

# **Quality standards for successful transition from school to work**

## **Summary in “easy language”**

According to the main goal "Inclusion and social participation in social life for disabled people", this anthology develops and describes those quality standards which are decisive for a successful transition from school to work.

Viewpoints from "professionals", young disabled people and their parents are taken into consideration.

The key person, the individual with a disability, stays always in the center of all considerations.

The quality standards are attributed to the following areas:

- 1 Goal level: Guiding goals,
- 2 Action level: Criteria
- 3 Method level I: Principles
- 4 Method level II: Tools
- 5 Demands how to enforce quality standards in horizontal and vertical mainstreaming

By doing that, existing offers, procedures, networks and issues from politics, legislation and administration can be evaluated critically and models of „best practice” can be developed.

In May 2005, the results will be presented in a brochure and later on as a PDF document on this website [www.tsw-equal.info](http://www.tsw-equal.info) under "results".

## **Goal level: Guiding goals**

### **1.2.1 Individualisation**

The aim is to put an individual into the centre and regard him or her with his or her own wishes, needs and abilities and to develop together adequate offers for support.

## **Goal level: Guiding goals**

### **1.2.2 Inclusion**

Some people talk of "integration". Integration means, to take people into a group, who were outside before. "Inclusion", however, means, not to exclude anybody from a group from the very beginning. That means: Everybody has to take each other seriously with one's abilities and problems and accept each other. By that we can change our everyday life in our families, in school, at work and so on.

## **Goal level: Guiding goals**

### **1.2.3 Accessibility**

Barriers are obstacles. There are barriers on and in buildings which hinder a wheelchair user to get around, for instance stairs or narrow doors. There are books, official forms and websites in the internet which cannot be used by a blind person. Or directions for use which can be understood by a person with a learning disability only with the help of others. Or events where all speeches are being translated into English or French, but not into sign language. So, there are very many barriers which "disable" people. A lack of barriers makes people less disabled - and makes living together and learning together easier for everybody.

## **Goal level: Guiding goals**

### **1.2.4 Adequate language**

Language should be easy to understand, should not exclude and not hurt. It should take into consideration men and women.

## **Action level: criteria**

### **2.1. Empowerment**

Empowerment is a life attitude which expresses that we are much stronger, bigger and more capable than we dare to think. It also means, that we have the power to change ourselves to experience more freedom, responsibility and joy of life.

## **Action level: criteria**

### **2.2 Self-determination**

Many people want to live as self-determined as possible. That means: to decide themselves, where and how they live, work and spend their leisure time. If they want to live alone, by two or in a group, if they want to have children. If they want to do something on their own or with help, they want to decide who is to help them and who is not, with what kind of thing they want help with and with what kind of thing they don't want help with. That means also: To be allowed to make mistakes - and be able to learn from them.

So, on one hand self-determination is a goal. On the other hand one reaches this goal only then, if there are at all various real possibilities of choice - and if on this way one can learn and try to "determine oneself" and get support with it.

Therefore it is important to evaluate all offers concerning the transition from school to job, all institutions, basic principles, methods and tools in how far they support to learn and to try out self-determination.

## **Action level: Criteria**

### **2.3 Equality and equal chances for men and women.**

Men and women with or without disabilities shall have equal chances in all areas of life and be able to use them.

## **Action level: Criteria**

### **2.4 Individual life planning by freedom of decision and choice**

To make a plan for one's own future, meaning for one's job, living and leisure. Being able to do that, one must know what kind of possibilities do exist to be able to choose from them.

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.1 Lifelong learning**

Learning is possible your whole life long. In order to succeed in doing that, adequate offers must exist which also people with a disability can attend. The following text shows what the German government thinks about that.

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.2 Orientation of action**

Orientation of action means to manage tasks in a practical and successful way and do them as independently and planned as possible. That requires to learn necessary skills and to check with other people, for instance school-mates, colleagues, supervisors and teachers.

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.3 Key qualifications for independent working**

Key qualifications are important abilities and skills in order to manage successfully tasks and orders. These are for instance

- professional skills and knowledge (e.g. craftsmanship)
- independent planning, doing and testing
- Cooperation and agreements

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.4 User and customer orientation**

If people with disabilities need help and support from other people, their needs and wishes should be paid attention to. They also are to say if the help or support is “good” or “less good”, so that helpers and supporters can act accordingly.

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.5 Practical trying-out**

An apprenticeship or a job is often reached through an internship. With an internship one can get to know professions and spheres of work. One can learn, what one is able to do, what still has to be learned and what is interesting. One senses what one cannot do yet, but one can also learn what might be possible with support by others (see also 4.2. “assistance and coaching”)

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.6 Support plans with regard to strengths and weaknesses**

Young people and support persons make a plan. The plan tells what one is able to do well and what not.

The plan tells also, what the young person still should learn in order to reach his or her goals.

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.7 Qualified staff**

Employees in the area of transition from school to job have to learn how well they are able to counsel, to accompany and to support.

## **Method level I: Principles**

### **3.8 Peer Counseling and Peer Support**

These two terms stem from the United States. They mean that people with a similar background counsel and support each other (peers counsel and support peers). That means: disabled people share experiences with other disabled people and support each other. Or: parents do that with other parents.

## **Method level II: Tools**

### **4.1 Key tool: Personal Future Planning**

With personal future planning one can plan one's future path through life together with relatives, friends and buddies. One can also get help from them to put one's dreams and wishes into reality.

## **Method level II: Tools**

### **4.2 Job Coaching**

Somebody helps you with training for the job, to do your work well and independently and to get your way about in the company your working in.

## **Method level II: Tools**

### **4.3 Clearing, assistance at the workplace, vocational training assistance and job coaching in Austria**

These four ways of support are offered to young people with a disability in Austria at the transition from school to work. They form a network and therefore take care for a smooth transition of the young person from one stage of life to the next. In the following the specific tools are briefly explained.

#### **What is clearing?**

Clearing is a counseling offer for young people with a disability between 13 and 24, who do not yet exactly know how to continue job-wise or who simply need counseling.

For more information see [www.clearing-noe.at](http://www.clearing-noe.at)

#### **What is assistance at the workplace?**

Assistance at the workplace is counseling and help for people with learning difficulties and a disability. It is not easy for them to find the right job. Therefore they get counseling what work they can do and which kind of work suits them best.

For more information see [www.caritas-wien.at/211.htm](http://www.caritas-wien.at/211.htm)

and [www.noe.lebenshilfe.at/info\\_job.htm](http://www.noe.lebenshilfe.at/info_job.htm)

#### **What is vocational training assistance?**

The employees of the vocational training assistance (VTA) support individuals during their vocational training if they are disadvantaged and are not able to undergo an apprenticeship or vocational training without help. It is about young people who are socially disadvantaged, have learning disabilities or a physical disability.

For more information see [www.clearing-noe.at](http://www.clearing-noe.at)

## **What is job coaching ?**

Job coaching means help for people with a disability when they start working. They get support when they have to learn new jobs or when they have problems with colleagues. More information has Mr. Josef Schönhofer, e-mail: [jschoenhofer@caritas-wien.at](mailto:jschoenhofer@caritas-wien.at)

### **Method level II: Tools**

#### **4.4 Personal budget in Germany**

Personal budget means a certain amount of money which is given by a public funding office. With that money one can buy the support and help which one needs and wishes. It is also possible to choose the person one wants to have for help. With that person one talks about the wanted help. After getting the necessary help one pays this person oneself.

### **Method level II: Tools**

#### **4.5 Dictionary for “easy language” - in Germany**

The dictionary for easy language translates difficult words. It explains difficult words. It is a good book of reference. The dictionary helps when writing texts in easy language. It is a good guidance for easy texts.

In the dictionary there is also a CD-ROM with pictures. These pictures can be inserted into texts in order to understand even faster and better what it is about.

For more information see [www.people1.de](http://www.people1.de)

### **Method level II: Tools**

#### **4.6 NUEVA - “Users evaluate” - in Austria**

Nueva is an abbreviation for “users evaluate”. That means: Individuals who are directly concerned themselves interrogate people with learning difficulties and disabilities about housing. The answers they get are evaluated by a computer. Thus an exact description for each housing offer comes into being.

For more information see [www.atempo.at](http://www.atempo.at)

### **Method level II: Tools**

#### **4.5 Individual transition planning (ITP) - in The Netherlands**

You can get more information on this topic via e-mail:

Freerk Steendam: [f.steendam@chello.nl](mailto:f.steendam@chello.nl)

## **Method level II: Tools**

### **4.8 Handbook to ensure quality of offers of disabled people for disabled people - in Germany**

We understand by “offers of disabled people for disabled people” especially those offers where counseling is done according to the peer counseling principle. For good counseling it is principally important that the counselor him- or herself is a disabled person.

But this is not enough. More is necessary, for instance that the counselors receive continuous further training, that the counseling place is accessible, that the written material is reliable and always up-to-date etc.

In order to know what is important to build good counseling offers and to continue on that well in the long run, experienced counselors of the Jena Center for Self-Determined Living - JZSL - have developed this “Handbook to ensure Quality” for non-profit organizations or groups of directly concerned people.

You can get more information on this topic via e-mail: [info@jzsl.de](mailto:info@jzsl.de) or Internet: [www.jzsl.de](http://www.jzsl.de)

## **Method level II: Tools**

### **4.9 CD-ROM Handbook: How employers can be brought to employ disabled persons - in Austria and Germany**

You can get more information on this topic via e-mail

- in Austria: Otto Lambauer [olambauer@caritas-wien.at](mailto:olambauer@caritas-wien.at)

- in Germany: Karl-Heinz Miederer [kh.miederer@access-ifd.de](mailto:kh.miederer@access-ifd.de)

## **5. Demands for getting quality standards at the transition from school to profession**

In order to successfully manage the transition from school to profession for disabled people, good examples have to be shown to experts, politicians and to other people, who can decide.

In order to implement this everywhere, these good examples have to be formulated as demands. Then the experts, politicians and other people, who decide, can deal with it in order to get good results.

For putting these quality standards really into practice, existing structures have to be altered and developed further. Then demands have to be addressed to experts from politics, administration and service organizations.

Also people with disabilities, their parents and relatives should concern themselves with these issues.

For alteration and improvement processes two basic prerequisites are necessary:

- I. By taking into consideration the goal of “inclusion”, equal participation in all areas of life of all individuals has to be ensured.**
- II. Basis of action of all who participate in the process (people with disabilities, parents and relatives, professional and volunteer staff) is a resource- and strength-oriented picture of human beings.**

The following demands are based on those prerequisites:

1. To ensure possibilities of choice, enough regional offers, especially in the areas of leisure, education, jobs and housing have to be provided. If appropriate offers are not yet available (e.g. “school for all”), they have to be built gradually and well planned.
2. All offers must be equally accessible for all people, no matter what sex or which disability they have, according to their needs.
3. Access and utilization of offers and facilities must be barrier-free (especially no architectural, technical, verbal or non-verbal barriers)
4. Various offers have to be synchronized and net-worked in a senseful way.
5. Independent counseling concerning these offers has to be made sure.

6. Wishes for sharing information, counseling and support by peers (peer counseling) has to be taken seriously. Possibilities of sharing and counseling have to be offered.
7. No matter which offer, the individual has to be put into the centre. Therefore offers have to be created towards the needs of the individual (and not to the needs of the program)
8. Offers have to reflect the actual technical standards of quality.
9. Offers must be funded with sufficient resources (finances and staff).
10. Qualified people with sufficient actual knowledge, training and skills have to be employed.
11. People with disabilities have to be directly involved in all decision-finding and -making processes which have to do with their concerns (e.g. by a personal budget). Decision-makers (from politics, administration, service organizations) must provide and guarantee this kind of co-decision structure.
12. Life-long learning has to be provided for people with disabilities by appropriate offers of training and supplementary training.
13. Structures have to be guaranteed in a way, that parents and relatives of disabled people can achieve skills to be able to advocate for their and their childrens' interests concerning a full participation in society.