

# PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

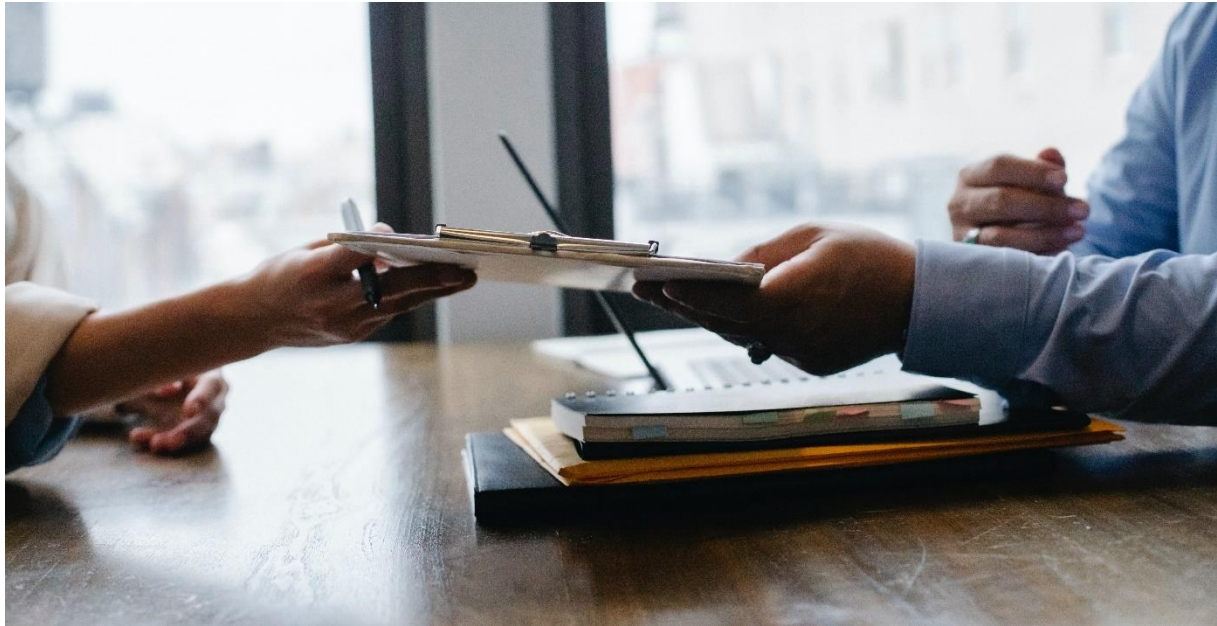
Analysis of policies and practices for  
pathways to the mainstream labour market

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# Easy to Read Summary

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The European Platform for Rehabilitation is a group of organisations that provide services to persons with disabilities and other people. For short we call it EPR.

This document explains what are some of the main laws and employment support services that can help people with a disability get a job, PWD for short. The idea of this document, which we are calling a study, was to understand what makes each law or support service work best.

In this document we use the words “service user”. A service user is someone who uses a service or services that helps or supports them. In this report the service user is the person being supported to get a job.

This study is useful for service providers and people who make laws or work with people making laws. In the document there are questions that can help them to think about whether a law or employment programme could work well for their country or organisation , and how it could work in the best way.

## WHO WROTE THE DOCUMENT AND WHO HELPED TO WRITE IT?

This study was written by people working for EPR. Some professionals from the group of service providers in EPR who are experts on employment met with each other online to discuss the study and the topics in it. They worked together to develop the document, adding text and ideas from their experience.

The task force helped find good practices about the laws and programmes. A “good practice” is a law or programme which works very well and has good results, and therefore is a good example to follow. These good practices can be found in the part of the document called the “annex”.

## WHAT DOES THE STUDY SAY?

Too many PWD do not have jobs. To find work, they need different forms of support. There are many laws and employment services and programmes that try to support PWD to find a job.

There are many things that can be done to make these laws and programmes work better. For example, it is important that they promote the respect of human rights and improve understanding of people’s differences. This helps to prevent ,



people having the wrong idea of people with a disability, not believing that they can work well, or treating them unfairly.

People who do not work often receive money from the government to live - benefits. Laws should ensure that benefits can be combined with salaries, so people can work part time and also receive benefits.

A close relationship between the support service provider and the service user helps to understand their needs and wants and better support them in finding the right job. After the PWD has found a job, it is important to continue providing individual support to help them keep the job and grow. People that support people with a disability and companies need to be trained well.

Partnerships between service providers and employers are essential to make sure that the skills of a person matches the needs of the company, so that they can do their best in the new job. Employers need support to hire PWD and make sure that they can work well in their companies. For example, many laws provide employers with money to buy the right equipment for PWD or to give them training.

Access to good quality inclusive education and training, as well as to different types of services (for example transport) is important to make sure people can get the skills needed for work, travel to work, and be included in the community.



## About the publication

The objective of this document is to highlight the success factors of key policy frameworks, legislation and employment models supporting the transition of persons with disabilities into the open labour market. The publication is aimed at national and EU decision-makers. It has a specific aim to feed into the initiatives that are part of the “Employment Package” launched under the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but will inform all of EPR’s advocacy work in the field of employment, including the joint work with partners in the Inclusive Labour Market Alliance<sup>1</sup>.

The document is also aimed at service providers, who can find information about the success factors to improve the implementation of services that they are running or could introduce, better work with employers and meet their needs. The perspectives of both jobseekers with disabilities and employers were taken into consideration during the development of the study.

For decision makers and service providers considering a specific policy or model, EPR and members have identified challenges, success factors and questions for reflection. These are aimed to facilitate analysis of whether such a policy or practice should or could be implemented and how best to implement it. In a separate annex, good practices in policies and practices have been identified and explained. A link to download this document can be found on page

The EPR secretariat carried out a small literature review of existing research on policies and practices, drawing out success factors identified there. Then EPR member experts in a task force worked to develop the document, adding their reflections and insights from experience. The main conclusions were presented at the Public Affairs event for discussion which fed into the publication.

The EPR secretariat will share and discuss the publication and main reflections and conclusions with key stakeholders.

## Policies and programmes: cross-cutting success factors

Some “issues” are essential for any piece of legislation or programme in the field of employment of people with a disability to work effectively.

### **A human-rights based approach to disability**

The general comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes the human rights model of disability; *“under which it is recognized that disability is a social construct, that impairment is a valued aspect of human diversity and dignity and that impairment must not be taken as a legitimate ground for the denial or restriction of human rights. Disability is acknowledged as one of many multidimensional layers of identity, meaning that laws and policies must take the diversity of persons with disabilities into account. It also recognizes that human rights are interdependent, interrelated and indivisible.”*<sup>2</sup> Countries need to have this approach mainstreamed into their policies.

### **Access to quality education and training.**

Education and training should be adaptable and aligned with labour market needs. While gaining a qualification from training or education is not essential, for many companies it is important that the potential employee has their skills and or knowledge recognised. Individual person-centred learning pathways are necessary for successful training and education outcomes. Inclusive education and training prepares workers with disabilities for an inclusive labour market.

**Openness of the mainstream labour market.** The labour market, i.e. employers, must be open to employing people with a disability for any measure or support programme to truly work. Employers understanding the added value of a diverse workforce are open to employing people with different abilities. Service providers have a key role to play in highlighting the value, including through sharing research.

**Tackling stereotypes.** Initiatives to address stereotypes of people with a disability and changing mindsets of society has a trickle-down effect to employers. Service providers also have a role to play in tackling prejudices in society, working with their communities and relevant policy makers.

**Relationship with the client.** Meeting the needs of service users and building a solid relationship with them is essential for effective support in the labour market. A solution-oriented and strengths-based approach that addresses individual needs and aspirations can support job seekers in finding the right placement and making informed and realistic choices about their career path. The relationship with the client remains crucial also after finding a job, with individual ongoing support a key success factor to help the person to remain in employment.

**Partnerships with employers.** Partnerships with employers are crucial to enable the intermediation between labour supply and labour demand and to improve matching between services, the skills of a candidate and offers of placement. They are key to increased awareness in the workplace and in facilitating ongoing assistance for employees long-term inclusion in the labour market once initial placements have ended.

There are many success factors and ideas for successful partnerships, including specific models that are featured in the annex of this publication, as well as EPR’s toolkit<sup>3</sup>, so this document will not go into detail on this topic.

**Support for employers.** Financial and legislative support measures outlined below are often essential to enable employment, in combination with different models of support services.

**Flexibility.** In coordination with the service user, employers should be able to choose the model of support for their employees, and whether a place then train or a train then place approach is most appropriate. The choice may be constrained due to the need for a specific qualification before entering an employment, for safety reasons, for example.

### Access to a full range of support services.

To ensure access to employment and enable inclusion in general, other services must be available as needed, such as childcare, transport and support

for independent living. Policy makers must take an integrated approach to ensure this.

## Policies and legislation

*The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls on countries “to develop and implement affirmative action measures, such as the allocation of targeted funding to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors, including vocational programmes. Further measures include quotas... or targets”<sup>4</sup>*

### Financial incentives

“Incentives” are a common instrument to enhance the hiring of persons with disabilities by providing employers with some form of income to compensate for a perceived or actual increase in costs related to employing a person with disability. There is a wide range of incentives, from wage subsidies to finance the remuneration of workers with a disability, or hiring coaches, tax exemptions and reduced social security contributions, to financial aid provided for the provision of reasonable accommodation and compensation of work tools or transport costs. Employers are often unaware of the forms of financial and fiscal support available to them.

Financial incentives have a different duration according to national legislation, ranging from six months to 2-4 years. After the incentives end, retention in the company can be limited due to a lack of continued support and long-term vision regarding the integration of the employee with a disability in the organisation.

### Quotas

The quota policy is widespread in the EU, with nearly all EU countries having a system in place which establishes quotas to achieve a rate of employment of persons with disabilities. Being determined at national level, quota systems differ greatly across countries in terms of the minimum percentage set (between 2% and 7%)<sup>5</sup>, the sectors they apply to (public or private, or both) and the categories of beneficiaries (some systems can include also other disadvantaged groups like orphans and war widows). In some countries the quota system is voluntary and not compulsory.

Obligatory employment quotas are generally better enforced than anti-discrimination legislation<sup>6</sup>, however, quotas are not always reached, with the degree of fulfilment across Europe ranging between 30% and 70%, with countries like Austria, Germany and France fulfilling around 60% of the quotas<sup>7</sup>. Even where quotas are mandatory, sometimes there is a lack of penalisation for not enforcing the policy, such as in Spain, Ireland and Belgium. In some countries where quotas are mandatory, if employers do not reach them, they have to pay a fine, usually into designated funds for disability, vocational training and employment of persons with disability<sup>8</sup>. Employers might “cherry pick” jobseekers just to fulfil the quota, choosing those who can be more easily mobilised towards the labour market and leaving behind those really in need<sup>9</sup>.

EPR is not advocating for or against quotas, but if quotas are in place, the following success factors ensure proper implementation and monitoring.



## Success factors

**Flexibility and harmonisation.** Financial incentives are most effective when they are harmonised with social protection policies. For example, when incentives are well combined with disability benefits they can better support the integration of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

**Awareness of support measures.** Authorities providing support should ensure clear information about support measures and funding is readily available to employers and easy to understand.

**Bureaucracy.** Incentives for employers should be designed so that the administration and bureaucratic measures to access them are moderate, to avoid employers being deterred from using them.

**Quality jobs.** Authorities should make sure that measures do not lead to “fake” employment, whereby persons with disabilities are engaged by employers but do not perform work or do not have meaningful employment on an equal basis with others”.<sup>10</sup>

**Balanced and long-term incentives.** When incentives or subsidies are too low, their effect may not be strong enough to convince employers to hire. Long-term support is essential to ensure workers with disabilities do not end up trapped into a sequence of subsidised jobs. It is important to also combine incentives with awareness-raising, to ensure hiring is not only a financial decision.

**Monitoring; sanctions and fines.** The adherence to quotas should be monitored and results publicised. The UN CRPD stated “*All measures should be accompanied by an annual reporting requirement on compliance by public authorities*”<sup>11</sup>. Sanctions should be part of a monitoring mechanism that is crucial to guarantee the respect of quotas. Sanctions can be more or less severe and be gradual according to the percentage of quota filled by the employer, as in the case of Germany. This gradual approach rewards employers who are making an effort to employ severely disabled persons<sup>12</sup>.

**Bonuses.** In some countries, firms achieving the quota and employing even more persons with disabilities than the requirements are entitled to bonuses. These can happen in many forms, usually as reductions in social security contributions, like in Italy. The concept of “double weighing” could be

explored, whereby hiring people with severe disabilities count double and therefore employers are encouraged to employ them to reach the quota. Recognising the efforts of employers through bonuses encourages them and others to stay involved and committed to fulfilling the quotas.

**Combination with other services.** Incentives and adherence to quotas are more attractive when employees have the employment support services they need, for the long term, including placement support, technical advice and on-the-job support where relevant. Technical assistance can be particularly useful to support employers in introducing adaptations to the job and reasonable accommodation<sup>13</sup>. See for example *Supported Employment*.

**Ensuring funding for workplace adjustments and support for reasonable accommodation** When sanctions are included in the mechanism, there is the risk of employers preferring to pay a fine rather than trying to achieve the quota. One of the reasons might be that the costs of making workplace adjustments are more significant than the sanction<sup>14</sup>. Therefore funding for such adjustments and purchasing the suitable equipment, and information about how to apply for them, is essential. The funds coming from the fines paid by employers who didn’t fulfil the quota can be used to support those who respect them in the form of subsidies or technical assistance for reasonable accommodation.

**Broad definition of disability.** Entry points for quota systems differ depending on the national definition of disability. Generally, persons with disabilities are required to register as disabled or be certified, however the categories having access to the quota system can be more or less specific, for instance distinguishing between permanent and temporary disability (in Germany, for example, people with temporary disabilities are not eligible for quotas<sup>15</sup>). However, in most of the cases the legally registered status defines disability still in a narrow way, making quota systems not relevant for people with less disabilities or health constraint.

## Reflections for Service providers

- If your organisation wants to advocate for successful implementation of the quota policy, which of the success factors do you want to highlight? What needs to be changed in your country's system, what is missing?
- If your country has a quota system in place, how can you make the most of it?
- Do you think that the definition of disability in your country guarantees access to the quota system for all those who could benefit from?
- How far are you aware of the financial benefits for companies? How can you increase knowledge and raise awareness among employers of financial incentives available to them to hire persons with disabilities ?

## Benefits for persons with disabilities

The social protection systems of EU countries offer a series of benefits to persons with disabilities or a “reduced work capacity”. The most common types of benefits are sickness leave, rehabilitation subsidies and disability benefits or allowances. While the rehabilitation subsidy is usually a fixed-term type of allowance given in case of prolonged illness or temporary impairment, disability benefits are provided to people with a disability that impairs their ability and which is not restored during rehabilitation. Disability benefits to work<sup>16</sup>. Some countries might also provide partial disability benefits in case the individual can continue to do part-time work, as in the case of Finland<sup>17</sup>.

Similarly to quota systems, access to benefits depends on the definition of disability in the national legal frameworks. In this case, the cut-off point is often determined by a percentage of disability or work capacity.

Social protection systems can sometimes hinder access to work, such as when benefits are lost when combining with part-time work. The poverty trap is a situation where people who find employment experience in-work poverty and end up being financially worse off compared to those receiving benefits. This can be demotivating, and they might not see the value of engaging in a service that could help them to find a paid job. Poverty traps are often well hidden in the design of social protection systems and thus require more research and study.

## Success factors

**Well-designed benefits.** Sickness and disability benefits are more effective when they are designed taking into account all the key elements of the rehabilitation process, such as the duration of the benefit, the frequency of visits for rehabilitation it should allow and the access to counselling to make sure that the beneficiary with enough work capacity can get back to work quickly.

**Combining benefits with employment.** Flexibly combining disability benefits with paid employment is a key success factor to prevent the poverty trap and make work pay. It should be possible for an individual to take employment and keep benefits while working, at least to an amount equal to the benefit that was received. Benefits should be flexible to take into account differing levels of part time work. It should be possible for people to easily access the benefits and

services they need if they stop working full time. Labour laws and related programmes should allow and prompt the regular labour market to be more open and flexible to the evolving needs and heterogeneous working capacities of men and women with disabilities. This includes designing mechanisms allowing flexible means to transition between different forms of employment being it sheltered, supported or mainstream.

There should be a close study of, and elimination of, known and hidden poverty traps in social protection systems that sometimes hinder access to work.

**Wide definition of disability and non-exclusionary approach.** Disability assessment should take a capability/ability and holistic approach to a person's support needs and address barriers to employment. Assessment focused on loss of earning capacity can help in this regard. As the UN CRPD wrote in its General Comment on Article 27, *"Discriminatory or differential treatment and the exclusion of persons with disabilities are seen as the norm, and are legitimized by a medically driven incapacity approach to disability"*<sup>18</sup>.

People with a disability should never be classified as unable to work, and the benefits should be flexible enough to support all those in need, avoiding harsh cut-off points and large differences between levels of benefits. A few countries have introduced in their legal framework the notion of "predictable disability" or persons "threatened with disability", while others have extended their definitions of disability to include people with chronic or long-term illnesses, which can broaden the scope of the system and be a driver for early intervention.

### Reflections for Service providers

- Are you able to effectively advise people about their benefits?
- Is the poverty trap a concrete challenge in your country? What could you do to raise more awareness of this issue and contribute to address it?
- Are service providers in your country aware of the possibilities or options to combine disability benefits and employment?
- What are the challenges with disability assessment that you see in your country? Does it create more barriers or opportunities?

## Financial incentives for entrepreneurs with disabilities

Some EU member states offer financial incentives to persons with disabilities who want to start a business or become entrepreneurs. The incentives for inclusive entrepreneurship often include loans, income support and subsidies for the adaptation of the workplace or training<sup>19</sup>.

### Success factors

**A client-centred approach** This is integral to any stage of support, from training to financial aid, to be able to provide tailored assistance.

**Effective collaboration and coordination** between stakeholders and agencies, especially when some national measures provide only for financial assistance and not for training as well.

**Provision of complementary support** especially in the form of skills support and training, is crucial, such as for service providers offering entrepreneurship programmes.

### Reflections for Service providers

- As a service provider, is your organisation aware of the availability of incentives for entrepreneurs with disabilities or of organisations that support potential and existing entrepreneurs?
- Are you raising awareness among persons with disabilities of the opportunities of entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities? Do you know of examples in your countries?

## Service approaches and programmes

This section illustrates a selection of the main employment models that support the transition of persons with disabilities into the mainstream labour market, with success factors that can ensure the effective implementation of each approach. It is important to stress that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the employment of persons with disabilities. According to the employers and the jobseekers' demands, some programmes can be better suited than others.

There is no one effective way to connect employer and service users. Each organization that is struggling with this issue does their best to motivate employers to be open to the employment of people with a disability and to be socially responsible but there is still a problem with disability stereotypes in society, and therefore also from among employers.

### Early intervention

This can also be seen as a cross-cutting success factor for pathways to the labour market for people with acquired disabilities. This approach aims to make services accessible as early as possible to clients who have acquired a disability, employees with physical and coping disabilities or even unemployed people, to create a suitable and tailored rehabilitation programme to reintegrate them in the labour market. Support services are provided immediately in order to facilitate reintegration in the labour market. Early intervention can reduce social exclusion, medical treatment and medicine use, improve mental and physical health and self-esteem, increase work opportunities and reduce social costs.<sup>20</sup>

#### Success factors

**Immediate access to support.** The success of early intervention is based on ensuring the client immediate access to support services once he has completed medical treatment, or even in parallel. The sooner the intervention is made, the more efficient the approach is<sup>21</sup>.

**Multidisciplinarity.** Early intervention is based on a multidisciplinary approach which draws knowledge from different disciplines and addresses all dimensions relevant to the reintegration of workers. The teams that are in charge of assessing the persons' needs and develop the reintegration plan

are usually made up of specialists from the medical, social and work services. The plans designed should be highly tailored and take into account the preferences and expectations of workers, whilst also managing expectations.

**Cooperation of national and local authorities.** An important element for early intervention programmes is the cooperation and coordination between national administrative authorities, healthcare providers or insurance, municipalities and employers organisations. The cooperation among these bodies facilitates the provision of medical and employment advice and of well-targeted support services, increasing the chances of reintegration.

#### Reflections for Service providers

- Is your organisation cooperating closely enough with the relevant stakeholders to ensure coordination between services?
- Are you able to work with people from the very early phase after a traumatic event, even when still hospitalised?
- What could authorities do for you to promote or enable early intervention and related services?

## Supported Employment

Supported employment is the provision of support to persons with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups to access and maintain paid employment in the open labour market. This model has at its heart the notion that anyone can be employed if they want to work and sufficient support is provided. It is based on the principles of individuality, paid work, inclusion within the open labour market and ongoing support. Supported employment responds to the demand of real workplaces for persons with disabilities, whose features are difficult to replicate in training centres or sheltered environments. *The model uses a partnership strategy to enable persons with disabilities to achieve sustainable long-term employment and businesses to employ valuable workers. Increasingly, supported employment techniques are being used to support other disadvantaged groups such as young people leaving care, ex-offenders and people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse*<sup>22</sup>. Supported employment has been a widely researched model of employment of persons with disabilities, which has proven successful in terms of the jobs obtained and retained over time<sup>23</sup>.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a *specific supported employment-type model* that involves intensive individual support, a rapid job search followed by placement in paid employment and in-work support for both the employer and employee for an unlimited period of time. It is historically focused on supporting people with severe mental health issues, but increasingly used with people with other support needs, individuals on sick leave who are more at risk of spending long periods away from the labour market. In IPS there is an additional emphasis on the co-location of employment and clinical staff<sup>24</sup>.

Job coaching is a key feature of Supported Employment schemes. It enables a person-centred approach which takes into account the needs and wishes of both workers with a disability and employers.

Regarding employers in particular, the job coach has a key role in supporting employers. The framework regulating their availability to the public and private sectors differs across Member States, as well as the education requirements needed. In Spain, for instance, job coaches must have a university degree. However, in many Member States the profession of job coach is not officially recognised at the moment and the training opportunities are limited. Very few universities provide courses on job coaching and usually include only a few hours in the curricula on the topic, with some exceptions like Norway, where universities offer courses on job coaching and the majority of them are free of charge<sup>25</sup>.

Given the relevance of the profession and the several skills needed to provide adequate support to clients (ranging from teamwork and communication skills to a broad knowledge of the national labour law), there is a growing need to recognise the profile and the training needed through an official definition of the role and scope of the job coach, as well as to collect more data.

### Specific success factors

#### Supporting legal frameworks and funding.

One of the prerequisites for the successful introduction and/or implementation of Supported Employment is the existence of a supporting, enforced legal framework. In France and Germany, for instance, supported employment is officially recognised by the law and financial resources are allocated to the deployment of supported employment platforms, although more financial resources are called for.

Even if Supported Employment can exist through a more informal and bottom-up approach where NGOs and private actors succeed in implementing projects, the existence of a national framework supports the issue of common standards, equal access, existence of incentives for employers and employees as well as one entrance for the jobseeker with disabilities<sup>26</sup>.



There are many Supported Employment projects and services on offer through a variety of funding from local, national and EU sources. Funding of Supported Employment projects from the EU (ESF, Horizon) have an important impact in countries where no specific national framework is in place, but long-term, stable national funding should be the aim<sup>27</sup>.

A major challenge concerning IPS implementation according to an IPS study in the UK was the a lack of stable funding after a project period<sup>28</sup>. The study also showed the importance of funders needing to be willing to try new service models; they found *“where commissioners had ring-fenced recovery-type approaches, this allowed the space for IPS to be grafted on to overarching strategies for local mental health that emphasised new ways to deliver services...commissioners are risk averse to an intervention like IPS”*<sup>29</sup>.

**Vocational profiling.** The use of vocational profiling differs from the traditional assessment process within rehabilitation programmes where individuals are tested in sheltered surroundings and are presented with different support alternatives by rehabilitation specialists. Vocational profiling also helps job seekers to make informed choices about their career by helping them to identify their motivation, interests, work attitudes, resources and support needs, and to establish realistic aims for their careers<sup>30</sup>.

**Place-then-train approach.** Contrary to traditional programmes based on a “train-then-place” approach, in supported employment schemes the person is first placed in a suitable job position that reflects his wishes, interests and abilities for work, and then receives training on work-specific skills and broader topics like work-life management. Placement in an ordinary job therefore is not seen as the end-point but as a key first step in successful training. In the countries that have already implemented the IPS program there is 20-25% more return to work via this approach, compared to the “train-

then-place” approach. Furthermore, this approach is promotes a “can-do” attitude and challenges common low expectations about what people with mental health conditions can achieve in professional settings.

**Well-trained coaches.** Given the on-the-job learning approach at the basis of supported employment, quality training is essential for the schemes to be successful. Well trained job coaches play a key role in providing training and constant support to the worker. Several studies show that these variations in success results depend essentially on the quality of the support and more specifically, on certain skills and attitudes of supported employment counsellors<sup>31</sup>. Essential skills for job coaches include knowing the labour and non-discrimination law of the country, having an understanding of different kinds of disabilities, being able to work in networks, negotiate and establish relationships with the client, as well as having a dual culture of disability and business, since they work both with the clinical team following the client and employers<sup>32</sup>. For this reason it is important to put in place certified systematic training and upgrading of job coaches to ensure that Supported Employment staff develop the skills and competencies required for job finding, job development, on-the-job support, and cooperating with employers (an example is the Finnish TRADES diploma in supported employment<sup>33</sup> and the training modules for job coaches of CFEA in France).<sup>34</sup>

**Job coaching in context** Job coaching may be used outside of the SE model but there is a risk that the tasks of a job coach will be narrowed down to only on and off short-term job support, without taking into account the other important aspects that make a job sustainable and career progression possible.

**Long-term support** According to supported employment principles, support for individuals in employment must be life-long where needed.

**Accessible services:** to successfully implement Supported Employment, services should be designed in an accessible way in order to

ensure access for all to them, both in terms of geography and target groups<sup>35</sup>.

### Reflections for Service providers

- If you have job coaches, are they working within a broad framework taking into account other relevant elements of supported employment?
- Is your organisation aware of the national regulations regarding job coaches? (e.g. need for official qualification)
- Do you provide clients with vocational profiling? If yes, does your organisation have specific tools or programmes to assess their skills directly on the ground?

## Transitional/Complementary Workforce Model

The transitional or complementary workforce model provides a placement and support service for persons with disabilities and offers a supported transition from unemployment to employment. It is similar to supported employment schemes, however it claims to place a greater focus on employers<sup>36</sup>. The organisation identifies employers with both a need to supplement their existing workforce and interested in having a more diverse and inclusive workforce, then it completes a comprehensive job analysis and person specifications to recruit persons with disabilities who are motivated to gain employment and have an interest in the type of work offered. The jobseeker with a disability receives an initial work-related training from the organisation and then goes to work.

This model promotes the establishment of new partnerships between companies and the organisation providing services to persons with disabilities. Furthermore, it can offer a valid support to employers in addressing staff shortages, as it places great importance in identifying their needs at the very start, while simultaneously opening up new opportunities of transition for persons with disabilities by aligning employers' demands with the offer<sup>37</sup>

### Success factors

**Matching needs.** By searching for the employers with a need to hire new workers, this model promotes the employment of persons with disabilities by effectively matching the company's needs and the potential of jobseekers.

**Creating opportunities for initial contact.** In a similar way, by actively looking for employers the complementary workforce model supports the establishment of an initial contact between employers and job seekers and, of course, effective placements. This can lead to new partnerships between companies and service providers.

### Reflections for service providers

- Does your service actively look for employers who need to expand their workforce or are interested in hiring persons with disabilities?
- To what extent does your organisation promote first contacts with employers?

## Inclusive Job Redesign and Customised Employment

**Inclusive Job Redesign.** Job design and job redesign are core elements of Work & Organizational Psychology which usually aim to establish a match between person and task to increase well-being and performance. However, when it comes to employees with disabilities, these processes can also help to directly design tasks that take their capabilities into account. The redesign phase starts with an analysis of the entire work processes within the organisation. The next step is task differentiation, the principle of distinguishing simple tasks (routine activities) from complex ones (based on problem solving or intellectual work) to design “simple jobs” for people with different levels of capacities<sup>38</sup>. Inclusive job redesign differs from the forms of customised employment explained below mainly in the extent to which it impacts the way of working in the company, as it is a deep process that leads to organisational change and the creation of structural workplaces for persons with disabilities or in general who are distant from the labour market<sup>39</sup>. The redistribution of tasks and activities impacts other employees as well. These methods can fit well as part of a supported employment approach.

**Customised employment** is a method of individualising the relationship between employer and employee to identify the strengths, challenges and interests and meet the needs of both. Customised employment is an umbrella term that can include various approaches, like job carving and job crafting, but also entrepreneurial initiatives where responsibilities and tasks are individually negotiated according to the needs of employees with disabilities<sup>40</sup>. This method starts with the person, who is the source of information for potential employment options, and should result in a pay that is equal at least to the prevailing wage<sup>41</sup>.

**Job crafting** is the practice of employees designing their work tasks themselves. It is therefore a bottom-up process driven by employees, who have the freedom to decide how they work, thus improving their health and work engagement. It can include task crafting, relational crafting (changing the way employees interact at work, how and when), cognitive crafting (employee changes the way s/he perceive their job tasks) and time-spatial crafting (e.g. adapting workplaces, working hours etc.)<sup>42</sup>

**Job carving** is the practice of rearranging and adapting tasks by carving out activities from existing jobs to create new positions within firms that can be assigned to persons with disabilities. Such methods take into account the needs of the employer and existing employees, with the collaboration of consultants specialised in job design<sup>43</sup>. Compared to Inclusive Job Redesign, job carving is based on a bilateral exchange between the employer and a particular person with a disability, meaning that it is an individual intervention that will end when the employee leaves rather than a structural process<sup>44</sup>. Job carving can be accompanied by training, continuous support and by incentives to business e.g. workplace adjustments. In addition to being implemented by firms in the open labour market, job carving can also be used within WISEs.

**“Humanisation” of work.** Job carving and job crafting contribute to humanising work by providing ways to re-design jobs and task to make them more suitable to persons with disabilities and employees in general. By adapting the jobs to the employees’ needs (for example by changing the workflow or re-organising tasks to better match their skills), they can increase their satisfaction and improve their health in the workplace. In this way the humanisation of work can contribute to better relations between employers and employee and increased productivity.

## Success factors

**Matching companies and job seekers needs.** Both practices help successfully match the needs of employers and the needs, abilities and interests of workers with disabilities. The demands of both are legitimised. Companies are able to fully benefit from workers' talents and employees bringing value.

**Expert and constant support to employers.** A key success factor for inclusive job design is the support

provided to employers by expert consultant in job design. When these figures are well trained they contribute greatly to designing tailored roles and positions that enhance the talents of employees at their best. Moreover, since both job crafting and job carving should be considered as processes, ensuring the continuous support of consultants to employers is very relevant.

## Reflections for Service providers

- Is your organisation aware of these approaches? Are you able to advise employers in this way? What support would you need?
- Does your organisation raise awareness of these approaches within its network of business partners?

## Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) & hybrid models

A Work Integration Social Enterprise is a specific type of social enterprise that aims to integrate workers with support needs into work and society through productive activity and pay them a salary that is equal or at least comparable to that of other workers. While they all aim to provide employment for persons with disabilities, the organizations can have very different modus operandi and pursue different integration models, ranging from the creation of permanent jobs that are sustainable alternatives for workers disadvantaged in the open labour market to transitional occupations that provide work experience and on-the-job training with a view to supporting the inclusion of the target group in the open labour market, or a mix of the two<sup>45</sup>. One of the criticisms of the CRPD of such models is that “*They do not effectively promote transition to the open labour market*”<sup>46</sup>. Here we focus on how they can effectively supporting these transitions There is limited research on social enterprises in the context of disability in relation to labour market integration<sup>47</sup>, but we draw from existing research and evidence from members' experience.

### Enclaves

Enclaves are a specific setting where a group of persons with disabilities work together in an open employment environment and provide strong peer support to each other. Generally viewed as a form of employment where employees in sheltered settings can provide services in clients' companies, helping to increase their inclusion. A more progressive alternative is the dispersed enclave. In this setting the group is dispersed throughout the workforce but still offers the opportunity of peer support.

## Success factors

**Objective of transition.** A key success factor is having as an aim to support the transition of people into the mainstream labour market. In some cases there is a requirement for funding to support a specific number of people. In Spain, a company that has a labour enclave is required to hire a number of those employees who have been working in the enclave for 3 years.

**Supportive legal framework** In a similar way, legislation facilitating the status and operation of Work Integrating Social Enterprises, recognising they have different needs compared to traditional companies, is an essential success factor.

**Right to return.** The safety measure for both employee and employer, the so-called “right to return”, is important to encourage people to try working in the mainstream labour market, and if it does not work out, to be able to come back to a known setting, that has more support.

**Providing qualifications.** WISEs that are able to provide either recognised qualifications or informal recognition of skills gained through the work are able to better convince employers of the skills of the people working with them.

### Reflections for Service providers

- How does your organisation certify or validate the skills of workers with disabilities in WISE or sheltered employment settings?
- How do you orient the people working in your WISE to the mainstream labour market? Do you have the success factors in place from a service provision perspective?

**Public funding and legislation.** State support is crucial for successful inclusion of persons with disability into the labour market. Regardless of their business models, WISEs need financial support to adapt their working processes and infrastructure and function in sustainable way. Reserving markets in public procurement procedures to WISE can also support WISE financially.



The report and the Annex with good practices is available digitally on EPR’s website: <https://www.epr.eu/publications/pathways-to-employment/>

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## Endnotes

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