

TSW

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

ÜBERGANG SCHULE-BERUF

Education and support of the transition from school to work in four EU countries

Summary

Working group of the trans-national development partnership TSW with the participation of the following development partnerships INTEQUAL (Austria), OPEN DOORS and KEINE BEHINDERUNGEN TROTZ BEHINDERUNG (Germany), EMPOWERMENT DOOR TRANSITE (Netherlands) and INTEGRATIVE GUIDANCE (Czech Republic)

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Five Development partnerships in four countries (Germany, Netherlands, Austria and Czech Republic) dealt in the period from 2002 to 2005 with the problems of the transition from school to work (employment) of young handicapped people. In the frame of the transnational partnership „Transition from school to work“ (TSW) ¹ were established seven trans-national working groups which dealt with various themes of the area of the interest. The centre of the work of one of the working group was the theme curriculum.

The working group “Curriculum” analysed the current educational supporting possibilities for young handicapped people on the field of transition from school to work of the participating countries. One of the aims was to find out how is the support based on the curriculum.

The situation in the participating countries is different. There are some general educational programs in some countries and in others are created new curricula or educational plans for new projects (qualification, provision). There are differences in the particular countries in the initial situations, frame conditions and priorities.

*„The integrative society insists on people working in this area new social, emotional and special task. To have a possibility to work in the area of integration is necessary to get in the educational courses not only specific competencies and knowledge but also the attitude“.*²

This statement points on the main parts of the analyse of curriculum and educational plans. In the curriculum should not be described contents of education but also defined the educational aims, methods and relation to work. Beside the elementary competencies is necessary to have the additional competencies. Together with the theoretical knowledge must the education provide practical competencies which are necessary for the life in the society and at work. Curricula should be open and respect the individuality, heterogeneity of the aim group and competencies of the educator.

Germany

In the European Union there is the right for the free choice of employment. People with disability have often this right in many areas practically limited. There is a raw of barriers and it is problem to get over, approach to education and after that to work is very often restricted for this group of people.

People with handicap need individual disposals, support and arrangements to have a possibility of free motion and orientation and not have a chance to choose only one (special) way. One of the disposals is for example assistance. It allows to handicapped people an equal participation on the life of the society and equal chances.

In the first part of the description of the situation in Germany are presented particular arrangements. One of the arrangements is the Special service for the area of integration (Integrationsfachdienste) which means the supporting service for the professional integration of handicapped people. The aim of this service is improvement of the professional changes of people who are limited because of their handicap on the open labour market (comp. working assistance in Austria).

The activity of the integrative service is presented on the example of the Hamburg working assistance. This company provides service to handicapped people and to employers. Offers the support during working intervention, guidance at work, support in the social inclusion and professional orientation and qualification. The service also provides professional counselling and creation of the working place convenient for people with handicap, during problematic

¹ www.tsw-equal.info/

² Ausbildung zur qualifizierten Integrationsfachkraft. Basiscurriculum. Equal-Entwicklungspartnerschaft QSI, 2004, free translation of the authors

situations and financial support. Another support is the working assistance. Working assistance is the support which is in Germany provided regularly during attended time. Assistants help during activities which the handicapped person is not able to manage. The term of the support is various (few hours or intensive guidance). This service is based on the assumption that employer can fulfil main activities of work. The assistance means supporting activities.

Two development partnerships (DP) of the Initiative Equal: Open Doors and „Keine Behinderungen trotz Behinderung“ participated on the trans-national partnership TSW in Germany.

Project Equal „Open Doors“ aspired in many partial projects to aimed action on the labour market and area of education to manage the successful qualification of handicapped people. Special attention has been paid on transition from basic/elementary to further education in special schools and to open labour market and educational area.

In the partial projects were created and tested various instruments, counselling and training programs and curricula, for example: wide, additional offer of sensibilisation, counselling, coaching and training offered by experts in the special and integrative schools, curriculum „Assistance training for handicapped students“, „Personal planning of future“ for mentally handicapped and students of special schools with mild form of mental handicap, elementary course of competence, guidance and organisation for the aim group of assistance and design for assistants, curricula for further education and specialisation of the peer-counsellors.

Equal DP „Keine Behinderungen trotz Behinderung“ aimed the development of the effective concepts for handicapped people, testing and evaluation. Transition of young people with handicap to work is influenced by various subjects. Realised interviews with different people (mentally handicapped, parents, teachers, employers etc.) were analysed because of the evaluation of the practical projects and it allowed to get different perspectives, views and subjective experience. The aim of DP was to create the network of participants and institutions participating on the professional training and integrative processes and creation of the new structure for young handicapped people.

In the frame of the project Equal was made the disposal of qualification for young handicapped people. This disposal is understood as training for the professional activity on the first labour market and is aimed on the levers of vocational and special schools or other educational actions. The young people with handicap have the possibility to get knowledge and abilities in the following areas: business, family economy, gastronomy, metal, electricity, wood and gardening.

The first sentence of the curriculum is *„Education...must be based on the current not on the missed assumptions of young people“*. The first are the special needs not the handicap.

Netherlands

There are many private schools beside the public school system (more that three quarters) which are financially supported by the state. The schools get the general budget from which can be founded the education. The schooling is free. The schools may ask for contribution for additional activities. Students above 18 must pay for their schooling which is generally the same at all schools.

The chapter describing the situation in Netherlands introduced the structure of education: primary, secondary and tertiary education. The education is compulsory min. 12 years and starts at the age of five. After finishing compulsory education exists partial duty for one year in which must the student go to school twice a week. In 1998 were set and described „main aims of elementary education“ by the state. Described are the qualities of pupils in the area of

knowledge, discretion and abilities after finishing elementary education. Specified are two types of main aims: main aims which overrun teaching areas (general abilities) and specific aims (particular subjects).

Despite of the lack of employees find handicapped young people in Holland work in the sheltered employment. During the last few years is possible to notice improvement of this situation. Project Equal „Empowerment Door Transitie“ was aimed on the planning of the personal future of pupils with physical handicap. Discovered was still lower support of the practical and social abilities necessary to orientation in the society and labour market in the special schools for physically handicapped. The main aim of the project was the fact that it is necessary to accept and respect them as unity with all individual characters. Pupils are let to independence, to make decisions and develop their own potential.

In the final part of this chapter are indicated recommendations which should contribute on the improvement of the situation: differentiated educational offer which possible to flexible accommodate to possibilities, abilities and problem of the students, individual plan of transition for each student, orientation on the general and practical abilities and on emotional development and social and communicative abilities of students, reciprocal support of teachers, intensive participation of parents etc.

Austria

In the first part of the chapter describing situation in Austria are defined general conditions. Included is the possibility of the integrative professional education from the year 2003. It is an educational form which corresponds with the needs of young people who need an optimal education and tools needed to be employed. The aim of this education is to improve the situation of inclusion of handicapped young people with personal problems connected with professional life.

Integrative professional education exists in two forms: longer period of the compulsory education (one or two years) if it is necessary to finish the professional education or set of the partial qualification (restriction of the particular part of the vocational training). This education may take from one to three years. The students have a possibility of guidance and assistance during the integrative education. In the text are briefly introduced main tasks.

To improve situation of handicapped people in the process of integration is necessary the support and guidance of the qualified employers. In the text are introduced the most important possibilities of guidance and counselling in Austria: clearing (in Austria since 2001) supporting young people with special educational needs during clearing up of the possibilities of the professional development, working assistance which offers counselling and support – looking for the job, entering to work, forced situations and problems at work which follow two main aims: work and keeping work of handicapped person, job coach support people with handicap during entering to work, problematic situations, guidance to work or to school.

In the frame of the Equal project INTequal were in Austria created four innovative forms of education with the aim to integrate young people with handicap in the transition from school to work in Lower Austria (NO). For all of the qualification criteria were/will be created new curricula and educational plans which are shortly introduced in the text. The qualification criteria are: *“Qualification gardening of young people with handicap”* – area gardening and work in agriculture; *“Job coaching”* introduces support of young people with mild mental handicap and their training in the companies and on the open labour market, *“Qualification gastronomy of young people with handicap”*, *“Qualification work in office of young people with handicap”*.

Czech Republic

There is the new School Act since 2004. In this new act are set some new changes in education of pupils and students with special needs. In the chapter about Czech Republic are introduced the most important changes in the general part of this act. One of the main changes is the compulsory education for all. The compulsory education in the Czech Republic is nine years. Another change is the title of schools (now is it only elementary school and elementary special school) or the possibility of the second educator (teacher's assistant) in the class with special needs student.

There was created the new system of the curricula documents of education of pupils from the age of 3 to 19. These documents are state and educational. The state prepares the educational programs in which is defined the frame of education and defined are standard educational contents for the particular period of education. Each school prepares own school educational program based on the general educational programs prepared by the state. In the text are also mentioned main areas and aims of the general educational plan. Again is mentioned the fact that this general educational plan is not the syllabus, is not the methodological material. It is always necessary to complement it modify for the particular school and pupils.

The general educational plan has four parts. Modified attachment will be created for the pupils with the lower level of the educational cognitive abilities and for mentally handicapped. This attachment has two versions – for the practical elementary school and for special elementary school (for severe mentally handicapped pupils). The parts of the special elementary school are rehabilitation classes for severely handicapped pupils in which are pupils educated according to the special program.

In the frame of the Initiative EQUAL were two projects, realised in the Czech Republic aimed on the problems of the transition from school to work. In the Action 2 it was the project *“Integrative counselling for people with handicap in the context of national and European cooperation.”* The aim of this project was the support of the handicapped people on the open labour market and more possibilities for school leavers of special schools and to get an employment.

The specialists in the area of transition from school to work are missed in the Czech counselling system. In the frame of the project was the school counselling system supported by the new counsellors aimed on the complex professional orientation and counselling. Their task is to help pupils in their professional orientation, professional carrier and counselling. This new counselling is realised in the area of Brno (South Moravia). The final report and project's results will be the guidance to disseminate it to other areas in Czech Republic. Project Action 3 of the Initiative Equal *“Integration/Inclusion of the integrative counselling into the service system of the Czech Republic”* is based on the activities of the Action 2. The success of the project is proved by the school leavers and their further carrier and legislative. The School Act has a new part about professional counselling.

Summary

There are differences in the particular countries in the base situations, frame conditions, priorities. The development partnership had partly different aim groups: in Netherlands and Czech Republic were in the centre of attention the pupils, schools and training after school, in Germany and Austria were in the centre school leavers and their professional training and practice. In some of the projects were included all handicaps, in some not. The aims of the projects were partly different: qualification, planning of the personal future, professional training, training, counselling. All participants generally follow one aim: improvement of the situation of young handicapped people on the labour market.

The knowledge and results of the co-operation also show that the situation is in many aspects very similar. In all of the countries it is necessary to connect the schools, school institutions and another services for special needs students – institutions, support of the transition from school to work, entering to work, sensibilisation of the society etc.

The change was observed in the relation of the society towards education. The first are not the theoretical knowledge, but connection with the practice. The young handicapped people get new knowledge, abilities and competence useful for their life. Young people have the possibility to test the work, get information about work, together with the counselling, guidance and coaching with the aim to limit the failure and disappointment.

The frame structures in many countries present also the new direction. Right for education, work and support should not be just a written rule. It should be by the part of plans, programs and acts. The educational programs, curricula and studying plans must be open to accommodate it to special needs of the pupil/student. The integrative education of handicapped is still an exception (there are some differences in the countries). These pupils are usually educated in special schools and trained for further education in the special schools not for integration to the labour market.

Barriers, problems and different general conditions still exist together with different financial background. Many people make an effort to improve this situation. The European Year of handicapped people 2003 was a proof of this effort. It is necessary to continue in these activities. Educational possibilities, disposals and systems described in this report present the way which chose this people: integration of handicapped people to the open labour market and to the society.