

National Awareness Raising Event

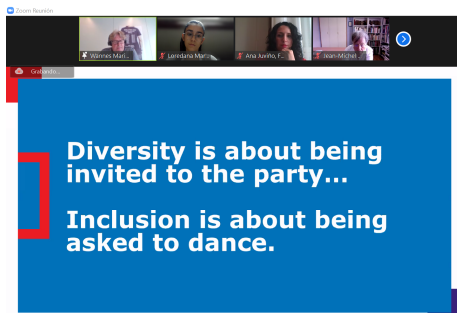
Practices and Policies in the Employment of People with a Disability: What's now and what's next?

Report

21st June 2021

13.30 - 16.15 CET

Online



On June 21st, EPR held online a National Awareness Raising Event on the topic of practices and policies in the employment of people with a disability. The event was co-organised with Rehabilitation International Finland (RIFI). The event aimed to examine the state of play, developments and successes in both practice and policy supporting the employment of people with a disability. The awareness event addressed initiatives at the European and national levels, examining the current and possible future impact and implementation of national and EU policies on practice and programmes. It involved participation from the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), Comète France, and EPR members GTB and Fundacion ONCE.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Pauliina Lampinen, Chair of the Commission on Policy and Services Rehabilitation International, Executive Director of VAMLAS, (Finland), welcomed the participants to the online meeting. She introduced herself and her role in both organisations and gave the word to Laura Jones, Secretary General of EPR, who introduced herself and EPR's work and explained to the audience the aim of the meeting.

2) Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030; focus on employment

The online meeting kicked off with a presentation on the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 by Susanne Kraatz, Policy Officer, European Commission Disability and Inclusion Unit. Susanne gave a brief overview of the Strategy and its eight priority areas: accessibility; enjoying EU Rights, decent quality of life and living independently; equal participation and non-discrimination; promoting the rights of pwd globally; efficiently delivering Strategy; the Commission's ambition for the next decade; and awareness, governance and measuring progress. Susanne mentioned the huge disability employment gap of 50.8% as one of the reasons the Commission is presenting in 2022 the "employment package", in cooperation with the European Network of Public Employment Services, social partners and organisations of persons with disabilities and service providers, where the Commission will issue an Action Plan on Social Economy in 2021 and will call on Member States to establish targets for increasing the employment rate of pwd and reducing the disability gap. Susanne added the components of the "employment package" which are focused on mutual learning. The Strategy got support from the disabilities organisations, the Member States and the Portuguese Presidency that organized the Social Summit Declaration to Promote the implementation of the EPSR Action Plan; and the Council Conclusions on the Strategy 2021-2030. To conclude, Susanne highlighted the important role that rehabilitation has on reducing the disability employment gap.



3) Employment practices for pwd in Europe: What have we learnt?

Pauliina Lampinen gave an overview of the main policies and practices implemented in Europe and shared common support practices as job coach, workplace adjustments, assistive technology and work capacity assessments and work demand assessment; as well as their results and learning. There's a need to move from "work incapacity" to "work capacity"; to address barriers to productive employment; to focus on workplaces and communities; to change how to think about disability and work capacity raising awareness activities and inclusive education; and to collect better data.

4) EPR activities & perspective on employment of PWD

Laura Jones introduced an overview of EPR and fields of work. She shared some additional perspectives from EPR Members; some activities that support employment of pwd; EPR's advocacy and partnership as the Inclusive Labour Market Alliance or DWISE network (work inclusive, work wise); some projects related with employment as 'Transitaction' or 'Jump to Job'; and resources/studies that can be found in EPR's website.

5) Finland's co-production approach to employment of people with a disability

Mika Ala-Kauhala from Kuntoutussäätiö (Finland) presented the Rehabilitation Foundation, their research on public health, social care & welfare employment on rehabilitation and introduced the IPS Individual Placement and Support, an evidence-based model of supported employment for people with partial work ability which aims to help people living with behavioral health conditions work at regular jobs of their choosing. Mika described some of the 8 principles of IPS and its development (policy and practices). Finally, he highlighted a good example of collaboration and co-production: 'Guide to the employment of people with partial ability by modifying work'.

6) Successful approaches for the employment of PWD

The following session introduced a 'Tour d'Europe' and involved speakers from Belgium, Finland, France, Norway and Spain to present inspiring practices and programmes for the employment of people with disabilities.

- 'Ripple in the Water Programme': Paal Haavorsen, Senior Adviser "Work & Inclusion" at the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, (Norway) presented their organisation and different programs they run. Paal explained the 'Ripple in the Water' methodological model which are:
 - Assessment of the company: to know the company and what type of jobs they offer.
 - Recruitment: job seekers try to match the right persons to the job offers.
 - Pre-qualification: in order to do indoor training with the person
 - Workpractice and employment: test the person before hiring them, after that if the person meets the criteria for the job, the person will be employed.

The main focus of 'Ripple in the Water' is the employer'. Paal highlighted the evaluation and results that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs ordered of the program. It showed that this method created more than 3 times more people employed than ordinary supportive employment.

- Fundación ONCE's Entrepreneurship Program: Ana Juvíño, Technical Adviser in the Directorate of Training and Employment, Operations and Transformation of the Fundación ONCE (Spain) gave an overview of the Spanish unemployment context of pwd, where only 1 in 4 pwd are employed. As for entrepreneurship, the rate is 5 points lower than the rest of the population as for the lack of accessible training and guidance.

The ONCE's Entrepreneurship Program aims to contribute to full social inclusion of pwd by offering support to entrepreneurs with disabilities throughout the whole entrepreneurship process. The program is open to any person with a recognized disability, after registration and interview candidates are sent to an orientation session with a trained Entrepreneurship Facilitators that will help them through the itinerary programme. Fundación ONCE offers the candidates support and guidance to generate and develop their entrepreneurial idea and business plan. When business plans are solid, participants can apply for financial grants. Ana explained that during the first stage of new business they monitor, counsel and provide training in specific business skills. Finally, Ana shared some facts of the impact of their programme.



- The Comète early intervention programme: Prof. Jean-Michel Mazaux, Hospital Practitioner and Vice-President of Comète France, (France) shared some information about their French network for early and global re-integration for the disabled worker. Prof. Jean-Michel shared the four main principles of the program:
 - Early intervention: vocational integration is a priority as important as medical care and rehabilitation, and should be undertaken as soon as possible.
 - A global, comprehensive system approach: in the context of ICF model and systematic theories, all dimensions relevant for the re-integration of workers have to be addressed. Beyond Impairments and Activity limitations interventions on the environmental factors may facilitate reintegration.
 - Pluri-interdisciplinary approach: all competencies within the team and outside the walls with actors from social and work services are brought together and coordinated.
 - A personal project: the plan is tailored to the wishes/preferences and expectations of those to be re-integrated and he/she engages actively in.

Prof. Jean-Michael explained the reintegration plan that structures in four phases:

1. Identification
2. Contact and assessment.
3. Drawing a plan: appropriate facilities are designed, helpful partners are identified and involved in the process. Professionals skills are checked in the context of the workplace.
4. Implementation: procedures and actions in the plan are undertaken and achieved. To follow up, Comète stays in touch with the person 2 years along after their reintegration.

To conclude, prof. Jean-Michael shared the results where 60% of the participants that completed the programme were employed; 10% learned a new job; 5% returned to study; and 15% had no viable vocational project.

- The Talentoscoop service: Wannes Marivoet, Human Resource Development Department of GTB, (Belgium) shared the mission of GTB which is 'to help people in vulnerable situations to find and keep jobs'. Wannes explained that Talentoscoop is a simple but powerful design. The factors of design of the service are: an interview based on active listening and structured guidelines, this may be the most important factor; consulting process in pairs; signed commitment; unique point of contact for the company; team experts from a broad partnership; structured follow-up, agreed time frame. Wannes followed his presentation sharing the results after one year where although it was a hard period because of covid-19, they managed to launch 87 Action Plans; most of the actions are combinations of them.

After the 'tour d'Europe', the meeting followed with a round of questions to the speakers:

- Paal explained that there are different types of job seekers depending on what programmes there are. The key is you need to know the client very well, if you don't know the person very well, you can't make a good match. They look for jobs that match the competence of the clients they have.
- Ana explained that there's a lot of people with disabilities interested in joining their Entrepreneurship Program, so they offer around 100 grants per year. Ana also mentioned that they are going to develop a full training program for job coaches, so they know how to help/support entrepreneurs by the end of the year.
- Prof. Jean-Michael explained that they find challenges every year, as they continually have to prove that their model works.
- Wannes mentioned that they are able to do ESF projects funded as an added value to their work that are developing. Ana, on the other hand, explained that the EU funding is crucial for their project during these 20 years.



To conclude, the event had some closing reflections by the disability expert/ entrepreneur/athlete with a disability/ Equality activist Anni Kyröläinen (Finland). She highlighted the progress of the Finish government program on this topic; and the raise of awareness on this issue by many other organisations. Anni explained her reflections on her extensive report for the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, where she examined different legislations, reviewed research, utilised stakeholders' information, and collected service and useful available data. The aim of the report was to increase the visibility of changes that are required for as many persons with disabilities as possible to work and participate in society. Anni noted that it must be remembered that we need to take a big step from the words from the actions, a good example is the disability services in Finland. Another important fact is visibility that the media can provide to pwd.



NARE Evaluation Report:

The National Awareness Raising Event- Finland had an overall rating of 4.3/5.

Participants expressed that their understanding of EU policies and programs increased, as well as their learning of different projects and methodologies. Some participants requested more practical examples such as using videos/photos with witnesses of the project. Overall participants gave high ratings to the structure, the information and the knowledge they gained.

