
- **Inclusion and participation:** Inclusion is the inseparable entity of social community and individually orientated upbringing, education and lifestyle of all its members. Persons with disability are provided with the necessary amount of support for an active participation within social life.
- **Indivisibility:** Basically every person with disability, regardless of the type, degree and severity of the disability, can be integrated. All persons who are involved in the concrete planning processes for help and support work on voluntary basis.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

- **Holistic approach:** The particular social reality needs to be considered and has to be integrated in all services of support and life skills.
- **Individualisation:** All attempts to keep or improve life quality as well as all decision processes regarding life skills have to be adjusted to the individual personal needs of the clients. Personal wishes, needs and particularities have to be taken into consideration.
- **Decision rights and self-determination:** Integrative processes should be adequately planned, performed and reflected together.
- **Empowerment:** Persons with disability make their own decisions concerning themselves or are at least significantly involved in decision making processes. This autonomy helps to advance and strengthen personal freedom of action and individual responsibility which leads to equal opportunities with persons without disability.
- **Comprehensibility:** Agreements are to be worked out with the persons with disability. They have to be published in a comprehensible version.
- **Active participation in designing the service:** The service is actively co-designed by the users of the service and assessed in terms of its quality.

Pedagogic support service

By means of care, guidance and assistance in the work context (it means within the service or occupation for visually impaired people) the pedagogic service should be a support within the following areas:

- Separation of the employment and work environment from the world of living and leisure (daily and weekly structures)
- Creation of need and interest oriented occupation and working fields
- Preparation for the entrance into a continuous occupational and working process
- Introduction to active participation and maintenance of creative-productive activities/ ensuring transparency

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

- Acquisition or maintenance of occupational skills and competences
- Planning, designing, implementation and evaluation of tasks and work assignments
- Joint target planning
- Guaranteed support service that is adjusted to the individual support needs
- Securing of a stable and reliable support structure
- Meaningful application of cultural techniques
- Conveying and maintaining life practical skills
- Promotion of social and communicative skills
- Therapeutic support possibilities as required.

Scope of services

The service is to be provided as follows:

Part residential: 248 days/year on average
up to 8 hours a day
up to 38 hours/week per client
Monday to Friday on all workdays; depending on the field of activity the service can also be carried out on Saturdays/Sundays/Bank holidays (e.g. in the field of gastronomy)

Subsistence has to be provided during the day: Snack and Lunch. The person with disability is part of the decision process regarding the tailored demands.

Quality management

The term quality refers to the entity of characteristics and attributes of a service, which fulfil fixed or presupposed requirements. In order to relate those characteristics

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

to each other, the starting points (What should be changed?), the goal definitions (What should be achieved and how?) and the goals themselves (Which methods were used and how were the goals reached?) need to coincide to a large extent.

2.1.3 Structural quality

Size of the facility

Size of facility: up to 24 clients

Location and Surroundings:

The following minimal infrastructural requirements should be achieved:

- It has to be ensured that adequate infrastructure is available (shops, medical doctors, institutions etc.).
- A good connection to the public transport network should be assured.

Spacial requirements

The necessary spatial resources depend on the demand that occurs with the respective working or occupational situation.

The institution should be built according to the following basic principles: (guide value: 26m² overall spatial need per person with disability)

- Group rooms
- Project rooms (studios, therapy and relax spaces)
- Kitchen
- Common rooms
- Sanitary facilities

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

- Sanitary facilities / Toilets – regarding the assistance of clients with a need for care adequate sanitary/care facilities need to be provided
- Secondary rooms such as a stock room, a storage room, a cloak room, a salesroom, extended relax and therapy space etc.
- 30 % of the occupational positions have to be suitable for wheelchair users.

The institution is to be built according to the respective state of the art of constructional and technical standards.

Specialised Staff

Pedagogic direction:

- The number of leading staff has to be matched to the number of assisting staff.
Maximum value: 6,7 % leading positions per 100 % assisting personnel.

Total personnel needed:

The amount of professional staff depends on the number of persons with disability and the degree of their disability.

A temporary shortfall of staff is only permitted if unforeseen situations occur (e.g. cancellation of a staff member on short notice, unforeseeable long-term sickness of an employee). This staff shortage needs to be within a pedagogically responsible framework and must not affect the proper support of the clients.

Degree of impairment:

The correct, actual demand of professionally qualified staff is defined by the degree of impairment of visually impaired people (defined within a separate expertise process by the individual support assessment team) and the respective operational organisation within the institution.

Staff requirements:

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Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Minor degree of disability:	16 %	Staff/Client
Average degree of disability:	23 %	Staff/Client
Major degree of disability:	40 %	Staff/Client
Highest degree of disability:	70 %	Staff/Client

Human Resources

The multi-professional team is composed of the following professional categories. The professional training of all team members have to be completed (except professionals in training):

Graduated social care professionals with a specialisation BB and BA, graduated pedagogues with the main focus on therapeutic or special pedagogy, social pedagogy, integration pedagogy and therapeutic psychology, teaching degree for primary or secondary school from the year 2007 onwards, special education teachers, vocational school teachers within their specific fields, social workers, graduates from the academy or university of applied sciences for social professions or the college for social pedagogy, psychologists, care workers, therapists (MTD-BG - occupational therapists, speech therapists and physical therapists), trainees (max. 30% of staff) within the above mentioned professions (no internships).

Professionals in training can only be active when guided by a member of professional staff.

Professionals with a final apprenticeship examination in manual occupations (e.g. in the crafts sector) and additional pedagogic qualification (at least 200 units of theory), graduates of secondary of high schools with vocational training and final apprenticeship examination and additional pedagogic qualification (at least 200 units of theory).

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Professional trainings must be completed within institution that are admitted by the state of the federal countries (university, university of applied science, academy, institutions according to StSBBG).

All professions including education and further education are liable to the respective legal requirements (as StSBBG, GUKG etc.).

2.1.4 Quality of process

The quality of process refers to the planning, structuring and implementation of the service provision. The means and contents of the service provision arise from the aims and kind of the service.

Organisation

- Structure and organisation of procedures have to be described within an organisation handbook (description of functions, descriptions of staff requirements).
- The care concept has to include an illustration and description of the aims and methods that need to be implemented.

Documentation

The care process needs to be comprehensible by means of the required documentation.

The **client specific** documentation has to be carried out in cooperation with the client during the time of support. It has to contain particularly the following issues (in this context the respective vocational laws have to be followed):

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

- Case history/first contact (e.g. application of persons with disability, if needed waiting lists, first evaluation, anamnesis form, allocation diagnosis, clarification of interests etc.)
- Entry by means of a basic data assessment (general, medical) of the support needs, care needs, the competences and resources, further therapeutic-psychological procedures, additional care agreement, determination of wishes and goals of the person with disability, additional agreements with persons from the family background (parents, other relatives, solicitors), emergency form, health form (medication and diagnostic finding) etc.
- Development and procedure documentation (Updating of personal data, goal and progress planning – individual helping plan) on the basis of the concrete service adjudication notification and the care agreement, regular evaluation of the implemented procedures and goals.
- Final documentation of the service provision including the success of the process

The **institution specific** documentation has to include particularly the following issues:

- Documentation of achievements
- Yearly progress report
- Service schedule
- Driver's logbook
- Attendance lists of the persons with disability
- Documentation of team meetings and further training of the professional staff

Professional Staff/Human resource development

Further education has to be accomplished.

Team meetings and supervisions are to be held and attended if necessary.

Employee training of new staff member is required.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

2.1.5 Result quality

The result quality can be recognised within the degree of achievement of objectives. The achieved results are to be regularly evaluated and compared to the substantiated goals of the individual help plan.

- Yearly progress reports are to be written.
- The inspection of the individual success of processes is done by the service granting public authority by means of an expert's report according to need and demand.

Examples for products, specifically for visually impaired people (within services)

The production of the artefacts is carried out by diverse techniques and by means of different materials. Most of the products are unique – special requests from our customers are most welcome.

- **Paintings and drawings on linen cloth or paper:** using acrylic paint, oil pastels, coloured crayons, covering colour, linoleum stencil, etc.
- **Pottery:** crockery, bowls, tea candles, pots for plants, decorative items, etc.
- **Media design (Photoshop) and pictures:** Greeting cards with or without Braille, post cards, calendars, etc.
- **Creative work:** candles, buttons, felt ribbons, fimo and papier mache artefacts, fridge magnets, etc.
- **Remittance work:** putting letters into envelopes, labelling magazines, product images and pictures of in-house events.

Product

examples:

<http://www.odilien.at/de/Dienstleistungen/Werkstaetten/Werkstaette-farb.ton>

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

2.2. State of the art in IT

2.2.1 Conceptual approach

The target group for which the occupational/craft laboratories have been instituted is made in larger part by youngsters suffering from the Down's syndrome with visual impairment or by youngsters with cognitive functions in the low standard and mobility disabilities. The pedagogical concept on which the laboratories are based is above all working on sensorial vicariance, abilities maintenance, autonomy improvement. The activities through which such aims are achieved are the craft ones with facilitating systems, activities that are often varied throughout the year in order to avoid the gesture mechanisation. As a result these have to have handcrafted simple products however appreciable, but not because made by visually impaired people but for their inner beauty.

2.2.2 Structural aspects

Inside the Institute there are no architectural barriers and all the spaces are accessible to mobility disabled people. In the Institute two laboratories were started: a textile one and a decoration one. The materials employed are very varied: wicker, wood, Chinese cord, wax, cotton and linen spools, lambswool for felt, knitwear and carpets weaving, dried stabilized flowers or silk flowers, various types of clay, pearls and varied fabrics, vertical and horizontal looms, winders, basis for building ponpons, sewing machine, knitting machine, molds and furnace for ceramics, molds for wire and glue technique, circular safety saw, threading and small tools.

2.2.3 Process aspects

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

In the two laboratories several people work together, like specialized educator assistants with the help of specialised artisans, under the coordination of an educator.

All the products are then submitted to the Education Manager for the approval.

The key processes that guide the work in the laboratories are preparing prototypes, assessing them and evaluating their applicability, studying facilitating systems to employ, final assembling of crafts and organization of small trade shows of the products.



2.2.4 Result level

Into the textile laboratories the activities are as follows: preparing and assembling ponpons, weaving on vertical looms with Ghiordes knot, creating small tapestries on horizontal looms, creating Christmas and Easter decorations, knitwear (stoles, scarves and hats), then pillows filling, creating small animals, necklaces and bags, while in the decoration laboratory we have wicker baskets and their decoration with dried flowers or silk flowers, then creation of candles, soaps, ceramics and raku, wire and glue products, felt, stencil, wedding favors, various items for Christmas and Easter time.

2.2.5 Sustainability

The handcrafted products, after having been evaluated from the quality point of view, can then be displayed in trade shows.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

2.3 State of the art in SL

In Slovenia it is difficult to find informal training for the visually impaired in order to make the employment easier and at higher quality.

At the Employment service a rehabilitation adviser deals with visually impaired people. He deals with all the groups of disadvantaged people advising them about their role in the active employment policy. They search for the best opportunities regarding individual's education but they offer no additional training.

Likewise, the Rehabilitation Institute of Slovenia, as part of the center for vocational rehabilitation, together with the visually impaired person seeks opportunities within the employer-to-be, although the employment might not be realised. The employer just allows the individual to take part in the job training that is appropriate to his qualifications.

In the Centre for Vocational Education, there is no training adapted for the blind and partially sighted people. A few years ago, a blind person applied for an educational programme for the profession of masseur / masseuse within the programme of national professional qualifications, and he also successfully completed the training. All the above mentioned institutions tend to new ideas, proposals, how to provide additional training for the visually impaired in order to facilitate employment.

3 Study question

Which needs do persons with disability describe related to their workplaces in the field of crafts/art sector including prerequisites in order to enter the labour market.

Based on an empirical multi-perspective analysis of the situation of visually impaired people related to the issue of sustainable work this study question will be answered.

4 Methodology

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

The methodology of this study takes into account the diverse “pathways” towards labour market inclusion of visually impaired people in the 3 partner countries. Therefore the applied methodologies are flexible and to a high extent focused on the specific needs of visually impaired people.

Also it has to be taken into account that the personal skill level of the target group might differ significantly.

4.1 Sample

The multi-perspective sample consists

- a) of the primary target group (visually impaired people in AT, IT and SL) (see graph 1)
- b) Employing bodies (institutions, enterprises, NGOs...)
- c) Professionals directly working with the target group
- d) Other relevant persons, as this study also takes into account other environmental factors (preparation for the labour market, administrative issues to enter the labour market..)

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Graph 1: Structure of the sample

Target group N=	AT	IT	SL
Visually impaired people	2	3	6
Employers			4
Professionals	2	3	
other	1		
Sum	5	6	10

Overall 21 interviews have been performed within the state of art analysis.

4.2 Methods

As the target groups can be described as heterogeneous also the applied methods have to follow their needs and skills.

Therefore – for some clients – direct structured dialogues – due to their communicative capacities might be reduced – in some cases also observation data.

To increase full participation of the target group in some cases also assistance might be necessary (e.g. in terms of explaining questions)

Graph 2: Applied methods related to partner country

Applied methods	AT	IT	SL
interview	5	6	10

4.3 Instruments

Interviews were performed based on a pre-defined structure, focusing on following questions:

Graph 3: Structure of the instruments

	For Professionals	Clients

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Conceptual questions	Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to the working place of visual impaired people?	What is most important for you at your working place
	How is the wellbeing of visually impaired people at work ensured?	What do you like most at your working place?
	How are the individual needs of visually impaired people addressed?	How do you obtain the support/assistance at work which you need.
Structural questions	Which infrastructure do you assess necessary related the working place	How should your working place be organised?
	Which human resources do you assess as necessary (, ratio Client/professional)	Who is assisting you at your workplace?
	Which specific tools/materials are necessary related to the working place?	Which materials/tools do you need at work?
	Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary in your sector?	
Formative/ Process oriented questions	Which skills do you assess as necessary for the clients?	What do you have to know to do your work?
	What are the concrete working steps 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	What do you do (concretely) at your working place
Result oriented questions	What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work	What do you produce?
Sustainability	What do you do to ensure the quality of the working process in the craft sector	How do you know, that your work has good quality?

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

4.4. Data analysis

Content analysis

Data analysis is based on transcripts of the interviews, focus groups and analysis of questionnaires. The consortium itself serves as an internal validation entity. Contents of the transcripts are analysed related to KEY WORDS which are highlighted in diverse colours

- a) yellow: key words related to the concept
- b) green: key word related to structural issues
- c) blue: key words related to formative issues
- d) red: key words related to the result level
- e) grey: key words related to the sustainability level

The presence of comparable key words within the partnership is then analysed.

Clustering of data related to relevant categories

The second step consists in a clustering process of these key words within the partnership. The partners themselves attribute key-words of their interviews into the proposed structure of necessary requirements on

- conceptual level
- structural level
- formative level
- result-oriented level
- sustainability level

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

To guarantee transparency of the analysis process, the consortium partners are asked to colour the chosen and attributed keywords, which are included into this analysis process.

5 Results

5.1 Conceptual requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons

5.1.1 Key words on the conceptual level

AT	IT	SL
Goal: Integration into the labour market	availability of the Institutions to offer jobs	Adapted ways of information provided
Differentiation work/occupational therapy	operative and personal autonomy (x2)	Possibility of socialising (2x)
Possibility of contact to non-disabled peers	environment adequately prepared (x6) with technological devices and without architectural barriers	Assistance from others (3x)
Early identification and early support processes towards prevention	initial coaching (x3) to prevent situations of unsuitability	Assistance at orientation in the building
Provision of very early and person-centred services (2x)	education and training (x3), also about the instrumentation used in the working environment	Care for wellbeing (music, exercise)
Entitlement towards services	Professionalism, professional preparation	Individual assistance provided (2x)
Mainstreaming in regional contexts	co-operation (x3)	Manageable tasks/work provided (3x)
Person centred support (2x)	good disposition from the colleagues (willingness to listen and help, empathy and being welcoming) (x4)	Availability or adaptation of specific tools and working place (5x)
Availability of specific tools (specifically for visually)	recognizing the own personal limits	Building adaptation for blind and visually

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

impaired people).		impaired
Specific entitlements (e.g. more holiday)	Assistance from colleagues, if possible from experienced people	Personalized achievement normatives
Stability of services	Initial inspection of the working place	Training provided
Usage of individual support plans		Adapted ways of informing provided

5.1.2 Clustering process

The data analysis process is based on a content-oriented clustering process within a discourse setting of the consortium.

Collected data related to conceptual necessities reflect the importance

- training aspects of the staff (by initial training/monitoring/reflection processes)
- availability and stability of services (specifically focused on available assistance)
- specific entitlements
- availability of specific tools and prepared environments for visually impaired people
- inclusive setting (with mainstream strategies)
- cooperation and communication (including adapted information)
- person-centredness (including care and wellbeing, manageable tasks and individualized assistance)

5.2 Structural requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons

5.2.1 Key words on the structural level

Key words related to	AT	IT	SL
Infrastructure	Need for diversity Needs assessment (including relevant others)	Wide enough lifts (x2) Platforms, raised relief maps (x2),	Proper lighting 2x Well organised bulletin board



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Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

	Needs related to orientation Regionalisation Inclusive services Support by auditive signals Need for adequate light systems (2x) Services as early as possible	tactile signs (x2), indicators and signposting of the environment No architectural barriers (x3) and easy access to disabled people	
Human resources	Some specific training is necessary (2x) Importance of contact to non-disabled persons Specific training courses in the early preventive field is available Including expertise of parents	Availability of tutors and supervisors Assistance (x3) Colleagues ready to help Adaptability Acceptance of the own personal limits Good disposition from employer and employee (x2)	Assistance from co-workers 5x Assistance from tutors 2x Instructions, material prepared in advance Positive feedback necessary 2x Acceptance of people with disabilities 3x Blind person helps developing special technologies for computers and other equipment Specific training
Tools	Complementary auditive prompts Specific working tools related to low vision.	Audio devices and video magnifiers Ergonomic workstations Proper personal	Bigger computer monitor Hand magnifier Higher working desk

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

	<p>Training depends on personal needs (2x)</p> <p>Good preparation of the person working</p> <p>Matching needs and services</p>	<p>computer</p> <p>Special aids and software for pc (braille bar and vocal synthesizer) (x4)</p> <p>Devices to take personal notes</p>	<p>Adapted pliers</p> <p>Protection (robes, shoes) 2x</p> <p>Special aids and software for pc (braille bar and vocal synthesizer 3x)</p> <p>Specialised textbooks</p>
Financing	<p>Based on needs assessment and clearing (Financial) stability of services</p>		

5.2.2 Clustering process

The data analysis process is based on a content-oriented clustering process within a discourse setting of the consortium.

Collected data related to conceptual necessities reflect the importance

- assessment procedures related to individual needs and resources
- Personal training of the professionals (see also conceptual requirement) including instruction materials for the assistance
- sustainability and financial stability of services (see also conceptual requirements)
- specific working tools (Braille, visual cues related to orientation or complementary auditory prompts, vocal synthesiser, specific monitors..)
- psycho-hygienic support (e.g. supervision..)
- an preventive (early as possible) approach
- infrastructural adaptations (light-systems, technology..)

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

It is noteworthy, that a differentiation between conceptual terms and structural requirements related to the needs of visually impaired persons in arts and craft laboratories might be difficult, as some terms appear in both parts of the analysis.

5.3 Formative (process-oriented) requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons

5.3.1 Key words on the formative level

AT	IT	SL
Assessment of needs (2x)	Proficiency (x2)	General knowledge
Expertise	Relational skills (x2)	Knowledge of legislation
Inclusion of visually impaired person mainly in mainstream services	Good disposition to interpersonal relationships (x2)	Computer skills (4x)
Diversity of services and processes (depending on the delivered service)	Adaptability to environment	Writing memos, project proposals, administration work
Mainstream contact to non-disabled peers (together with non-disabled) (2x)	Professional /Operational capacity (x2)	Organizing sport events (showdown, bowling, chess)
Empowering own competences	Being able to interact with the public and colleagues (x2)	All tasks must be shown, taught (3x)
Individual goal planning (2x)	Autonomy	Assembling string for mobile phones (3x), assembling folders (3x), removing isolation from copper wires, attaching wire to flowers, sorting, assembling collectors, packing
Reflection of processes	Effective communication (x2)	Get manageable tasks (2x)
financial guarantee		Developing new skills
Individual assessment		Maintaining acquired skills
		Raising self-esteem (2x)
		Controlling work (very precise person)
		Importance of touch, hand

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

		skills (2x), accuracy
		Communication skills (2x)
		Moving around without help
		Answering and connecting phone calls (2x)
		Musical expertise and tiphlopedagogical qualifications
		Teaching music, musical instruments (primary school blind and visually impaired pupils)
		Preparing work plan, counselling attending teacher meetings, additional education, teaching solfeggio (integration pupils)

5.3.2 Clustering process

The data analysis process is based on a content-oriented clustering process within a discourse setting of the consortium.

Collected data related to conceptual necessities reflect the importance

- individual (formative) approach related to skills (e.g. computer), motivations and goals of visually impaired persons
- relationship centred processes (including effective communication, including formal communication, like on phone))
- focus on autonomy of the person and empowerment (e.g. including the self esteem of the customers..)
- inclusive settings (see also within the conceptual framework, also including social events, like sports..)
- Diversity of services for visually impaired people
- Necessity of specific knowledge (laws..) and specific qualifications
- Structured procedures (workplans, monitoring tools

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Some single aspects (e.g. like expertise and financial sustainability) already have been mentioned within other contexts (concept and structure)

5.4 Result-oriented requirements of working places for blind and visual impaired persons

5.4.1 Key words on the result level

AT	IT	SL
Depending on strategic goals of the institution	Autonomy (x2)	Positive feedback
Need for cooperation between diverse stakeholders	Planning and organizational skills	Control needed
Empowerment	Relational skills (x2)	Small financial compensation (2x)
Prevention	Integration	Extra time needed
Information of non-disabled population	Production	Lower quality
Autonomy/self determination	Participation	Lower quantity (also as result of being too precise, perfectionism)
Contact and communication with non-disabled people	Professionalism	Achieving the norm
Feedback	Good disposition (x2)	Customer satisfaction
	Good training	Management satisfaction
	Proficiency	Answered and connected phone calls
	Problem solving ability	Musical recitals of pupils
	Kindness	Giving musical knowledge to pupils, their success and love for music
		Responsibility for work
		Competence for work
		Positive example for all pupils

5.4.2 Clustering process

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

The data analysis process is based on a content-oriented clustering process within a discourse setting of the consortium

Collected data related to conceptual necessities reflect the importance

- of cooperation and strategies on diverse levels related to outcome-products (e.g. ceramics etc. including product quality issues (quantity and quality), pricing
- training related to the products, techniques, but also related to wider personal competences (e.g. kindness, feedback, planning skills, contact with customers, own-responsibility..)
- participation of people with visual impairment
- outcome related parameters: customer satisfaction, management satisfaction

It is noteworthy that some aspects (training, communication) also were related to conceptual and structural requirements).

5.5 Sustainability aspects

5.5.1 Key words on the sustainability level

AT	IT	SL
How to stimulate prevention	Education, acquire knowledge (x2)	Positive feedback 4x
Hopes towards labour market (how to ensure, that invested energy into prevention is successful)	Have a practical experience (x2)	Adjusting amount of work
How to sustain preventive effects?	Personal motivation (x2)	Considered too precise
Importance of autonomy	Daily practice	Long enough learning process
Importance of cooperation	Observing how the others respond to your work (x2)	No complains
Is there a realistic chance towards the 1 st labour market		Proper training and education provided
Perceived changes in the prevalence (more people with complex disability,		Constant informing



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

not only congenitally blind)		
		Following technology development
		Being treated as equal despite visual impairment

5.5.2 Clustering process on sustainability level

The data analysis process is based on a content-oriented clustering process within a discourse setting of the consortium

Collected data related to conceptual necessities reflect the importance

- labour market-readiness and labour market chances for people with visual impairment - sustainable prevention
- sustainable acquisition of skills (especially focussing on long lasting learning processes and constant training and technology development)
- feedback from consumers (e.g. positive feedback)
- including services into “daily practice”, it means into mainstream (being treated as “equal”)
- possibility of sustainable usage of the products (including lack of complains..)

6 Discussion

6.1 What do blind or visually impaired persons need related to their working places, especially within the crafts/art sector?

Current qualitative data show, that visually impaired people need specific tailored training/education services, which are person centered and equipped with specific tools related to their needs.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Structurally this means, that a) infrastructural requirements are fulfilled (e.g. related to mobility) but also related to equipment and that b) specifically trained staff (trained both related to technical skills but also to communication skills)

The goal of specific services addresses the importance of

- Inclusion and mainstreaming
- Specific focus on the needs and skills of visually impaired people (including technology)
- Empowerment and
- Possibilities to enter the labour market

Processes should focus on person-centred interests and skills and to include a perspective of prevention and/or full participation of people with visual impairment.

Specific products are not necessarily required, however they might depend on personal interests and skills of the learner.

Sustainability focuses on the one hand on financial guarantee (in terms of entitlement), on the other hand on personal commitment and long term training effects of performed learning/training processes.

6.2 How does the current practice in the 3 partner countries address these needs?

The perceived practice within in the 3 partner countries reflect high heterogeneity highlighting specific aspects for the 3 partners:

In AT (specifically in Styria) people with visual impairment are entitled to receive services, however with some small exceptions (e.g. Odilieninstitut in Graz) no other specific services for visually impaired persons (with some exceptions in Vienna) exist. However, due to their legal basis and entitlement existing services are sustainable.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

The general focus aims to prevent institutionalisation based on early support services (e.g. Early Childhood Intervention, mainstream kindergarten inclusion).

The situation in Italy (related to the Istituto Rittmeyer) focuses on another aspect, as this service offers a specific training/service related especially to the needs of learners with visual disability. However the issue of regional/national coverage with services remains, also the issue of financial sustainability might be a challenge.

Situation in Slovenia indicates, that no specific services (especially related to labour market inclusion) are observable, however basic training in school for visually impaired children/adolescents is observable.

6.3 What has to be done?

The 3 countries require different strategies:

- For Austria the issue of specific needs- and skill-related training services for visually impaired people remains open
- For Italy there's the need of an appropriate job placement through training regarding the work environment (suitable preparation of working place from the aids point of view) and daily mobility between home and working place
- In Slovenia, both aspects – infrastructure and specific tools/training programs are required

6.4 How can the project contribute to necessary changes?

The project contributes to the above mentioned necessities in diverse ways:

- a) by means of dissemination political stakeholders are sensibilised related to the specific support needs of people with visual impairment (relevant for AT)

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

- b) by means of transfer of skills and techniques and know-how Slovenia is able to benefit and perform first steps towards an implementation of required services.
- c) By means of dissemination and training what's been experienced in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region the situation in Italy can be improved.

7 References

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8 Attached annexes

8.1 Interviews in AT:

Attached are English transcript of interviews performed in Austria

Interview 1 in the Framework of the Viskilab Project

Interview date: 3.2.2011

Location: Hartberg

Interviewed person: Mrs. Mayerhofer, head of the local administration for persons with disability

Interview time: 9:00 – 10:30

A. Introduction

The interviewer (Prof. Pretis) introduces himself to the local head and informs about the Viskilab project related to the needs of visually impaired children.

Conceptual Level

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to the working place of visual impaired people?

Based on the question of the interviewer Mrs. Mayerhofer explains that generally in the field of persons with disability the Styrian, respectively Austrian legal situation differentiates between two forms of support processes:

Support processes which are directed towards professional integration in terms of all measures which support the integration of a person with disability into the first or second labour market.

How is the wellbeing of visually impaired people at work ensured?

The system differentiates forms of therapy or occupational therapy (productive or creative). People who join this kind of support measures are at the moment of assessment not able to fulfil the requirements of the first or second labour market. So the goal is maximum participation to ensure wellbeing.

Which infrastructure do you assess necessary related the working place?

Asked by the interviewer, how this concept is transferred into reality is made the local head points out that diverse procedures are foreseen. First, it is the will of the parents or relatives of the person with visual impairment what they want and how they assess the situation. Mrs. Mayerhofer in this context points out that her impression is that parents systematically underestimate the potential and resources of persons with visual disability.

Which human resources do you assess as necessary (, ratio Client/professional)

There are some specific services for persons with visual impairment, like for children early childhood intervention for visually impaired children. This service is offered by regular early childhood intervention centres by visual specialists. Then, there are specific services related to school – integration e.g. like specific support teachers with a specific training in visual impairment or the availability of technical aids. Related to professional training usually persons with visual impairment might be integrated into regular training institutions for persons with disability. However, there is one institution in Graz, the capital of the province, where persons with specific visual impairment can follow a professional training. However, the head of the department points out that her impression is that parents underestimate the resources and capacities of persons with disabilities. It must be highlighted that above mentioned services are related to the Styrian law of persons with disability. As Austria is a federal country it has to be taken into account that some services, especially related to the integration into the first and second labour market, are based on federal laws. Another institution (Bundessozialamt) is responsible related to these issues.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary in your sector?

The second issue of preparation/training consists of a so called **clearing process** in which so called clearing teams for an assessment process with the person with visual disability what he or she wants to do or aims to do or is able to do. This clearing process takes place within the last year of school of the person with visual impairment.

Formative level

What are the concrete working steps?

1. the Styrian law foresees a so called **individual assessment** of needs or needs for assistance (IHB). In this process the person with disability or his/her parents or relatives ask for a certain service or assistance.
 2. In order to assess the need of assistance independent assessment teams will have a contact with the person with disability and assess with him or her together a concrete need of assistance. Based on a following expertise the local administration will **guarantee the financing** of the proposed service.
 3. The service itself will be provided by **diverse service providers**. Mrs. Mayerhofer in this context points out that in her political district no specific offers are available for persons with visual disability. Persons with visual disability might **join regular services for persons with disability in general**.
 4. Mrs. Mayerhofer points out that, based on the Styrian law for persons with disability 2004, services are defined within a **taxative** list. After having passed the assessment related to the individual needs a service plan will be performed and the person with disability then can use the services. Here it is pointed out that they consist of therapeutic services like occupational therapy in terms of creative or **productive occupational therapy, family relieve services, assistance for leisure time activities**, financial assistance related to income or care allowance. In the field of rehabilitation or integration into the labour market also diverse services are available like **assistance at the work place**, support towards integration or financial support. Persons with disability themselves will be entitled to obtain these services.
-

Result level

What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work?

The results of the working/therapeutical processes **depend on the strategic goal of the institution**. Mostly (within the field of occupational therapy) the results are art-related products and empowerment of the participants.

Mrs. Mayerhofer points out that it is her impression that the services reach people and that as persons with disability are entitled to obtain these services there are no



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

major conflicts in this field. However, she points out that integration into the first and second labour market is still a big challenge as job possibilities are missing. Another issue which is highlighted by the head of the department is that information related to the diverse laws, services and entitlements is **split up among different institutions** and that for persons with disability or parents it might be sometimes challenging and difficult to **obtain all relevant information**.

Sustainability level

This is difficult to assess as it depends on the skills of the person with visual impairment but also on the conceptual/structural conditions. Generally the system of per capita financing – related to the degree of disability **does not stimulate prevention**. But this is a legal issue and in her position she has only to administer laws, not to develop them.

Interview 2 with Maximilian Pichler, an adolescent with very low vision

Date: 12.2.2011

Time: 16.00-19.00

Location: 8132 Pernegg, Styria

Maximilian Pichler is 20 years old and – due to extreme prematurity shows impairments related to his motor functions and related to his visus. His visus is reduced, so he can only see partly with one eye. This situation is due to his prematurity.

Information about Viskilab project

Conceptual Level

What is most important for you at your working place?

Maximilian Pichler is currently not working, as he still attends the school (High School).

How do you obtain the support/assistance at work which you need?

The one main issue which he perceives especially related to his **age is his handicap to follow activities of my his group. Sometimes this is a very painful experience**. His peers are able to organise their own free time. For him this is difficult as leisure time activities usually are not adapted to the needs of disabled persons. In this context he needs a personal assistance, who is doing certain activities with him like going to a gym. This issue is not directly related to the issue of the working place.

Structural level

How should your working place be organised?

Within my place in the educational setting I need some devices for **better orientation in the working room**, furthermore for reading texts I need a high resolution screen in order to increase the size of the letters. In some moments of my professional education I couldn't pass written exams as I have problems with my graphical education. In this context I need more exams and **explanations** of tasks by the teacher or instructor.

Maximilian Pichler also points out that for him and his visual disability the amount of **daylight** is very important related to his working place and related to his still available functions. He needs a **light** working place with a computer suitable related to the anchor of work. Furthermore, Maximilian Pichler points out that for him the issue of **orientation** is important. He wishes that, related to his working place, the **visual prompts** should be more clear so that he can find the concrete working places around him.

Who is assisting you at your workplace?

There are some specially trained teachers (coming once a week for 1 or 2 hours). Mostly Maximilian Pichler is assisted by his **peers**.

Is there a need for specific training facilities for persons with visual disabilities?

In his opinion he does not know on the one hand which specific form of disability requires specific tools as mentioned before. On the other hand during all his school and professional education Maximilian was part of integrated systems, this means also together with not disabled children and adolescents. This aspect is perceived as something important to have contact with **non-disabled people** especially as cognitively and language related Maximilian is quite able to communicate and follow conversations and academic tasks of his peer group. So, a concrete answer related to this question has to a high extent depends on the **individual situation of everybody**.

Formative Level

What do you do (concretely) at your working place?

As his current "working place" is the school setting his primary goal, is to **achieve necessary academic skills** (in terms of **own competences**) and **exchange processes with peers**. Especially this second aspect is highlighted by Mr. Pichler, also related to future labour market integration.



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Result level

What do you produce?

Mr. Pichler points out, that for the moment this issue is not relevant for him.

Sustainability

However for the future he hopes, that he will be able to enter the labour market. He hopes to work in the area of art.

Maximilian Pichler agrees to mention his name in this interview.

Interview 3 with Mrs. Rauer

Date: 7.4.2011

Time: 9:00 – 9:50

Location: Early Childhood Intervention Centre for Visually Impaired Children, 8230 Hartberg

Information about the ViskiLab Project

Mrs. Rauer is the responsible early childhood intervention professional in the field of visually impaired and blind for this district. She is informed about the current Transfer of Innovation project.

Personally she states that she has not been involved in any kind of European project in her field.

Conceptual level

Mrs. Rauer states that parents generally accept the service for early childhood intervention for visually impaired and blind children very well, especially if there are isolated visual problems for the child.

The concept relies on early identification and early support processes towards prevention for the person with visual impairment and the relevant others (parents...)

How is the wellbeing of visually impaired people at work ensured?

By providing services very early and person-centred.

How are the individual needs of visually impaired people addressed?

Mrs. Rauer points out that children need a stable foundation in terms of stable, predictable base organisation

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Structural Level

Which infrastructure do you assess necessary related the working place?

The district's early childhood intervention centre provides preventive services for preschool children 0-6 years. It means assistance, support and stimulation is provided at **home** for visually impaired children. Mostly these children show complex multiple-disability. The service is free of charge mostly once for one and a half hours per week. The service is provided till the child with visual impairment or blindness will attend school. Therefore these specific services for children with visual disability is also provided during the time of kindergarten. Referrals towards the service: 90% come from the clinic for Ophthalmology, **partly regional ophthalmologists are referring children.**

Which human resources do you assess as necessary (, ratio Client/professional)

One professional usually attends 12-14 families, based on weekly 1,5h **home visits.**

Which specific tools/materials are necessary related to the working place?

Generally the referral of children towards these early preventive services works quite well, an exception are children with complex and multiple-disabilities, where the visual impairment might not be prominent and where parents might have problems to identify the visual impairment. This is especially related to children with central visual impairments. Specific **working tools relate e.g. to low vision stimulation or black-light boxes.**

Also the issue of **stability of services is addressed.**

Mrs. Rauer points out that children need a stable foundation in terms of stable, predictable base organisation. Furthermore, they need **high contrast**, so to avoid e.g. carpets with a lot of colours. Children with visual disability need a **lot of light** and parents who understand their needs.

Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary in your sector?

As a specialist in early childhood intervention she had to **pass a two-years-training course at university, then a three-years-specialisation related to visual impairment.** The diverse centres themselves in Styria created a network. Styria is the only of the Austrian provinces where diverse centres for visual impaired children are existing. In all other provinces the preventive support of children with visual impairment is centrally organised.

Formative level



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Which skills do you assess as necessary for the clients?

There are no necessary pre-requisites from the side of the clients, as every person with disability is entitled to have this service.

What are the concrete working steps?

- **assessing** the (pedagogical support) needs of the visually impaired child and of the family
- developing an **individual support plan**
- performing **weekly** home visits
- **reflecting** the ongoing processes with parents and relevant stakeholders (e.g. ophthalmologists)

Result level

What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work

The focus of Early Childhood Intervention for visually impaired children lies on the **empowerment/information of parent and developmental support /stimulation** for the child. Material products do not play a key role in this process. The goal is **prevention**.

Sustainability level

However, **coping** with the disability of a child is always a **process**. Mrs. Rauer highlights that 100% of the children at pre-school age stay with their parents as there are no institutions for children with visual impairment. Some parents might accept boarding school when the children are attending school. However, the majority of children with visual impairment are integrated in **mainstream** school. However, Mrs. Rauer points out that the support within mainstream integration for children with visual impairment is limited, it is about two hours per week by means of a special teacher for children with visual disabilities.

Mrs. Rauer points out that the **first two years of visual development** are the most important ones. As a professional she sees that preventive effects could be reached on the level of the visual impairment (that the children have better vision) and they can orient better, **be more autonomous and that the parents receive support**. Generally she evaluates that early childhood intervention for children is an effective service, most of the children with visual impairment will be mainstream integrated in the kindergarten system and mainstream integrated in the school system. Some exceptions might refer to children with severe complex learning disabilities.

Chances of Early Childhood Intervention related to Visually Impaired Children

Mrs. Rauner states that he sees a lot of chances related to visual competences, to **autonomic intervention** of children and related to mainstream integration of children of

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

visual impairment into the educational system. Furthermore, the counselling of parents, e.g. related to supportive tool etc. is important. Additionally to early intervention for visually impaired children parents of the children 0-6 might also obtain relieve services up to 5-6 hours a week. This is specifically connected with the degree of disability for the child. Furthermore, **cooperation** is performed with ophthalmologists, with counselling services, with the school system. Mrs. Rauer states that most of the children are mainstream integrated.

Development within the System towards Professional Integration into the Labour Market

Generally, Mrs. Rauer sees that the frequency of congenitally blind children is **decreasing**. She talks about 3-4 children in Styria at pre-school age. However, children with visual impairment and colour complex learning disability or complex needs are increasing in terms of very low birth-weight children. Related to the labour market Mrs. Rauer states that she does not have a lot of experiences with the integration of persons with visual disability into the labour market. The work of early childhood intervention is related to possible small steps in **prevention and not primarily to the labour market**. So this is the primary task of early childhood intervention. For most parents not the labour market for blind or visually impaired children is important but the school system.

Interview 4 with Christine Trummer, Special Educator

Date: 7.4.2011

Time: 11-12

Location: Heilpädagogischer Kindergarten Mitterdombach

Information about the background of the VisikLab Project for Mrs. Trummer

Conceptual level

Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to the working place of visual impaired people?

Generally every child with disability is **entitled** to attend the kindergarten in Styria. The kindergarten system itself differentiates diverse branches:

- a. **special** services which are organised based on groups containing 5 children with disability and 15 typically developed children. In this context a special educators and specific therapists are present most of the time.
- b. Possibility of mobile services for children with disability. These children are included in the **mainstream** services and are visited by mobile teams. For visual impaired children there is no specific kindergarten in Styria.

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Related to the future labour market inclusion of people with visual impairment Mrs. Trummer points out, that the **early promotion of participation** (within all life-settings) is important.

How is the wellbeing of visually impaired people at work ensured?

The wellbeing of persons with disability is ensured by means of **person-centred support** processes.

How are the individual needs of visually impaired people addressed?

By means of **individual support plans**

Structural level

Which infrastructure do you assess necessary related the working place

In this early stages of support no specific infrastructural adaptations are done.

Which human resources do you assess as necessary (ratio Client/professional)

Specific knowledge related to visually impaired children is given by the early childhood intervention centres which also assist and attend the kindergarten system. Generally the specialists point out that the assistance for children with visual impairment or blindness in the system **depends to a high degree on the individual needs of these children**. Mrs. Trummer points out that congenitally blind children are quite rare, usually children with multiple-disabilities or learning difficulties are attended.

Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary in your sector?

As pointed out the assistance in the kindergarten system depends to a high degree on whether the child is included in a special kindergarten, in a district center or in a mainstream kindergarten by means of mobile teams.

Mrs. Trummer points out that for the kindergarten system it is important that the child has a basal orientation, which at the very beginning of the **inclusion** in the kindergarten needs some time. Furthermore, order and **predictability** should be guaranteed. Also the facilities should be high **contrasted with a lot of lights**. In some facilities communication towards the typically developed children for example is ensured by specific items that the child with visual impairment or disability can recognise like the other diverse children. Related to possible curricula or individual family support plans, Mrs. Trummer points out that the **cooperation** with the parents is important, also the cooperation with the specialists in the specific early childhood centres. Professionals themselves working in the systems **do not have a specific training** related to visual impairment. Knowledge is shared within the transdisciplinary



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

teams. Mostly Mrs. Trummer points out that **parents** themselves can be seen as highly skilled and **experts** related to the support and assistance for their children.

Formative level

Which skills do you assess as necessary for the clients?

Every persons is addressed **individually**, therefore individual **skills are empowered**

What are the concrete working steps

Social-emotional and **peer-related** group processes (welcome, time for own activities, group-focused activities..)

Result level

What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work?

Mrs. Trummer identifies the preventive effect of **good information for the typically developed children**, that the children are better prepared for the schooling systems and that the major focus is given to the development of **autonomy** for visually impaired children to enable a **self determined** life.

Interview 5 with G.U. (37 years old)

G.U. suffers from congenital blindness and obtains some visual perceptions, however she calls herself blind. She is working in a governmental office and it is planned to talk about conceptual or structural requirements related to work and other working places also in the sector of arts and crafts of blind persons or persons with visual impairment. The interview was administered on the 6th of June 2011 and lasted one hour.

Conceptual level

Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to your working place as visual impaired person?

Important for G.U. on the conceptual level are **tools**, which enable her to deal with work related tasks. G.U. is talking for example about Braille tools for her computer and a speech processor related to reading processes during her work process. Furthermore she highlights the usage of a scanner which scans text files into Braille related documents.

What do you like most at your working place?

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Related to other conceptual requirements she highlights the possibility of **one week more holiday**s and some systems related to **leisure time activities**

Structural level

How should your working place be organised?

Related to structural issues of her working place **lightening systems** are not relevant as she does not perceive high variants of visual stimuli.

Who is assisting you at your workplace?

Related to the art sector G.U. highlights the necessity of **good training and preparation** of blind or visually impaired persons. She herself performed diverse training courses. In this context she highlights the ECDL which represented a big success for her. On the other hand she highlights that other courses were not so adequate for her. Also in the sector of crafts and art G.U. highlights the **need for matching of the interests and needs** of persons with disability and the work processes.

Which materials/tools do you need at work?

Related to other structural issues she highlights the necessity of **auditory signals**, e.g. related to traffic lights and training related to mobility. Especially any kind of change within the work place she perceives as challenging and obtains **mobility training** if there are any changes related to her work place.

Formative Level

What do you have to know to do your work?

GU describes, that she is primarily active within the field of office management.

Result level

What do you “produce”?

As G.U. also works in the sector of telephone administration she highlights that a specific training in the field of communication was necessary. In this context she highlights that also in the sector of crafts and arts **communication skills** are very important, especially related to the contact to **persons without disability**.

How do you know, that your work has good quality?

GU obtains **feedback** by the colleagues.

Sustainability



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

G.U. highlights that she is very interested in attending flea markets and therefore needs some assistance to look for suitable things. Related to her life she describes that she is living autonomously, she has good social contact to her boyfriend and she spends holidays together with him in the mountains. She highlights that her boyfriend is also visually impaired.

8.2 Interviews performed in Italy

English transcript of interviews performed in Italy

Interview 1

name and surname: TERESA POLITO

location: Trieste

role: Specialized Educator Assistant at Istituto Regionale Rittmeyer per i Ciechi

interview date: 08/07/2011

length: 30'

Introduction

The interviewer Ms Federica Marchesich explains to the education coordinator the Viskilab project and the current data gathering concerning training and employment of visually impaired people.

CONCEPTUAL LEVEL

What do you consider indispensable for a good job placement?

Ms Polito points out that there must be three fundamental assumptions that lead to a good job placement for a visually impaired person, which are **availability of the Institutions to offer jobs** to visually impaired people, **training** and an **operative and personal autonomy**.

By which means the operative well-being of visually impaired can be established?

Ms Polito talks about the need to have an **environment adequately prepared** to welcome a visually impaired person

Which are the methods and programmes to guarantee a good job placement?

Ms Polito talks about the need for the visually impaired person of an **initial coaching** and of a **specific training about the instrumentation used in the working environment**

STRUCTURAL LEVEL

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Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Which infrastructures do you consider as necessary on a working place?

When asked about infrastructures Ms Polito underlines the need of **lifts wide enough** for those suffering from mobility disability along with the visual impairment, but also the need of **platforms, maps, indicators and signposting of visually impaired people environment**.

Which are the human resources that guarantee a good job placement?

Ms Polito says that the human resources necessary to guarantee a good job placement is the **availability of tutors and supervisors**, as well as **colleagues and contacts ready to help**.

Which new generation technologies are indispensable for a good job placement?

When asked about technologies to enable a good job placement for visually impaired people Ms Polito points out that there are some useful devices that can help a lot a visually impaired person to work well, like **audio devices**, **video magnifiers** and **ergonomic workstations**

FORMATIVE LEVEL

Which skills do applicants need to have for a good job placement?

Ms Polito lists a series of skills that are necessary for a good job placement, that are **proficiency, relational capacity and good disposition to interpersonal relationships**.

Which are the necessary achievements for a good job placement?

Ms Polito considers the **adaptability to environment** and the **operational capacity** as fundamental achievements for a good job placement.

RESULT LEVEL

Which are the operative/relational characteristics that are necessary for a worker?

In Ms Polito's opinion there are three characteristics that a worker must have, or develop, from the operative and relational point view and these are **autonomy**, **planning and organizational skills** and **relational capacity**.

SUSTAINABILITY

By which steps does a switchboard operator work at his/her best?

When asked about the steps a visually impaired person has to take Ms Polito talks about the need for a visually impaired person to **acquire knowledges**, **practical experience** and have a **motivation**.



Interview 2

name and surname: EMANUELA FRANZUTTI

location: Trieste

role: Specialized Educator Assistant at Istituto Regionale Rittmeyer per i Ciechi

interview date: 11/07/2011

length: 30'

Introduction

The interviewer Ms Federica Marchesich explains to the Educator Assistant the Viskilab project and the current data gathering concerning training and employment of visually impaired people.

CONCEPTUAL LEVEL

What do you consider indispensable for a good job placement?

Among the most important things for a good job placement Ms Franzutti considers indispensable these three things listed in order of importance: **professionalism**, **autonomy** and **co-operation**.

By which means the operative well-being of visually impaired can be established?

Ms Franzutti thinks that in order to establish the well-being of the visually impaired there's the need of an **initial coaching** along with **checking out that the environment is actually suitable for a visually impaired person**.

Which are the methods and programmes to guarantee a good job placement?

A good job placement is guaranteed by preparing **education and training** on the base of the worker's needs and the role he/she is in charge of.

STRUCTURAL LEVEL

Which infrastructures do you consider as necessary on a working place?

The working place must be **without architectural barriers** and must provide **access to disabled people**.

Which are the human resources that guarantee a good job placement?

When thinking about human resources of the applicants Ms Franzutti talks about **adaptability, acceptance of the own personal limits and good disposition**.

Which new generation technologies are indispensable for a good job placement?

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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Ms Franzutti refers to **Personal Computers** and their usage with **special aids** and **software** for visually impaired people.

FORMATIVE LEVEL

Which skills do applicants need to have for a good job placement?

In Ms Franzutti's opinion applicants need to show **adaptability, working capacity** as well as **being able to interact with colleagues and public**.

Which are the necessary achievements for a good job placement?

Ms Franzutti thinks there are three fundamental achievements for an applicant and these are **proficiency, autonomy and effective communication**.

RESULT LEVEL

Which are the operative/relational characteristics that are necessary for a worker?

The most important characteristics for a worker are **integration, production and participation**.

SUSTAINABILITY

By which steps does an artisan work at his/her best?

Ms Franzutti thinks that an artisan is able to improve by **daily practice** in order to develop his/her manual ability and hand mobility and by **projecting the artefact, preparing its various parts and finishing it**.

Interview 3

Name and surname: MARINA BERNICH

location: Trieste

role: Specialized Educator Assistant at Istituto Regionale Rittmeyer per i Ciechi

interview date: 11/07/2011

length: 30'

Introduction

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

The interviewer Ms Federica Marchesich explains to the Educator Assistant the Viskilab project and the current data gathering concerning training and employment of visually impaired people.

CONCEPTUAL LEVEL

What do you consider indispensable for a good job placement?

Ms Bernich when asked about fundamental points for a good job placement underlines the need of a **good professional preparation** for the applicant, the **good disposition** from the employer, being able to **recognize the own personal limits**.

By which means the operative well-being of visually impaired can be established?

Ms Bernich points out that the operative well-being can be established by the **willingness to listen**, **empathy and being welcoming**.

Which are the methods and programmes to guarantee a good job placement?

In Ms Bernich's opinion there aren't special methods but only the **common sense**. By an **initial inspection of the working place** and after knowing the worker you can then **prepare the environment** and **prevent situations of unsuitability** through a period of **coaching**.

STRUCTURAL LEVEL

Which infrastructures do you consider as necessary on a working place?

The Educator Assistant states that it depends on the working place, if it's very big part from the lifts other things could be useful like **tactile signs, raised relief maps**.

Which are the human resources that guarantee a good job placement?

Regarding human resources to guarantee a good job placement Ms Bernich thinks about the **good disposition** by managers and colleagues

Which new generation technologies are indispensable for a good job placement?

When asked about technologies to facilitate a good job placement Ms Bernich talks about an **adapted personal computer with aids and programs for blind and partially sighted people**, like the **braille bar**, the **vocal synthesizer** and **magnifying programs**, that shouldn't be in conflict with each other.

FORMATIVE LEVEL

Which skills do applicants need to have for a good job placement?

When asked about the applicant skills Ms Bernich lists three abilities: **professional capacity** as well as **relational skills** and **autonomy**.



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Which are the necessary achievements for a good job placement?

The necessary achievements must be the **good acquaintance with the work to do, having actually improved the necessary abilities to carry it out.**

RESULT LEVEL

Which are the operative/relational characteristics that are necessary for a worker?

In Ms Bernich's opinion the three operative/relational characteristics indispensable for a worker are **autonomy, relational skills and professionalism.**

SUSTAINABILITY

By which steps does a switchboard operator or an artisan work at his/her best?

Ms Bernich states that the steps for an applicant to take in order to work at his/her best are **education, personal motivation and experience.**

Interview 4

name and surname: ALESSANDRA BORGHESE
location: Trieste
role: switchboard operator
interview date: 08/07/2011
length: 30'

Introduction

The interviewer Ms Federica Marchesich explains to Ms Alessandra Borghese the Viskilab project and the current data gathering concerning training and employment of visually impaired people.

CONCEPTUAL LEVEL

What is most important for you on your working place?

Ms Alessandra Borghese states that what's most important is a **comfortable environment**

What do you like most of your working place?

What Ms Borghese likes best is the **relationship with her colleagues**

Do you consider necessary being helped on your working place? If you do, by whom and in which way?

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Ms Borghese answers that she considers it necessary and that **assistance should come from an experienced person** that should help her when in difficulty.

STRUCTURAL LEVEL

How should your working place be organised?

From a structural point of view Ms Borghese underlines the importance of the **absence of architectural barriers**.

Do you need assistance or are you autonomous?

Ms Borghese admits she isn't autonomous and **needs assistance** to go to the toilet.

Which are the technologies that you need on your working place?

Ms Borghese says she doesn't need any technology in particular.

FORMATIVE LEVEL

Which are the skills that you have to have for a good job placement?

Ms Borghese says that having a **nice presence** helps but fundamentally the **approach to the customer** is what matters most.

Which are your training phases that influence most your current job placement?

Ms Borghese states that the most influent training phase is the **internship**.

RESULT LEVEL

In your opinion which are the operative/relational characteristics to perform your current job?

Ms Borghese says that having a **nice voice** is important, but also showing a **good disposition** to colleagues and public and having received a **good training** are equally important.

SUSTAINABILITY

From what do you understand that the work you performed has a good quality?

Ms Borghese understands it from **how colleagues and public respond** to her work.

Interview 5

name and surname: FRANCESCA MINCA



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

location: Trieste
role: switchboard operator
interview date: 08/07/2011
length: 30'

Introduction

The interviewer Ms Federica Marchesich explains to Ms Francesca Minca the Viskilab project and the current data gathering concerning training and employment of visually impaired people.

CONCEPTUAL LEVEL

What is most important for you on your working place?

Ms Minca says that what's most important for her is the **environment**.

What do you like most of your working place?

On her working place what Ms Minca likes most is the **cooperation between colleagues**.

Do you consider necessary being helped on your working place? If you do, by whom and in which way?

Ms Minca says she **needs to be helped by colleagues** when in difficulty.

STRUCTURAL LEVEL

How should your working place be organised?

Ms Minca talks about the importance of **absence of architectural barriers**, while there's the need of a **computer with vocal synthesizer**.

Do you need assistance or are you autonomous?

Ms Minca refers to be autonomous for carrying out the work but **needs assistance for her movements**.

Which are the technologies that you need on your working place?

Ms Minca says she needs a **computer with vocal synthesizer**.

FORMATIVE LEVEL

Which are the skills that you have to have for a good job placement?

Ms Minca says the most important skills are first of all **good disposition** and **communicative skills**.

Which are your training phases that influence most your current job placement?

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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Ms Minca considers the **internship** very important.

RESULT LEVEL

In your opinion which are the operative/relational characteristics to perform your current job?

Ms Minca lists three things which are **proficiency**, a **fair relationship with the colleagues** and the public and **problem solving ability**.

SUSTAINABILITY

From what do you understand that the work you performed has a good quality?

Ms Minca can understand whether her work quality is good from the **compliments** she receives.

Interview 6

name and surname: Michel Tomasevic
location: Trieste
role: trainee for switchboard operator
interview date: 12/07/2011
length: 30'

Introduction

The interviewer Ms Federica Marchesich explains to Mr Michel Tomasevic the Viskilab project and the current data gathering concerning training and employment of visually impaired people.

CONCEPTUAL LEVEL

What is most important for you on your working place?

Mr Tomasevic underlines the importance of **having an environment with adapted devices** for visually impaired people.

What do you like most of your working place?

Mr Tomasevic isn't employed at the moment.

Do you consider necessary being helped on your working place? If you do, by whom and in which way?

He considers it necessary, above all he says he **needs suggestions from the colleagues** in order to improve his working skills.



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

STRUCTURAL LEVEL

How should your working place be organised?

Mr Tomasevic, apart from the need of a **proper personal computer**, would like to have a **device for him to take notes**.

Do you need assistance or are you autonomous?

He says that for the first period he **needs to be accompanied** to his working place.

Which are the technologies that you need on your working place?

Mr Tomasevic underlines the need of a **personal computers with braille bar and vocal synthesizer**.

FORMATIVE LEVEL

Which are the skills that you have to have for a good job placement?

When asked about the skills to have Mr Tomasevic says that **being patient** is always very important but it's important to **show responsibility** and have **good operative abilities**.

Which are your training phases that influence most your current job placement?

Mr Tomasevic considers of fundamental importance in his training **having learnt how to use a personal computer and developed a good language and socializing ability**.

RESULT LEVEL

In your opinion which are the operative/relational characteristics to perform your current job?

Mr Tomasevic considers **kindness**, **good disposition** and **adaptability** as the necessary characteristics to perform the job.

SUSTAINABILITY

From what do you understand that the work you performed has a good quality?

Mr Tomasevic understands that the work is of a good quality from **how customers respond** to it and from the **amount of work finished** within the established terms having taken the proper ways.

8.3 Interviews performed in Slovenia

Transcript of interviews performed in Slovenia

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Interview 1: M.Ž.

Interview date: 10.8.2011

Interview time: 12.40

Age: 33

MŽ suffers from low vision with less than 10% remaining sight. He finished a 4-year Secondary school for economic technicians in 2001.

Employment : January 2005 - Octobre 2008

He was employed at the Local office of the Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia as an assistant of the secretary, through the system of public works.

Conceptual Level

1. *What is most important for you at your workplace?*

I think most important is the feeling of participation and being useful. Members of the Association didn't know where to find some information, how to deal with some problems. So we all benefited, the members obtained the information they had requested for, and I felt useful.

2. *What do you like best at your workplace?*

What I liked very much was the **contact with people** of all ages, from school age children to elder people. They all had their wishes, needs and rights to deal with. There were only 3 employees, so we got on well.

3. *How are your individual needs being a person with visual impairment addressed at your workplace?*

My visual impairment was taken into account, because I was employed at the local office of our Association, it was probably easier and I didn't have any problems. If I had been employed at another institution, it would probably have been different. I have some experience when I applied for jobs and **attended job interviews.** **Experiences are positive and negative.** However, **I felt a different attitude** due to my impairment. When they got the information about my impairment, I think, they started to feel afraid, I had the feeling that they did not actually want to bother with me. For example, I didn't have my own transport, etc. ... and then they prefer to employ a sighted person, because they have fewer problems and less bureaucracy. In one case, I would have been employed so that they could have received the subsidy, but they could not tell me what kind of work I would actually do, besides that, with the expire of the subsidy, it would be likely to remain without a job - it had discouraged me ... Many employers also expect you to have enough knowledge to begin working



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

immediately and that you know everything, but this is difficult, because you do not have experience. I think that experience is a major problem when looking for a job.

Structural level

1. *Do you think work could be better organised at your workplace and how?*

I think it was **well organised** and there were no needs to improve it. Sometimes I worked on my own and there were no problems.

2. *Who is assisting you at your workplace?*

The secretary usually offered to help me, she gave me a hand and provided me with the information necessary to do the job, she told me where to find the information and other things.

3. *Which materials/tools do you need at your workplace to do the job?*

I needed **a bigger screen and a hand magnifier**. There was no need for other adjustments.

I didn't need ZoomText because it was enough to use larger fonts. You just have to put more effort into your work.

Formative level

1. *What do you have to know to do your work?*

I needed some **general knowledge, ICT skills** (word, excel, the Internet, e-mail), some knowledge about our **legislation**, how to enforce the individual rights in the field of social welfare, at Pension and Disability Insurance Institute.

2. *What do you do (concretely) at your workplace?*

I wrote formal letters, assisted when preparing project proposal to apply for a new project, I provided our members with some information how to enforce their individual rights, I helped with secretarial work. I also worked in the field of sport, so I organised different sport activities and events e.g. showdown, bowling, chess.

Result level

1. *What are the actual results of your work?*

The results of my work were mainly seen in **the response of our members** in providing information and offering practical assistance needed by the individuals. I was employed through public works, after the expiry of four years of service it could

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

no longer be extended, so I was left without a job. Then I retired benefiting the invalidity pension.

Sustainability

1. How do you know, that your work has good quality?

I could see this especially from the feedback of my superiors - the President of the local office of the Association and our secretary, as well as by response of our members. They were all satisfied with my work. However, the fact is that, when I didn't know how to do something I had asked my secretary or the President, before I passed on the information.

Interview 2: J.P.

Interview date: 31.08.2011

Location: in VDC (Occupational activity centre) Škofja Loka

The boy was visited at the Occupational activity centre in Škoja Loka. His parents bring him daily to the Centre.

J.P. attended Primary school with lower standard of knowledge at The Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana. He spent some time in VDC Kranj, organisational unit Mavrica. When a new unit in Škofja Loka was established, he joined it.

He is blind, with some remaining sight.

He has been in VDC since September 2003 or 2004, and in Škofja Loka since January 2010.

Conceptual Level

1. What is most important for you at your workplace?

I think most important is to do exercise, to do some work, to be with friends and to have fun.

We are environmentally friendly, so we take care of our environment, we separate the rubbish.

2. What do you like best at your workplace?

I like doing exercise, going somewhere and that other people visit us.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

3. *How are your individual needs being a person with visual impairment addressed at your workplace?*

They all help me. Now, I can go around the building independently – I can get oriented myself. All the tasks I have to do are somehow related to the touch.

Structural level

1. *Do you think work could be better organised at your workplace and how?*

I am satisfied. Everything is OK. I get on well with everyone, the atmosphere is better than in Mavrica, besides that it is closer to my home.

2. *Who is assisting you at your workplace?*

The instructor and all the staff help me. I also try to help the others as much as I can.

3. *Which materials/tools do you need at your workplace to do the job?*

I need instructions how to do the task. The instructor prepares the material. I need to talk and listen to music while working. The food is served to me.

Formative level

1. *What do you have to know to do your work?*

They find me jobs I am able to do. They show me first how to do the job.

3. *What do you do (concretely) at your workplace?*

I assemble strings for mobile phones. That is something I can do. I assemble folders for Mladinska knjiga. I am not good at making pottery. I assemble plastic parts for telephones. We sing. There are music workshops and a choir.

Result level

1. *What are the actual results of your work?*

I am a bit slow. They have to control my work. Sometimes I make a mistake. But I get some financial compensation/reward. About 10 EUR. It's enough for me. I'm not very demanding. I spend the money for a pizza.

Sustainability

1. *How do you know, that your work has good quality?*

I always do my job very well. They always commend on my work.



Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

The employer

Interview 3: Employer A.V. about J.P.

Employer's address: Varstveno delovni center Kranj (Occupational activity Centre Kranj), enota Škofja Loka (Organisational unit Škofja Loka), Stara Loka 31, 4220 Škofja Loka

There are 38 clients in the unit, one of them is partially sighted and one is blind.

Interview date: 31.08.2011

Conceptual Level

1. *Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to the employment of visual impaired people?*

The biggest obstacle is orientation in the environment. There was **a lot of assistance needed to get him oriented in the building**. Now he can do it well and there are no problems.

2. *How is the wellbeing of visually impaired people at work ensured?*

There is **a limited selection of tasks that J.P. is able to perform. He does less work, products have to be checked more carefully**. The main concern of these workshops is to take care of our clients, they are not profitably oriented. He likes listening to the radio, **so they let him listen to foreign radio channels. He also attends other groups in order to have contacts with other clients, he enjoys talking.**

3. *How is individual support for a visually impaired person ensured at work?*

J.P. has **a personal assistant. He needs help at any work**. When he goes for a walk he is accompanied by an employee. He joined Pilates and yoga club where he also shows some exercise. He wants to be more successful than others from time to time..

Structural level

1. **Which conditions have to be fulfilled when a visually impaired person is employed?**

A visually impaired client has to be given the work he is able to perform or that he is assisted to such a degree that he is successful. He needs positive feedback.



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

2. What kind of relationships are needed within the institution when a visually impaired person is employed?

J.P. knows how to communicate his needs. Sometimes he disappears and we look for him around the building. We are responsible for him, so we really don't want he hurts himself.

3. Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary when a blind client is employed?

Mental disability is the only condition that a person is involved in VDC. He doesn't need any skills or specific knowledge. The process is person-oriented, we try to find work, tasks he is able to learn and he is able to perform.

Formative level

1. Which skills do you assess as necessary for the clients?

Everything, all the steps in the work process have to be learnt. We are doing our best to develop new skills and to maintain the skills they have acquired. We put a lot of effort into building higher self-esteem. I mean, for the blind as well. They must find out their work is also very important.

2. What are the tasks that your blind client has to perform?

There are two phases in the process of assembling mobile phones: he inserts the string and he puts in a loop, besides that he assembles folders for Mladinska knjiga.

Result level

1. What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work?

He needs more time to do his tasks. The results are worse qualitatively and quantitatively.

Sustainability

1. What do you have to do to ensure the quality of the products?

He works less, products should be checked. He needs a lot of encouragement. We must be careful to redirect his attention when we notice that he hasn't acquired the



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

necessary skills yet because he gets nervous. We change the activity and later, perhaps after a day, come back to learn the new skills. Like others, he does not like to be unsuccessful.

Interview 4: T.D.

Interview date: 31.08.2011

Location: VDC Škofja Loka

The boy was visited at the Occupational activity centre in Škoja Loka. He commutes every day. During the academic year he stays from 7.00 am to 2.30 pm, during the holidays from 7.30 to 2.00. the transport is organised.

T.D. attended Primary school with lower standard of knowledge at The Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana.

He is partially sighted with 25% remaining sight.

He joined VDC Škofja Loka in 2003.

Conceptual Level

1. What is most important for you at your workplace?

I think most important is **to get on well, to be together every day**. There are 4 workshops and A. (A. is in charge of VDC Škoja Loka) changes the group members from time to time. In some rooms I feel well, in others not so well. It depends who I am with in the group.

2. What do you like best at your workplace?

I like working. We produced sliders for trailers, we packed them by 10 or 16 and we closed each package using a welder. We also produce parts for mobile phones.

3. How are your individual needs being a person with visual impairment addressed at your workplace?

I do the jobs I'm able to do. There are no other adaptations, but it's OK. We also paste codes on the folders for Mladinska knjiga. The rooms are very bright here, because the building used to be a school for the visually impaired.

Structural level

4. Do you think work could be better organised at your workplace and how?

It can't be any better. It is done the way they want it to. They don't fulfill our wishes.



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

5. *Who is assisting you at your workplace?*

There are instructors and A. They help us.

6. *Which materials/tools do you need at your workplace to do the job?*

We have special pliers for sliders. Otherwise it could not be put together. I have a special higher desk for my size. We all have protective clothing and shoes. Mine have been made to order, because I wear such a big size of shoes. I have my own locker where I keep my things. We, who commute, we get just a snack, and those who are in a residential home, they get all meals.

Formative level

2. *What do you have to know to do your work?*

You must be skillful and precise enough. You must get used to work. There is an instructor for each workshop, who explains how to carry out the task. I can't do everything because I'm not so skillful, for example I can't insert the string for mobile phones.

4. *What do you do (concretely) at your workplace?*

I pasted codes on the folders for Mladinska knjiga, we used to produce plugs. Many different works have already been performed, but we don't do them anymore. We cleaned copper, which was then sold, we threw away the plastic part. When there is nothing to do we sew, color coloring books, go for a walk, now we are moulding the clay into bells. They are baked and painted afterwards. They hang them on the string. I'm using tongs to twist a copper wire for the flowers that we're producing for the Post of Slovenia.

Result level

2. *What are the actual results of your work?*

We're working for Mladinska knjiga now. We sell the products. Pottery is best paid, and we get the least money for sliders and mobile phones' clips. I get some financial compensation/reward at the end of the month. Up to 50 EUR.

Sustainability

1. *How do you know, that your work has good quality?*

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

They say I'm too precise. If it doesn't look well it has to be corrected. They say I shouldn't complicate so much.

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Interview 5: Employer A.V. about T.D.

Employer's address: Varstveno delovni center Kranj (Occupational activity Centre Kranj), enota Škofja Loka (Organisational unit Škofja Loka), Stara Loka 31, 4220 Škofja Loka

There are 38 clients in the unit, one of them is partially sighted and one is blind.

Interview date: 31.08.2011

Conceptual Level

- 1. Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to the employment of visual impaired people?*

The partially sighted use adapted tools. T.D. doesn't need special adjustments due to his eyesight. He knows how to live with his impairment. He wears glasses and that's enough. He is well oriented around the building. All he needs is a higher desk.

- 2. How is the wellbeing of visually impaired people at work ensured?*

T.D. has a higher desk, but in general, the place is adapted for the visually impaired since visually impaired students used to live here. There are no architectural obstacles, there are even lifts for those with physical impairment. We always keep to the right side when walking along the corridors or up and down the stairs.

- 3. How is individual support for a visually impaired person ensured at work?*

There is always an instructor who can help T.D. when he needs help. T.D. is able to perform most of the task. We are very careful that all our clients are given manageable tasks. When we spend our winter or summer holidays, not only instructors but also other professionals might accompany our clients.

Structural level

- 1. Which conditions have to be fulfilled when a visually impaired person is employed?*

Only a visually impaired client **with mental disability** can be involved in VDC. He has to be given the work **he is able to perform** or that he is assisted to such a degree that he is successful. He needs **positive feedback**.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

2. What kind of relationships are needed within the institution when a visually impaired person is employed?

All the members of our staff have to have a special feeling for people with special needs, they have to be able to accept people who are different, otherwise they can't work at our institution.

3. Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary when a partially sighted client is employed?

Mental disability is the only condition that a person is involved in VDC. He doesn't need any skills or specific knowledge. The process is person-oriented, we try to find work, tasks he is able to learn and he is able to perform.

Formative level

1. Which skills do you assess as necessary for the clients?

Everything, all the steps in the work process have to be learnt. A large part of our programme represents our own products, other products are part of cooperation. This part is getting smaller and smaller. We also develop tools that our clients need to perform certain steps in the production of the product. T.D. is afraid to be unsuccessful, so he needs a lot of encouragement in order to learn something new. He's very happy when he acquires new skills and he likes working. We put a lot of effort into building higher self-esteem. They must find out their work is also very important.

2. What are the tasks that your blind client has to perform?

As he is very precise, we believe he is able to check other products. He has already painted flowers, produced rings for flowers, assembled plastic parts of mobile phones, but he preferred the production of sliders, which has almost stopped.

Result level

1. What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work?

T.D. has very good results at checking the products. He is not so successful regarding the quantity because he's so precise and he wants to be 100% at work.

Sustainability

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Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

2. *What do you have to do to ensure the quality of the products?*

The training process should be long enough so that he can learn how to do the job properly.

Interview 6: H.V.

Interview date: 30.08.2011

Location: at home

The boy was visited at his home at Č. V. – a lovely village with a church, school and elder people's home. Not far away from the church, there is nicely arranged, all in flowers a tourist farm, where he lives with his parents and his two brothers. One of his brothers has already got married and does not live in their household any more. V. started schooling at his hometown but before the end of the first grade he was involved in the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana and he continued at the Center for the Blind and Partially Sighted in Škofja Loka. He finished a two-year school programme for a carpenter. Due to his visual impairment he could not continue schooling in this profession.

Partially sighted (his left eye - 25% remaining sight, his right eye – complete loss of sight)

He was employed in Kolektor, a social enterprise Ascom Idrija, from 1996 to January 2011.

The enterprise employs disabled worker and other people with disabilities. Now he receives a disability pension.

Conceptual Level

1. *What is most important for you at your workplace?*

I don't know what to say. Everything was important. His mother: He lived for Kolektor.

2. *What do you like best at your workplace?*

I liked best that there were jobs I was able to do.

3. *How are your individual needs being a person with visual impairment addressed at your workplace?*

For a few years there was a production of solar panels, which were curved shape, we called them horses. Working with them was easy. There were many different tasks I performed: I sorted them, packed them in the containers, assembled the simple ones. This production was moved to Bosnia later. I had to be very precise



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

at work. We had a norm. They took account of my limitations, so my norm was 85%. Even physically they were willing to help. I couldn't lift heavy boxes, but they were always willing to help. I had to keep a record of what I did.

Structural level

1. *Do you think work could be better organised at your workplace and how?*

It couldn't be better. They had to struggle for each business. It got worse each year. Due to my low vision I couldn't perform certain tasks any more, the simple jobs were moved elsewhere. There was less and less work I could do.

2. *Who is assisting you at your workplace?*

All my colleagues were ready to help. I also helped them. We got on very well.

3. *Which materials/tools do you need at your workplace to do the job?*

I needed protective clothing, shoes, I didn't need more light, because the space was bright enough. I had enough work space, I only had to withdraw when they brought in a new crate and shook the contents onto the table, to avoid a risk of an accident. Sometimes it happened that a forklift truck missed the table and the parts fell to the ground. Then we had to collect them. This was time-consuming work.

Formative level

1. *What do you have to know to do your work?*

I needed trained touch, manual skills and precision. They showed me what and how I should perform the task and I tried. The very first month I exceeded my norm. They told me to work more slowly, because it was harmful for the others to raise the norm. I didn't need other skills. I used my touch much more than I used my sight. Often, while I was assembling the products I was watching through the window. I had to keep a record of everything I did in one day, I had to complete the charts (sorting, folding, assembling ...)

2. *What do you do (concretely) at your workplace?*

I sorted the parts, I assembled the parts of solar panels. Later on I couldn't assemble the parts of certain panels any more, because I didn't see enough. A hand magnifier didn't help. I packed the parts putting them into the containers, I helped the others.

Result level

1. *What are the actual results of your work?*

Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

To **achieve the norm** assembling the parts or packing. I had to be precise and the work had to be done well. Some items were removed due to poor quality of copper and they were put in another container. The process of assembling and packing had to be done very precisely.

Sustainability

1. How do you know, that your work has good quality?

They were satisfied with my work. But the recession could be felt in Kolektor, too. The phases of the work process that used to be done manually are now done by machines, and only one worker is needed to supervise the production. There was no work for me any more. In fact I was lucky. I worked four hours a day for the last three years, and then I retired this January.

What does your mother say about this?

We are grateful that V. could work so long and earn his pension. We are grateful that they were so understanding at Kolektor Ascom and that they were prepared to employ him. In this respect, M. H. and K. W. helped a lot.

Now, when he is retired, he helps in our tourist farm. When he was still working, he used to take a bus for Idrija at five in the morning and he got back at three pm. It meant a lot to him to have a job. He liked to go there, he lived for Kolektor. At home he helps making žlinkrofi (a special kind of pasta). Precision, manual skills and speed are what make him good at this job. I've taught him how to prepare simple dishes for example how to cook a sausage, make dumplings and žlikrofi. His daily chores are also to take out the rubbish, hang and fold the laundry. He doesn't like putting the dishes into the dishwasher. He's afraid that he might drop the plastic framework with plates and the plates would smash.

Each time when doing a household chore I think how it could be done by V. If it seems to me, that my son would be able to do it I teach him. I wish there were a lot of things he would be able to do, so that he would become as independent as possible.

However, it is not good that V. doesn't go to work. He's hardworking, but he is at home. If you go to work, you have to get up at a certain time, get dressed and leave home. The worst part is that V. does not socialize enough. It is not good that he is so lonely. When he was employed, he came into contact with different people and he liked it. He needs company, but he doesn't have any friends.

Interview 7: E.V.

EV is blind. He finished secondary school for administrative workers – switchboard operators. He worked as a switchboard operator for a year and a half. He was replacing an employee being on maternity leave. He has been working as a



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

switchboard operator at the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute since 1996, having a permanent job.

Interview date: 6.9.2011 at 12.45

Conceptual Level

1. *What is most important for you at your workplace?*

I think the most important is **cooperation among colleagues** at work. If you get on well with them, you like working and you work better.

2. *What do you like best at your workplace?*

What I like best is **to have a job**. And secondly, that my employer is very understanding about the adaptations I need at work.

3. *How are your individual needs being a person with visual impairment addressed at your workplace?*

They take a good care of my special needs as **I have received all special equipment** that I need due to my impairment. They fully respect my special needs, especially regarding technical adaptations, I mean adapted computer software and hardware.

Structural level

1. *Do you think work could be better organised at your workplace and how?*

I think it **couldn't be better since I have all the equipment I need** to do my job.

2. *Who is assisting you at your workplace?*

Mostly my **colleagues**. We help each other and we cooperate. I ask my boss only when I have a formal demand, e.g. if I need to go out to settle my personal matters, if I need to request him something or if I need some material (e.g. paper) Regarding our work I only ask my colleagues or the manager of ICT department.

3. *Which materials/tools do you need at your workplace to do the job?*

I need a **Braille display, a computer with adapted software for the blind (Jaws), and adapted equipment for the switchboard**

Formative level

3. *What do you have to know to do your work?*

School for switchboard operators, Braille, ICT and how to deal with customers. You have to be independent, so that you don't need help to move around



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

4. What do you do (concretely) at your workplace?

I answer telephone calls and put them through. There are clients calling and asking for different pieces of information. About receiving their pensions, seeking professional advice, etc. My task is to connect them with the right member of our professional staff so that the client receives the information he needs.

Result level

1. What are the actual results of your work?

Specially the satisfaction of our clients, who call, their responses. But also the satisfaction of my superiors.

Sustainability

1. How do you know, that your work has good quality?

Because there are no complaints from the clients, the employees or my superiors.

Interview 8: Employer about E.V.

Location: Pension and Disability Insurance Institute.

Interview date: 6.9.2011 at 12.10

Interview with the head of the switchboard department and personnel manager.

Conceptual Level

1. Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to the employment of visual impaired people?

That person needs adapted working environment, workplace, adapted equipment, if necessary, adapted working hours and some adjustments regarding his arrival to work. EV, a blind employee, works full-time (40 hours a week), which is the same as for everyone else. He has the equipment he works with adapted to his impairment, specifically, adapted ICT for the blind. He does not need any special adjustments coming to and leaving his workplace because he is independent. If he needs some information, it is provided by his colleagues.

2. How is the wellbeing of visually impaired people at work ensured?



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

To provide a friendly working environment, adapted technology, a switchboard, adapted software for the blind. The employed blind person is entitled to annual training related to his work, specifically, safety at work, communication with clients, mobbing, and preventive health examination, as provided by law. The possibilities for education and training are the same as for all other employees. We have an adapted lift with special audible equipment. We are doing our best to create a friendly working environment for the visually impaired.

3. How is individual support for a visually impaired person ensured at work?

Assistance is provided by the nearest employees with whom he works, as well as by his superiors. The other employees know basic information concerning visual impairment. E.g. they know they have to remove obstacles in the corridors and other rooms, if needed. We also cooperate with the caretaker in a case of works, renovation, etc.. so that he sets the appropriate indications and warns EV.

Structural level

1. Which conditions have to be fulfilled when a visually impaired person is employed?

Especially adapted software and hardware should be provided, as well as adapted working environment, where they could be as independent as possible, as few obstacles as possible, an adapted lift, etc.

4. What kind of relationships are needed within the institution when a visually impaired person is employed?

A visually impaired person should be respected as all the employees. He should be introduced to other employees, and they should pay attention if he needs help. But what is most important is to accept him as he is.

5. Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary when a partially sighted client is employed?

This was not a new situation for us, since we had already had a blind employee. We only had to improve our knowledge in this field. The first blind person was employed at the Institute in 1975, and I believe, there is a tradition of employing the visually impaired. He works a lot on improving computer technology and adapted equipment, so that we have already introduced several improvements (especially in the field of new adapted ICT).



Formative level

1. *Which skills do you assess as necessary for the clients?*

Manual skills, good memory, recognising the voice of different people, making contacts and dealing with clients, ICT skills.

2. *What are the tasks that your blind client has to perform?*

The main task is **to answer telephone calls of the clients and connect them** to the appropriate professional worker. He should be prepared to cooperate in improving hardware and software, which is of course free will of the individual, but it improves the quality of work.

Result level

1. *What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work?*

In our case we are talking about the services, specifically **answering and connecting telephone calls of the clients**. We cannot measure or count the calls. What is important is to answer the telephone call and connect it to the appropriate professional worker. Performing these tasks he should communicate properly and he should be nice with our clients and employees.

Sustainability

1. *What do you have to do to ensure the quality of the products?*

To provide him with **adequate training and education** (internal and external), that he is **always informed** about e.g. the absence of professional staff and employees - every morning he receives the data on employee absence, a computer programme may itself provide him with the information of the temporary exits of employees (e.g. break, etc. ..). It is also important that **we follow technological development** and improvements in this field, especially on adapted ICT.

Interview 9: N.L.



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Interview date: 1.9.2011 at 10.00 am

NL is 46 years old, she is partially sighted with 8.3% remaining sight. Her low vision is caused by the optic nerve atrophy and achromatopsia. She finished four-year secondary music school, Academy of music, a special programme for teachers of visually impaired children and she has a diploma in Willems Music teaching system. Employment: 1994 – 1997 as a piano teacher at secondary school for pre-school teachers (replacemnt for a teacher on maternity leave), she has been employed at the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children Ljubljana since 1999.

Conceptual Level

1. *What is most important for you at your workplace?*

I think it's important to **do the job you like, you are good at it and you feel well doing it.** It is also very important that I have all **adjustments I need** so that extra energy is not spent and I don't feel stressed at work. It's also important that there is **a possibility to adapt the materials.**

2. *What do you like best at your workplace?*

I like **individual work with children.** Because of my visual impairment, I prefer individual work to work with a larger group, since it's **easier to master and control the process.** In this way it's possible to adjust as much as possible to child's needs and abilities. In this way the child can also get the maximum knowledge. If I worked in a classroom with **several students, I believe, I would not be able to notice all the responses** of the students and thus would not have feedback. I like dealing with the music of visually impaired students, which is my speciality and I am really interested in it.

3. *How are your individual needs being a person with visual impairment addressed at your workplace?*

I have a **computer with adapted software for the partially sighted** (ZoomText), I use **dark pens** but I don't need other adaptations.

Structural level

1. *Do you think work could be better organised at your workplace and how?*

As I mentioned my domain is music. Since I also teach music to blind students, I use a computer programme for music, I'm not very skillful at ICT. Therefore I would like to have **additional training in this area, or some more help - of course in the field of music.** The problem is, because there are **no tailored textbooks for music for the blind and partially sighted,** so I have to adapt all the learning materials myself. If I had



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

more ICT skills it would be easier to adapted the materials.

What bothers me is the noticeboard, because there are too many pieces of information and besides that there is a desk below, so I have problems to find the right notice. I like when the room is dimmed, because the light bothers me, especially neon lights. This is sometimes very inconvenient in the classroom because some students need more light - in this case, I adjust to the students' needs. We have a special book where all the notices are kept or written and my colleagues were asked to write in ink and in capital letters but they keep forgetting it. I know it's not on purpose, but still I have difficulties to read the notice, which is written in small fonts and with a pen leaving a poor trail.

2. Who is assisting you at your workplace?

In most cases the headmistress helps me, she had also taken care that I was provided with the necessary equipment, she is very understanding regarding my requests. Some colleagues ask me if I need enlarged texts, e.g. What kind of text, etc. However, it has already happened, that I missed some information and then I could hear a complaint, saying why I hadn't read the notice or that I should have found the information myself. Sometimes I feel this as humiliation and criticism, taking into account my visual impairment.

3. Which materials/tools do you need at your workplace to do the job?

I need a computer with adapted software for the partially sighted, the room should be dimmed, I need double telescopic glasses. It would be nice if the notices in our book were written in black ink and in capital letters so that I can read them without help. The noticeboard is not arranged the way I can use it. Sometimes I would need an additional piece of information on a certain matter e.g. during our meetings the others can exchange looks, use their body language - things that I am not able to do or read.

Formative level

1. What do you have to know to do your work?

I need my professional knowlege in the field of music and the skills regarding the teaching of the visually impaired. Considering my recent experiences of a teacher and a class teacher I would need some additional knowledge in the area of social pedagogy, behavioural difficulties and multiple disabilities.

2. What do you do (concretely) at your workplace?

I teach music at primary school for visually impaired pupils, I give free time activities – music lessons, learning an instrument, I'm also a class teacher.

Result level

1. What are the actual results of your work?



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

The actual results of my work are various musical performances of visually impaired children, giving musical knowledge to pupils, good results of my pupils, I try to inspire them with love for music and I encourage them to listen to music and visit concerts. Regarding my work of a class teacher, the results can be noticed in the response and satisfaction of children and their parents, in particular, as regards the functioning of the whole class as a group.

Sustainability

1. *How do you know, that your work has good quality?*

Positive feedback of the children, their parents, colleagues and the headmistress.

Interview 10: Employer about N.L.

The Institute for Blind an Partially Sighted Children

Interview with the headmistress

Interview date: 15.9.2011.

Conceptual Level

1. *Which concepts (key terms/pedagogical approach) do you assess most important related to the employment of visual impaired people?*

Ensuring appropriate adjustments, technical equipment - computer with adapted software, it's necessary to find suitable work, which such a person can perform. E.g. if she doesn't take part in a sports day, she performs other important work for the educational process instead, it's important to ensure a sense of acceptance within the team.

2. *How are the special needs of visually impaired people at work ensured?*
Through the quota system of employing the disabled.

3. *How is individual support for a visually impaired person ensured at work?*

In particular, that they are informed in a way that they can independently read the notices. Using suitable fonts and electronic mail, providing permanent training and education and providing other appropriate devices. It is also important that we always pay attention and check, if she is really informed on all important matters.



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Structural level

1. Which conditions have to be fulfilled when a visually impaired person is employed?

The ones mentioned above, and especially **having some knowledge about visual impairment** and the sort of disorder.

2. What kind of relationships are needed within the institution when a visually impaired person is employed?

Above all the **staff should be open-minded**, ready to accept people with special needs and the different. The person should be **part of the team**.

3. Which methodologies (training/programs) do you assess as necessary when a partially sighted client is employed?

Adapted ICT so that she can communicate is necessary, you must know the special needs, you must **trust her and evaluate correctly the kind of tasks she can perform** taking into account her visual impairment.

Formative level

1. Which skills do you assess as necessary for the clients?

ICT skills, mobility skills, independent and able to take care of himself, come to work independently, daily living skills. A visually impaired person should try to be **as independent as possible**, as the colleagues get tired when too much help is needed.

2. What are the tasks that your blind client has to perform?

Teaching music lessons, preparation for teaching, **preparation of annual work plan, advisory interviews with parents and pupils, being a class teacher, free time activities in the area of music, the organization of school celebrations with the assistance of other members of the staff, attendance at all professional and school meetings, additional training, teaching children in inclusion solfeggio.**

Result level

2. What are the material/immaterial results/products of the work?



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 3: Study of workplace descriptions and possibilities for work of blind and visually impaired in selected crafts/art sectors

Like all other teachers she is responsible for her subject. The immaterial results could be seen in the fact that she is a partially sighted teacher and thus a positive example for all visually impaired students at our school.

Sustainability

1. *What do you have to do to ensure the quality of the products?*

Taking into account the specific features that she performs suitable work regarding her visual impairment she is equal to the other members of the staff and thus permanent quality is guaranteed. Since we are an institution with the experience of working with the visually impaired, it is easier, especially since it is not necessary to put special emphasis on understanding and acceptance of visual impairment.