



Our Strength is Experience - innovative training program for Experts by Experience

EXPERIENCE

EVALUATION OF WORKSHOP

Place: **Reštaurácia KÉK DUNA**
Kúpeľná 3544/33, 932 01 Veľký Meder

Date: **29th November 2017**

The event was held as part of the **Nationwide Week of Lifelong Guidance**.



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1. Participants

- Representatives of the Project coordinator organisation – Spoluprácou pre lepšiu budúcnosť
- Representatives of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family Komárno
- Employers - operators of sheltered workshops
- Representatives of non-governmental organizations to support people with disabilities
- Private entrepreneurs

The list of participants is attached in the attendance register.

Number of participants: 17

2. Agenda

16:00 – 16:10	Registration
16:10 – 16:20	Opening speech
16:20 – 16:35	Presentation of international project „Our Strength is Experience - innovative training program for “Expert by Experience “
16:35 – 16:50	Increasing labour force employability over 50 years of age through Distance Learning within the International Project SILVER.
16:50 – 17:05	Improving the quality and professionalization of career counselling in Slovakia.
17:05 – 17:20	Coffee break
17:20 - 18:50	Discussion using method of World Café – 3 workshops <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Exchange of experience in the field of expert advisors training dealing with disadvantaged groups with particular emphasis on people with disabilities.2. Factors affecting the current situation of the older generation on the labour market.3. Possibilities to improve the quality and professionalization of career counselling at local and regional level.
18:50 – 19:00	Conclusions, recommendations

3. Description of the workshop (World Café Method)

The aims of the WORLD CAFÉ

Evaluation of the topic: Exchange of experience in the field of expert advisors training dealing with disadvantaged groups with particular emphasis on people with disabilities (PWDs).

The aims of workshop were to identify the opinions, experiences, achievements, possibilities, suggestions and recommendations of labour market actors (employers, educational institutions, counselling organizations for disabled citizens, supported employment agencies, local self-government authorities, sheltered workshops and workplaces, OLSAF – Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, NGOs) through informal discussions that are related to:

1. examples of good practice in the field of counselling and training in the preparation of people with disabilities for the labour market,
2. examples of good practice in the field of training services for advisors dealing with people with disabilities
3. the involvement of "Expert by Experience" in the counselling process.

The procession (method)

- The host of World Café introduces the program.
- Groups of around 5-6 participants sit around the three tables. At each table a „Table Host” facilitates the conversation in a given topic. At the tables 3 different topics will be discussed parallel within 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, the participants – except the Table Hosts – change the table and they continue the conversation in another topic for another 20 minutes. Participants are also encouraged to write or draw their ideas, suggestions on a flipchart paper so that when people change tables they can see what previous members have expressed in their own words and images.
- Each participant will take part in the discussion of all the three suggested topics.

The suggested topics

1. Did you meet some best practices, which helped in preparation of the people with disabilities for labour market? Why did you consider these examples as the best practices?
2. a) What kind of training programmes, best practices do you know, which are focused on the skills development of professional counsellors and career advisors, who are providing the counselling services for people with disabilities?

b) How do you evaluate the effectiveness of existing counselling services for people with disabilities?
3. a) What is your opinion on the involvement of “Experts by Experience” into the counselling process?

b) According to your opinion which skills would be necessary for advisors (Expert by Experience), to be able to prepare the people with disabilities for managing to handle the challenges in the continuously changing labour market?

4. Results and conclusions of the workshop

1. **Did you met some best practices, which helped in preparation of the people with disabilities for labour market? Why did you consider these examples as the best practices?**

The following examples of good practice identified in the workshop have helped to prepare people with disabilities for the labour market:

Personal training based on cognitive - behavioural therapy - training of disadvantaged job - seekers supporting their reintegration into the labour market. The objective is to correct the irrational thinking and behaviour of disadvantaged groups in relation with their integration into the labour market. The objective is to promote self-esteem and self-evaluation, to get a real view of the surrounding environment to be able to face difficulties. By acquiring new knowledge and skills and positive feedback, they are expected to be active in seeking job and participating in training. Training will be realised in a group form of study.

Competence balance, which is a training process that enables a client to better understand their own career path, to create, set up or complete their own portfolio of competencies, to know their own professional assumptions, to define their own values, motivations and interests, to develop a realistic career objective and action plan, to increase own independency and develop skills for managing your own career.

Specialized Courses for Clients Supported Employment Agency, non-profit organisation in Bratislava. Provides basic and specialized counselling and courses for clients in the following areas: World of Work, PC course, Creative courses focused on various techniques of creating "re-use products", Trivium (practicing of reading, writing, counting), Individual mobility course and city orientation, Waiting Course, * Etiquette, Garden Work Course. Courses are primarily designated for Supported Employment Agency clients.

Innovative Training Programme for People with Disabilities - Motivational training to promote the reintegration of people with disabilities on the labour market was developed within the framework of the international project SUCCESS. Training has been developed by partner organizations based on identified factors of successful reintegration into the labour market on the basis of international experiences and focused on developing competencies and increasing the employability of people with disabilities.

All these trainings contribute to the motivation of participants and thus encourage their reintegration into the labour market.

2. a) **What kind of training programmes, best practices do you know, which are focused on the skills development of professional counsellors and career advisors, who are providing the counselling services for people with disabilities?**

Personal training based on cognitive - behavioural therapy – training of lecturers for disadvantaged groups. The basis is training material with the same topics for disadvantaged groups, which is increased with labour market information, specifics of group work and practical experience gained through experiential methods. Training will be realised in group and distance form of study.

A training program for Competency Balance Advisors is designed for experienced professionals in the field of career guidance or related activities. At the same time, the principle of multidisciplinary applies. This means that it is not limited to participants with one type of qualification. Entry into the training programme is conditional on the fulfilment of specified qualification and professional requirements.

Skills Training for Effective Practice was created by an international team who examined the world-wide evidence for what works in employment counselling, distilled the results into a skills curriculum for advisors, trained trainers, and tested and evaluated the curriculum with 80 advisors in four countries. The result of this work is a curriculum that conforms to the current understanding of what effective career and employment counselling is, coupled with quality guidance on how to install and apply the curriculum. The STEP Programme aims to help people who provide employment advice to use the most effective skills.

Career guidance in conditions of hearing impairment. The content of the education was prepared by experts on the basis of a previous analysis of educational needs in the form of a questionnaire. It has participated 98 hearing-impaired citizens and 83 advisors and educators and interpreters. Education was conducted by lector K.A.B.A. Slovakia (Expert from Practice) and Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University (PF UK) in Bratislava (expert from the academic field) through experiential learning. The aim of the

education was to train teachers from schools in the field of career guidance and to increase the level of training in the provision of career guidance services also in the hearing impairment surroundings.

Specialized courses for Supported Employment Agency (SEA) employees, social workers, pedagogues and other co-operating people working for the integration of disabled citizens provided by the Supported Employment Agency, non-profit organisation in Bratislava. The courses are focused on training the professional public (SEA staff, social workers, pedagogues and other co-operating people working on the integration of disabled citizens) to work effectively with a client who needs the services of supported employment.

b) How do you evaluate the effectiveness of existing counselling services for people with disabilities?

Disability counselling services for people with disabilities can be carried out **by state** (offices of labour, social affairs and family) and **non-governmental organizations** (supported employment agencies). Clients in smaller towns where non-governmental services are not established are mostly utilised by the services of labour offices.

State employment services – Offices of labour, social affairs and family

The Labour Office provides information and advisory services free of charge to the citizens, job seekers, candidates as well as to employers.

The information and advisory services include services in the field of:

- career choices,
- finding or changing a job
- recruitment
- adaptation of employees in a new job position.

Professional Advisory Services are addressing the problems associated with the active involvement of job seekers, synchronisation of their personal capabilities to comply with the requirements for a specific job, facilitate the decision-making and adequate behaviour of job seekers, as well as their social and occupational adaptation.

The Labour Office, in collaboration with the disadvantaged jobseekers, can develop a personalised action plan to facilitate their success in the market.

In addition to the above, regional, national and transnational projects are implemented to providing a comprehensive set of high-quality information and professional advisory services to the candidates and job seekers, focusing on individual approach with a view to increase their employability, employment rate and activation to facilitate their re(integration) to the labour market.

Information and Consulting Centre (ICC) is a facility of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family with computers, internet and a printer available to the clients. If needed, professional staff is available to help.

The clients visiting ICC can find a broad range of information (in electronic form as well as hard copy documents) on the labour market and active labour market policies to help them reintegrate to the labour market, as well as professional papers, leaflets, promotional materials, register of secondary schools and universities, catalogue of employers and investors in the region including information on the working conditions and types of qualifications, social schemes and job possibilities.

Strengths:

- public organisation, high-quality staff of consultants with years of experience,
- appropriate facilities for the provision of group and individual advisory services,
- good cooperation with employers in the region
- free services

Weaknesses:

- public organization – lower flexibility than private sector organisations,
- small number of professional advisors,
- the activity of professional advisors is focused on quantity rather than quality

Non-State Employment Services - Supported Employment Agency (SEA)

SEA is a legal entity or natural person providing services to people with disabilities, a long-term unemployed people and to employers focused at facilitating employment obtaining or maintaining employment, or facilitating employee obtaining from people with disabilities and long-term unemployed citizens.

Supported Employment Agency, non-profit organisation developed quality standards for supported employment services. These standards set up the level at which we can still declare that the services provided to the client are of the required quality and at a standard level.

3. a) What is your opinion on the involvement of “Experts by Experience” into the counselling process?

It is important to involve Experts by Experience in the counselling process, make use of their potential as they have experiences that can be effective and motivating for other people with disabilities in a similar situation. By appropriate training tailor-made to these skilled citizens, we can prepare suitable mentors – Experts by Experience for people with disabilities.

b) According to your opinion which skills would be necessary for advisors (Expert by Experience), to be able to prepare the people with disabilities for managing to handle the challenges in the continuously changing labour market?

The most important knowledge of Experts by Experience:

Vocational knowledge - knowledge of the labour market, basic knowledge of relevant laws, knowledge of who provides employment services for people with disabilities.

The most important characteristics of Experts by Experience:

Know how to define boundaries of competence, individual approach to each PWDs, ability to increase the empathy of healthy citizens, increasing self-confidence of DC, motivation of PWD, individual approach to each PWD, positive relation to the target group, knowledge of the situation of the target group, positive relationship to life, support to involve into the society, self-development.

The most important Skills and Competencies:

Comprehensive communication skills - active listening, selective listening, communication with the client's language, credibility, reliability, empathy, tolerance, patience, conflict management, teamwork, management skills, ability to pass on information about the labour market, ability to develop basic client skills (writing, reading, understanding the read text, counting), creativity, assertive behaviour, life regime.

Recommended forms of training:

Experiential learning, group training, e-learning, blended-learning

5. Recommendations for the content of training material for Experts by Experience

1. Basic terminology and related legislation in the field of lifelong counselling, training on the labour market (each partner country separately)
2. Personality of "Expert by Experience" (knowledge, professional skills, personal, methodical and social competencies, key competencies, ethics)
3. Counselling process (communication in contact counselling, identification of client needs, client motivation, development of client self-efficacy, planning)
4. Individual (individual action plan) and group counselling
5. Conflict management, assertive behaviour, feedback and evaluation
6. Organizational skills, time management

