Employment and Job Coaching Skills Training

Report

5th – 6th November 2019

Vlaams Administratief Centrum – Diestevest 6, 3000

Leuven, Belgium

On the 4th and 5th of November the Training on Employment and Job Coaching skills organized by EPR in collaboration with GTB and SUEM.BE, the Belgian umbrella organization for supported employment was held in Leuven. The training was attended by 19 professionals from 11 European countries (Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Estonia, Latvia, France, Germany, Greece, athe Netherlands).

This training aimed to provide an in-depth analysis of the skills necessary to Job Coaching, to improve the effectiveness and impact of its intervention. The course was designed for professionals who work in the field and who want to deepen and improve their skills. The training also hosted one of the dissemination events of the Talentoscoop project, giving participants the chance to learn from a successful good practice in the field of Employers Engagement.

The first part of the training was lead by Sofie Meeuws of GTB vzw and Karen Warson of SUEM vzw. Trainers have been chosen as they have both been active in different areas of the employment service, often as experts, on increasing employment for persons with disabilities and achieving an inclusive labour market and for their expertise in designing, developing and disseminating tools and services that foster an inclusive society on the principles of employer engagement.

The first presentation, by Karen Warson, helped the participants to better define the concept of supported employment, highlighting the fact that there are differences, even substantial ones, in the way in which this is understood and supported in the different European countries.

The shared definition of Supported Emplyment referred to during the training was: "The provision of support to people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups to secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market".

The concept of Supported Employment was then deepened through the 5 stages model:

1. Client Angagement: Theorem: The client can decide what he wants and I - as a service provider - follow his choices;
2. Vocational Profiling: Theorem: It is important to have a complete picture of the client in all areas in order to allow him to gain experience on the workfloor;
3. Job Finding: Theorem: If there is no job, you can (almost) always create one;
4. Employers Engagement: Theorem: Employers expect perfect employees (see section below);
5. On and Off the Job Support: Theorem: Once someone knows his job well, support is no longer needed.

The following session was dedicated to Employers Engagement and to the multiple methodologies that can be applied in this area.
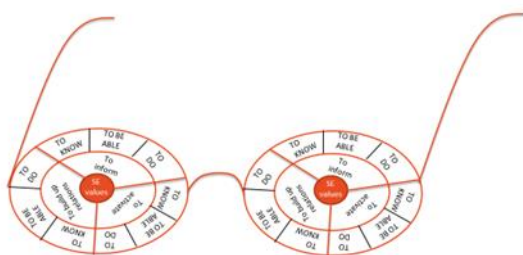
The eyeglass model shown here was used to illustrate the importance of taking into account both the needs of the job seeker and those of the employer. In particolar, how it's important to activate, to inform and to build relations with both.

The different corporate cultures and the need need to know them in depth the was then emphasized: Gaining insight into one's own preferred behaviour gives as an important lever when working in a team, during a job interview or dealing with people who have very different behaviours.

In particular, the communication-behavioural model has been explored in depth, underlining how people's behaviour differs from each other on 2 axes:

- Direct vs Indirect
- Task-orented vs. Person oriented

Following this methodological approach and the so-called 4-color model, the 4 different corporate cultures have been studied in depth, providing solutions and tools on how it is best to approach them, taking into account the different characteristics of each.
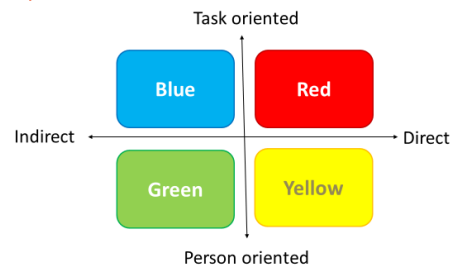
The afternoon of the first day was dedicated to the Talentoscoop project and its results. This was meant to give participants the chance to learn from a successful good practice in the field of Employers Engagement.

Patrick Ruppol of GTB, project coordinator, and his colleague … introduced the project, taking the time to present the following elements:

- Service Design, infographic, business model canvas on Talentoscoop Concrete outputs
- How Questionnaires were prepared and used in the project
- The roadmap:
  - Information
  - Dream Detection
  - Consulting Process
  - Match Report
  - Action Plan
  - Impact Evaluation
- The 2 fundamental roles in the Talentoscoop methodology:
  - KAM-D: the Key Account Manager
  - SPOC: the Single Point of Contact
- Results after 9 months in 6 organizations
- Lessons Learned
- Concrete Outputs

A case study (Sint Lodewijk) was the introduced by Marieke Eggermont, giving an overview on how the SPOC was introduced and implemented in a real project.

Edurne Alvarez de Mon Gonzalez of Inserta introduced then her organization and its pathway to employment for people with disabilities. A particular focus was dedicated to:

- Inserta Services for Jobseekers
- Inserta Services for Companies
- Portalento: Training and Employment platform
- Awareness and Communication campaigns

Judit Fekete of Corvinus University of Budapest spoke about the project ProAbility - Promotion of the employment of people with disabilities through the training of employers, touching the following topics:

- People with disabilities on the Hungarian labour market
- Phases of the proAbility project:
  o Needs assessment
  o Awareness-raising among present and future managers
  o Dissemination of results
- How can PWD and businesses connect?
  o PWD as consumers
  o PWD as suppliers and partners
  o PWD as employees

At the end of the day, Roberto Zanon of European Platform for Rehabilitation presented the Partnerships with Employers Toolkit, developed by EPR in 2018:

- Success factors and tips in partnerships with employers
- Ideas to show employers the value of hiring people with disabilities
- How can enterprises achieve business success while simultaneously creating equal opportunities?
- Reasonable Accommodation / Workplace adjustments
- Examples of good practices

All presentations were followed by a Questions and Answers session that showed a great interest from the participants, in particular for the more practical and operational elements of the good practices brought as an example.

The second day was dedicated almost entirely to mutual learning. The participants were divided into two groups and invited to share and exchange their experiences, projects and tools in the context of supported employment.

In particular, the they were asked to prepare a presentation that focused on specific questions. Here are some:

- Can you describe your usual working day? How much of your time during a week do you spend on: Clients, Employers, Stakeholders, Colleagues, Administration, Education/vocational training
- Inside your organization, do you work with other professionals in order support clients' employment?

- Outside your organization, do you work with other professionals? (networks, organizations, employers, federations, other professionals, etc.)
- How do you find and get in contact with new employers?
- How do you support employers working with people with special needs? Do you organize, for example, training days?
- Do you approach smaller and large companies in different ways? How?
- What good methodologies or tools do you have available to support you in your work?
- How do you expect EPR to have a role through mutual learning and/or joint product development?

The topics emerged from the exchange of experiences, together with the salient elements that emerged from the training as a whole, are highlighted in the success factors and reccommandations section below.

The day was then closed with two goup discussions. The first with the aim of tackling the problem of support to job retention and the second to explore how the common challenges can be tackled together and what role EPR can play in these developments.

Success factors and reccommandations

- One of the most complex challenges to face concerns the transition from sheltered employment to supported employment in the general labor market. It is necessary that this step is supported more and better so that the efforts sustained in this phase of transition are not in vain;

- There are big differences in the various European countries and the labor market defferently open to the inclusion of people with disabilities. It is important, however, that the quota system is supported and, if possible, reinforced. The employment quota reserved for people with disabilities and the support to organizations that employ people with disabilities are two fundamental elements, without which the employment inclusion of people with disabilities becomes extremely difficult to realize;

- The role of the job coach varies greatly from country to country. Nevertheless, there are some common characteristics, one of whic is the extreme flexibility that this role implies, from the point of view of the competences and of the actions put in place, but also from the point of view of schedules, of the hierarchical position, of the position within the network of professionals, etc. It is important that such a complex role is supported by the necessary tools, continuous professional updating. It is imortnat the the Job Coach is not left alone to play such a delicate role;

- Administrative tasks (including those related to the new privacy legislation) require a huge investment of time, subtracting energy and resources to direct intervention with customers and companies. It is important that the administrative part is simplified or that at least the Job Coaches have the tools (also digital) to speed up the most strictly bureaucratic tasks;

- Internships can be a very effective tool for the job placement of people with disabilities. For this reason they must be supported economically and with appropriate regulations. At the same time internships are very difficult to evaluate. Therefore, shared tools are needed to help implement their evaluation;

- Assessment represents a phase shared by all the organizations, even if there is still a difference in the instruments used or a different use of the common tools (ICF for example). It is necessary that moments of exchange and comparison are dedicated to this specific topic;

- Even if the digitalisation and use of digital tools is spreading in this field of work too, the level of knowledge of these new possibilities and tools is very different in the different countries and organizations. It is necessary to support

the exchange of existing digital tools and develop new tools designed specifically for job coaches and their intervention;

- EPR can enhance supported employment and organizations that work in this area mainly in three ways:

  o Bringing the needs and demands of organizations where political decisions are made;
  o Supporting the dissemination, knowledge and exchange of methodologies and tools among organizations active in this field;
  o Collecting good practices and tools to be made available to the organizations themselves.

Participants were asked to rate the overall event from 1 (poor quality) to 5 (excellent). The average rating of the event was a **4.5 out of 5**.

All presentations are available on the EPR website here.