Supported Employment – Working for ALL
Leonardo da Vinci Partnership

Training Case Studies

“Supported Employment for People from Disadvantaged Situations”

June 2012

Produced by Supported Employment Working for All Partnership:-

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

Supported Employment Working for ALL Partnership was funded under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The partnership consists of four partners NI Union of Supported Employment (Northern Ireland), Molla Kompetansesenter AS (Norway), Associacao Portugueses de Emprego Apoido (Portugal) and Associacioin Espanola de Empleo con Apoyo (Spain).

The Supported Employment Working for All project commence on the 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 situation and to produce a Briefing Paper and Training Case Studies.

The aims of the Training Case Studies are:-

- To provided real experiences of people from disadvantaged situations
- To illustrate how the model of Supported Employment can be transferred to assist people from a disadvantaged situations
- To outline the 5 key stages of Supported Employment model
- To identify key training skills to ensure best practice and delivery of a quality service
- To provide useful tips and advice on training for staff working with people from disadvantaged situations.

The Training Case Studies are target at:-

- Supported Employment Professionals
- Professionals working with people from disadvantaged situations
- Other professionals working in employment interventions for people from disadvantaged situations
- Interest groups (Service-users’ – self-advocacy organisations)
- Non Government Organisations (NGO’s)
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 in accessing and staying in employment.

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 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)

Although there has been an expansion of the SE 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 why and how some SE-providers now also deliver the SE-model for people in disadvantaged situations and not only for people with disabilities, as has been the tradition in most countries.

**Training Case Studies**

One of the aims of the partnership was to produce Training Case Studies on how to provide Supported Employment for people in disadvantaged situations. The partnership saw a need for the development of case examples and points to remember when offering Supported Employment services to people in different disadvantaged situations.

**People in disadvantaged situations**
The definition of Supported Employment includes the term “disadvantaged groups”. In this project we have chosen the term “people in disadvantaged situations” because:
• Individuality and flexibility are two of the important values and principles of SE:
  o **Individuality** – Supported Employment regards each individual as unique, with his / her own interests, preferences, conditions and life history.
  o **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.

The Training Case Studies illustrate how people in different disadvantaged situations can benefit from Supported Employment.

Key success factors have been highlighted as well as tips for Supported Employment providers on important matters to consider when offering Supported Employment other jobseekers in similar situations.

**Case Study - Norway**

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 her and her family were granted residence permits and 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 a work experience placement 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 the Supported Employment organisation to get help to find a job.

**Stage 1 - Client Engagement**
Fatima is invited to a first meeting with her job coach at the Supported Employment organisation to start their cooperation. In the initial meeting the job coach informs Fatima about the Supported Employment service and the level, nature and types of support that are provided. Fatima explains about her wishes, expectations and concerns. At the beginning she was expecting to get a job-offer from the SE-provider. The job coach explains the role of the job coach and the responsibility he expects her to take on. She realises that her own contribution is crucial if she is going to reach her goal. Her concerns are mainly about travel distance and working hours. Since she has small children so she would like to spend as little time as possible getting to and from work. Fatima experiences that the job coach takes her seriously and really listens to what she says. The aim of the first stage is to build a relationship that is based on trust and respect to make Fatima confident that she will receive the service she needs. After a few meetings Fatima and her job coach have established an Action Plan which outlines the aims and the content of the process that lies ahead of them. The Action Plan is also based on existing documentation about her educational background, work experience, health etc.

“She realises that her own contribution is crucial if she is going to reach her goal”.

Ownership and empowerment are key success factors.

Tips: Remember not to take over the job seeker’s responsibility and don’t do things for the job seeker that she can do herself.

**Stage 2 – Vocational profiling**
At first Fatima is not sure about what kind of work she would like. She does not know the Norwegian job market, the possibilities and the different job requirements. Fatima and the job coach spend some time gathering relevant information from the internet as well as visiting different companies. After having considered different options Fatima decides to apply for canteen jobs. She has always enjoyed cooking and working in the kitchen at home.

Fatima has several challenges and will need support from the job coach in order to find, secure and maintain such a job. Fatima and her job coach have identified her language and communication skills as well as her social skills as areas needing improvement. In addition, she has some limitations when it comes to working hours. Nearly all canteen jobs start at 7 o’clock in the morning.
Fatima cannot begin work before 9 a.m because she has to help her children to get up and go to school and without a driver’s license she has to use public transportation to get to work. The aim of stage 2 is to identify the job seeker’s motivation, interests, work attitudes, resources and support needs, and to establish realistic aims for career development.

“She has always enjoyed cooking and working in the kitchen at home”.

Some jobseekers have little or no prior work experience.

**Tips:** Look for skills and areas of interest that are not directly linked to working life. Maybe an interest for music or books can become a paid job?

Stage 3 – Job finding

Fatima and her job coach decide to use a work experience placement as a method to obtain paid employment. She is actively involved in finding a placement in a canteen. Her language teacher helps her to prepare a presentation for the employers. She writes down and rehearses what she is going to say in order to present herself and ask for a placement. The job coach has a network of employers and accompanies her to one company who is interested to interview her.

The job coach presents the SE-model for the employer and describes how he can offer guidance and follow-up both of the jobseeker and the employer. The job coach encourages the employer to single out a mentor for Fatima who can ensure that she gets training and is included in the social environment. The employer, Fatima and the job coach all sign an agreement that states the aim of the work placement, the working hours, the length of the placement and the tasks she is going to do.

Fatima will be at her work placement three days a week from 9 a.m until 3 p.m. The plan is to expand to a fulltime engagement after some time. Her tasks include preparing lunch and other meals, cleaning up the dishes and eventually she will be expected to handle the cash register.
Stage 4 - Employer Engagement
In order to establish a partnership with the employer the job coach schedules formal appointments with both the leader of the company and the mentor. But the job coach also pays informal visits to the canteen to get an idea of how things are going. Sometimes the job coach drops in without an appointment. Not all employers would appreciate this, but the job coach has cleared this with the mentor in advance. During these visits, the job coach talks not only with Fatima, but also with her colleagues and the mentor about the development, everyday matters and challenges in the canteen and future possibilities for Fatima. In order to give Fatima helpful guidance, it is vital for the job coach to know the company and the concerns of the employer. The job coach must be mindful of the need of the employer to run the business in an efficient manner.

“Fatima and her job coach decide to use a work experience placement as a method to obtain paid employment”.

A work experience placement can be a door opener to employment if it is successful.

Tips: Check out: Does the employer have a need for recruitment or is he offering the work placement only to show social responsibility?

Stage 5 – On and off the job support
During the first period of the work placement both Fatima and the mentor report back to the job coach about different challenges related to the practical tasks, communication and her social skills.

“The job coach must be mindful of the need of the employer to run the business in an efficient manner”.

Traditionally the job coach has focused more on the needs of the jobseeker, than on the needs of the employer. In order to succeed the focus must be balanced.

Tips: Do not underestimate the importance of establishing and maintaining a close working relationship with the employer.
1. Fatima shows exaggerated respect towards her boss because her cultural upbringing demands it of her. She is in fact afraid of her boss. She is afraid to have eye contact and only addresses him if strictly necessary.

2. She feels like an outsider during lunch break because she finds it hard to join in the conversation. The things that are talked about during lunch such as TV programmes and news are unknown to her since she does not watch national television, read newspapers or listen to radio programmes. And the conversation goes too fast for her. Half of the words she does not understand and therefore she doesn’t capture the content of the conversation.

3. Fatima feels she is doing a very good job and is exhausted when she comes home in the afternoon. Her employer on the other hand evaluates her capacity to half of her colleagues. She does not manage all the tasks she is supposed to, especially being a cashier. Fatima asks the mentor every other day if she will have a paid job soon. However the employer means that Fatima has a long way to go before she becomes as productive as the others and have the skills and the competence that are demanded to be ordinarily employed.

4. Sometimes Fatima is late for work. Usually it is because she has problems at home and getting her kids to go to school in time. She misses her bus, and has to wait 15 minutes for the next bus. One day she had to stay home with her sick daughter. But she did not call the work place before noon.

In a follow-up meeting the mentor addresses these issues and discuss them with Fatima and the job coach. They find several solutions to how both Fatima and her colleagues can contribute to make the situation better. They explain that the company has a non-hierarchical structure in order to increase the contribution and say of the employers. In fact her boss expects her to speak her opinion and to point out areas that might need improvement.

The job coach encourages Fatima to spend some time reading, watching, listening to different media and especially the news. He also says that she should show interest by asking questions, ask the others to speak more slowly, or repeat difficult words. The mentor becomes more aware of how she can include Fatima more actively in the conversation by explaining about a subject, asking her questions and talk about other topics that Fatima might be more familiar with. The job coach arranges for a language teacher to give Fatima language lessons at the work place in order to learn the words and expressions that are essential in a canteen.
“Fatima and her Job Coach have identified her language and communication skills as well as her social skills as areas of improvement”.

Language and communication skills are essential to succeed in working life.

Tips: To learn the language needed in the job ON the jobsite is very efficient. Check the possibilities. Maybe the employer or the government is willing to pay for some hours with a language teacher.

Even though Fatima is not reprimanded there and then, it doesn’t mean that her late coming goes unnoticed. On the contrary, the job coach and her mentor explains that being on time and giving notice when she is sick is of utmost importance. Otherwise she might loose her work placement and her chance to be offered a paid job in the company. They agree to put the question of paid work on the agenda for the next follow-up meeting a month from now, and that meanwhile, Fatima will not address the issue.

Time passes by and Fatima adjusts more and more to the social environment. She manages her tasks better and becomes more confident in herself and towards the others. She contributes more to the conversation and becomes a natural part of the social environment. She is no longer an outsider. Her colleagues especially appreciate her ability to keep the kitchen clean and tidy and the way she strives to make the food look delicate.

However she does not manage the cash register yet. When it is her turn she gets nervous and makes several mistakes, the line gets long and the customers start complaining. In a follow-up meeting the job coach suggests job stripping, which means to take away some tasks from the regular job that are difficult to do for the employee. In exchange, he suggests Fatima might take over other tasks from her co-workers. Fatima and her mentor find this to be a good idea and adjust her job description accordingly. Her colleagues are also satisfied. They appreciate the tasks as cashier more than cleaning and tidying.

Handling the cash register is no longer an obstacle for paid work. The main issue to be solved now is for Fatima to be able to start working at 7 a.m. The job coach speaks with Fatima’s husband and explains how the family now has good chances of doubling their income if Fatima can start to work earlier in the morning. In a while the family manages to solve the problem by receiving the help of the woman next door, as well as the cooperation of the children and Fatima’s husband.
After six months in the work placement, Fatima’s boss is very satisfied and so dependent on her that he is afraid to lose her. She is offered a fulltime paid job. The job coach keeps in contact with Fatima and the employer to ensure continued follow-up whenever needed.

Case Study –Northern Ireland

Paula is a 17-year-old woman who left home when she was 16 due to difficult family circumstances. She now lives in a one bedroom flat in a supported living scheme. She is known to Social Services and has had a Social Workers 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 achievements or qualification and with very poor literacy and numeracy skills.

When Paula was not attending school she got involved in anti-social behaviour (i.e. alcohol, drugs and stealing) and mixed with people much older than herself. Following an incident Paula distanced her self from the group and became very with drawn and did not leave her flat.

As part of the criteria for living in the supported living scheme Paula had to participate in an employability programme to work towards gaining qualification and finding a job. On advice from her Social Worker, Paula commenced on a government mainstream scheme which provided essential skills training (literacy and numeracy) and vocational training. Although Paula was apprehensive about the training programme, initially she got on very well. However, her attendance started to deteriorate and her behaviour on the course became very disruptive and the training organisation contacted the Social Worker to withdraw her from the programme.

Through discussions with her Social Worker, she expressed that she found it difficult to participate in training sessions and often she felt that she was ignored and lashed out. She had stated that she wanted to improve her literacy and numeracy so that she could get a job. The Social Worker referred her to a Supported Employment Organisation as she felt that the group environment was not conducive for Paula and one to one support would be more appropriate.

Stage 1 - Client Engagement

A meeting was arranged between Paula and her Social Worker and the Supported Employment organisation. They met in an informal setting at the SE Organisation and met with an Employment Support Worker.

The Employment Support Worker explained the services provided by the organisation and outlined the type of support they could provide. They were also very clear that their role was to assist people to find and stay in
employment. Also at the meeting, Paula explained a little about her self, her expectations and what she would like to achieve.

Following an open and honest discussion Paula agreed to participate in the Supported Employment Programme to work towards employment. A level of commitment was required from Paula and an agreement was signed between both parties. This was to ensure that both parties were fully aware what was expected from each other.

“The Employment Support Worker explained the services provided by the organisation and outlined the type of support provided”

Clear roles and responsibility from the beginning of the Supported Employment process is essential for both the service user and Employment Support Worker.

Tips:- Using a formal agreement between service users and Supported Employment organisations outlining the services provided and what is expected from each party. This can be easily monitored and reviewed.

Stage 2 – Vocational Profile

For the next stage of the process, Paula meets with the Employment Support Worker to gather some personal information and background information on Paula’s experience to date. This information would be collected in a Vocational Profile which includes collected information about an individual’s personal details, support networks, educational background and achievements, work experience, previous employment, employment preferences and accumulate in an action plan to achieve the individual’s goals and expectations.

This included personal information such as family support, living arrangements, education background and qualifications, welfare benefits and support networks (family, friends and key workers). The vocational profiling process was completed over a number of weeks with Paula meeting with the Employment Support Worker in a variety of settings for example for a cup of coffee in the local café and in the Supported Employment organisations offices. This provided the opportunity for Paula to work one-on-one with her Employment Support Work and develop a level of trust.

The Employment Support Worker started to explore what type of job/career opportunities Paula would be interested in. This proved challenging as Paula had never worked before and had come from a family who were unemployed
and had no experience of different types of jobs. Additionally, Paula had never had a summer job or after school job. Through discussion with Paula, the Employment Support Worker identified that Paula had liked to help out at home cooking.

The Employment Support Worker also assisted Paula to identify the different type of environments that she would prefer to work in. Through exploring different types of environments, Paula had expressed that she did not like working in stressful environments or environments with a lot of people or where there would be a lot of shouting.

Paula identified in her vocational profile what type of employment she would like to have – work in a small café, in walking distance from her flat, and to achieve this she also need to gain some basic food hygiene and health and safety qualifications.

To achieve this an Action Plan was developed in conjunction with Paula. The Action Plan included Paula contacting the local college to identify a suitable training course which would be part time and could offer her learning support to assist her with her literacy and numeracy. (Paula did not want to go back to full time learning).

"The vocational profiling process was completed over a number of weeks with Paula meeting with the Employment Support Worker in a variety of settings for example for a cup of coffee in the local café and in the Supported Employment organisations offices”

Individuals interact in different ways depending on the situation and environment. Employment Support Worker can gather information about how a person interacts, social skill and behaviours in situation and enviroments outside the formal setting.

**Tips:** Arrange meeting outside the formal enviroment such as meeting in a cafe for a tea/coffee, at home, social setting etc

**Stage 3 – Job Finding**

The next stage in the Supported Employment Process was identifying suitable employers. It was also agreed that the best route for Paula to get a job was through work experience. Paula did not have any previous work experience or qualifications but this did not mean that she could not do the job. However, through work experience, Paula demonstrated to the employer that she could do the job. Also, through the recruitment process, Paula would not be able to compete with other candidates applying for the post as she did not have any qualifications or previous work history.
Paula, with support from her Employment Support Worker, identified potential employers for work placements. The criterion for work placement was a small café in walking distance from Paula’s flat. A number of work placements were identified via the internet. Paula and the Employment Support Worker walked from Paula’s flat and identified a number of work placement opportunities.

“Paula, with support from her Employment Support Worker, identified potential employers for work placements”.

Empowerment and self-determination are key elements of the Supported Employment model.

**Tips:-** Individuals should be actively involved throughout the Supported Employment process including identifying employers for work placement. This will provide ownership and control for the individual.

**Stage 4 – Employer Engagement**

The Employment Support Worker approached a number of small café for work placement for Paula and was successful in getting a work experience placement.

The Employment Support Worker met initially with the work placement provider and explained their role and how they would support Paula in the work place as well as explaining Paula’s skills and abilities (also including that she was commencing training in basic food hygiene and health and safety).

Before the final decision was made, Paula met with the employer. The Employment Support Worker attended the informal interview with Paula to offer her support. Following the interview the employer agreed that she would commence work placement.

The work placement provider initially agrees for Paula to work two mornings a week in the kitchen preparing the food for the lunch time rush. It was agreed that Paula would work in the morning preparing the food rather than work over lunch time rush. Paula’s hours were from 9 – 12 pm on a Tuesday and Thursday for a 12 week period.

Before starting the work experience the Employment Support Worker met with the work placement provider and other members of staff to identify the job tasks, working conditions and environment. This is called a worksite analysis and job analysis. The job analysis broke down the duties and tasks required for the job
and the routines (times).

The Employment Support Worker also explained to the employer that the Paula did not like stressful situations or to be in very noisy environments. The placement provider also spoke to their other staff about Paula starting work experience.

The Employment Support Worker also attended the work placement with Paula for the first day to ensure that she arrived on time and to support her through the first day.

“Before starting the work experience the Employment Support Worker met with the work placement provider and other members of staff to identify the job tasks, working conditions and environment”

No two jobs or two employers are the same. Therefore it is important that the Employment Support Worker can gather as much information about the job and the employer before starting work placement.

**Tips:** An Employment Support Worker should conduct a job analysis and worksite analysis before starting a work placement or job.

**Stage 5 – On and off the job support**

The Employment Support worker had identified that Paula may have difficulty in preparing sandwiches for lunch as there were specific instructions and ingredients for each sandwich.

The placement provider had written up what should be contained in each sandwich including the amount. Paula was still attending literacy and numeracy classes and had difficulty reading the list of instructions and contents of what was in sandwiches. The Employment Support Worker assisted her initially in making the sandwiches and then took photographs of each of the steps of making a sandwich and used the photographs as a tool to assist Paula prepare sandwiches. Paula then could use this to remind her how to prepare certain sandwiches.
Another key area that the Employment Support Worker identified was the social interaction between Paula and other work colleagues. Paula had become very withdrawn when she initially lived in the supported housing scheme and she found it difficult to engage in conversation with other co-workers.

Initially the Employment Support Worker tried to initiate conversations with other co-workers and Paula would join in. This developed further as the Employment Support Worker would encourage Paula to initiate conversation by asking questions of co-workers.

As Paula’s confidence grew as she become more skilled in her work placement, the support from the Employment Support Worker was withdrawn.

After 3 months, Paula, Employment Support Worker and the work placement provider met to discuss Paula progress. The placement provider was very pleased with the progress that Paula had made and offered her part time job, 12 hours a week at £6.50 per hour which he would review after 6 months and there may be a possibility of additional hours. Paula accepted the job and 1 year later Paula is now working 20 hours per week. Her confidence has grown and she enjoys working as part of a team and had established good working relationships with her colleagues.

Paula’s Employment Support Worker still meets with her and her employer but not as often as before. It has been agreed that if either Paula or her employer has any difficulties to contact the Employment Support Worker immediately.

Paula’s job has not always been plain sailing, when her work colleague in the kitchen left to go off on maternity leave; Paula was upset and had decided that she no longer wanted to work in the Café. However, her Employment Support Worker met with Paula and the employer to discuss this issue.

"The Employment Support Worker assisted her initially in making the sandwiches and then took photographs of each of the steps of making a sandwich and used the photographs as a tool to assist Paula prepare sandwiches”. 

Individual learn skills using different learning methods.

**Tips:** The role of the Employment Support Worker is to identify an individuals learning style and use creative ways to make learning easy. VARK Learning Styles include Visual, Aural, Reading/Written and Kinesthetic – individual or combinations of styles.
Case Study - Portugal

Joaquim is a 60 years old man who lives in Lisbon. Before he was sentenced to prison for 7 years he was married with three children. He was sentenced to prison due to activities relating to substance abuse. Nearing his end of his sentence he participated in Supported Employment EQUAL project to explore finding work when he would be released. Joaquim was one of 75 prisoners followed at NGO Equal Project.

Stage 1 - Client Engagement & Stage 2 Vocational Profiling

Joaquim was coming to the end of his prison sentence and had expressed an interest in finding a job to his Probation Officer who referred him to the Supported Employment Project.

Joaquim expressed interest in this because he wanted to have support to achieve a job after his released.

He started his journey in the project through an interview with a coach from the Prison who became his case manager and both identified and elaborated on the Individual Rehabilitation Plan (Vocational Profile) and the steps to be followed.

This process involved Joaquim’s having several interviews with the coach to identify his social and vocational skill. He also took part in training course provided by NGO. During this training, Joaquim showed interest in participating in a job training course and was supported by an entrepreneurs NGO in the areas of electrician.

“Joaquim expressed interest in this because he wanted to have support to achieve a job after his released”.

A fundamental principle of Supported Employment is Zero Rejection - everyone who wants to work should have the opportunity to explore employment opportunities.

**Tips:** Supported Employment Organisations should not make decision who should and should not avail of their services to assist people access and stay in employment. If an individual expresses any intention or wish to find employment the organisation should explore this opportunity.
Stage 3 Job Finding & Stage 4 Employer Engagement

The Entrepreneurs NGO contacted a number of businesses that showed an interest in offering a training placement for Joaquim. After a process of discussion between the employer, Joaquim and his job coach, the most suitable work place provider was identified. The employer interviewed Joaquim; and offered him a job training placement in the field of construction for 6 months after his release from prison.

In addition, in preparation of leaving prison Joaquim participated in a course of social and live skills, which appeared to have been very important to him.

“In addition, in preparation of leaving prison Joaquim participated in a course of social and live skills, which appeared to have been very important to him”.

Social skills training can be as equally important as learning skills required to carry out a job. Research has shown (i.e. Minskoff & Demoss (1994)) that one of the main reasons identified for jobs breaking down is an individual’s lack of social skills.

Tips:- Employment Support Workers should not only identify vocational skills but also social skills training. Behaviour Rehearsal (role plays) is an good technique to learn social skills.

Stage 5 – On and off the Job Support

Leading up to his release a psychological assessment was conducted on Joaquim and discussion with his family and close friends prior to his release. This was to ensure a smooth transition from prison life and the full integration and inclusion of Joaquim in the community.

On his own initiative, and after verifying that it would be necessary to have an update on the profession, Joaquim attended a course in telecommunications backbone networks, while working on the internship.

When he finished the internship the company could not offer Joaquim a job so he begun a job search with the support of an employment specialist from the project. Joaquim got a job one month after finishing the job training.
INDIVIDUAL PLAN

In line with the Supported Employment process the NGO EQUAL Project followed a 4 stage process working with ex-prisoners in preparation for their release:-

The Project consists of four distinct stages: the first stage is based on knowledge of inmate life and creating a bond of trust between the prisoner and the technician responsible. It is in this stage that the construction of an Individual Rehabilitation Plan (PIR – Plano Individual de Readaptação) started.

This step consists of six major factors, they are: the inmate’s criminal history, individual characteristics, the involvement of prisoners in the definition of the plan, the motivation, the level of technical knowledge about the inmate and the trust relationship established.

The second step aims to test and complete the plan of intervention where there is a concern upgrade diagnostic material changes in the life of the individual or in respect of the same.

Determinants in this step are: individual characteristics (self-esteem and self), flexibility and multidimensionality of the intervention plan, involving the technical reference in implementing the plan, the inmate involved in implementing the plan, motivating and managing expectations and trust consolidated.

Stage three prepares the output of the inmate of the prison and involves others (i.e. family & friends, probation officer etc) who will play an important role and will contribute significantly in the process of freedom of the individual.

The most important areas involved are: motivating and managing expectations, individual characteristics, family involvement in the preparation for the prisoner release, the technical level of knowledge about the objective conditions of integration of the prisoner, established trust relationship, preparation of the inmate to everyday life in freedom, liaison with external entities (involvement of other actors in preparation for freedom).

The fourth stage is related to the monitoring in a free environment; this monitoring is carried out with the aim of empowering the individual and guaranteeing goal and emotional support.

This includes areas such as individual characteristics - reorganization of time and new routines, an intervention plan - objective conditions for the practice of the skills developed, involvement of family and friends, involvement of the coach, individual involvement, motivation, expectations and reliable relationship management.
Case Study – Spain

Manuel is 35 years old man who was recently released from a rehabilitation center, where he was for 3 years as a result of his addiction to alcohol and drugs. He is single with no dependents and lives with his parents. The rehabilitation center provides on going rehabilitative support to Manuel to assist him to stay off drugs. He has a good relationship with family, which was not always the case, in the past he would have argued with his father and his oldest brother. He speaks Catalan, Spanish and knows some words in English and German. He has few qualifications but has some work experiences in restaurants (temporary jobs). This environment provided him with the opportunity to earn money easily and quickly to finance and increase his drug additions since he was 17 years old.

Stage 1 – Client Engagement.

In the first contact with the Supported Employment organisation, the Employment Support Worker explained to him the services and supported provided by them and Manuel had an opportunity to provide some information about his background and personal situation. Once Manuel agrees that the Supported Employment organisation can provide him with the type of support that he requires to assist him to find employment and is aware of his commitment to the organisation he signs an agreement form.

The Employment Support Worker also analyses all the information provide by Manuel and agrees he is motivated to work, he has little qualifications and due to his drug abuse we realized that he has cognitive disorders like a slow learning process, lack of attention and concentration as well as memory problems. In his personal plan we must find out his expectations, future goals and objectives.
2. Vocational Profiling.

To find out what type of job Manuel would like the Employment Support Worker uses a questionnaire which identifies his vocational orientation. The Employment Support workers also use another tool to access Manuel's abilities and skills. Due to his professional and personal background, we consider that is not appropriate to find any job in places serving alcohol. The results of this phase show that his vocational orientation was to work in agriculture, mechanics or art. It was also identified through his vocational profile Manuel that he would require some basic qualifications in agriculture and mechanics.

The Vocational Profiling process is completed over a period of meetings and is reviewed regularly to check progress of the action plan.

The outcome from the Vocational Profile was to develop an action plan which included a schedule and a routine everyday, as well as training course of ecological agriculture for one month. It consists of a short theory lesson and practice in a local agriculture corporation. At the same time, we followed up his duties and his relationships at home.

“The Vocational Profiling process is completed over a period of meetings and is reviewed regularly to check progress of the action plan”

Vocational Profile is alive document and requires regular updating as an individuals personal situation may change as well as completing training course, achieving qualifications and work placements etc

Tips:- Vocational Profile is used to collect relevant information about and an individual’s aspirations, interests, skills and abilities for work.


The Employment Support Worker/Job Coach assists Manuel to draft a CV and presentation letter. We would advice it is necessary to attend and meet any job offer in his main vocational area. Manuel and his Employment Support Worker work together to identify potential jobs. To assist Manuel prepare for interview we simulate selection interviews through role-playing exercises and initial meeting with employers.
Stage 4 - Employer Engagement.

The Employment Support Worker/Job Coach meets the an identified employer to inform him that Manuel was is being supported by a Supported Employment Service and outlines the type of support that they can provide to Manuel as well as the employer. The employers agree that the Employment Support Worker/Job Coach can provide support and offers a placement opportunity for Manuel. The employer also shows the Employment Support Worker around the organisation and introduces us to Manuel's supervisor. Finally, we receive a contract as an agriculture worker for one month.

“*To assist Manuel prepare for interview we simulate selection interviews through role-playing exercises and initial meeting with employers*”.

Job Interviews can be very daunting for individuals who are starting out looking for work therefore it is important to prepare, prepare and prepare for interviews. This is essential

**Tips**: One of the best ways to prepare for interviews is role play. This provides an opportunity for the individual to experience what types of questions will be asked but also how to interact in an interview situation.

Supported Employment not only provides support to individuals to find employment but also support employers. In many situations often the employer requires more support than the individual

**Tips**: Supported Employment Services should provide arrange of supports to employers to assist the inclusion of people from a disadvantaged situations.
Stage 5 - On/Off Job Support.

The Employment Support Worker/Job coach supports Manuel in his job placement so he can efficiently learn the tasks and create a good relationship with his employer and co-workers. They also support Manuel in issues outside of work place. During a review meeting they pay particular attention to Manuel’s work inclusion as well as other daily activities like learning processes, home duties and his free time. In these meetings, it is possible for Manuel's relatives or other significant others, like supervisors or employers, to participate. The aim of these meetings is mainly to review if Manual how he is progressing with his employer, co-workers as well as his tasks. This provides Manuel with an opportunity to discuss how he is progressing. The feedback from Manuel is very positive regarding his satisfaction and efforts at work and at the other areas of his life is positive. If this was not the situation the Employment Support Worker /Job Coach could intervene and jointly with Manuel make any changes that were necessary. Manuel feels useful and has reached his very important goal.

“The aim of these meetings is mainly to review if Manual how he is progressing with his employer, co-workers as well as his tasks. This provides Manuel with an opportunity to discuss how he is progressing”.

Regular Reviews – it is important to have regular review meetings to monitor progress.

**Tips:** Supported Employment services need to ensure that review and monitoring meetings are held regularly and that formal reviews are build in to the action plan.

Conclusions:

The Training Case Studies clearly illustrate how the Supported Employment model can be transferred to assist people from other disadvantaged situations in to employment. The model of Supported Employment continues to be the same but depending on the individual or the individual’s situations there may be more emphasise in a certain area. For example for Fitaima the emphasises was on Stage 5 – On and Off the Job Support particualrly in relation to communicaiton and language support.
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