
PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

TOOLKIT

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INTRODUCTION

According to Eurostat, less than 1 out of 2 persons with disabilities (PwD) are employed.¹ This means that there is a waste of individual potential and that persons with disabilities are socially excluded, resulting in social costs.² There is a need to work towards a more inclusive society, which also means working towards a more inclusive labour market.

Why this toolkit? In working towards a more inclusive labour market, social service providers building partnerships with employers is essential because it can lead to a more in depth and long-lasting cooperation and therefore greater success in the employment of PwD in the mainstream labour market. The more employers, with the help of a service providers, employ PwD, the more employers will gain a better understanding of disabilities and change their mindset. This toolkit aims to be useful for organisations that support persons with disabilities into the regular labour market, particularly as regards building partnerships with employers.

This has been a topic of high importance for EPR members for a number of years, and EPR has facilitated various mutual learning activities and study visits on the topic. The toolkit aims to bring together the information and knowledge gathered over the past years to support further mutual learning and service improvement.

What to expect? This toolkit starts with an overview of success factors in building and maintaining partnerships with employers. The second part deals with arguments and information to help convince employers to hire people with disabilities. Section 3 focuses on how enterprises can achieve business success while simultaneously creating equal opportunities. Section 4 provides information about reasonable accommodation. Section 5 entails examples of EPR members' good practices.

¹See https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_-_labour_market_access#Less_than_1_person_out_of_2_with_basic_activity_difficulties_is_employed

² Employment of persons with disabilities – for the benefit of Europe (EPR Presentation “Benefits of Diversity”).

02.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND TIPS IN PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

This first section focuses on success factors in partnership with employers. In order to build a successful partnership, members have found that it is important to take things one step at a time. EPR has identified four important stages with each a number of success factors that are important in partnerships with employers. These lists are non-exhaustive.

I. Making first contact with employers

Making first contact with employers can be done in different ways. Below you can find a list of possible actions to take in this first stage.

- Identify and involve partners/colleague experts:
 - ✚ Before starting a partnership project, it is necessary to check good practices from other organisations
 - ✚ Contact colleague experts to ask feedback on a partnership idea/ ask to collaborate in the partnership
 - ✚ Involve relevant partners who can have an added value to the project
- Organize awareness raising events about the integration of people with special needs into the labour market
 - ✚ Awareness raising about misconceptions, advantages/value of hiring PwD,
- Change the mindset of managers: raise awareness about diversity in employment
- Make direct contact to potential employers: set up meetings to explore possibilities/interest
- Provide information about disabilities by using a resource/strength-oriented approach
 - ✚ Check employers' knowledge about disabilities and especially invisible disabilities
 - ✚ Strength oriented approach: inform employers about value the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in individuals rather than focusing on the disability
 - ✚ Resource oriented approach: apply career resource model
 - Identity resources that include the knowledge of one's own abilities, competencies and goals
 - Human capital resources describing technical skills, soft skills or knowledge relating to the labour market
 - Social resources, such as advantageous professional support networks, and
 - Psychological resources describing the inner attitude³

³ <https://www.mentoring.uni-konstanz.de/en/program/a-resource-oriented-approach/#c374602>



- Offer pedagogical support, discuss strengths and potential weaknesses, find suitable organisational solutions. E.g. The time needed to integrate a PwD in teams and to train the new employee: Will there be a special long time of low performance?
- Provide information about possibilities of public funding when hiring PwD
- Research employment needs in order to react to actual employment needs
- Organize (mutual) learning events with employers who already hired people with different labour market needs
 - ✚ learning events can be useful to get feedback on lessons learned, positive experiences, feedback on ideas, etc.
- Create understanding and explore the needs and potentials of PwDs
 - ✚ Explore the needs and potentials of PwD that could work in this sector
 - ✚ Before starting a partnership, it is important that employers understand what it means to hire PwD, the value of hiring PwD in that specific partnership

2. Providing information before employment

What do employers need to know about employing PwD? Providing information before employing PwD is an indispensable phase in developing partnerships with employers:

- Use an interdisciplinary team approach by defining and addressing the needs of all stakeholders: PwD, employer and social service provider
- Make sure that as a service provider you have good knowledge of working conditions, corporate culture and companies' needs in order to answer employers' questions.
- Provide employer with support/case management on different topics such as workplace adjustments or "reasonable" accommodation (and the potential government support for this) – for more information see section 4- social responsibility, etc.
- Provide an individualized and flexible case management approach, addressing all relevant issues of PwD when they arise
- Attend matching process between possible employee and employers
 - ✚ Give feedback on job applications
 - ✚ Be present at job interviews
 - ✚ Take part in discussion for selecting the right candidate
- Define training initiatives and special employment programs together with stakeholders/employers
 - ✚ Possible stakeholders can be e.g. expert organisations on specific disabilities, peer counselors, employment organisations, etc.
- Attend practical trainings for employee/employers
- Build trustworthy relationships with employers
 - ✚ Make sure employers can rely on you as a social service provider
 - ✚ Give correct and honest information and feedback to questions/issues

3. Providing support during and after employment

Partnerships with employers is not just about matching a PwD with an employer. A next phase is all about providing support not only during, but also after employment of PwD:

- Provide Intensive support for employers during employment
- Propose (optional) follow-up support after employment
 - Provide coaching on the floor
 - ✚ be present for first week to make sure everything is clear between employer-employee (e.g. practical information, tasks), plan feedback/evaluation sessions with both employer-employee, be available for questions/solve issues, etc.
- Make sure that employers feel and stay involved and are available for both social service provider and PwD when questions/issues arise: organize regular feedback sessions
- Exchange best practices and lessons learned with partner organisations and partnership stakeholders.

In the above three stages it is important as a social service provider to be available to the employer; communicating well and responding quickly and effectively to questions and issues.

4. Communicating & sharing success

When you have a successful partnership with an employer, it is important to spread the word. In many cases, communicating and sharing success stories is a final phase within partnerships and can help bring in new partnerships. Success stories can be shared in different ways.

- Formal ways of sharing success:
 - ✓ Official evaluation reports for subsidizing bodies
 - ✓ Official evaluation reports with employer
 - ✓ Internal-external evaluation report and annual report
 - ✓ Specific publications focusing on success stories
 - ✓ At (mutual) learning events
- Informal ways of sharing success by using social media such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn
- Make success stories more visible by using creative methods in communicating success:
 - ✓ Create infographics
 - ✓ Make testimonial videos
 - ✓ Publish interviews with employers/employer

Supported Employment

Supported employment is a method to implement many of the items mentioned above. Job coaches are usually part of a Supported Employment programmes.

“Supported Employment is a method of working with PwD and other disadvantaged groups to access and maintain paid employment in the open labour market. This method of working is a proactive policy in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.” (The European Union of Supported Employment)

The Supported Employment method can be used for people with significant disabilities: physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and hidden. The purpose is to provide real employment opportunities of people’s own choice in an integrated setting with appropriate ongoing support to become economically and socially active in their own communities.

The European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) identifies 5 stages in the SE process:

➤ Client engagement

This first stage in the 5-steps process is indispensable to ensure that a PwD makes an informed choice about wishing to use the Supported Employment model to find a job and which Supported Employment organisation can assist them to achieve employment.

➤ Vocational profiling

To help PwD to secure and maintain paid employment, a person-centered approach is used within Supported Employment to collect relevant information about the persons’ wishes, interests and abilities for work.

➤ Job finding

In this third stage, the job seeker is connected with potential employers. The persons’ skills and abilities are viewed in terms of their relevance and requirement in the open labour market. As a result, there is a matching of the job seekers’ needs with those of the employers’ needs.

➤ Employer engagement

When working with the SE-method, it is important that service providers work with both job seekers (clients) and employers. Service providers must focus on identifying the skills and abilities of the job seeker, and matching these with the needs of employers.

➤ Job support

Effective support on and/or off the job is the fundamental element of Supported Employment which makes it different from regular placement services. Job support also entails follow-up after employment

Want to learn more about the Supported Employment method?

Consult the EUSE toolkit online:
<http://www.euse.org/content/support-ed-employment-toolkit/euse-toolkit-2010.pdf>

03.

IDEAS TO SHOW EMPLOYERS THE VALUE OF HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In this section of the toolkit we present arguments and information that can help employers understand the value of hiring PwD and having inclusive workplaces. These reasons are presented on four different levels when working on disability inclusion: Business, workplace, market place and community.

1. Business

- All staff need support in different ways. someone with a disability have specific needs. Providing support to all colleagues improves productivity and loyalty; tailor-made, supportive HR practices benefit all employees.
- Gain a positive reputation on the international stage and demonstrate leadership
- Further own corporate values and social priorities
- Key component of diversity: hiring PwD can make an organization more diverse and inclusive
- Foster an environment that promotes dignity and respect of all persons
- Meet and exceed legal requirements

2. Workplace

- Gain greater access to talent pool: including PwD in the pool of possible employees means that as a company/organization, you have more people to choose from.
- Better able to avoid skills shortages or labour supply issues
- Possible decreased labour turnover: If you invest in people and a more inclusive working place, it is likely that employees stay longer.
- Access to untapped resource of different skills, points of view and abilities

3. Marketplace

- Increased ability to reflect the diverse demands of customers, making the business more receptive and responsive to unique needs, helping it to develop better products and services
- Making business better prepared to address people with disabilities and the growing market of older persons
- Foster innovation in products and services
- Enhance supplier diversity by also sourcing from companies that are owned by and employ PwD
- Enhance customer loyalty with inclusive marketing and advertising and avoid the negative repercussions of using stereotypes

4. Community

- Through increased inclusion and accessibility, contribute to an improved enabling environment for all members of the community, including business, to thrive and grow
- Contribute to positive social change through leading by example and positively influencing attitudes



HOW CAN ENTERPRISES ACHIEVE BUSINESS SUCCESS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY CREATING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?

To develop good partnerships with employers it is important that social service providers raise awareness among businesses of what is needed in creating equal opportunities for PwD. The ILO Global Business and Disability Network Charter provides a framework to help enterprises achieve business success while simultaneously creating equal opportunities. Here are the 10 principles provided in the Charter:

- Promote and respect the rights of PwD by raising awareness and combatting stigma and stereotypes faced by PwD.
- Develop policies and practices that protect PwD from all types of discrimination.
- Promote equal treatment and equal opportunities for PwD by providing reasonable accommodation in the recruitment process, on-the-job, apprenticeships, training, job retention, career development and other relevant terms and conditions of employment.
- Progressively make the company premises and communication to staff accessible for all employees with disabilities.
- Undertake appropriate measures to enable current employees who acquire a disability to retain or return to their employment
- respect confidentiality of personal information regarding disability.
- Consider the needs of those PwD who face particular challenges accessing the labour market, including persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.
- Promote employment of PwD among business partners and other companies and collaborate with national employer and business networks on disability as well as with organizations working to advance the rights of PwD.
- Review regularly the company disability inclusion policies and practices for their effectiveness.
- Report on company efforts to promote the employment of PwD to all relevant stakeholders and share information and experiences with the members of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network. The ILO will utilize the company reports and practices in its own communication, wherever relevant.

The ILO Global Business &
Disability Network Charter online

Check https://www.societegenerale.com/csr-report/files/charte%20oit_en.pdf

05.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION / WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS

1. Understanding reasonable accommodation today

The UN Convention on the Rights of PwD (UN CRPD) defines reasonable accommodation as

“[N]ecessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to PwD the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

2. A little bit of history

The legal concept of reasonable accommodation is rooted in US law (1960s) and Canadian law (1980s). It was introduced in North America with respect to religious beliefs by prohibiting discrimination in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This definition stands in contrast with the definition provided in the 1990s Americans with Disabilities Act. Reasonable accommodation is described as being necessary unless there is “undue hardship” in implementing it, considered to be “action requiring significant difficulty or expense”.

3. Why thinking about reasonable accommodation is important

- Because of obligation by national law in an increasing number of countries and to anticipate and comply with existing or future legal obligations
- It is a key measure to promote diversity in the workplace

Important to note is that legislation on reasonable accommodation is different in each country.

4. Analysing reasonable accommodation

The concept of “reasonable” accommodation can be divided into two main parts:

- identifying effective measures that remove or mitigate barriers encountered by the worker
- assessing the reasonableness of that accommodation

If a PwD wishes to make use of reasonable accommodation, the employer needs to assess the reasonableness of the accommodation requested. Below you can find a list with factors that are taken into account in determining whether a requested accommodation would pose a disproportionate burden:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the cost of the accommodation; ➤ the size and economic turnover of the enterprise obliged to provide the accommodation. If it is part of a larger company, the size of the entire company should be the reference; ➤ the functioning and the organization of the company; ➤ whether the accommodation will benefit more persons than the individual making the request; ➤ the existence of public (or other) funding, which could cover or reimburse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the employer for the partial or total cost of the accommodation; ➤ occupational safety and health requirements; ➤ the anticipated duration of the employment relationship. If the worker has been hired on a short, temporary contract, then the employer might not be expected to invest in major changes unless these would be of wider benefit to other workers. |
|--|---|

Check the ILO guide online

Promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments a practical guide
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_536630.pdf

06.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

Por Talento – Inserta

FSC Inserta, ONCE Foundation's entity, expert in labour mediation services for PwD, developed Portalento.es, a platform co-financed by the ONCE Foundation and the European Social Fund that coordinates job offers from over 4,000 collaborating companies and assists over 190,000 job-seekers registered in their database.

Equipped with the latest technological innovations, the employment platform is at the forefront of labour mediation and allows their users to directly interact with FSC Inserta's experts in order to get updated on the broad training offer and job opportunities available. The platform also gives the companies the possibility to manage their job offers in real time and access the information of all candidates meeting the requested profiles.

But the distinguishing element of Portalento.es is the fact that it combines the potential of new technologies with human involvement, thus setting a new paradigm in labour inclusion.

Portalento.es is much more than a website, much more than a tool; it is an open fully inclusive meeting place for job-seekers with a disability, companies offering jobs, public administrations or interested persons; open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

"A thousand reasons" campaign. Together with the new Portalento.es, the ONCE Foundation launched the campaign "A thousand reasons" with a double objective: on the one hand, to inform and encourage PwD, including entrepreneurs, to use the website services such as guidance, training and support to increase their options to get a quality

job, and on the other, to try to raise awareness of employers and business owners.

As the campaign states: "for many PwD the day couldn't start any better", because every day more persons with a disability find a job thanks to the ONCE Foundation through Portalento.es. The campaign also consists of a free mobile application ('Despertador Por Mil Razones'- 'A Thousand Reasons Alarm Clock', available on the Apple Store and Google Play) so that users can post morning tweets saying one of the 'thousands of reasons' why getting up every morning is so good, using the hashtag #razonesparalevantarse ('reasons to get up').

Mediation services for more than 50,000 job offers. Since its creation in 2009, FSC Inserta has processed over 50,000 job offers for PwD, and it has also provided its registered job-seekers with over 3,000 courses and workshops where about 30,000 students with a disability have been trained. A training and work mediation activity is absolutely free for its beneficiaries thanks to the financing by the ONCE Foundation and the European Social Fund.

WATCH THE CAMPAIGN ONLINE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQO4unsWLto&feature=youtu.be>

Duoday – GTB Flanders

What is DUOday? The concept is simple: DUOday is a DO-day for jobseekers with an occupational limitation. On that day they form a DUO with an employee within a company or organisation. This duo-job for one day gives both of them a real opportunity. Employee and employer get to know the skills, commitment and possibilities of jobseekers with an occupational limitation. The jobseeker has a chance to show his or her talents, and can test his or her perception of a certain job against reality.

Why? Even today, jobseekers with an occupational limitation do not yet have the same chances in the employment market. This is proven by, among others, the employment rate. It is 50% lower than the employment rate of the total active Belgian population: approximately 35% compared to 70%, with minimal differences between the regions. Great progress can still be made. In the Scandinavian countries the employment rate of people with a limitation even surpasses 70%. Thanks to an approachable campaign such as DUOday we can build bridges between employers, people with an occupational limitation and service providers. DUOday is an action providing a win-win situation for all parties involved.

Evolution. DUOday was first organised in Flanders in 2011. In 2013 this was extended to Wallonia. From 2015 it is a Belgian DUOday with partnerships in Flanders, Wallonia, the German-speaking community and the Brussels-Capital Region.

Success? On Duoday 2018, 477 businesses all over Belgium took part. 42 % of participating businesses learned about GTB or other specialized partner organisations. 60% of the businesses took part for the first time and 92% of the businesses wish to continue this partnership in the future. 31% of the businesses planned a next step after

⁴<https://www.facebook.com/DUOday/photos/a.417708204912879/2260707067279641/?type=3&theater>

DUOday. In May 2019, DUOday will celebrate its 10th edition.⁴

DUOday in Europe. DUOday doesn't only take place in Belgium. In 2019, DUOday will take place in 11 European countries: Belgium, Ireland, Scotland, Luxemburg, France, Germany, Hungary, Finland, Sweden, Portugal, Greece.⁵

DUOday Belgium – Job Shadow with the President of the Flemish Parliament

On 26 april 2018, VDAB organised the 9th edition of DUOday. Blogger, Hilko Peters had the honour to shadow the president of the Flemish Parliament, Jan Peumans. "I was lucky be Jan Peumans' assistant for one day" she writes in her blog. On top of that, she conducted a 2-hour long interview with the President. Read the interview with the President here (in Dutch) <http://community.dewereldmorgen.be/blog/methusalem/2018/06/06/vlaams-parlementsvoorzitter-jan-peumans-in-duo-eeen-persoonlijk-gesprek>

Ireland - Me and my shadow: all in a day's work experience

Austin Lynch was involved in a job shadow day. He shadowed the minister for social protection Joan Burton. "It was very good. I had to get up very early and go to the dáil, and there were cameras everywhere," he says. "Minister Burton introduced me to everyone as we went into the dáil. Then, we went to a recycling centre in Tallaght and back to the dáil for lunch. I really enjoyed it. I'll never forget the day."

Joan Burton about job shadow: "it raised the expectations of job coaches, employers and employees. People with disabilities also have a lot of ability. Voluntary organisations, employability services and job coaches can help them get work placements, and the supports are there to help employers."

Read more: <https://bit.ly/2GKOOFs>

⁵ Information extracted from folder https://www.duoday.be/files/flyer/A4_flyer_2019_EN.pdf

Ripples in the Water – Work and Inclusion

Who? Work & Inclusion (W&I) is an association in the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), the main business organisation in Norway with 26,000 member companies. W&I have 100 member companies all over the country which base their services on individual coaching towards ordinary employment through providing qualifications, job training, protected work and Supported Employment. They provide services to approximately 35,000 disadvantaged people annually.

What? RIW is a methodology for cooperation between NHO member companies and W&I service providers. It aims to increase the level of employment for PwD or disadvantages based on the understanding that the vast majority of people both want and are able to work. With reference to their CSR strategy, NHO companies need manpower and want to be successful in integrating employees with a disability.

Success? An evaluation from December 2017 shows that RIW helps NHO's members recruit the right person for the right job. The NHO company gets in touch with a service provider, who after an assessment of the company's needs, consider whether they have suitable candidates for the position in question. The service provider may also provide training and coaching to prepare the candidate to become employable. In addition, they provide follow-up support in the workplace, including coaching after the candidate has been permanently employed. The evaluation further shows that 57% of the NHO companies would not have recruited without RIW. 84% trust that the service providers propose relevant candidates and 77% agrees that the actual candidate matched the needs of the company. Two out of three find it safe to recruit through RIW.

CDI ISI CURRICULUM - Centre de Réadaptation du Mulhouse, France

Who? Centre de Réadaptation du Mulhouse (CRM) offers different training programmes adapted to PwD. A person-centred approach is at the core of their services promoting dignity and citizenship with respect for the choices and needs of each service users. Through its services, CRM promotes the development of people's capabilities, full participation in society and employment inclusion. CRM supports the users' autonomy as well as physical, mental, and moral wellbeing.

What? CDI ISI Curriculum, is a two-year IT development training programme for people with a disability. The aim of the programme is to prepare students for the level required in order to enter the IT engineering training courses provided in most of the big companies in the sector. While companies have to recruit PwD to respond to their legal obligations, they often fail to find good profiles matching their demands.

Partnership and success. The problem in the past was that only a small part of CRM's students was able to follow an IT engineer training course without preparation. To increase the number of potential students, it was decided to organize a special curriculum in partnership with four companies in the IT sector to enable people to reach the level required to enter the engineer training programme. This resulted in the CDI ISI Curriculum programme. At the end of the two-year training provided at CRM's centre in Mulhouse, the students obtain an IT engineering diploma (ISI) which allows them to sign an apprenticeship contract. Out of the 11 students who followed the curricula-programme in its initial year, 7 signed an apprenticeship contract with a company for engineering training afterwards.

07.

RESOURCES

If you want to find out more about partnerships with employers, please consult these useful resources:

- > Guide for business on the rights of PwD. United Nations Global Compact & ILO.
- > Employment of persons with disabilities – for the benefit of Europe (EPR Presentation “Benefits of Diversity”)
- > https://www.societegenerale.com/csr-report/files/charte%20oit_en.pdf
- > Promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments: a practical guide
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_536630.pdf
- > https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_-_labour_market_access#Less_than_1_person_out_of_2_with_basic_activity_difficulties_is_employed
- > <https://www.mentoring.uni-konstanz.de/en/program/a-resource-oriented-approach/#c374602>



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