

The Road to Employment: National Awareness Raising Event Sweden

10th December 2020, Online

Summary Report

Background

The purpose of this event was to raise awareness on the topic of supported employment, discuss research and challenges, share good practice examples, facilitate mutual learning and guide policy recommendations. EPR and the Swedish Association of Supported Employment co-organised the event.

Introduction, SFSE

The webinar commenced with an outline of the workings of the non-profit Swedish Association of Supported Employment (SFSE) by Bertil Johansson, the association's head. The association's purpose is to work on quality assurance and to gather and disseminate knowledge around Supported Employment (SE), Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and Supported Education (SEd). Bertil discussed their theory and workbook product which helps improve the quality of SE services, and is used by job coaches in Sweden of which there are approximately 1,500. SFSE promotes job shadowing and strong media campaigning to establish contacts with employers.

EPR, the EU & Employment of People with a disability

Laura Jones, EPR's Secretary General, provided an overview of services provided by EPR for its community of 23 organisations across Europe which include facilitating mutual learning, promoting innovation and development opportunities, providing workshops on various topics and its involvement in EU projects. She then gave an overview of key EU initiatives in the employment field, including a campaign known as #EUvsdiscrimination, highlighting EU law preventing discrimination and promoting awareness of, for example, guidelines for employers to follow in the field of reasonable accommodation. Laura also drew attention to the employment-related topics of the European Disability strategy, saying that EPR is advocating for supported employment for people with disabilities to be higher on the strategy's agenda. She highlighted the possibilities of funding supported employment projects via Erasmus plus, the EU's programme to support education, training and youth. Within the EPR website you can find news, analytical papers and briefings, including on funding to support social enterprises from EU initiatives. Further resources related to employment can be found on the knowledge hub¹, and online learning modules².

Interview with Luc Henau, President of the European Union for Supported Employment

Luc Henau highlighted the importance of maintaining contacts with service users during COVID 19 and mentioned the opportunities in certain employment sectors created by the pandemic including the care

¹ <https://knowledge.epr.equass.be/>

² <https://epr.teachable.com/courses>

sector and urged people to move away from the term disability to a more reflective term such as people in a vulnerable situation. Some solutions posed by challenges arising from COVID 19 were provided including promoting stakeholder involvement and working towards inclusive services versus specialist services. He emphasised the importance of asking companies what are your problems and how can the talents of people with disabilities meet these needs? GTB led the creation of a service that supports employers in this way, called Talentoscoop³. Luc drew our attention to the UN article 27 that states everyone has the right to a job. To support this right he encouraged those working supporting people into employment to start conversations on what their dreams are and what they want to become.

Experience from Norway – presentation by Grete Wangen, Forsker, OsloMet

Grete from the work research institute at Oslo Metropolitan university provided an insight into the development of the supported employment concept in Norway. The target group of this concept in the 90's were those with intellectual disabilities. The original project was successful in supporting 20 people into work. A 3 year project followed and the target group grew to include those with Mental health needs and drug misuse. Research demonstrated a 70% success rate in supporting people into employment. By 1996 the supported employment model was widespread at a national level. But unfortunately by 2003 work attainment had decreased and changes in regulations impacted on its availability. Now public employment service provides SE including the use of the IPS, and other services such as work preparation and follow up.

Between 2010-2020 studies were conducted and concluded that Supported Employment is a small part of return to work projects and those with intellectual disabilities are no longer a large part of the target group. Grete promotes the knowledge of SE into wider society and the training of job coaches to ensure quality and use of a quality framework.

Q & A.

There were opportunities during the seminar for people to ask questions. Below are some questions and answers from the session.

Q. How do you support a person in employment who has fluctuating needs:

- A. Luc highlighted how this depends on employer knowledge and their ability to adapt to the person's needs. For example a service user in GTB was unable to work during the day therefore he was supported to design a job that met his needs . He now repairs computers remotely at night time which means his particular schedule can be accommodated and his expertise can be used.
- B. Putting a plan in place to support the person on their return to work if they can foresee they may come out of work due to their fluctuating condition.

Q. How are the core 12 values highlighted in the SE quality framework supported in the material?

- A. Grete pointed out that the core values of the quality framework are values that not only the job coaches need to work towards but that it needs to filter down from management. It is very important for management when managing their staff to understand the core values of the framework so that it becomes embedded in the service.
-

³ <http://www.talentoscoop.be/#/>

Conversation with Employers

Several employers were invited to the seminar to help participants gain insight into their perspectives on supporting people with a disability including success factors and recommendations. Andreas Nyhlén from SFSE led the conversation.

Lotta Rizzo, Left is Right

Lotta highlighted that her company fosters an environment where there is *no danger in being wrong* and how members in the company coach each other, even if they are all on the autistic spectrum. She emphasised the importance of *job design* and a distribution of tasks people are good at to promote successful working. She advised employers/job coaches not to focus on giving people with disabilities tasks that are viewed as “easy” but tasks they are experts in. She points towards people not making assumptions about what people can or cannot do.

Jeanette Danielson, BNP Paribas Fortis

Jeanette, who has a particular interest in the topic of inclusion in the workplace, highlighted the importance of selling an idea to an employer and addressing the knowledge gap with employers. In addition, it helps to find a person within a company who has a particular interest in the topic of inclusion. This person may be found in a variety of different places within the company e.g. HR or communications. Engagement can be facilitated by going onto the companies website and targeting them or creating your own network.

Pontus Kåmark, Swesam

He was asked what are the key success factors in relation to job matching. He highlighted that his company is fortunate to have a variety of types of jobs, some tasks take longer to do than others and their motto is to support people to stay for a long time at the company as an employee and help them develop and move forward in their careers. He advises that regulations need to have a long term perspective not short term to support people to develop.

Political reflections by Mikael Klein, Head of policy at Funktionsratt Sverige

Expert Mikeal reflected on how Sweden doesn't have a strict discrimination legislation and people with a disability have no legal right to work in Swedish law. He outlined that Sweden has a wide definition of what having a disability constitutes which influences how the country ranks compared to other countries in Europe. It looks like it does well in terms of employment, whereas in fact when you use similar definitions to other countries, it in fact ranks quite poorly. The cost associated with having a disability in Sweden is within the top 2 highest in Europe and the long tradition of Sweden being a welfare state has been changing over the last 20 years. The risk of poverty if you have a disability in Sweden is the fastest growing in Europe.

Success factors:

Success factors in supporting people with a disability in employment is to focus on a person's ability and asking the person what support they need to have a job (e.g. adapted work schedule). He reports that people with a disability have highlighted needing support with organising their work for it to be successful.

Universal Design:

He drew attention to the notion of universal design which is promoted by the UNCRPD which has been signed by Sweden. Universal design promotes accessibility of new services, products, programs to be

accessible for all, is against focusing solely on special solutions and to remove obstacles to existing environments.

The question was raised on how this strategy of universal design can be adapted to the labour market and if we can develop policies which promote a sustained working life design.

Participant discussion

The webinar concluded with a discussion on the topic of what would advance supported employment in Sweden and beyond; recommendations for employers, service providers and policy makers.

Participants were divided into groups and asked to discuss the questions below. Included below are a selection of answers:

1. What are the challenges to providing quality supported employment services?

Not following the true model and values and cherry picking	Empowerment and listening to the person.	Sometimes job coaches think they know best
Dealing with other issues than things related to work. Guiding them to the right profession, i.e. physio therapist, occupational therapist, psychologist etc.	Support on longterm for all people that are involved in support services. Individ, coach, employer.	Sisu kan inte längre jobba som det var tänkt
Att hitta arbetsgivare som vill / vågar anställa.	Kunskap saknas på många nivåer.	Uppfinningsrikedom

2. What would help ensure quality supported employment and what could public authorities do?

Listen to the needs, seek doable solutions and put person in drivers seat.	Early intervention - Personalised path - Coaching on the work place - In case of vocational training use learning environment instead of traditional classrooms	Inform in a proper way the employers and the employees who will work with the pwd. (disability management) - Coaching on the work place
Services developed with indepth user research and person centered services	close connection with the employer, including during the sick leave	To provide soft skills and digital trainings
Make a good assesement (intrest, expectations, personal story)Peer support- built confidence Close conection with the employer-- Employment should be intrgrated at an early stage.Support main straa	To hear and understa d the individual stories of the service users, how they perceive the situatation	Focus on talent and what the person can bring.

Additional Recommendations:

- A focus on long term regulations and policies from government versus short term.
- A shifting of focus from tendering to more long term perspective where expertise is valued and people are helped to develop and progress.
- For service providers to seek out opportunities for educating employers and for policy to incorporate this also.

- Service providers to be encouraged to continue to share experiences to help learn from each other to help advance supported employment.
- To call for a stable income from governments for supported employment rather than short term solutions.
- To be innovative in seeking out ways to share success stories with those in government and involved in decision making.
- Corporate partnerships with governments should be promoted.

Evaluation: Participants were asked to rate aspects of the webinar such as overall satisfaction and what they had learnt. The average rating was 4.3 out of 5.

For more information, please contact: Laura Jones at ljones@epr.eu or Bertil Johansson on bertil.johansson@s-activa.se.