Supported Employment – Working for ALL
Leonardo da Vinci Partnership

Position Paper

“Supported Employment for People in Disadvantaged Situations”

June 2012

Partnership Members:-

- Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment, NI
- Mølla kompetansesenter AS, Norway
- Associação Portuguesa de Emprego Apoiado (APEA), Portugal
- Asociación Española de Empleo con Apoyo, Spain
Summary

Supported Employment Working for ALL was a partnership funded under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The partnership consists of four partners NIUSE, Norway, Portugal and Spain. The Supported Employment Working for All project commence between 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2012 and during this period four study visits were held (Northern Ireland – Nov 2010, Spain- March 2011, Portugal – Nov 2011 and Norway – April 2012).

The aim of the partnership was to share knowledge and experiences of Supported Employment for people from other disadvantaged situations and to produce a Briefing Paper and Training Case Studies in relation to this.

The aims of the Briefing Paper are:-

- Provide an overview of the Supported Employment Model
- Demonstrate how Supported Employment methodology can be used to promote community and work inclusion for people from disadvantaged situations
- Promote the model of Supported Employment as an employment intervention for people from disadvantaged situations
- Promote mainstreaming of Supported Employment Model

The Briefing paper is aimed at:-

- Supported Employment Professionals
- Professionals working with people from disadvantaged situations
- Employers & Employer Organisations
- Trade Unions
- Schools and students
- Interest groups (Service-users’ – self-advocacy organisations)
- Non Government Organisations (NGO’s)
- Government Departments responsible for employment interventions
- Employment community networks
Introduction

Supported Employment - Working for All Leonardo da Vinci Partnership consists of four partners, two of which deliver Supported Employment for people in disadvantaged situations and two that are exploring this model for expansion in their countries. Those partners who already deliver Supported Employment for people in disadvantaged situations have used this partnership to share best practice and to import other models within the partnership.

The aim of the partnership was to produce a Position Paper and Training Case Studies on how to provide Supported Employment for people in disadvantaged situations.

The model of Supported Employment has been developed across Europe initially as an employment intervention for people with disabilities. Few countries have developed this as an intervention for people from disadvantaged situations.

In the countries that have been providing Supported Employment for people in disadvantaged situations there has been evidence of success and realisation of common issues and difficulties facing people with disabilities and people in disadvantaged situations.

The situation in each of the partner's country prior to commencing the Supported Employment - Working for All Project:-

Northern Ireland Experience

Supported Employment in Northern Ireland whilst, a well recognised model of intervention for people with disabilities, has not been utilised for other people far from the labour market. Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment has recognised the potential and has been promoting the model as suitable for other people in disadvantaged situations. To date mainstream Government funding is unavailable for Supported Employment and organisation using this model are funded mainly through European Structural Funds (ESF).
**Norwegian Experience**

Supported Employment in Norway started as a pilot project that lasted from 1992-1995. In 1996, the project was transformed into a state-financed national Supported Employment programme which was named Arbeid med bistand. In recent years, a short-term scheme called “Follow Up” (Oppfølging) has been added. Both programmes are administered by the Norwegian Work and Welfare Administration (NAV). Approximately 8,000 people are participating in the two programmes (statistics from Dec 2010). Supported Employment serves people with any form of disability as well as those who are in disadvantaged situations. Nevertheless; few people with learning disabilities are benefiting from Supported Employment programmes in Norway. People with learning disabilities are typically working in financed sheltered workshops, and in day centres financed by the municipalities.

**Portuguese Experience**

Since 2001, the Supported Employment in Portugal has been extended to people in a disadvantaged situation, through the promotion of national and transnational partnerships, thereby enhancing Supported Employment mainstreaming. In Portugal they have been diversifying contexts of intervention at formal and informal levels, regardless the existence of specific support for this purpose.

**Spanish Experience**

The current situation of Supported Employment in Spain is that state financial support is received for inclusion of people with disabilities (physical, learning, mental health and sensory) in to the open labour market. There are however, certain criteria which applies to the funding that can be justified through an official evaluation report and fulfill certain requirements as specific types of employment contract, level of disability, etc.
What is Supported Employment?

The model of Supported Employment is an employment intervention which assists people with disabilities and people from disadvantaged situation to access and maintain paid employment in the open labour market.

The definition of Supported Employment is:-

“Providing support to people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups to secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market”

European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) 2005

The Components of Supported Employment

The Supported Employment model is divided into distinct components. Each of these components holds equal status, however, depending on the individuals’ needs and desires will require differing emphasis and support strategies

- **Client Engagement** – Underpinned by the core values of accessibility to ensure informed choices are made
- **Vocational Profiling** – Ensuring empowerment to the individual throughout the process
- **Job Finding** – Self-determination and informed choice are key values in Supported Employment
- **Employer Engagement** – Accessibility, flexibility and confidentiality are key values to be nurtured through this process
- **On/Off Job Support** – Flexibility, confidentiality and respect are the key components to successful support measures. Support measures particularly refer to when the individual is in paid employment and are delivered through the provision of an Employment Support Worker/Job Coach

(EUSE, 2010)
In 2010 the European Union of Supported Employment published the "European Union of Supported Employment Toolkit", which consists of a range of Position Papers and How to Guides. It was designed to increase the knowledge and skills of professionals responsible for the delivery of Supported Employment services.

The production of the Toolkit was the result of a Leonardo da Vinic Partnership Project “EUSE Toolkit” which comprises of 11 partners from across Europe. The members of the partnership consisted of managers and professionals from national, regional and local Supported Employment services providers across Europe.

The EUSE Toolkit highlighted that although, there has been an expansion of the Supported Employment model for people in disadvantaged situations across Europe which has proven to be very successful, not every state has adopted this approach. During the two year project period of this partnership it was discussed and demonstrated how Supported Employment is deliver to people in disadvantaged situations and not only for people with disabilities, as has been the tradition in most countries.

Lessons learned –

Key lessons learned from the project included:-

• Understanding of the term disadvantaged situation

The term disadvantaged has many connotations across Europe and for this project a definition on disadvantaged was imperative. Previously, partners viewed “disadvantage” by their grouping (i.e. lone parents, long term unemployment, ex-prisoners, ethnic minorities, immigrants, young people not in education, employment or training etc). Through discussion and debate a profound and significant inference was realized i.e. the project considered that not all young people, lone parents, ex-prisoners are disadvantaged but that it is their situation at a point in their life can make them. This project adopted and recommended that the term disadvantaged group be replaced with people in a disadvantaged situations.

This allows for two of the important values and principles of Supported Employment to be addressed:-
- Individuality – Supported Employment regards each individual as unique, with his/her own interests, preferences, conditions and life history.
- Flexibility – Staff and organisational structures are able to change according to the needs of service users. Services are flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals and can be adapted to meet specific requirements.

The partners also concluded that:

- The focus should be on the individual and not putting people into boxes/groups and giving them a label.
- An individual can belong to many groups – multiple identify (i.e. young, abused, woman, refugee etc).
- Belonging to a group seems to be more permanent, than being in a passing situation.
- All people can experience problematic situations in their lives (as instability, low self-esteem, drug addition, long term unemployment). It is possible to change a bad situation and to find new solutions.
- The problem lies in the situation, not in the person (group).
- The support from Supported Employment should be tailored to the individual rather than to a group.

This realisation was a fundamental part of the project and provided the understanding how the Supported Employment model could be easily transferred as the focus is on the individual and their current situation and not a grouping.

- **Transfer of Supported Employment Model**

The Partnership concluded that the model of Supported Employment could be easily transferred to meet the requirements of people with disabilities to access and maintain employment in the open labour market. The partners agreed that there is a strategic benefit to build an integrated process and holistic perspective of intervention that promotes the development of inter-cooperation community networks between:

- Supported Employment Organisations
- Self-advocacy organizations
- Organizations that work with people in disadvantaged situations
- Companies and employers associations
- Others public and private organizations
This integrated strategy allows for input to the individual base on the following principles:-

1. Development of supports that promote candidates abilities for self-determination, participation, informed choice and equal opportunities and inclusion in the job market and in the community (competitive employment), in a individualized perspective;

2. Job-matching / compatibility between the organization / company needs and the candidate competencies and abilities, promoting customized employment;

3. Promotion of on job training, through participative and shared work plans, built, developed and evaluated by company tutor, Employment Support Worker/Job Coach and candidate/job seeker;

4. Use of easy tools to support job-matching, the management of diverse human resources within companies and the community networks, accessibility and gender equality.


In order to illustrate how a person from a disadvantaged situations can benefit from the model of Supported Employment each partner provided a Case Study. The Case Studies will be further explored in the Training Case Studies.

**NORTHERN IRELAND Case Study**

Paula is a 17 year old woman who left home when she was 16 due to difficult family circumstances. She is known to Social Services and has had a Social Worker since she was 10 years old. Her attendance at school was very poor and she left formal education when she was 15 years old without any qualifications.

Paula when non-attending school was involved in anti-social behaviours. During this period she became isolated from her peers.

Following a period in a vocational training programme which was not very successful, Paula was referred to a Supported Employment organisation.
The vocational profile provided Paula with the opportunities to explore and identify her skills, work preferences and aspirations. The relationship between Paula and her Employment Support Worker was key to provide a greater understanding of Paula’s work aspirations.

A year on from when Paula started her journey on Supported Employment she is now employed as a catering assistant 20hrs per week in café. She is enjoying her job and her Employment Support Worker continues to provide support to Paula and her employer. Support from her Employment Support Worker is fading but Paula knows that if there are any issues that she can contact immediately.

**NORWAY case study**

Fatima is from Afghanistan. She is a mother of six children and has been a housewife since she married at seventeen.

Like most of the girls in her village she did not go to school as a child. When she came to Norway four years ago she was illiterate and had no work experience outside her home.

After two years in a centre for asylum seekers she and her family were offered an apartment for rent just outside Oslo. Fatima and her husband started Norwegian language training.

He got a job at a Supermarket after one year. She is still attending the language course, and her progress is slow. Her teacher has recommended work experience to practise and improve her Norwegian.

Fatima's aim is to get a paid job in order to contribute to the family income. She also feels that she needs a life outside her home and has come to Moella to get help to find a job.

**PORTUGAL case study**

Joaquim, is 60 years old and lives in Lisbon. He has participated in the “Rumos de Futuro Project” (EQUAL) as a beneficiary. Joaquim was in prison for seven years.

In his last period of imprisonment he showed interest in being supported from prison back in to employment and his local community (social inclusion). He had the support of a coach /technician from the Prison who became his case manager and both identified and elaborated the Individual Rehabilitation Plan and steps to be followed.
Even in prison, he participated in a course of social and life skills, which appeared to have been very important to him. Before being released, he had experience in some work and had the opportunity to be interviewed by an employer of a company with the objective of an on job training of 6 months after his release.

When released from prison, Joaquin started on job training programme with a local employer; meanwhile he also attended a training course for two months related to his professional field (electrician) and as a result demonstrated much more motivation and self confidence.

After completing his internship in the company, he did not stay in the company as there were not employment prospects, so he begun a job search with the support of an employment specialist from the project. Joaquin got a job one month after finishing the on job training.

**SPAIN case study**

Manuel is a 35 year old single man who lives at home with his parents since he left the rehabilitation center for ex drug-addicts. His educational level is very low and has no professional experience in other field different from restaurants, where started his alcohol and cannabis abuse almost 20 years ago. Now, he is looking for starting a new life and asks for support in the process of getting a job and integrating in society again.

The job coach, under the supported employment methodology, shows him some other interest areas which might also be approached. But actually getting a job is both main goal, so all the enterprise’s environment will be involved too. Finally, he could increase his qualification, discovered his vocational preferences, decided about his free time and got a job for three months. After that it’s necessary to evaluate the experience and continue until Manuel needs supported employment.
Discussion

The experience and knowledge shared in the development of this project has demonstrated that the supported employment model is useful in promoting self-determination and professional and community inclusion of all people, particularly those who are disadvantaged situations.

These findings are enhanced by studies that demonstrate a positive cost-benefit, particularly from the perspective of employers and job seekers.

It is our belief that supported employment as an instrument for promoting quality of life for citizens and sustainable and cohesive communities will increasingly assert itself as a model for the future.

The model of Supported Employment has been evaluated with regards to cost benefit. Below are two examples of such analysis. Whilst using different methodologies have been used both analysis determined the benefit both financial and social inclusion in using Supported Employment as an employment intervention.

Portugal - Cost Benefit Analysis

An exploratory study conducted within the Project Nautilus, Portugal, in the context of the EQUAL Community Initiative in 2007 by a partnership of ten organizations under the coordination of Dr. Teresa Duarte, analyzed cost-effectiveness of supported employment for people in different situations disadvantage.

The cost benefit study was carried out with in co-operation with Professor Stephen Beyer.

One of the main findings of the study which was conducted with 50 different companies is the balance between costs and benefits of employability, under the business perspective, a positive result, with 56% of employers stating that the benefits outweigh the costs and 40% stating that the costs and benefits are equivalent.

Employers also report high levels of satisfaction with their workers in supported employment and also get a positive return in terms of its organization and work teams, as well as social responsibility.
In addition workers in supported employment who participated in the study showed high levels of satisfaction with their work situations and with the support provided by also the benefits for your personal and family life.

**Employers- Balance of Benefits**

![Balance of benefit of having supported employees](image)

Teresa Duarte, Teresa, Beyer, Stephen and all (2007) - The Nautilus Project: Employer return on social responsibility, APEA, Lisbon

**Northern Ireland - Cost Benefit Analysis**

In 2007 the Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE) commissioned a Social Return on Investment (SROI - [www.thesroinetwork.org](http://www.thesroinetwork.org)) study on organisations providing Supported Employment for people with disabilities.

Social Return on Investment is a method that can be applied to determine the social value of an activity or group of activities. In this instance SROI examined the social value of a person with a disability accessing employment.

SROI is expressed using financial modeling mechanisms. A key outcome of an SROI report is the future projection of the financial return of an activity expressed as a ratio to the investment.

This study scoped participants in 12 organisations across Northern Ireland over a one year period.

**The key findings of the study were:**

- People who have engaged with a Supported Employment process reported that they felt better off both from a quality of life and a financial viewpoint.
• From the sample of people in this study, the average individual financial gain through access to paid work was £2,330.65.

• The State Purse is on average £901.67 per person better off through savings not being paid on welfare benefits.

• For every £1 invested £6.17 will be returned to the economy over the ensuing 5 year period.

Conclusion

Supported Employment – Working for ALL concludes that Supported Employment intervention for can be successfully transferred to assist people from disadvantaged situations. The Supported Employment model assists people with disabilities and people from disadvantaged situations to move from unemployment to employment in the open labour market.

The project provided the opportunity to discuss and experience first how the model has been used to assist people from disadvantaged situations in to open paid employment. This was particularly evident in our study visits in Norway and Portugal which demonstrated that the model of Supported Employment remains the same but the emphasis of support required depending on an individual particular circumstances.
References

1. Duarte, T; Beyer, Dr S; et al (2007) - The Nautilus Project: Employer return on social responsibility, APEA, Lisbon

2. European Union of Supported Employment - www.euse.org


5. Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE) - Social Return on Investment (SROI) - www.thesroinetwork.org
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