



Successful life stories

Our strength is experience
Innovative training programme for Experts by Experience



1. About the project

One of the key objectives in the European employment sector is to promote the employment of people with disabilities (PWD) on the open labour market and to encourage the employers to employ them.

There is a range of supporting public employment services available for PWD, however, the capacity of these services does not meet the requirements at the national level in any partner country due to the lack of qualified professionals. Organisations working in the non-profit sector play an increasingly important role in filling in this gap.

Survey results have shown that more attention should be paid to the transition of young PWD from the education to the employment and, that PWD should be assisted in their choice and change of employment. This process requires experienced professionals to help PWD to overcome the obstacles and share the experience gained in the open labour market. The project aims were to develop an innovative blended-learning training program for the “Experts by Experience” based on international recommendations. The project defines the “Experts by Experience” as PWD who have personal experience with the challenges of disability and, who managed to handle them due to some specific skills, attitudes, methods and competences gained during an innovative training and, who can also use their experience to the benefit of other PWD. After completing the training, the “Experts by Experience” would work in non-profit organizations and thus facilitate the reintegration of PWD to the labour market.

This brochure contains the collection of successful life stories, which can also be an example for other fellow people with disabilities. Brochure is a continuation of the brochure, which was developed within the project SUCCESS - <http://www.success-erasmusplus.eu/>.

Project team

2. Successful life stories

Roman

I want to work to feel like a full-fledged person



I live in Dunajská Streda and I work as an IT volunteer in the social club for people with mental disabilities. I have helped them to refit obsolete computers and taught some of the club members with minor disabilities to use them by playing computer games and using different learning programs. I often help my friends to edit their university

thesis, I edit offers for a lady organizing trips, occasionally I digitalize scanned books or study materials. I have accompanied my friend with visual impairment to the receiving interviews to Brno, Prague, Ostrava and Olomouc, to school in Brno, Prague and Bratislava, later to job interviews to Prague, Brno, Karlovy Vary and Jánské Lázně and, I even helped her to start her own business as a masseur.

I was born in Dunajská Streda. When I was 5 years old, I got sick of angina, which developed to small-brain inflammation. I could not walk and move my hands, which was later followed by a speech disorder and ultimately with visual impairment. However, I do not remember that, I only know it from my mother. It was as if I was born again. I had to learn all that again. My sight recovered quite quickly, however, the motor skills and speech recovered very slowly. After one year, thanks to exercise, logopedic care and numerous spa treatments, I was enrolled in the first grade of the Elementary School for Children with Disabilities in Bratislava.

Later I continued my study at the Secondary Grammar School for Students with Disabilities in Bratislava, where I attended IT classes. That had, in fact, determined my future, because I liked it and learned to use computers well despite my severe physical disability. It was not easy, because despite my efforts, I had great difficulties with my fine motor skills as well as with controlling my involuntary movements, which was really exhausting. However, thanks to my persistence, I managed that and, therefore, helping others has become one of my major goals and challenges. I have developed my IT skills by completing additional training courses.

My parents are also physically disabled. The story of their life is a great inspiration and motivation for me. In many things I depend on others, but I try to be as independent as possible, so my disability does not hamper my personal development.

Before completing the school, I received a job offer from an advertising agency in Dunajská Streda. The owner of the agency was excited about my IT skills. I managed to design a rather complicated logo in the computer without the need to scan it, by simply redrawing it in the program. I also helped them when they were too busy with orders. I could comfortably do the work from home and they were very satisfied with the results of my work. At that time, I was a student and therefore they could not employ me. However, by the time I successfully completed the school, the economic situation of the agency changed, so they could not afford to employ me any longer.

I would like to find a job that would satisfy me and which I could perform even in consideration of my special needs at the worksite. An ideal solution for me would be a sheltered workshop or a home-office.



Bianka

I will never give up!



I am 32 years old. I live in Hungary, in Szombathely. I am physically disabled ever since I was born. Despite of the fact that my parents did everything and I was trying hard as well, as a consequence of an operation that went badly, I did not manage to learn to walk on my own. That's exactly why I opted

for studying. So elementary school was followed by secondary grammar school, then the management major of University of West Hungary, then the master's degree in business development. I always try to give as much to others, as my non-disabled fellows. I mean I feel good if I can do several things at once, for example study besides working.

Although I always thought that it will not be hard for me to get into employment on the labour market, but it did not happen like that. However, due to the fact that my parents and my older sister always stand by me, it is easier to bear the difficulties of life, the idle periods.

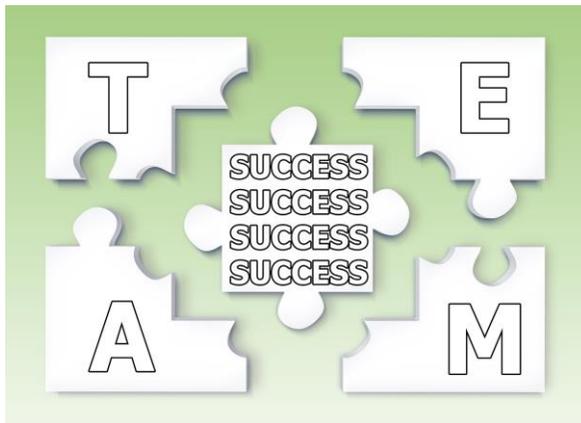
In my present job, I can finally deal with things that I love to do, and I continuously have a chance to extend my existing knowledge.

Ever since I was a child, it has been important for me to help other people, my fellows, so besides being a member of the local association of physically disabled people, should anyone come to me to ask for my help, I help him according to my best knowledge. In order to be able to do so, I took a course in the field of equal

treatment and discrimination and that's why I was glad to attend the training as an Expert by Experience.

This training as an Expert by Experience gave me more in terms of the fact that I gained deeper information about people living with other types of disabilities, as well as about the way of thinking of employers, about the importance of non-verbal tools and about the differences existing in the participating countries. It was an entirely new experience for me that I could not only test the knowledge I gained in theory, but I could apply them in reality. By doing so, I gained more and more information, experiences, tasks to be solved and real solutions related to the topic. Besides that, due to the training, my self-knowledge got broader, I could get to know some (professional) people, who are a lot more experienced than me.

Last, but not least, I can only hope that by this training as an Expert by Experience, I can offer tangible help to many-many fellows of mine.



Enikő

My success story



I was born in 1969 with encephalitis, a paralysis on the abdominal and thoracic right side that affected my speech too. That's why much of my childhood I spent in the sanatorium. I was seven years old when I started going independently.

For family reasons, I have not finished my studies. I'm married, I have two boys. Since August 1999, I have been in sickness retirement. In July 2018 I had a big operation, after two weeks they called me from the Ergon Center and offered me a job. At that time I could not think of work, because I was not able to do anything in the house at all. In mid-September I visited the above-mentioned center and concluded a contract. The staff of the center were very kind and helpful.

In January 2019 I found a job in Bertis Catering where I am a kitchen assistant. I started without confidence in myself. Along with my engagement, the Ergon Center invited me to a course, where I got all the confidence I needed. The first time I had to talk, I panicked and could not say what I wanted, but when I saw that everyone had problems in the group, I let go, and the communication was getting better. I got the knowledge of myself, and I learned how to solve the conflict. It helped me a lot that the instructors did not keep their distance between them and us, they treated us equally. Last but not list, I got new friends from the group members.

At work, I can use the things I learned at the course, be team players, diligent, flexible, be positive with any work, try to meet my colleagues. Today I have already been able to integrate, my work satisfies me, makes me happy, I feel that I have landed in a safe harbour.



Hüseyin

Just go out, smile and get involved in daily life!



I live in Ankara, Turkey. I am 32 years old. I have physical disability in my spinal cord since I was born. It makes me different from other people even in the first instance when I meet with new people. I have also slight learning disability. I couldn't continue to mainstream schools after secondary school; I just went to Dost special

education school for 5 years. In there, we were trained for to be adapted to daily life better with the help of real-life practices and simple vocational guidance. I lost my father when I was 17 years old. My older brother had taken upon the financial burden of our family since then. However, he was imprisoned 6 years ago. He has 2 children who are 4 and 7 years old. His wife doesn't work.

In 2010, I heard from one of my friends that he earns money from paper gathering from the streets. It was not a clean job seemingly; but it provides easy and sufficient money. I asked for the recommendations of my family and teachers. They encouraged me. I made a blacksmith produce a car for me and started to work.

I started to make a considerable amount of money after 3 months which provided my financial independence from my brother. After 3 years, my brother was sent to prison. Now, for about 6 years, I have undertaken the responsibility of all of my family involving my mom and the family of my brother. I have developed my job as years passed. I left gathering papers for years; I found someone who made it for me. Besides, I am also known as scrap metal gatherer and plastics gatherer in the vicinity. I know the market, prices, people and final buyers in industrial area. I collect all

papers, plastics and metals from gatherers for each day; arrange vehicles for transportation and send them to the final buyers. Now, I can buy a truck with my own money but I don't, because I can't drive.

My job is seemingly a dirty job, but it makes me happy for not only providing income to me but also making important contribution to recycling and environment. Additionally, I have recently bought a bagel seller car for me and work 2 hours in the mornings. I sell pastry and similar foods for breakfast. It keeps me vigorous since I wake up at 6 o'clock in all weekdays.

I suggest you to never be ashamed of your differences. Always try to be involved in daily life and try to be financially independent. Always be positive and express your opinions strongly. Remember you have more interesting ideas than other people since you have a different mindset. And finally, whatever you do in the life, try to be best.



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