

**EU-Project Career:  
Towards participation in working life  
Four national projects and  
a transnational comparison**

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# **THE CONCEPT OF CAREER AND CAREER EDUCATION**

**Tuula Matikainen**

## **BACKGROUND**

The central elements of career education are to teach working and to prepare young people for choosing a career as well as to familiarise them with the fundamentals of work. Career education is thought to be part of the education carried out at home, school, and an element of the objectives of other public educational activities.

The development of career education programmes designed for disabled people have been based on traditional and stereotyped options about the abilities of disabled people. The lack of theoretical models applicable to development work has made it difficult to develop appropriate programmes. Career education programmes consist of entities teaching ADL-skills (activities of daily living), teaching of appropriate behaviour in working life, teaching work and adjustment to working life. The newest entities that improve career education are the idea of inclusion, career education programmes, from school to work -programmes (transition programmes) and occupational education.

## **1 DEFINITION OF CAREER EDUCATION**

The oldest definition of career education is the Educational Policies Commission of NEA and AASA: Manpower and Education (1956):

“Career education is not only concerned with what lies inside the individual, but also with the individual’s role in the society.” (Hoyt 1981.)

ERIC-thesaurus:

“Career education (is) a comprehensive educational programme that focuses an individual career developing, beginning with

grade 1 or earlier and continuing through the adult years“ (Hoyt et al.1974, 14).

Norman Strangler, Los Angeles State College:

“Career education consists of all the extensive and comprehensive educational effort that is detected to motivate, train, counsel, and improve an individual in his life’s work experiences“ (Hoyt et al. 1974, 14).

Keith Goldhammer, Michigan State University:

“Career education is an approach to education which stresses the instrumental value of all education in helping an individual become a participating, contributing, and fulfilled citizen“ (Hoyt et al. 1974, 14).

Kenneth B. Hoyt, The U.S.Office of Education:

“Career education is the total effort of public education and the community to help all individuals become familiar with the values of a work-oriented society, to integrate these values into their lives in such a way that work becomes possible, meaningful, and satisfying to each individual“ (Hoyt et al. 1974, 14-16).

Kenneth B. Hoyt, 1975:

“Career education is the totality of experience through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of her or his way of living“ (Hoyt 1981).

Kenneth B. Hoyt, 1977:

“Career education is an effort aimed at refocusing American education and the actions of the broader community in ways that will help individuals acquire and utilise the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for each to make work a meaningful, productive, and satisfying part of his or her way of living“ (Hoyt 1981).

Kenneth B. Hoyt, 1978:

- 1) Career education is rooted, at its bedrock, in the four letter word “work“ and in education/work relationship,
- 2) career education is an effort intended to be applicable to all people at all age levels - including all kinds of educational setting,
- 3) career education is an effort that demands the joint participation of career education systems and the broader community

- i.e. it is not something the education system can accomplish by itself,

4) the word “work“ includes unpaid as well as paid activities“ (Hoyt, 1981).

Work has been defined in several ways. Work may be activity in which man with the help of different tools shapes the objects of work into a desired form. In its widest sense work can be defined as an activity which aims at the satisfaction of man’s needs. With help of work and through work man attempts to satisfy material (nutrition, clothing, dwelling, environment), social (freedom, equality, justice, friendship, love etc.), and mental (knowledge, art, religion, own view of the worlds) needs. Work is a way to satisfy material needs, a way to become a member of society, and it has also a meaning in itself; man attempts to use his skills at work, to fulfil oneself.

## **2 STAGES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Brolin’s life-span career education model has four phases: career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, and career placement, follow-up and continuing education (Kokaska & Brolin 1985).

### ***Career awareness***

When learning daily living skills, students must become aware of how to assume civic responsibilities and roles, how to fulfil interests and needs by becoming aware of recreation and leisure activities, how to manage and use money appropriately. They may become more aware of socially desirable behaviour and learn how to interact appropriately with others. Attitudes, information, and self-understanding are the three main elements of career awareness.

### ***Career exploration***

Career exploration is the link between career awareness and career preparation. Young students begin to think about their particular set of aptitudes, interests, and needs and how these can be directed toward meaningful and successful adult roles. Students should try various work samples, simulated job tasks, and community jobs, and other competencies needed in the work place.

### ***Career preparation***

It is a professional job to help students identify specific interests and aptitudes, and help them find an effective life style. Guidance and special education workers are responsible for teaching students how to seek, secure, and maintain employment. Disabled students may need more than the traditional amount of time to prepare for a successful career.

### ***Career placement, follow-up, and continuing education***

Career placement pulls all previous stages together. Disabled people will have lifelong learning needs, and, therefore, follow-up and supportive services are an important aspect of career placement. All disabled people need full opportunity to learn the complex society.

Since severely disabled, and multi-handicapped students need more time to develop the skills required for successful career functioning, these stages will begin earlier and last longer.

Basic career skills, such as persistently working on tasks, can be taught in the earliest school years.

The career education approach encompasses all kinds, types, and levels of education and prepares individuals for all phases of productive work activity. Career education is an holistic approach that views occupations as one part of the individual's career and attempts to prepare the student with vocational, , civic (volunteer work), and family work skills. (Kokaska & Brolin 1985.)

Career assessment is a broad term that includes vocational competencies as well as social behaviours, functional academics, and daily living skills. Special educators begin to assess and teach career skills in the elementary grades and this continues in later grades. In the later grades special educators emphasise preparing students with vocational skills.

### **3 CAREER EDUCATION MODELS**

We have several career education models available to educators. The Life-Centred Career Education (LCCE) models target 22 life-centred competencies and 102 sub-competencies within the domains of daily living skills, personal-social skills, and occupational guidance, and preparation that are designed to be infused into the regular education curriculum. The Life Centred Career Education,

a competency-based model for school, is a competency-based approach to providing disabled people with educational services.

Clark and Kolstoe (1990) have developed the School Based Career Education model. This offers a framework for delivering career services from pre-school through adulthood and includes the areas of values, attitudes, habits, human relationships, occupational information, and job and daily living skills. Larson (1981) developed the Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) model, which provides students with the opportunities to work in community-based settings while taking classes in school. The School-Based Comprehensive Career Education model seeks to transform the regular education curricula through career education information and the availability of guidance, counselling, consultation, and curriculum guides on innovative strategies. Gillets´(1981) Career Education for Exceptional Children and Youth, offers educators a development model for teaching students about a variety of jobs and helping students develop appropriate work habits and skills.

A developmentally appropriate career education programme can be instrumental in helping students make the transition to work. Beginning in the elementary school years, career education should occur through students schooling years and include career awareness, orientation, exploration, and placement. During the elementary school years, students career education programmes should focus on career awareness, an understanding of the various occupations and jobs available to workers, the importance of work and an initial self-awareness of career interests. Career education programmes at the elementary level introduce students to daily living skills, attitudes, values, and concepts related to work through classroom jobs, homework, and money.

During the junior high school years students career education programmes should focus on career orientation, an identification of career interests through practical experience and exposure to a variety of occupations through field trips. With the use of speakers, special vocational classes, and integrated curricula, students develop greater familiarity with work settings, attitudes, job-related and interpersonal skills and an appreciation of the values associated with working.

During the high school years, students career education programme should focus on career exploration, preparation, and placement. Career exploration activities provide students with simulated and direct experiences with a range of occupations to assist in determining their career goals and interests. Vocational

guidance and counselling also provides help to obtain information about a variety of jobs. Career preparation helps students make the adjustment to work offering instruction, support and work experiences through vocational education programmes. A career preparation programme includes training in the specific job-related skills and the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of these skills in simulated or real work settings. Career placement, the placement of students in a job or other post secondary opportunities, often occurs as students are ready to exit from high school.

#### **4 DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS RELATED TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

The transition to adulthood is a phase when a young person breaks away from family ties, becomes emotionally and economically independent and turns to relations outside the childhood home. Transition is a period that includes high school, the point of graduation, additional secondary education or adult services, and the initial years in employment. Transition is a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life. Any bridge requires both a solid span and a secure foundation at the end. The transition from school to work and adult life requires sound preparation in secondary school, adequate support at the point of school leaving, and secure opportunities and services, if needed, in adult situations. Transition planning means:

To arrange for opportunities and services that support living.

To prevent the interruption of needed services.

To maximise community participation, independence, and productivity as young adults.

Transition services mean a co-ordinated set of activities for a student, designed outcome-oriented processes, which promote movement from school to post-school opportunities, including post secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (included supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, dependent living or community participation.

The research on the transition to adulthood belongs to the field of development and social psychology and sociology. In developmental psychology the transition to adulthood is described as a universal phase of development to which functions of development are related. In social psychology and sociology growing up has been examined with the help of the concepts of role transition and role expectations. This requires that the analysis of

transition is carried out tightly bound to the social and historical environment.

There is little information about the transition period among people with learning disability in Finland and in other countries. Researchers are, however, becoming interested in the study of transition. The longitudinal study on transition of young people with learning disabilities by Parmenter and Knox (1991), by Todd, Evans and Beyer (1991), and by Ferguson, Ferguson and Jones (1988) are considered in the following.

Parmenter and Knox (1991) studied the transition period from school to working life, leisure-time activities, living conditions and friendships of students with special needs (N=75) graduated from New South Wales in 1985. The subjects were interviewed about their daily activities, living conditions and friendships. 53 (73 %) of the interviewees were or had been working after graduation. Only 42 % had found jobs in the free labour market. All of them were either of normal intelligence or mildly learning disabled at the most. None of the moderately or severely learning disabled had managed to find a job in the free labour market. 15 % of the subjects, all learning disabled, were studying in adult training centres. 30 % had a sheltered job and over half of them were learning disabled. 20 % of the subjects were unemployed. Most of subjects (54 %) were living with their parents. 26 % were institutionalised. 11 % were living in dormitories and some of them in their own flats or in other forms of housing. 70 % of learning disabled people were living with their parents. Most of the interviewees (69 %) had some friends. Eight per cent of the subjects claimed that they had no friends, and 23 % said that they had several friends. For the disabled people work meant increased independence, improved self-esteem and gave the possibility of making friends in the working environment.

Todd, Evans & Byer (1991) examined the life situation of learning disabled people living in Wales. The basic group consisted of 632 young people of which 512 (81 %) participated in the research. Most of the 16-18 year olds were still at school. Only three of them had already started working. Most of the young in the age group from 22 to 24 were working, but less than one third of the young were either unemployed or without a training place. Todd, Evans & Beyer claim that a mere diagnosis may prevent the learning disabled person from getting a job. Employers will even refuse to test the working skills and capabilities of a young person belonging to the group in question.

Ferguson, Ferguson and Jones (1988) examined the transition processes of the severely learning disabled from their parents point of view. They claim that the cultural norms have considerably changed during the last few years in the US.

Ferguson, Ferguson and Jones (1988) interviewed 15 families in their research. There were 17 severely learning disabled young people in the transition period in those families. Ferguson, Ferguson and Jones detected three kinds of transition process:

- a) changes in the social service organisations,
- b) changes in family life, and changes in the attitudes towards the young, i.e. changes in their status.

Ferguson, Ferguson and Jones found shortcomings in the services for the learning disabled young people completing their education. The planning of the transition period should be started early during compulsory education. The teaching of skills and the development of possibilities for functioning should be emphasised in education and one should improve services that are needed in providing support for disabled people in their communities.

The planning of the transition process should be a part of an individualised education plan. The young person themselves and his/her parents as well as a counsellor, a physiotherapist, a speech therapist, a school psychologist, a school nurse, and a social worker should participate in the planning. The transition period is a stressful time for the family. The authorities should support the families in this period. Families need e.g. student guidance and counselling, work experience, medical services, occupational training, financial support, transportation services, telecommunication services and support in finding a job as well as services related to possible sheltered work. Integration into the culture of one's own age group is the first step towards independence. Connection with one's age group provides a possibility of testing ideas, views, skills and problem solving capacity without the help and guidance of adults. Juvenile culture, like music, customs, clothing, and group activities express togetherness and offer the young person the freedom and independence of an independent person. Friendship development supports the young person in the formation of identity. Friends give support, protection and understanding. They may also give information about how they solved the problems related to identity and the transition period.

Deficiencies in the cognitive level of an individual should not be a bar to friendship, and a learning disabled person should be

able to make contacts like other young people of the same age. A learning disabled young person should also be able to become independent at the usual age of gaining independence.

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# **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT**

**Gerard Keane**

With the passage of time, our present organisational climate of ongoing and continuous change and the ease with which ideas can travel within and between countries it is frequently difficult to retrospectively identify the starting spark or initiator of a new idea or proposal. For Project Career this task is dually difficult since it involves both a transnational or multi-country project and five individual national endeavours all aimed at exploring and facilitating the social and occupational inclusion of adults with learning disabilities into mainstream settings. Pursuing a career.

Those familiar with problem solving techniques will be aware that in some instances solutions seek problems just as problems seek their remedies. The participants and the timing is what is important. Such was the case for the European project 'Career'.

## **WHICH CAME FIRST, THE LOCAL OR THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION ?**

There are five participating countries in Project Career. These are Northern Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands which is an associate member. All but the Netherlands received funding under their own national Horizon programmes.

In Northern Ireland, Project Career was developed to enable young people with learning disability to access training and employment opportunities. As a result of the project such opportunities which were currently available to people who attended training programmes run by the Orchardville Society in Belfast were made available to school-leavers from special schools. The project focused on meeting the needs of these young people to identifying their strengths and needs in relation to making career choices. A key innovative component of the Northern Ireland project was the synergistic co-operation between the local partnership consist-

ing of a consortium of voluntary organisations, schools and colleges, training authorities and social services. The attendance by four members of the future consortium at a conference in Sweden in early 1994 promoted the idea of further co-operation.

In Sweden there tends to be a clear divide between social and employment services. If a person is employed, it is expected that he or she will produce goods or services. If he or she receives social services, the task of these is to contribute to a good quality of life for the recipient. In recent years, although such 'social service' is offered to persons in 'real' or ordinary settings in the local community, little progress has been made to facilitate adults with learning disabilities participating in employment.

It was against this background that Kent Ericsson, Research Psychologist from the University of Uppsala in Sweden and Tuula Matikainen from Finland initially discussed the possibility of a project for co-operation on the issue of work and day services for people with learning disability. This discussion took place at a conference in Norway in 1993.

At a subsequent conference in early 1994, which took place in Sweden, further discussions took place on the possibility of co-operation and a wider European component was promoted by the attendance of four representatives from Northern Ireland and Michael Kemp from Tact and Vision in the Netherlands.

In the subsequent Swedish project, supported employment methods are being introduced to three local communities.

The national impetus for involvement in Project Career in Finland stems from an overhaul of the service system which historically placed strong emphasis on the sheltered workshop model and a policy shift towards a more inclusive supported employment model for disabled people. The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health and the Finnish Association on Mental Retardation, who were prime movers in the national project had earlier co-operated. The Finnish national project, Stakes/Steps, is a large consortium involving 17 local sub-projects throughout the country.

Project Interact was Ireland's contribution to the European Project Career Originally St. John of God Services, Drumcar were to be the partners however they were replaced by St. John of God Services, Dunmore House in 1995 when the latter obtained Horizon funding.

The rationale for Project Interact was that traditional programmes of work training and career planning have in the main been programme oriented, centre-based and segregated from mainstream educational certification and work opportunities. Training approaches have on the whole been task focused rather than focused on the individual's learning style, motivation and personal aspirations. Career guidance and the identification of factors required for worker satisfaction have not been a key feature of traditional work training approaches. Other styles of learning, such as a self-directed approach, were considered to have a value and worth exploring.

In the Netherlands, supported employment began being promoted for adults with disabilities since the early 1990's. Based on successful experience, requests from people with learning disabilities have grown and these have further promoted the issue of career development.

This in turn resulted in the development of a project proposal, and although it did not receive funding under Horizon, the Netherlands participated as an associate member of Career.

As the outline above indicates, therefore, Project Career was born out of identified local or national need, and national innovation, combined with a wish for shared learning and European co-operation among prime movers in five European countries.

In January 1995 the first formal meeting for the planning of an EU Project took place in Uppsala, Sweden. The partners who were interested in such a project at this stage were Sweden, Northern Ireland and Finland.

A subsequent planning meeting was held in Belfast, Northern Ireland in March 1995 at which Ireland and the Netherlands joined the partnership. This marked the real starting point of the EU - Project Career.

The first transnational meeting of EU - Project Career was held in Brussels in December 1995 at which the transnational co-operation document and the relative contributions of the various partners was discussed and agreed.

The essence of partnership is that partners contribute as per their strengths and draw from it as per their needs. Some synergistic outcomes are also hoped for.

The sharing of information and the opportunity to compare and contrast one's own national service model or approach with those from other European countries was identified by most partners as the main benefit from project participation. For many of the partners, project involvement facilitated exchange visits between both staff and service beneficiaries and in some cases their parents, and their visits were complemented by the five formal transnational meetings during the two-year life of the project. Each partner hosted a transnational meeting and Northern Ireland proposed and took on the responsibility of organising an end of project Conference in

Belfast in March of 1998. For two of the partners, shortage of funding limited transnational visits by staff and participants. The transnational visits between service users, staff and parents identified some common challenges. Cultural difference, and service differences added interest, and indeed highlighted 'good practice' in the different countries. This contact was supportive and greatly encouraging and certainly gave a strength and sense of 'fellow traveller' in the sometimes lonely work of the innovator.

At Project end all five partners expressed satisfaction with the workings of the partnership, four expressing strong satisfaction. The factors which were identified as contributing to this satisfaction included:

Businesslike conduct of meetings

Efforts invested in exchanging information between partners

The client focus of the discussions

The appropriate match of projects. In addition to their own national reports, all five countries participated in a transnational study which examined and contrasted the factors contributing to career building in the partner countries.

# **PROJECT CAREER IN FINLAND**

**Leena Sariola**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

There are 41 Employment Horizon projects in Finland co-ordinated by the National Development and Research Centre for Social and Health Services (STAKES). The number of E.C.H.O. sub-projects is 24 and that of the STEPS sub projects is 17 around the country. The E.C.H.O. projects promote employment for people with mental health problems. The STEPS projects concern other disability groups of which the biggest group involves people with learning disabilities. The Career project is associated with a series of STEPS projects whose purpose in the first place is to promote the employment of people with learning disabilities. The projects ran from 1996 to 1997.

All 12 projects and their activities are outlined in this report. They belong to the projects of the Foundation Promoting Employment of People with Disabilities. The purpose is to develop a method of supported employment for people with learning disabilities. These sub-projects constitute the Finnish Career project. The projects are based in different parts of Finland between Oulu and Helsinki.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECTS AND SET TARGETS**

Supported Employment of People with learning disabilities living in Helsinki. The target is to integrate 75 people with learning disability living in Helsinki through a tailor-made programme into jobs in the public sector and in the private sector.

KENU - A Joint Employment Project for People with learning disabilities and Unemployed Young People. The target is to increase positive attitudes towards better employment opportunities and alternatives for the disabled people in the region.

KENU - A Joint Employment Project for People with Learning disabilities and Young People. This project aims at utilising the abilities, skills and other valuable qualities of people with learning disabilities in society.

Liperi Vocational School. The aim of this project is to look for ways to integrate disabled people into the labour market and into society.

SEPTT - Paivaharju Supported Employment Project. The target is to employ 20 people with learning disabilities during the project through supported employment.

Supported Employment in Kuopio. The aim of the project is to create an operation model of supported employment which would be suitable for local conditions.

Pihlajapuisto School, Kauhava. The target is to try to make an individual curriculum for each young person belonging to a special disability group using the methods of supported employment and the know-how of special education.

OPEN THE WAY! / Paajarvi Federation of Municipalities, Lammi. The target of this project is to give steady employment, based on an individual plan, to people with learning disabilities and people who need support for some other reasons by using the model of supported employment.

STEPS - Province of Oulu, A Project of Supported Employment for People with learning disabilities. The aim is to diversify and expand the work activities of people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems.

“We are participating too“, An Experimental Project of Supported Employment of the Joint Council for Eskoo Social Services. The target is to apply the model of supported employment to people with learning disabilities when employing them.

Antinkoti Project, A Project of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Deaf-blind in Jyvaskyla/Aria Institute. The main target of the project is to employ the clients partially in the open labour market and to create ways of action for the service home.

A Training and Developmental Project in Gardening / The Rinnekoti Foundation, Espoo. The aim of the project is to give people with learning difficulties instruction in gardening.

For nearly two years all the above-mentioned projects have been developing the model of supported employment for disabled people by using individual employment paths and trying to search for job opportunities in the normal labour market. The main client group in all the projects, except for one project, involves people with learning disabilities. Because the aim of these projects was to develop a new employment model, the quantitative aims of the projects were of minor importance.

**This is a summary of the joint final report on the STEPS projects.**

### **3. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT**

The preliminary assessment includes a stage where the functional facilities of the person are assessed regarding employment. The facilities which are assessed include professional knowledge and skills as well as social skills.

The clients of the projects were selected through the work and activity centres and schools, and the clients were previously familiar to the promoters. It was important that the first employees already had appropriate skills which would be needed in the open labour market, and that would correspondingly benefit the project in the form of a couple of successful employment models. After that it would be easier to market the project and the attitudes towards employing people with disabilities would be more positive. Some of the clients had a service contract already.

The support official and the specialists previously familiar to the client took part in the assessment. The assessment often took place in that unit where the client was working, that is at school or at the activity centre. The purpose of the assessment was above all to try to find the client's strengths regarding employment. During the preliminary assessment, the client was allowed to express his hopes and expectations of the tasks he would like to perform. This stage also brought out such spheres where the client needed more training. Training was arranged and given to the clients.

The assessors and the employee regarded it as good that the client's skills could also be assessed in real working conditions. First the clients took part in work experience for some time, some even for several months, after which a contract of employment was signed if possible.

These supported employment projects were included in the follow-up study done by the Rehabilitation Foundation and the University of Kuopio. For the follow-up study, the project promoters filled in the forms meant for the preliminary assessment. A form was completed for each client separately, and those projects which took part in the advanced study filled in other forms, too. The ecological assessment model of supported employment, developed by Kristiina Harkapaa Senior Researcher Psychologist of the Rehabilitation Foundation, includes the following fields:

- background information
- previous working history
- client's professional strengths
- client's interests, dreams and aims
- assessment of social skills.

Filling in the forms was done together with the client and his support official. This way he was able to assist the client in answering the most difficult questions. In the project Controlled by the Liperi Vocational School, a preliminary assessment method suitable for network therapy principals was developed. With the help of the method, the most important people for the client are found regarding his course of life and employment. The assessment can be done together with the client, i.e. by drawing a network map and then writing the names of the people in his network onto the map. The first meeting with the people of the network is held on the basis of the preliminary assessment. The client's members of the immediate family, friends, former teachers, representatives of the Social Insurance Institution, representatives of the Social Services and those of the Employment Agency, the support official, the job coach or other people of the network can be assembled for the meeting. However, the client doesn't always want to have too many people round himself. On the basis of the preliminary assessment and the meeting, the client gets an employment plan.

#### **4. JOB COACHING**

Job coaching is often separated from the job seeking and analysis regarding the definitions of supported employment means that there is a specialist for each task, too. Job coaching in the STEPS projects has developed in most cases into a large-scale activity including all the stages of supported employment from job seeking

to the actual job coaching as well as giving on-going support. It means that one and the same person has been working in all these fields.

#### ***4.1. Stages in the job coaching***

Learning the rules of working life covering such issues as:

- preparation for a job interview
- learning regular working hours
- learning how to dress for a certain occasion
- learning how to take care of oneself (hygiene and maintenance of clothes) and
- learning skills of social interaction.

Before the client starts work, he learns the way to work and becomes acquainted with the premises of the workplace.

#### **Teaching the tasks**

The job coach becomes acquainted with the tasks planned for the client, and it often happens that the job coach himself must first learn to do the tasks. At the beginning of the coaching, the job coach must make his role clear at the workplace. This can take a few days or several weeks depending on the client's ability.

#### **Arranging the supportive measures at the workplace**

The job coach finds out the support available from other employees and the employer's willingness to coach at the workplace.

#### **Giving ongoing support**

The job coach agrees on the number of visits to the workplace and the ways of contact with the employer and the employee. The employer is encouraged to get in contact with the job coach even if minor problems appear.

#### **Clearing up the matters concerning the employee's social security, contract of employment and health and safety at work**

The job coach becomes well acquainted with the employee's social security or other sources of livelihood and negotiates on the amount of the paid wage.

### **Informing the staff**

The Job coach gives information to the staff of the same workplace of the illnesses and disabilities and how they affect the life of an individual.

#### ***4.2. Problems occurring during job coaching***

The projects met with the following problems:

- employee's motivation problems and decrease in interest after the contract of employment was signed
- employee's mental health problems and drug problems
- non-desirable behaviour (too keen on company, indifferent attitude towards working hours etc.)
- co-operation with the members of the employee's network
- being patronised at the workplace
- problems with personal relationships at the workplace and the working atmosphere in general
- job coach's impartiality regarding occurring conflict situations
- professional secrecy
- job coach's feeling of guilt in unsuccessful job placements

Perhaps the most demanding fields in the job coaching turned out to be teaching the social skills and the skills needed to take care of oneself. That was the situation almost in each case

### **5. JOB FINDING**

Finding the right job and the right tasks are based on the employee's skills and expectations. The employer is also a job finder's client, and it is the employer whose needs you try to serve.

The job finder's tasks include all the measures necessary to find a suitable job. The measures are as follows: finding a job, identifying tasks in the workplace for the jobseeker to do, job coaching and initiation into the workplace as well as job matching and its assessment.

All-round experience and qualifications are required of the job finder. It is an advantage if the job finder is extrovert, presentable and a good negotiator, objective and patient. The knowledge of human nature and good marketing skills are necessary for the job finder when establishing client contacts.

From the point of view of the job finding, it is important to strengthen the co-operation with the local promoters. Co-operation strengthens the organisation and its reliability on the employer's part. It may be an advantage for the job finder if he knows some of the entrepreneurs in his own region, for it is much easier to do business with a familiar person. Contact can be made by writing a letter or by telephone. The projects have obtained experience also in sending inquiry forms. From the point of view of the job finder contact by telephone is the most reliable alternative of getting an answer to a job inquiry.

Even if it is impossible for the entrepreneur himself to employ, he can be able to recommend another enterprise.

One of the job finder's tasks is to assess how the offered tasks suit the client. The job finder records the main features of the tasks. The job finder and the job coach together (if not one and the same person) should try to match the tasks that suit the client and the offered tasks by the enterprise in order to form a successful combination of tasks. The job finder can suggest that the employer should map all those tasks which must be done but the permanent staff have no time or enthusiasm for.

The decisive factor in the project is the quality of the jobs and not their quantity as long as a new method is being developed.. Sometimes the parents and the members of the family set unrealistic hopes and expectations on the career of their disabled child. In such cases, honesty and empathy are required of the job finder.

## **6. CO-OPERATION NETWORKS AND NETWORKING**

The recent crisis of the affluent society has an influence on the system of social welfare and health care services so that new methods are looked for. One of the methods is seen to be networking and the development of networks. Networking takes place individually and at organisation level. Many of the local projects in Finland benefited considerably by being run as networks.

The maintenance of networks after the projects closed required a common cause to set up a network. One of the causes can be the method of supported employment. Such a network operates within the FINSE (Finnish Network of Supported Employment) at national level. In order that the network would hold together, it requires consensus of all partners. At its best, networking is a dynamic process bringing continuity and variety with it.

### **7. PRESENT STATE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER PLANS**

A national study was conducted by FINSE in September 1997 on the amount of people involved in supported employment and on the supportive measures available. A questionnaire was sent to the FINSE network, to the STEPS and E.C.HO projects, to the work and activity centres and the special vocational training institutions.

The study showed that there are almost 300 handicapped people involved in supported employment. A supported contract of employment was signed with 122 people, 112 people were involved in work experience, and negotiations on signing a contract of employment were going on for 45 people. 55% of those who had signed a contract of employment were people with learning difficulties, 24% were people with mental health problems, and the other 21% were for example long-term unemployed and people with multiple sclerosis. 8.5% of all clients were participating in the supported employment process. 12.6% of the clients were participating in integrated open employment. Most of the clients, 69%, were still in traditional sheltered work.

The employer's labour costs were compensated by the employment benefit received by those clients with disabilities under the employment services. Many remained on disability benefits. Generally, the wages were modest.

Project Leaders in Finland have drawn up the following set of guidelines for supported employment:

*Form of employment:* supported wage model, individual supported employment, work patrol, enclaves, home work/telework, co-operative, entrepreneurship

*Formalising employment:* employment based on written contract

*Remuneration:* wages or matching of wages and social benefits, wages according to performance

*Weekly working hours:* individual approach

*Preparation, training and work experience before employment:* social skills, preparation for working life, working skills

*Job coach, quality and quantity:* the amount and duration of support vary, employer's and employee's needs must be taken into account, work support given by the job coach and fellow employees, additional support given by the members of the local network and peers.

*Duration of the contract of employment:* individual approach.

*Social integration into the job:* similar to other employees

*Opportunities of advancing one's career:* similar to other employees.

*Employee's participation in planning his employment process:* an essential condition for the process.

The quality criteria for supported employment will be drawn during the following period of activity. Both the leaders of the projects and the management group of the Finnish Network of Supported Employment find the drawing up of the quality criteria essential regarding the promotion of the method. One of the main principles, which will be included in the quality criteria, is full participation of the clients, their empowerment.

## **PROJECT CAREER IN IRELAND**

### **Project Interact: Reflecting on the experiences of two years**

**Gerard Keane**

*'Tuesday 5-3-96: I went to the Buttery (student canteen in Trinity College, Dublin) as usual this morning. I bought a doughnut for 50p. Kate and I went to the crèche in Stephen's Green and we played with the children. We gave the children their lunches and we had our lunch until 1.00 o'clock. We played in the ball pool and it was good fun. We came home at 3.00pm on the 46A bus' (extract from diary of student with learning disability on Project Interact)*

#### INTRODUCTION

Project Interact was about widening boundaries to promote the inclusion of adults with learning difficulties into mainstream vocational education. It was also about students with learning difficulties, studying on a university campus alongside 'high points' university students who are pursuing a four year degree BSc course in Occupational Therapy. It was about preparing for a career.

It commenced in October 1995, and for over a two year period twenty students with learning disabilities participated in the pilot adult education programme which included shared classes in communication, personal effectiveness, life management, and art with occupational therapy students, and also computer studies, work experience placements supported with instruction in job seeking and the world of work. Certification was provided by the National Council for Vocational Awards.

The Project was a partnership between St. John of God Services, Dunmore House (now Carmona Services), the National Council for Vocational Awards and students and staff from the School of Occupational Therapy, Trinity College, Dublin. St. John of God

Services provides training and work opportunities for persons with learning difficulties.

The School of Occupational therapy, Trinity College, offers a four-year degree course for occupational therapists. Occupational Therapy is concerned with the improvement of quality of life for and by people with disabilities. It is person-centred and recognises the value of self-directiveness and autonomy. An effective method of promoting occupational therapy students' appreciation of the value of a self-directed approach, and the skill acquisition required to manage a balanced lifestyle and meet the changing demands of work, is to offer courses with integrated participation with people with differing abilities.

The National Council for Vocational Awards was established in 1991 to provide a National Certification framework for vocational education and training. The benefits of the NCVA to the project were that it offers:

- A nationally-recognised vocational qualification;

- Student-centred learning and assessment;

- Clear and specific learning outcomes with performance criteria;

- A hierarchy for further progression, where interest or ability permits;

- A modular structure where students can achieve records of achievement for each module successfully completed and then progress onto full certification on completion of three core and six elective modules;

- An opportunity for students to integrate their learning on the course overall, yet avail of the special and focused inputs on the three core subjects of communication, mathematics and personal effectiveness/personal and social development;

- The possibility of European recognition of qualifications at a future stage.

#### **RATIONALE**

The rationale for Project Interact was that traditional programmes of work training and career planning have in the main been programme-oriented, centre-based and segregated from mainstream educational certification and work opportunities. Training approaches have on the whole been task focused, rather than focused on the individual's learning style, motivation and personal

aspirations. Other styles of learning, such as a self-directed approach, were considered to have a value and worth exploring. Career guidance and the identification of factors required for worker satisfaction have not been a key feature of traditional work training approaches. Most traditional work training programmes have also excluded creative or artistic components which can contribute significantly either as training media or by offering a variety of vocational outlets.

### **OUTCOMES**

#### ***INTEGRATION***

For the staff involved, the main surprise has been the extent to which the students with learning disabilities readily adjusted both to successfully negotiating the main college campus in Trinity College Dublin and to the shared learning experiences with the occupational therapy students. The 'Buttery', the 'Main Arch' and the 'Hamilton' (College landmarks) became part of the vernacular within a few weeks of commencing. Linking in with the 'national supports' of College security staff and catering personnel contributed to this smooth transition.

The response from the occupational therapy students has also been very positive on the whole. As the classes progressed the occupational therapy students were surprised and impressed that some of the students from Dunmore House had represented Ireland in the Special Olympics. They had travelled abroad on sports events, had been to the United States and had busy lives.

Some quieter students were greatly encouraged by the students from Dunmore House who usually volunteered, had something to add to the discussion, and were usually not self-conscious during sessions of drama. 'If they can do it so can I'.

The staff and students of the School of Occupational Therapy were also challenged by the changing trend towards user-driven services, and such concepts as empowerment and partnership. New relationships and methods of working as enablers are being explored Project 'Interact' is one way of allowing these relationships an opportunity to unfold

#### ***INDEPENDENT TRAVEL***

The challenges which independent travel and public transport present to some people with learning difficulties have also fea-

tured strongly, especially since there was a wish that students attend daily from approximately 9.30am - 4 00pm. Although the proximity of Trinity College to frequent train and bus services greatly helped, the resource implications of travel training and accompanying need to be considered seriously on projects such as this. .Alternatively, students who cannot readily travel independently are excluded, or only attend part-time.

### *LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS*

The ethos of Project Interact was self-directed learning and this has proven to be very challenging with both groups of students. The degree to which students took ownership for attending on time, completion of homework and class participation has, impressed all, and was noticeably different from some students' application in previous settings.

For the NCVA Foundation Certificate there is no requirement for prior academic attainment. What has been looked for here were abilities involving concentration, responsibility, group participation, stamina and travel. Motivation and a wish, based on realism, to cope with the challenges was also considered.

The success or otherwise of projects such as these can be measured from a variety of perspectives. These may include personal growth and development, educational achievements organisational change or contribution made to the body of thinking and research

For the students with learning disability included in Project Interact the most significant changes have been in the areas of self-esteem, motivation and self confidence. Statements like 'we have moved on', 'now we are out in the world', 'I want to think about my future', and 'it's great to be going to college', reflects this.

From the occupational therapy students' perspective, issues around personal and professional development, facilitation, self-direction and earning through creative activities and group work were greatly enhanced by working, with people with differing abilities.

*'Facilitation was and still is a mystery to me and others - completely new concept, almost a contradiction of what we thought was expected of us. It seems to involve a much more personal approach to each person. No more talk of 'helping' or 'doing' but more showing how it can be done and only if it is important to the indi-*

*vidual - not merely because it's easier or may help others or even help them into society. New activities, mechanical aids, programmes and exercises have to make sense and also be important to each of these people' (first year O.T. student's report from communications course, at end of term 1)*

The project demanded a considerable amount of co-operation, communication, honesty and trust between educational, service and employment agencies; parents, staff and students. It raised issues about care and education and expectations of quality of life. All parties had to take risks.

Since a prior threshold level of academic or educational performance was not an entry requirement for participation on the course, individual students have achieved individual levels of success. By November 1997, 109 student portfolios covering 10 subject areas were submitted for external moderation to the National Council for Vocational Awards. This is a substantial body of work. It is planned to submit additional modules in the Spring of 1998. As expected, the most difficult modules for the students with learning disabilities were those involving mathematics and literacy.

#### *ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE*

At an organisational level, a new model of service which reflects a more self-directed lifestyle, which involves accessing integrated work, leisure and continuing education opportunities has emerged in Carmona Services.

For Trinity College there now appears to be an expectation that people with learning disabilities will be involved on the campus, contributing to academic and leisure pursuits.

Project Interact is now concluded. A new phase in the promotion of inclusive certified adult education has commenced, however, via a new endeavour with the working title of 'Inter-Action'.

#### *MULTIPLIER EFFECT*

The overall aim of 'Inter-action' is to develop a network between educators, service agencies, students and others which will further explore opportunities and methodologies for integrated adult learning and career planning.

Since January 1998 there are 27 students from four agencies involved in campus activities. This provides an opportunity for shared learning for all involved.

# **PROJECT CAREER IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Alan Hanna**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Despite encouraging recent trends in employment in Northern Ireland the region remains one of the most deprived in the United Kingdom and Europe. The rate of disability is higher than in the rest of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Europe. A small number of people with severe learning disability have full membership of the work-force, others are occupied on Sheltered Workschemes and a large number involved in long-term or permanent training for work. The vast majority of people with learning disabilities are not in employment. An important component of citizenship is occupational activity. The vast majority of people are members of the workforce. From this work they organise their economic activity, seek self-fulfilment and promote their own independence. Many people develop their work participation through training and education and go on to experience the satisfaction of a career. Central to this project was the idea of creating opportunities for people with severe learning disabilities to prepare for, get started in, and develop a career. This project, named Project Career, aimed to establish a model of career development for people with learning disabilities who were preparing to leave school.

## **THE PROGRAMME**

Project Career ran for two and a half years and was funded by the European Social Fund through the EMPLOYMENT Horizon initiative. A consortium of different organisations came together in September 1994 to explore ways of enabling people with severe learning disabilities to gain employment. Over the following 9 months the project was developed by a mixture of voluntary and

public sector organisations. The project was approved in due course and was planned to run from September 1995 to July 1997. It became possible to extend the project to the end of March 1998.

The project was managed on a daily basis by the Orchardville Society but a Consortium was formed to maximise the effectiveness of the project. This consortium consists of the main statutory authorities involved in the lives of people with learning disabilities. This Consortium has formed the project management group and includes representatives from the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education, Glenveagh and Tor Bank Schools, the South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust and the Training and Employment Agency. To this Committee were added two managers from major employers in Northern Ireland. These brought a new dimension to the work of the project by giving specific information about the needs of employers who are taking on disabled employees. The Consortium which brought the organisations together is called ACET -Agencies in Consortium for Education and Training.

This project has been a major initiative for the Orchardville Society because it has developed its work with other agencies, added an international dimension and made significant impact on the service environment for people with learning disability. It was decided to operate the project as a consortium in Northern Ireland because no single agency could supply all the support needed by any individual learning disabled person who needed employment support. Its aim was to devise a method and model of career education for people with learning disabilities to enable them to progress into employment. Project Career focuses on young people approaching school leaving age and those people in the community who are not attending day care.

Each trainee progresses through the following programme of activities towards identifying their choice of career:

- Career awareness
- Career preparation
- Individual planning
- Job sampling
- Career matching
- Career developing
- Personal growth

In October 1995 two members of staff were appointed as Personal Careers Advisers to provide support to trainees who were recruited to the programme. Recruitment to the programme was completed by Christmas and in January 1996 ten trainees began to take part in work placements. By September 1996 this had risen to sixteen trainees. They were recruited through contact with schools, careers advisers and social services. By March 1997 this was increased to 25 trainees. Recruitment to the programme was then closed because there was only 1 year left of the project.

It was essential to give each trainee a personalised and responsive service. The Personal Careers Advisers had a crucial role in getting to know the trainee, meeting their parents and working with employers and other professionals such as teachers and social workers. The Personal Careers Adviser role is of the utmost importance in co-ordinating and supporting all the efforts to help the trainee.

It became clear that many people with learning disabilities are not well informed about the content of various jobs so Project Career set out to give each trainee the opportunity to sample a range of jobs. Initial work on the identification of skills, interests and aspirations for each trainee focused on discussing the content of jobs, hobbies and desires. New resources had to be developed in order to help trainees to make vocational choices because existing careers materials were not appropriate. The original plan was for each trainee to spend about four weeks sampling each of three or four different jobs in order to help each trainee to make an accurate choice for a career. After this process was complete the trainee was to choose one of these jobs to specialise in. They would then spend up to a year working in this job. It became clear that this plan needed to be more flexible in order to cater for the individual needs of some trainees but the elements of vocational exploration and choice were retained.

The participants were all under 25 years old and this was also an important factor. Most were completing or had recently left special educational provision. They were lacking in job awareness and confidence in their work skills but all made significant progress. Over 50% of the trainees achieved recognised qualifications and all progressed into further training or employment. The young people took part in a very wide range of employment placements and activities. During the programme over 50 different

employers have been involved. An anticipated spin off from this will be a greater acceptance from these employers about the idea of employing people with learning disabilities.

#### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The views of parents have been taken on board in a series of meetings of a parents council. This met for the first time in February 1996 and continued to meet every 6 weeks thereafter. The Council has provided useful feedback to the staff on the programme. An unforeseen benefit of the programme has been the readiness of parents to provide encouragement to other parents. Parents also took part in study visits to transnational partners.

#### **TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Transnational contacts have been strong with each partner. The transnational study headed by Kent Ericsson has been realised in Northern Ireland through research activities led by Belfast Institute. This research is comprehensive and includes inputs from parents and professionals as well as the opportunity to learn from the trainees' experiences in their placements. The Northern Ireland project has benefited enormously from the contacts with other countries.

#### **STUDY VISITS**

During the project study visits were held in Ireland, Sweden and The Netherlands. During these visits staff from each of the agencies involved in the project joined parents of trainees in viewing day centres, supported employment projects, schools and group homes. These visits were very successful and depended on the support and hospitality of our transnational partners. Many of the participants felt that the situation in Northern Ireland compared favourably with those of our partners.

#### **PRODUCTS AND OUTCOMES**

The project has seen the development of a wide range of studies, training materials and reports. A local evaluation, research project and project report have been published and a video produced to describe how the project has worked. These sit alongside the transnational research and project report. The most important product has been the skills and confidence of the trainees and their families who have judged the project a great success. A small number of the trainees have achieved economic employment

and all will have the opportunity to get paid jobs in the future. The operational work of the project with people with learning disabilities will continue in the future.

### **CONSORTIUM WORKING**

The project has brought together a range of organisations that rarely meet let alone work together. It has been very valuable to share perspectives and to explore the different organisational cultures which prevail in the respective organisations. It is now widely recognised in Northern Ireland that as life becomes more complicated organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors must work together in the future. Partnership working has become very common now but at the beginning of Project Career in Northern Ireland there were relatively few examples of good inter- agency co-operation in existence.

### **CONSORTIUM PARTNERS**

**The Orchardville Society:** This is a voluntary organisation providing employment and training services for people with learning disabilities. The organisation was founded by parents with relations in a day care centre but with the potential and ambition to move to employment.

**Training and Employment Agency:** This is the statutory agency responsible for training and employment policy and programmes. Through the Agency's Disablement Advisory Service support initiatives are in place for people with disabilities.

**South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust:** This is the statutory body responsible for the social care needs of people with learning disabilities. Traditionally day centres operated by the Trust have developed work training programmes for the learning disabled. All the trainees in Project Career are residents of South and East Belfast. Some of the trainees are referred by social workers in this area.

**Tor Bank and Glenveagh Schools:** These are special schools situated in the South and East Belfast area. Pupils from these schools form the bulk of the trainees on the Project.

**Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education:** Belfast Institute has an extensive background in providing Further Education programmes for people with learning disabilities and in research-

ing new educational methods to improve the learning potential of these students. The Orchardville Society and Belfast Institute are partners in another Horizon project called "Entree 2000".

Employers: Managers from Northern Ireland Electricity and Coca Cola are members of the organising Committee of Project Career and provide advice on employment issues from their perspective. There has also been support from Nationwide Building Society during the programme.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The project has had a number of notable features which have made it a success and should be taken into consideration by any project with similar objectives:

- Co-ordination of all relevant service organisations
- Dedicated and expert staff.
- Wide and varied resources and materials for training
- Co-operation with employers
- Parental Involvement.

It is also important to revisit the strategic objectives of the project at regular intervals to ensure that the project continues to be operating at its optimum level.

The goal has to be enable people with disabilities to realise their potential as employees as a way of playing a full part in the community.

# **FROM DAY SERVICES TO PARTICIPATION IN WORKING LIFE**

**Experiences from three local projects in  
Gävle, Ljusdal and Söderhamn, Sweden**

**Kent Ericsson**

## **TOWARDS WORKING LIFE**

### **The day activity centre**

In the early seventies, day activity centres were established to form a day service for adult with a learning disability. Together with the group home, these two services were to constitute the platform for community based support. This day activity centre has, over the years, developed into a creative and positive form of support, providing a variation of activities during daytime.

As this was a centre, staff, resources and activities were concentrated there and the people who needed this support had, in order to receive it, to spend their days there. The goal of community based services to contribute to the participation in community life of these people became hard to realise for this day service, as the activities most often took place in the centre.

### **Community based daily activities**

Alternative ways of establishing daily activities with support were found when places, staff and activities in the ordinary community were used. Through these settings, closer to local people and activities, a development of this service took place. This was supported and appreciated by the service users. Today one can find people in many places, in a variety of activities, in the daily life of a community.

This development outside the traditional day activity centre has been going on for quite some time. It started at the end of the 1970s and was recognised as desirable at the beginning of the 1980s. This means that there are a number of people who participate in daily activities in this way and have done so over a number of years. Many of these people perform productive activities and could very well earn their living in this way.

### **Day services and unemployment**

Organising daily activities in this way becomes positive mainly if one sees this as a way of creating an alternative to the traditional day activity centre. But it easily becomes a problem if one misunderstands this service, regarding it as real work and employment. Staff are then seen as “employers” and the person as an “employee” and a relationship is established which is one-sided, comparable to this relationship in real life. Such an “employee” has no formal means of “negotiating” his position as would be usual in real employment. Instead he risks experiencing a life during daytime, which is dominated by his role as an “employee” rather than the more democratic conditions which come from being a person with a right to receive support from professional staff.

Today there are a number of people participating in productive daily activities, under these informal conditions which are similar to those in working life. On a formal level however their “employment” is not based on a contract, therefore they do not belong to a union which represents their views, and they do not receive a salary corresponding to their productive achievement. These people should therefore be regarded as unemployed.

### **A task for a project**

The basis for this project is the recognition that there are people in day services who should be seen as unemployed, and who should therefore have the possibility of leaving this day service and getting employment. The potential for these day services to promote and contribute towards participation in working life is extensive as the freedom to arrange daily activities is vast. Many activities being organised with the criteria that they contribute to the quality of life of the person. To make this possible, and to enhance the potential of these day services, participation in working life should be based on a professional career for the person.

## **THE CAREER PROJECT IN SWEDEN**

### **Three local communities**

This project took place in the province of Gävleborg, situated 150 km north of Stockholm. The choice of this province was based on the existence of a number of positive activities going on which were to enhance participation in working life for other groups with a disability. In this province, three towns, Gävle, Ljusdal and Söderhamn, participated in the project. In each of these there is a day service, this being the organisation participating in the project.

Gävle is the main town of the province, and therefore can offer a broad variation of community life with administration, public services, schools and a business life. While Gävle is situated at the coast on the Baltic Sea, Ljusdal is a smaller town situated inland in an area which is dominated by the forests of the province. This influences the character of the life of the community, which has a limited number of industries and a high degree of unemployment. Söderhamn, also on the Baltic Sea, is smaller than Gävle and has a limited industrial life and few public services.

Day services exist in these three towns, but they operate in different ways. There is a day activity centre in each town but they also use activities in the ordinary community. The variations which occur are based on the different roles given to the centre, and its relationship to the people or the activity groups which are to be found in the community.

### **Ambitions of the project**

The aim of the project is to increase participation in working life for a number of people, at least four in each town. These people attend the day service. This project should preferably result in these people acquiring full employment. At the same time there is an awareness that this task is not easy to fulfil as a number of factors must be present to achieve this process towards working life.

The success of the project depends on a number of factors including the day services, organisations for the unemployed and the methodologies used in the project. This analysis will focus, therefore, on the extent to which this goal will be realised, as well as on the nature of the actual process towards participation in working life.

### **Project work**

This goal was presented as the task to the three day service organisations which had agreed to participate in the project. Details were not given about how it would be realised. The development of the method by which this goal was to be realised, within the framework of the idea of a professional career, was to be the task of each service thus optimising how conditions and resources of each local community were to be used. This has meant that their different ways of organising services and running their activities will be decisive for the way this task is tackled.

The key issue of the project is to formulate a personal career for each of the people, to enable the expression of a long-term idea of the person's adult life. This is then used as the starting point for choosing a number of purposeful activities, which together make up an everyday life for the person. These activities could involve the choice of existing ones, or finding others in the community which are suitable. It could also lead to the creation of new activities, previously not available.

Although this work is going on in different towns, there is a common task within Project Career, discussing issues related to the project. A critical issue in these discussions is concerned with finding ways which bring these people closer to working life. The first half of 1996 was a period of preparation and planning. All three projects have July 1996, as their starting date. They will continue until the end of 1998 when the projects will be summed up, evaluated and reported.

### **Three goals to be achieved**

Three goals have been formulated for carrying out the task of the project. These are the personal career, the career method and the organisation of activities. The basic goal of the project is to contribute to the careers of the people involved, as their participation in working life is the primary objective of the project. The second goal concerns the method by which this is to be achieved. The personal career was given as the framework for the method through which the task was to be carried out but this idea needed to be elaborated on. The reason for this was to allow the three organisations freedom to develop their own working methods by which the goal could be achieved.

The third goal of the project concerns the organisation of the services to be offered to these people. Initially this service was organised in the form of a day activity centre. Today things have changed. Through a new Act of Parliament new conditions have arisen for the provision of this service. Special services are gone as all people with a learning disability have the right to avail of all the services of the community. In this way new settings are opening up in the community, where new types of activities and staff can be used within the framework of this day service, creating new opportunities for participation in working life.

### **A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PROCESS**

The move towards participation in working life takes considerable time and the changes which are taking place can be hard to see. To be aware of what really is going on in this complex change, one must recognise that the process is multidimensional. During the course of this project 5 dimensions have been found to be relevant.

*Physical Setting:* Daily activities can take place closer to working life as regards the physical environments which are used. Places can be found which are situated where other places of work in the community can be found.

*Type of Activity:* The activities of the person can be chosen in such a way that they are relevant for what goes on in the working life of the community. With a higher degree of relevance of activities, the step to be taken towards participation in working life is decreased.

*Social Context:* The social character of the settings used by the person during his daily activities can be dominated by other clients or staff in clinical settings. But they can also be arranged in such a way that the social context of the activities is dominated more by people from working life. This therefore becomes a way to move towards participation.

*Remuneration:* Usually the person receives some form of remuneration for the activities in which he is involved. If he has his economic needs covered by a pension, his payment may be small. But if he has employment he will receive a salary like everyone in working life.

*Personal Support:* The person with a disability is in need of support, the degree depending on the extent of his disability. This support might also vary regarding its character. Traditionally this

may be in the form of staff from some client organisation. However, if one looks at this as a person in need of support in working life, relevant support can be provided by people in his place of work, for example, by some workmate having this as a special task.

### **EXPERIENCES AND CONCLUSIONS**

One year still remains during which project activities will be carried out. There are however some conclusions which can be made already.

a) There are some people in day services who have the capacity to work. Often they do a very good job, like many of the workers in the community. Many of the people performing these tasks want to leave the day service for employment. But they do not receive a job with a salary. They can therefore, and should, be regarded as unemployed.

b) Changes have taken place during this project as people, in a physical way, have moved closer towards an increased participation in working life. When this takes place and the person experiences settings, activities and support related to his requests, he expresses pleasure and satisfaction. Leaving the large unit for people with a disability for a smaller place closer to the ordinary people of community, has important personal consequences.

c) An important aspect of the idea of a career is that it is long-term. Formulating a career with a person leads to the creation of long-term goals. As the choice of the activities of today must be related to the needs and requests which constitute a good life for the person, introducing long-term goals makes it easier to choose relevant activities.

d) An important and convincing experience from working with the career of a person, discussing his thoughts and dreams of a future, is that he most often is very clear and articulate ideas about the type of life he would like to live. Depending on the extent of the disability, the effort to express his ideas, can vary. This is a positive conclusion as it makes it easy to work with the idea of a career.

e) When working with the career of a number of people, one soon discovers that they are different people, each having specific personal ideas about the future. As the choice of activities should

be the means whereby the career is realised, the day service must be able to offer a wide variety of activities. The move towards working life should therefore be seen as a personal process.

f) A major conclusion at this stage of the project is that the idea of a professional career is not common in day service, but can be developed and when it does it has positive consequences for the person.

g) The organisation offering day services was originally created with the sheltered workshop as a model. This means that it was, and in many places still is seen as an organisation with the purpose of delivering various types of products. This cannot however, be its primary objective as these are day services whose task is to contribute to the quality of life for people, and activities are merely the means whereby this can be achieved. The idea of a personal career emphasises the fact that the ultimate task of these day services is to contribute to the quality of life for the person, today and in the future. This calls for a re-definition of the day service, something which for many is a difficult task.

h) The people seen as unemployed by this day service are not necessarily seen as such by the public organisations responsible for countering unemployment in society. They have other criteria, which do not always cover the needs of the group of people participating in this project. Therefore these people cannot avail of the services provided to counter unemployment. The task of opening up these unemployment services becomes a major task. Only in this way will support be found for these people to embark on a personal professional career.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The idea of a professional career even for people with learning disability, was put forward by this project. After having been applied in this way a major conclusion is that the method has got important implications for day services. Traditional thinking that this is a modified sheltered workshop, dealing with the production of articles and services has decreased. The focus is on improving the quality of life of people with learning disability. The application of this career concept has been limited, but the consequences are positive.

# **THE TRANSNATIONAL STUDY**

**Paddy Rogers**

This article is a brief summary of the transnational study. A fuller version of the study is published separately. Project Career explores the working lives of people with severe learning disabilities. It also attempts to identify those factors which facilitate and hinder entry into the work force for such people.

## **AIM**

The overall aim of Project Career was to explore the prospects for stable employment for people with severe learning disabilities. The aim of the Transnational study was to enable the participants to describe their experiences in working life, to compare and analyse career development in different cultures and draw conclusions which will contribute to the development of a model expressing the process of career development.

## **THE PARTNERS**

The study was conducted in five European countries: Finland, The Republic of Ireland, The Netherlands, Sweden and Northern Ireland.

## **THE STUDY**

The transnational study created an opportunity to explore career development of people with severe learning disabilities. The three major factors in the study were:

- The person and his/her career choices
- The programme of guidance and support
- The context in which the person and the programme operated

### **DESCRIBING A CAREER**

The nature of a job, the setting in which it occurs, the remuneration, the social context and available support are important aspects of any career. When people are seeking to build (or change) a career they may well consider many factors but these five aspects will in all probability have a role in decision making.

The people who participated in this study all had some experience of the world of work and, from the perspective of the study, all had a story to tell. A career is a personal experience in life and as it grows the person may start to build a vision of the future and identify steps to some intermediate or ultimate objectives. A career, therefore, is a process which has a personal content and which occurs in a social context. The basic approach of the study was to describe a person's working week in the context of five dimensions.

### **THE DIMENSIONS OF A WORKING WEEK.**

#### ***The Type of Activity***

In this the study identified the types of work undertaken by the participants, for example, assistant in a restaurant, washing cars, working in a bakery.

#### ***Physical setting***

This identified the settings for the activities for example in a factory or within a voluntary organisation building.

#### ***Remuneration***

Earnings are an important part of working life for most people.

#### ***Social Context***

Was the workplace a special setting created for people with severe learning disabilities or was it an integrated setting?.

#### ***Personal Support***

What were the sources and extent of support?

### **THE PARTICIPANTS**

Twenty five participants were recruited to the study - five from each of the participating states. Thirteen were female and twelve

male. The average age of the participants was 28.6 years (range 19 to 47 years). The majority (24) had attended special schools - one person was in a special class within a mainstream school. Fifteen of the participants received no formal preparation for work during the school years, four people had received formal career education and five had participated in work placements.

On leaving school the participants went to various settings - five went to adult education, six went on training schemes, thirteen spent some time during the week in day activity centres and six went to employment. Only two went to open employment.

### **GATHERING THE INFORMATION**

Information for the study was gathered at two points in time. In early 1997 national managers were asked to arrange for the completion of a questionnaire which collected information on the participants' educational and social backgrounds and on the job in which they were currently involved. In late 1997 and early 1998 extended interviews were conducted with each participant. The extended interviews centred on opportunities for participants to contribute to the study by:

- reflecting on their lives
- discussing their jobs and the work context
- commenting on incomes
- identifying and discussing their support networks
- adding to the information collected by questionnaire

### **THE INTERVIEWS**

There was cognisance of the concerns expressed about the reliability of interview data, from people who have severe learning disabilities. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in comfortable settings and had a social context. Questions invited the participants to respond in their own way. All, but one of them was accompanied by a person well known to them.

### **WORKING LIVES - ACTIVITIES**

Participants worked in a variety of sectors including private companies, the voluntary sector and public utilities. One person worked in a day activity centre. Jobs involved sales, caring, cleaning, looking after the environment, packing, hotel and restaurant work and office work. All the jobs were part time ranging from

four hours a week to twenty four hours a week. All but one of the jobs were in open employment, and eight jobs had been specially created for people with severe learning disabilities. One person who could be described as less able worked in three different jobs spending a little time in each.

#### **EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR WORK**

The participants preferred on- job training and found training from job coaches, personal careers advisers, co-workers and supervisors most meaningful. The participants could appreciate the relevance of adult education where educational programmes were very focused on important aspects of their lives such as budgeting, being successful at work or home management. The lack of competence in basic skills such as reading and writing was acutely felt by a number of the participants.

#### **SATISFACTION**

One of the most striking features of the interview data is the high degree of satisfaction with working lives. The majority of the participants were in jobs which they liked but, even when some job tasks were perceived as unattractive, having a job was highly valued. A significant number of the participants wished to increase the percentage of the week they spent at work. Some were content with this status quo, while others were keen to explore the possibility of changing jobs.

#### **Working Lives - Physical Settings**

The participants in the study were very definite in their desire to work in ordinary settings alongside other people. The majority of the participants travelled to work independently using a variety of means of travel including buses, metros, cycling, walking and taxis. A number were competent in the home to work route only; others had generalised their travel skills and used these to engage in social activities.

#### **Working Lives - Social Context**

All the participants named co-workers to whom they related to in the workplace. They also knew managers and supervisors and valued their work based relationships. A number of participants named co-workers as friends but only two had out of work contact with colleagues.

Younger participants found the transition from school to work difficult: they were moving from a place at the senior end of the school to very junior positions at work. The vocabulary of the participants reflected their working experience: they were familiar with words in common use in the work place and there was an absence of language associated with more therapeutic settings.

Uniforms were important to the participants: they gave a sense of belonging to the work force and of being like others.

### **Working Lives -Remuneration**

Traditionally, people with severe learning disabilities have been seen as unemployable and therefore incapable of earning wages. As this changes it is not surprising that there is a transition period during which there will be anomaly and confusion. Historically benefits have been seen as a means of ensuring that basic needs were met and were not related to any significant quality of life. More recently benefits have been related to the provision of some quality of life and in many countries are now equal to or supersede basic national earnings. Earnings on top of benefits tend to be restricted and at a certain point earnings can result in the withdrawal of benefits.

There are differences between the five countries involved in the study and differences in the attitudes of participants. National disability pensions in the Netherlands and Scandinavia are high and additional allowances can be claimed for accommodation and work related expenses. In Finland, in particular, earnings can be added to benefit, national taxes paid and the remainder used to finance basic living needs and additional needs such as luxuries, leisure and travel.

In the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland small training allowances are often given in place of earnings related to the national basic wages. This has led to some people with severe learning disabilities being little better off financially when they have a job.

There is a strong case to be made that earnings from work should reward people by raising their standards of living, allowing them to acquire possessions, engage in foreign travel and increase their savings.

In the context of managing personal finances people who acquired literacy and numeracy skills during their school lives have a distinct advantage when they enter the working life.

# **CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT PLANS FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIS- ABILITIES**

**Michael Kamp**

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the introduction of the method of supported employment new opportunities were created for people with a disability. Due to their disability many disabled people were excluded from work. Supported employment can be seen as part of a support approach. In this approach attention is paid to what people with a disability can do instead of what they cannot do.

Excluded from work opportunities also means not having a career and not having choices. Many people with a disability still depend on services from organisations and professionals who make programmes and decisions for them. Activities for people with a disability are programme driven. Activities have to fit in a programme, which is mostly the same for a group of people with a disability.

The support approach sees that the needs of a person with a disability are the main focus. The person with a disability is seen as a fellow citizen who needs support and counselling in order to function properly with the same rights as non-disabled people. No longer supply-(programme) directed, no longer isolated, but playing an active and flexible role in society where the person with a disability is served, and if needed organised in a 'support network'.

## **PROVISION OF SUPPORT**

The awareness that activities in favour of people with a disability must be related to their wishes and possibilities. This includes that

people with a disability have a central role in the decision making process.

Supported employment is related to 'support thinking'. People with a disability have rights, wishes and ambitions. Support is given to the person with a disability to make his or her own choices. When a choice is made it doesn't mean that this is a permanent choice. New experiences or changes of circumstances can be the base of new choices.

To be able to make a choice a person with a disability must know what to choose. For people with severe learning difficulties their range of choices is limited due to lack of experience. Many people with learning disabilities make choices related to their knowledge, which are based on their limited reference framework. Another aspect is that many people with a disability have a special relationship with a care-professional. This relationship can be a barrier to identify the real choice a person with a disability may like to make.

Many people with a disability can spend years in a dependant position. Their behaviour is based and focused on that what a (care-)professional thinks is important. Not only verbal, but also non-verbal aspects are of influence. The disabled person may not want to disappoint the (care-) professional.

### ***An example***

A person with a disability gets a job. A part of the job is working with water. The disabled person has no verbal skills. When the work is carried out in presence of the job coach everything is OK. As soon as the job coach leaves things goes wrong. An analysis of the situation found that the worker didn't like working with water. They didn't want to disappoint the job coach and did this work in the job coach's presence correctly but he was sabotaging this part when the job coach left. This was the only way to express their dislike of this aspect of the job. When this part was deleted out of the job the problem was solved.

The idea that a person with a disability is able to make choices has as a consequence that the person need proper support to make his own choices and communicate them.

### ***Some support instruments***

There are many different ways to support a person in the decision making process. Some examples:

### **a. Personal future planning.**

This instrument is mainly used for people with severe learning disabilities. In this method the person with a disability has the central role. Meetings are organised with the objective to give support and find out what the real choices are.

Inventory of wishes, identify where the specific interest is. Practical situations are investigated and evaluated. It might be necessary to repeat parts of the process and information to get a good picture of what the person with a disability chooses.

It can be helpful to use drawings/symbols, working with colours, pictograms etc.

### **b. Assessment**

Assessment as part of a dynamic approach. From each disabled participant a profile is made with background information.

This profile is the basis of an individual oriented action plan. This action plan, for example lead to:

- vocational training on the job. It must be very clear what the wishes, options and possibilities are.
- job-preparation activities for those for which it is not clear:  
- what they like, - what they can do, - what they can cope with.

It is very important to get information from daily experiences, information from the home situation, changes etc.

### **THE WORLD OF WORK**

Supported employment gives people with a disability the opportunity to find and keep a job on the open labour market. Practical detailed, step by step training and tailored support to the person with a disability and to the employer are the key success factors.

When supported employment was being introduced many people had to be convinced that people with severe disabilities could work. This could be achieved by showing that it is possible.

### ***Example***

A disabled woman of 25 years old, moderate level of learning disability, had never worked. She and her parents were approached to take part in a supported employment project. In the beginning the parents were shocked. They felt that their daughter

couldn't work. They were also afraid that she would be at risk of losing proper care and support. The parents were assured that she would get all the support she needed. Under this condition the parents agreed. She started work training on the job in a restaurant. After three months she could do this work with less support. The placement in the job was successful and she demonstrated that she was able to work. But this was not all. There was a remarkable change. She developed other interests in clothes, television and other people and the environment. For her work was an important instrument for growth. The side effects were even more important than just having a job.

There are many examples of this type of experiences. People with a disability were placed in a situation that they were able to build experience and could develop themselves. For non disabled people this is a normal situation, but it is new for many disabled people.

Supporting a person with respect to their abilities, choices and personal growth also means no more support is given than needed and no less support than necessary. When a person with a disability is developing his abilities it can lead to less support. It might be a necessary that a minimum of support is needed. When this minimum of support disappears people might lose their job.

To get a good idea on the type of support which is needed a distinction can be made between the skill dimension and the 'support dimension'. Skill dimension is about the job. At every job there are a number of tasks which must be adequately carried out by the employee/co-worker. In reality there is usually considerable discrepancy between the employee's skills and his tasks. In the employer-employee relationship the employee is expected to meet the specific quality and production requirements. The relationships are: simple jobs - few requirements on one hand and qualified jobs - specific requirements on the other.

The skills gap needs to be resolved. In the first place, this can be done by making an assessment of the skills, wishes and preferences of the (future) employee. This information is necessary for achieving a good match between the job and the employee.

Secondly, negotiations can be made about the job responsibilities which correspond/coincide with the skills of the (potential) employee. The discrepancy between the people in skills and the job-requirements needs to be resolved to the satisfaction of both

parties. The employer can make use of these support-instruments which in turn help the employee to develop in his work.

‘Support dimension’ is a complex of supportive tools for the benefit of a handicapped employee. ‘Support dimension’ takes advantage of individual skills and needs of the handicapped employee.

The difference between ‘skill dimension’ and ‘support dimension’ can be explained by the following: skills are concrete, while person-directed support is more abstract.

Job demands are concrete. The absence or presence of skills is easily measured. On the other hand, ‘support’ is less tangible, because this relates to the individual situation of the disabled person. The support can vary. The primary focus is the employee with a disability who is coached in that process. When needed extra support is given in certain areas. Coaching may be aimed at behavioural elements, basic skills etc.

In the division of labour ‘Skill dimension’ responsibilities belong to the employer and ‘support dimension’ care/support organisations. Job coaching assignments of a technical nature are classified under ‘skill dimension’.

The experiences with supported employment are that when a disabled person is able to fulfil the tasks (has the skills) the job coaching will become less. It is also a fact that the skill-oriented part becomes more and more the responsibility of the employer and co-workers. However there is, when the job coaching disappears, not always enough attention for the support part. It occurs quite often that a person with a disability is losing the job due to lack of support.

People with a more severe disability need more support. The support is not only related to the work aspects, but also to all other aspects, which are of influence in the performance of a job.

#### **A HOLISTIC APPROACH**

A human person is unique: physiological, emotional (psychical, mental) and sociological. A change in one area cause changes in other areas. When a person feels wellness it means that the feeling of wellness is a feeling of wholeness and uniqueness. If a person has a work it causes wellness in every part of his/her life.

Changes in one part have influence in another part. When a person with a disability has a job mostly the effect of this is more

self-esteem, more personal growth. The result of this can be new wishes related to living conditions, for example a demand to live in their own house. Small experiences in life can have a great influence.

When people have experiences they might have new wishes and like to make new choices. These choices can lead to new experiences. This is an ongoing process.

### ***Example***

A group of people with a learning disability spent many years in a day centre with no outdoor activities. The management of the day centre decided that it might be a good idea to start a project outside the day centre. There was a big supermarket in the neighbourhood. A lot of small trolleys were spread around the neighbourhood. Customers didn't bring their trolleys back. The project would collect the trolleys and bring them back to the supermarket. The project was organised for the whole group. All the disabled participants in the project were dressed in a yellow coat and everybody could see them. The question is:

Is this integration? The answer must be: No. However, there was an interesting side effect. The participants in the project had no experience with work. Everything was very new. They could see the work in the supermarket and made some contacts. This experience was the beginning of a process. When people asked the participants of the project: do you like this work?, the answer was yes. When they asked what do you like the most? The answer was different for each person. Most of the participants said that they would like another job, for example work in the supermarket. Their experience was the base for another choice. They would like to have a career.

Many people, with a learning disability who are working for the first time will also point out that they might like to do different work after some time. Their wishes are no different than those of a non-disabled person. Creating opportunities means also giving support so that they can make their own choice, so that they also can have a career.

# **ASSESSMENT, GUIDANCE AND VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION**

**Joe Carleton**

Project Career set out to improve the integration of people with learning disabilities into working careers. If this was to succeed their ability to make informed and realistic decisions was an important part of the process.

Making career decisions is difficult for anyone given the wide range of jobs available and differing requirements in terms of interests, abilities, personality, skills and qualifications. For people with learning disabilities the difficulty is increased as they often have limited experience and knowledge of employment and may not have the confidence to make independent decisions.

Each country in the Project Career partnership adopted slightly different approaches depending on local circumstances but they all followed a number of common principles:

- The person with learning disabilities was central to any decisions being made concerning their careers.
- If informed choices were to be made it was essential to provide knowledge and experience of employment.
- Information on which choices are being made must be holistic in nature covering all aspects of a person's life and reflecting change which takes place as they progress through the programme.

## **VOCATIONAL PROFILING**

For many people assessment, whether it be in the areas of Health, Education or Employment has become associated with a stressful situation and negative judgements being made. In Project Career a more accurate description of what was taking place was Vocational Profiling and this less threatening term was adopted. Un-

der this approach the emphasis is on what the person can do, what their interests are and the type of jobs that are suitable.

The traditional approach to vocational assessment generally involves the use of norm-referenced tests to discover the skills and attainments of an individual and compare these with the demands of the job. This approach has not worked well for people with learning disabilities in that it produces a negative picture emphasising things they can not do and comparing them unfavourably to other groups of people. It also tends to concentrate on disability and handicap, increasing barriers rather than inclusion.

The Career Profiling approach was adopted which gathered information about all aspects of the person from a wide range of sources, producing a holistic view of the person and emphasising the positive aspects, which would enhance integration. The profile was to be used to make realistic vocational choices, to inform employers, support workers and personal career advisers about the individual and to identify support needs in the workplace.

The information for the profile was gathered through interviews with and observation of the person being considered for a career. This was supplemented and validated by others with a close association to the person, including parents, carers, schools, social workers and the support worker/ personal career adviser. The content of the profile was not seen as static but was adapted to include progress taking place as people gained work experience and learned new skills.

The information profiled varied slightly between countries. The criteria for inclusion being its relevance to career planning and the local situation. In general it included biographical information such as the domestic situation, social situation, education and training, and employment history. It also looked at physical abilities, cognitive abilities, daily living skills, communication, social skills, behaviour and personal characteristics.

The profile approaches used at the start of the programme were quite complex and comprehensive but experience identified the most important areas and resulted in more focused and practical instruments. It was generally found that information on social skills and behaviour was of prime importance if suitable job matches were to be made and the best support identified.

In parallel with the person profile a job profile was developed in order that comparisons could be made between job demands and individual aspirations and abilities. Decisions could then be

made on the suitability of the placement, whether the job needed to be re-designed to suit the person and to identify training and support needs. The job profile was generally carried out by the support worker / personal career adviser in conjunction with the work supervisor or personnel officer. It typically included a skills analysis, environmental profile, health and safety aspects, key work tasks and training requirements.

### **VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION**

When the person and job profiles were completed decisions could then be made regarding job areas and placements with employers. Many of the people on the career project were still at school or had limited experience of work, and therefore it was decided that they should be encouraged to sample a range of different jobs before making a career choice.

A number of methods were used to evaluate and improve vocational knowledge and to involve the individual in the decision making process. These included the use of employment based photographs, videos of jobs, job visits and discussions on an individual or group basis. All the methods proved successful in generating discussion and evaluating the current level of vocational knowledge.

Where possible the individuals choice of job placement was followed where it was suitable and practical. If a choice was made where the person did not have the required skills or qualifications alternatives at a lower level were sought in the same type of work. In some cases the jobs could be re-designed to suit individual needs. Areas where difficulty arose were responsibility levels too high, a need for good literacy/ numeracy skills, speed of work required excessive, health and safety factors and tasks that were too complex.

Although the gathering of relevant information from a wide range of sources will give a good indication of the types of work which may be suitable, the most valid assessment can be made when the person tries the job. The experience on Project Career often resulted in individuals changing direction after a work placement and looking at areas not previously considered. In some cases the experiences of their peers on placements could be deciding factors influencing their choice.

The profiling process continued while the person was on placement with a wide range of information being gathered:

- Attending job - timekeeping, attendance, independent travel, specialised transport.
- Doing job - speed, accuracy, skills, problems.
- Interpersonal skills/ behaviour - confidence, assertiveness, concentration, reaction to stress/ criticism, adaptation to change, social interaction, aggressive/ unusual behaviours, communication, work discipline and endurance fatigue/ factors.
- Support needs.
- Employer/ co-worker assessment.
- Training needs.

When it comes to making a final career choice it is important that this information is given to the individual accurately and in an easily understood form. It should be emphasised to employers that an accurate appraisal is important and it is not useful to give a “rosy” or token report because of the person’s disability.

It has been found on Career that vocational profiling if used properly can be an efficient way to involve people in making realistic decisions, informing support workers and employers and making good job matches.

# **TRAINING PROGRAMMES AIMED AT PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND AT THEIR STAFF**

**Samuli Puruskainen      Tuija Rauhamäki**

There has been various types of training within the Career projects in all of the project countries. This chapter will give a picture of the training which has taken place in Finland in the STEPS-project. In addition the training will be described through cases i.e. only one example of each type of training is given. This is done knowing that many good examples will be left out. However this has been a multinational project and collecting all the information is a huge task. All in all the training is divided into three areas: training of the clients, training of the staff and training of the key actors. To get the emphasis right the training of the clients is described in more detail.

## **1. THE TRAINING OF THE CLIENTS**

### ***The Case of Liperi and Kuopio supported employment projects***

#### **Background - why was training needed?**

The need for training became obvious at the preliminary interviews (initial assessment) with the clients. Many of the clients did not have any previous experience of working life or the demands connected with it. The clients of the project did not have enough knowledge on what it means to transfer from sheltered work or supported employment to earning one's living through a "real" job.

Another important reason for starting the training was that both projects are actually very small, and supported employment is a new form of activity for both projects. Liperi project concentrates in rural areas where the project workers as well as the

clients are very isolated. Because the projects are small, they naturally do not have any big resources for arranging activities or training on their own. Through co-operation, the resources and the knowledge could be used more efficiently.

In addition, the projects had decided to participate in an international exchange programme. Thus the training helped also in preparing for the trip, since the participants learned to know each other and formed into groups before the trip.

### **Empowerment - the full participation of the client**

The goal of the first joint session was getting to know each other, mapping the clients expectations, wishes and future challenges, and evaluating the need for training and on-the-job training through the so called future workshop method. The method includes pedagogic drama and expression, which aims at finding one's own capabilities, restrictions and possibilities through creative activity.

The possibilities for creative activities were perceived useful in mapping the need for training for the clients.

- the clients of the target group did not have any prior experiences of employment
- the clients were not used to the fact that someone asked them about their opinions. Usually someone else had always decided what was best for them.
- we felt that through creative activity, the real feelings and the need for training would come up
- for many of the clients it was easier to express their feelings through role play than by talking directly about them.

When working with groups with special needs, the experimental learning was perceived as the best working method. The aim was to achieve such concrete results which would answer directly to the clients needs and wishes.

In the future workshop method, images of a bad as well as of a very good working environment were created. Through these images, examples of ordinary, medium working environments could be found. Through the method, the following themes were brought up:

- there is need for more information on the basic rules of working life, such as the obligations and the rights the client has once s/he signs a contract.
- regular meetings were noticed to be very important: it is important to get to meet others and exchange experiences.
- interpersonal, interactional, and problem solving skills were insufficient
- it is important to talk about issues such as why it is important to work, what it means to me, what kind of work is available, and whether one job is more valuable than another.

### **Forming into group**

In the beginning it was very difficult for the clients to bring up their own experiences of working life, but once the groups had been established, they felt more secure. Forming into groups was made easier by the fact that both the personnel and the clients participated in working together. This encourages the clients and supported them in making their own initiations. The clients had a sense of equality, and confidence was created through doing similar tasks.

In the beginning both the clients and the staff participated jointly in the training, but as early as the second session, staff were trained in job-coaching while the clients were with an outside trainer. At the planning stage of the training it was considered important to have separate sessions for the clients and the staff, as things and situations which the client would not want to talk about with the familiar job coach might come up. The possibility of leading by the staff could also be avoided, and made sure that the client really talks for him/herself instead of letting the staff answer for him/her.

The group was perceived as secure and little by little problematic situations were brought up. Through meetings and common experiences, a sense of togetherness started to develop. Also the fact that the clients lived together deepened the sense of belonging to a group. The training sessions were held in each of the participating towns, and during each session, the local clients presented their jobs. Thus the clients received a wide understanding of supported employment and felt they were not the only ones facing a new situation and projects. Getting to know the others tasks also helped in developing equal support both in on-the-job training and discussions. One of the highlights was when a

client from Kuopio offered to show another client from Lieksa a task which he had long experience in.

### **Working life and the problem solving skills connected with it**

During the first sessions, the clients seemed fairly happy with their jobs and nothing seemed to be wrong or problematic. However, the trainers dealt with problems on a theoretical level and sought solutions to these problems through drama. As the groups formed, more and more openly the real problems were discussed.

The problems faced in working life situations were dealt with first by discussing, and then by trying to find solutions through drama. Finally there was discussion on which of the solutions offered would be the most suitable one for that particular case. If the solution failed, the group tried to find new ways of solving the problem. Both the problems and solutions were initiated by the clients, the participants of the project were told about the possible solutions earlier. The aim was to talk about the problems openly and directly.

Even if there were problems, the training was much more than that. The positive sides of the job were emphasised in on-the-job training, and in the client's discussions, there were more positive than negative things.

Dealing with emotions, such as a death of a relative, weakened the emotional strength of some clients. They did not have words for their sorrow and they did not have the strength to work as intensively as earlier. The client also mentioned that the sorrow was sometimes misinterpreted as something else. People were just wondering why she did not act as before or whether she was lazy. The training helped the client also in such situations, because she was able to bring up her feelings in the familiar group.

### **Comments**

- the clients noticed they were not alone in facing a new situation, there were others, as well
- training sessions are a concrete way for the clients to participate in the project
- a new project, the clients and the staff facing new situations / exchanging experiences was perceived as important

- experiencing new things, courage, and encouragement: new experiences were offered at the training sessions (e.g. rapid shooting, archery) and through them the clients were encouraged to face new experiences. Getting a real job is also a new exciting experience. Also rapid shooting and archery were exciting and a little bit scary, but when one had the courage to go through the experience, it was something to be proud about. Participating in the joint exchange programme in Ireland was exciting, as well. Through experiencing new things, the excitement and fear connected with it were eased.
- the clients teach each other,
- individual opening up, encouragement, raising self respect
- capacity, shown in different ways, behaving differently in different situations
- during the training some stressful situations have come up which would not have otherwise. Thus it could be observed how the client acts in such situations.
- the quality of life, contacts between the participants, improved social skills

There were five training sessions altogether, in all twelve days and an international exchange programme to Ireland.

## **2. TRAINING OF THE STAFF**

During the two-year project period training of the staff was arranged by many different organisers. In the Finnish Network of Supported Employment the Finnish Association on Mental Retardation was responsible for arranging training particularly for the job coaches of those sub projects whose main target group was the intellectually disabled. However practitioners from other groups that is people working with people with mental health problems as well as people working with sight difficulties among others attended the training. In 1996 the training was arranged as a nationwide course in Helsinki and in 1997 in four areas in Finland. The following is a description of the training programme of the job coaches in 1996.

The development of the training programme was influenced very much by foreign training programmes with the same targeting, i.e. American examples were studied intensively. Equally important sources of information were the local pilot project workers starting the activities in their own areas. An inquiry was made

among the project workers about their opinions and ideas of the training needed for succeeding in their tasks. The foreign example programmes together with these ideas formed the basis of the planning of the job coach training programme.

The programme for the job coaches consisted of five seminars (nine days) and the activities began in June in 1996. The start was a large seminar where the keynote speaker came from California, USA. The method of supported employment and the American experiences were introduced.

The second three-day-training period was in the end of August and the theme was support; what is support and supporting, how to assess the needs for support as well as how to support all the clients - the employee and the employer and others involved - in the process of supported employment.

Third part of the training programme was a two-day seminar and work shop in September focusing on marketing of supported employment. It was once again an international seminar the presenters coming from the Netherlands. The majority of the organisations developing supported employment in Finland come from a social care background and their knowledge of the business culture is poor. That is why people feel fairly insecure as far as the employers and the business world is concerned. That fear among other things was discussed.

Fourth seminar lasting two days in October discussed job coaching on the work site and in general. Need for mutual understanding and good co-operation skills were emphasised.

Finally the fifth one-day-seminar dealt with benefits and obstacles and other aspects of the social security system concerning supported employment and the society.

The majority of the presenters were Finnish experts on each of the separate subjects. When the projects went on more and more practitioners gained expertise on the Finnish Supported Employment Model which was also available for training purposes at the end of the project period. These pioneers will be valuable sources of information in the future when planning the training of trainers.

Approximately 40 people took part in the whole nine-day-training programme. Some 200 people were involved altogether while it was possible to attend the international seminars separately.

### 3. TRAINING OF THE KEY ACTORS

The third target group of the training were the key actors in the field of supported employment. By key actors are meant employers, recruitment officers, officers in social security, decision makers etc. Nearly all the sub projects arranged this type of training. However one of the biggest training activity addressed particularly to the key actors was organised by the Foundation for Promoting Employment of the People with Disabilities. The series of seminars which were held all over Finland were called "Abilities available".

In 1996 there were 20 and in 1997 16 seminars altogether. In each of the seminars there were presentations by employers, by the workers union and by a disabled person employed by a local project. Other presentations varied according to the place where the seminar was taken place. Members of Parliament as well as local decision makers were usually represented.

The main intention of these seminars was to increase awareness of the disability issues in general and to inform the key actors of supported employment and other employment activities that are going on in Finland. One of the main messages was that people with disabilities also have abilities which are wasted when not used in the labour market. The purpose of the campaign was well achieved while the seminars were highly noticed by the press and several interviews were made by local and national radio stations and the TV.

### CONCLUSIONS

One of the significant outcomes of the training was that people working with differently disabled people found much in common as far as employment is concerned and that is why co-operation and networking were highly valued. Another thing which was clear already in the beginning but which gained importance during the process was the necessity of **client-centred methods** and the need for **tailored** support, coaching and training. Tailoring is essential to meet the needs and abilities of each person individually.

No doubt the impact of the training within the STEPS projects has been positive and far reaching. After each of the conferences, seminars, workshops, presentations and courses people were asked to evaluate the benefits of that particular training to their work. People were generally very pleased with the training. Commonly participants appreciated new ideas as well as the strengthening of

courage to struggle with their day to day activities. Innovative ideas usually seemed to appear in mutual conversations and discussions. Training sessions made it possible to share these ideas.

# **EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS USED WITH PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITY AND THEIR STAFF**

**Alan Hanna**

People with learning disabilities are not full members of the workforce. They have had difficulty in having access to employment and the vocational training systems which assist people without disabilities to find employment. One of the reasons for this is that training systems and resources have been developed without regard to this particular group. People with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than people who are not disabled. Learning disabled people are more likely to be unemployed than almost anyone else. In Project Career attempts were made to adapt and create resources to overcome the substantial barriers people with learning disabilities faced in attempting to find employment. The problems that face learning disabled people who are seeking a career are not substantially different from those facing people without disabilities. These can include:

- lack of vocational skills such as the ability to do a specific job
- lack of job search skills
- lack of qualifications and basic skills
- lack of incentive due to inability of wage rates to exceed benefit levels
- low expectation - the person is not expected to get a job
- lack of availability of work in appropriate geographical areas

While the impact of these factors are different for people with learning disabilities measures must be taken to deal with them. The resources and materials available to the various groups which contributed to Project Career were not sufficient to tackle the

difficulties experienced by the participants on the various programmes. Most people involved in education and training will recognise the factors referred to above. They may question the point about expectation as something which non disabled people share with disabled people. It is true, however, that until very recently people with learning disabilities were expected to spend most of their lives in a care environment or a training centre where they might “pretend” to work by doing particular tasks in this segregated setting. Similarly long term unemployed people can develop a culture of not working and will find it very difficult to break out of unemployment.

The attitude still persists in some quarters that employment is not a viable option for people with learning disabilities. Project Career challenged that attitude. Using the supported employment principles developed in the United States in the 1980s the Project has sought to give people with learning disability the opportunity to try employment in a variety of settings. It dealt with a wide age range but concentrated on school leavers. A problem that was immediately apparent at the beginning of the project was that many of the potential participants did not have the aspiration to work. They were not expected to find work so there was little preparation for this eventuality. They had not considered the types of job they would like to do or the types of skills they had to bring to work. In order to facilitate the people in making choices about the type of work they wanted to do staff on the project had to use and develop a number of materials. These materials were concerned with:

- identifying the strengths and weaknesses of participants;
- educating the participant about the world of work;
- identifying the components of particular jobs; and
- choosing which jobs they would like to try.

The project then went on to give the various participants the opportunities to try these types of jobs. Following this they would then specialise in a an area of particular interest to them. The long term hope for the project and its methods is that these people will then secure employment in those types of work. This chapter describes some of the materials and the way in which they were used.

#### **IDENTIFYING THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF PARTICIPANTS.**

This was the essential starting point, even more important than aspirations or early career preferences. Many of the young people involved in the various national programmes were either unprepared for work or lacked knowledge of particular jobs. By identifying their skills and interests, strengths and weaknesses, it was possible to identify general task areas which might lead to work. A number of resources were used to achieve this. Some had been developed by other researchers in the past but generally they were not universally transferable to each particular setting or participant. As a general rule the use of visual material was more successful than written material. The assessment of strengths and weaknesses used a combination of activities with participants backed up with comments from parents and carers, teachers and other professionals involved in providing services to the participant. In Northern Ireland and Finland materials were developed by the individual staff members within the national project while in Ireland there was greater reliance on a Habit and Attitude Related Skills form and the CASP (Communication Assessment Profile for Adults with a Mental Handicap) form.

#### **EDUCATING THE PARTICIPANT ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK.**

In the Netherlands and Sweden a method of working was followed based on the review of existing day care services. It was common to all the projects that the participants did not have intrinsic knowledge of the world of work. Understanding of the importance of timekeeping, quality of work and being accountable to a boss were skills and knowledge areas which needed to be trained. In Ireland and Northern Ireland approaches were followed which led to recognised qualifications. Central to enabling young people with learning disabilities to enter the world of work is to boost their confidence so they believe they can cope with work. In Northern Ireland the City and Guilds Profile of Achievement qualification was used to focus on work related skills such as communication and problem solving. The delivery mechanisms were very varied and included booklets, puzzles, pictures and posters, videos and career visits. In Ireland the project used material from the National Council for Vocational Awards namely "Preparation for Work" and "Work Orientation". Before work placement could be safely contemplated it was important to provide health and safety training. Most participants had been in some sort of supported environment and been highly supervised.

In their work placement there would still be a high degree of supervision but not as much as in previous settings. Understanding and following safety rules was a central feature of this training.

#### **IDENTIFYING THE COMPONENTS OF PARTICULAR JOBS.**

This category overlaps with the previous one and is an essential stage to the selection of a job. Many of the participants on the programme had little or no idea about the content of various jobs. They did not feel involved in the world of work so did not take much notice of jobs and their contents. Others had unrealistic expectations about the types of jobs available to them. The staff of the various projects had to deal with these issues sensitively and fully. They tried to redirect participants to more appropriate work areas and give the fuller information about the content of the jobs they wanted to do. In Ireland the project developed and used a "Vocational Interests Inventory" to identify the components of jobs that their participants would be most suited to. In other projects the participants were asked about the jobs they knew about and had discussions about them. Misconceptions were corrected at this point.

#### **CHOOSING WHICH JOBS THEY WOULD LIKE TO TRY.**

Most of the projects followed a procedure whereby participants could choose the job they would like to try. A work placement would be set up in this type of work and the progress of the participant monitored. Work would be sampled in a number of areas to increase the participant's knowledge of different jobs. Sometimes the participant had very firm ideas about the job of their choice. They were still required to try other jobs. If they still retained their original preference they could return to that job. Sometimes they changed their preference in the light of this new experience. The opinions of their peers on the programme also proved to be important as they met together and talked about their work. This, combined with the industrial or career visit, was a very useful method in Northern Ireland. Constantly on the programme there were discoveries made by the participants. One young woman who had her mind set on childcare did not thrive in a nursery based placement but encouraged by a member of the staff she had a very successful placement in a mother and baby care retailer. She has now found employment with another retailer. A number of the young men on the project became interested in

car valeting because of what they heard from the first participant to try it. The main training technique and resources used in this setting was coaching by the other employees at the place of work or by the Project Career support worker.

### **MATERIALS FOR STAFF**

This is essentially a new area of work. There is considerable interest in supported employment as a method to enable people with learning disabilities to find employment. Nevertheless there has been comparatively minor success in learning disabled people actually getting jobs. A glance at the employment figures of any European Union member state will confirm this. In this project there has been a development in the supported employment model to address the lack of employment knowledge of the participant. Consequently there is a lack of specialist material for staff. During the life of Project Career there has been the development of the Diploma in Supported Employment which has helped the career prospects and employment of staff in support work. Some of the staff in Project Career have taken part in the course but by and large staff in each project relied on directed reading, group discussions, conferences and specific training courses to help with their development. In the programme throughout all the participating countries the most important educational resource has come from the dedication and creativity of the support staff themselves.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Project Career has set out to enable people with learning disabilities to access the career of their choice. Educational material has been used to help the participants to make choices. This has also meant giving the people with learning disabilities the skills and knowledge to make choices from as wide a range as possible. As well as knowledge and skills there has also been a concentration on attitude. The participants have had to be motivated to be in employment. Their active involvement in making choices and being responsible for their decisions has been an important part of the programme. The development of self esteem and confidence has been a notable by product of the project.

It is also important that advice and information is taken from people who know the participants well. This includes school teachers who have ongoing careers programmes in schools, social workers with knowledge of the family circumstances and parents or

carers who know the participants better than anyone else. One of the young people on the Northern Ireland programme consistently selected photographs of jobs involving work with animals. Only the intervention of the school and family prevented a placement working with animals. The school and family indicated that the participant was frightened of animals and such a placement would probably be a failure.

The young people with learning disabilities who have taken part in Project Career have had a strong influence on each other. This has been an important resource to use.

There was a general feeling that there were not sufficient educational materials available on the open market. In most of the projects the imagination of the staff proved to be most effective in helping the participants reach the stage where employment choices could be made. There is much to recommend the compilation of resources locally. Video materials with scenes or narrative using an unfamiliar accent to the viewer were not as effective as ones with local voices. Similarly the use of photographs of jobs set in a local context were better received than photographs of unfamiliar environments. It would have been more convenient to have materials easily accessible to show participants the content of jobs. Nevertheless it was also beneficial to respond to individual participants' learning needs in unique ways.

# **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS A METHOD TO ACHIEVE PARTICIPATION IN WORKING LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

## **Summing up a European Project**

**Tuula Matikainen**

### **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

The supported employment model was developed in the United States in the 1980s as a method for employing disabled people. The supported employment method has its origins in the principles of vocational rehabilitation. Usually the starting point of vocational rehabilitation is that the disabled person acquires the resources, abilities and skills required for employment during the rehabilitation process, and only after he has achieved the operation capability required by the open labour market, does one start to look for a job suitable for him or her.

The starting point of supported employment is that the individual increases his own competence and operation capability with tasks while working. The individual is guided and trained to manage a specific task, and the guidance takes place after the job has been confirmed. The goal is not a potential job in the distant future. Supported employment can be a, relatively, independent method for the employment of a disabled person. It can also complement other vocational rehabilitation processes that includes work experience, job coaching and vocational training.

Supported employment means regular wage labour in an integrated environment. Its starting point is that the employer pays the worker a normal salary for performed work. Supported employment is suitable for people whose employment in the standard labour market is unlikely and who need, due to a disability or

some other reason, constant support in order to cope with work tasks or the work environment. The support of supported employment can be training and coaching at the work place, social support outside the work place and transport arrangements, among others. The support person makes sure that the employer receives the contribution required for the salary.

The body of activities itself is connected to three central principles:

1. The first principle is the careful selection of a job suitable for the disabled person. On the one hand, the selection requires knowledge of the abilities and interests of the disabled person. Systematic clarification of the conditions and possibilities of the task and the working circumstances. A careful charting of both the situation of the disabled person and the characteristics of the potential job is a prerequisite for successful placement. In many cases the placement has a trial period during which both the worker and the employer can evaluate the success of the placement.
2. The second principle is that person being employed receives the necessary support and guidance at the job. When necessary, the support person works during the initial stage for several hours with the disabled person in order to be sure of the work getting done and of the success of the placement.
3. The third principle is that the amount of guidance and support diminished as the worker learns the skills required for surviving at the job and at the work place. In the long term it may suffice to meet the support person or group once a week, for example.

Supported employment has been studied quite widely. Recent studies seem to support the view that assimilation into employment earlier yields better results for people with learning disabilities than a long pre-vocational training trying to improve vocational or social skills.

### ***Project Career in Northern Ireland***

Project Career is developing a model of career education and development for people with learning disabilities living in South and East Belfast. The project began in August 1995 and ended in March 1998. Trainees came from three main sources. These are special schools for people with severe learning disabilities (Tor

Bank and Glenveagh), social workers based in the community, and the Training and Employment Agency. They have taken part in work placements that have involved over thirty employers in the Belfast area. The types of work have varied ranging from stores work and retail to car valeting and working in a Beauty salon.

In the Northern Ireland Project 25 young people with learning disabilities are involved at different stages of development. The management of the project has been in the hands of the following agencies:

- The Orchardville Society- a voluntary organisation and charity
- Tor Bank and Glenveagh Schools
- South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust
- Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education
- The Training and Employment Agency
- Employer Representatives (Coca Cola and Northern Ireland Electricity)

The Orchardville society has operational responsibility for the project and it has employed two Personal Career Advisers to provide support to the trainees. These staff have worked closely with parents, employers and professional staff of training centres. Their role has been crucial in helping trainees to make the adjustment from school or community life to work. The Personal Career Advisers provide the link between the trainee, parent or carer, professional staff (teacher, doctor, nurse, social worker) and employer. The Personal Career Adviser are able to provide continuity of advice and support.

The participants on the programme have worked through a range of activities. These have included industrial visits, job sampling, and activities to help make choices about likely jobs. The trainees have progressed through several work experience placements and then concentrated on a longer term career of their choice. Others have progressed from a half day a week in work to three days in work placement. The progress and the experience of the trainees formed part of the local and transnational research. The ability of the trainees to cope with employment placement without first attending a day care facility has been one of the achievements of the project.

To ensure that the lessons of the project are learned fully and

communicated as widely as possible there are two research projects: a series of dissemination events and an independent external evaluation. The local research programme has interviewed parents, trainees, staff and employers. A research forum of concerned professionals is examining changes in their own professional practice and has made a series of draft recommendations already. Dissemination of the ideas of the project were circulated around the member organisations of the Career consortium by in-house briefings.

External seminars were held from time to time to report on the progress of the project. The independent evaluation of the project includes an examination of the way the Consortium works together as well as a study of the effects of the project on the trainees themselves.

### ***Project Career in Ireland***

The Supported Employment project in Ireland, based around Carmona services, caters for 20 students per year. During the two year duration in a National Foundation Certificate Course, accredited by the National Council for Vocational Awards, 59 first year occupational therapy students participated. The project has two target groups. Occupational Therapy students at Trinity College Dublin were young and inexperienced. They were introduced to learning disability by working with a group of disabled people. The learning disabled students have taken part in a programme to concentrate on vocational interests, interpersonal skills, and transferable vocational skills. They are supported on this programme by the Occupational Therapy students and their learning is accredited by the National Council for Vocational Awards. Trinity College Dublin now expects that people with learning difficulties will be involved on campus, contributing to academic and leisure pursuit.

### ***Project Career in Sweden***

In 1994 the law "Support and Services for People with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) gave learning disabled people a greater influence over their daily activities. In 1995 they began to discuss the support systems for the people with learning disability in Gävle. Seven activities had been on offer: Mixed activity groups, Cafe, Handicraft and a shop, Contract manufacturing, Stimulation of senses, Carpentry and Activities for people with autism.

People with learning disabilities were asked what they wanted to do. They had the choice of 14 activities. A number of people and groups were involved: people with learning disability and their relatives, the organisation of interests FUB (The Federation for People with Learning Disability in Sweden), the employees, the local unions and responsible politicians.

In consultation with the local trade union they decided to give all employees (55 people) the opportunity to choose where they wanted to work. This was if the survey of disabled people meant that day services needed to be changed. The results showed that 46 % of people with learning disability wanted to another activity (bakery/kitchen, computer workshop, catering and arts). 35 % of the employees chose to change their work activities. This was evaluated in December 1996. Most of the people with learning disabilities (77 people) were very satisfied with their new activities.

#### *Project career in Finland*

The Finnish STEPS is targeted towards people with learning disabilities who have not been able to secure employment in the labour market. The Finnish network covers all regions of the country and includes more than 20 local or national sub projects.

The general objective of Finnish STEPS is to promote the social and vocational integration of people with learning or other disabilities, by increasing their training and employment opportunities (e.g., access to jobs in the open labour market, or in social firms contributes to the participant's empowerment and quality of life). The key tasks vary in sub projects:

1. Training of trainers and practitioners in rehabilitation, vocational training, employment models (e.g., client-centred methods and empowerment, co-operation skills, expertise in labour market issues, job seeking, analysing, and coaching).
2. Developing and implementing flexible step-by-step approaches to guidance, support, training and employment (so-called tailored pathways from day care and sheltered work towards different opportunities).
3. Job creation, development of new employment models for the target group (e.g., social firms and enterprises and supported employment models)
4. Increasing the awareness of disability issues and of the

vocational resources and working capacities of the target group (e.g., information campaigns to employees, recruitment officers and general public).

The Finnish STEPS is evaluated using a multi-dimensional approach (social and behavioural sciences, health economics and administrative sciences). The data collection of the programme took place in three phases, at the beginning of 1996 and 1997 and at the end of 1997, using mail questionnaires and interviews. Basic data was also gathered in connection with semi-annual reports given by the individual projects to the national programme coordinators.

In accordance with the American model and European examples the Supported Employment method was applied in Finland to people with learning disabilities. In the future it is essential to establish the Supported Employment method as a part of the care of all disabled people.

None of the disabled people in the Supported Employment projects is paid a normal salary for their work, but they receive the usual benefits and expenses. The disabled people are normally in part-time work. Interest in applying and developing the Supported Employment method is increasing in Finland. In the following two examples of Finnish sub projects: Antinkoti Project and Pihlajapuisto Project.