

KOPCOVÁ, E. – HUBINKOVÁ, Z.: The role of education in social enterprise project of sheltered workshop with disabled people in Slovakia.
7th Balkan Arts and Science in Education Conference – Education in the Modern European Environment“, Opatija, Croatia (17.-18.09.2012)

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROJECT OF SHELTERED WORKSHOP WITH DISABLED PEOPLE IN SLOVAKIA

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the role of education of disabled people in employment in the context of their social entrepreneurial project sheltered workshop in Slovakia. First imagine the possibilities of disabled people in education, so what can schools and professions disabled children and young people attend. Subsequently, the mean statistics and demographic factors relating to disabled people of working age and their position in the labor market, to further their employment opportunities with the support of the Slovak legislation, which is consistent with the concept of the EU. Conclusion The contribution of a specific example illustrates the continuous training of disabled people employed in a particular social business projects in a sheltered workshop Wellnea Senec in Slovakia.

KEY WORDS

Unemployment, disabled people, social and healthy disadvantaged, labor market

INTRODUCTION

Disability in the workplace, the same as education as a vocational preparation for a job, is not sufficiently discussed in the Slovak Republic. The state is trying to support and protect people with disabilities on the open labor market by various measures or by supplement employment in sheltered workshops. Public is still relatively closed in this respect. Fear of what is different plays a key role here. One of the ways how to reduce this fear is to increase general awareness of people about the issue disability. People should talk about the issue and to be interested in organization of more social and community projects; all these are the means how to change the attitudes of public toward people with disabilities. Consequently, also the situation on the labor market and attitudes toward disabled people in job will change. People with disabilities deserve to become equal members of the society and providing employment to them presents one of the ways how to include them.

DEFINITIONS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Regarding Slovak legislation (MPSVR, 2012) provided in active labor market policy in employment services law § 9 The Act No. 5/2004 Z.z.. According to this law, a person with a disability is the one which is accredited as invalid according to a specific regulation. § 71 The Act No. 461/2003 Z. z. on social insurance, says that *“a person is invalid if his/her incapacity of work is higher than 40%, due to a long lasting physical, mental or sensory impairment”*.

According to the United Nation (2007) people with disabilities are *“all persons with disabilities including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”*.

World Health Organization's definitions, also called ICF, are one of the most widely accepted ones. The WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, ICF, functions as a tool for defining health and health-related states and based on it, it is possible to evaluate disability (Madden & Hogan, 1997). According to the WHO, there are three main dimensions of disability which are not exclusively based on physical characteristics, rather on activity and social participation limitations of people with disabilities.

“Impairment: In the context of health experience an impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

Disability: ...is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Handicap: [Participation]...is a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex, and social and cultural factors) for that individual” (Madden & Hogan, 1997, p.14).

Most of handicapped people need reasonable accommodation of a workplace or a work position to be able to successfully perform their work. Reasonable accommodation means *“a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are done that enables a qualified individual with a disability [or applicants for employment] to perform essential job functions”* (The Ohio State University, 2009). Providing barrier-less architecture of the workplace, providing a special software, adjustment of time work, job restructuring or reassignment etc. are examples of reasonable accommodation. A qualified individual with a disability is the one *“who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires”*. Based on this we could conclude, that in case that appropriate accommodation is provided, the impairment of the qualified individual can present a little or no hindrance at all.

EDUCATION POSSIBILITIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

As a preparation for a work, people with disabilities are in a disadvantageous position and their physical or mental impairment presents an obstacle to complete integration to a “normal” educational process. In order to provide education for people with disabilities, there exist specialized educational institutions which are adjusted to capabilities of these people. There are various primary schools, special classes, secondary schools, courses or retraining programs. Moreover, some Slovak Universities have barrier-free architecture and specialized support centers and programs for this group of students.

Pupils with special educational needs - students with mental, hearing, visual or physical disabilities, physically impaired students and the sick, students with impaired communication

skills, students with autism, students with developmental learning disabilities or behavior, students with severe mental disabilities placed in social services homes, students with psychological or social development to provide adequate education to their individual capabilities, special forms and methods corresponding to their disability in special schools.

Regarding secondary schools, which provide higher expertise, Slovak students with disabilities can choose from more types of schools. However, the most important criterion which they have to take into consideration is their form of disability. There are special secondary schools (such as, training institutions or gymnasiums), practical schools and special training institutions (Migration Information Center IOM, 2012). There are about 7 specialized secondary schools for students with a hearing disability while majority of them is located in the town of Kremnica. Students with vision impairment may attend one of two secondary schools in town of Levoča. In Slovakia, there are approximately 14 secondary schools for people having a physical impairment (O škole, 2007). Bratislava's vocational school for students with hearing disability can be mentioned as an example of specialized schools. This school offers education and trainings in various specializations such as hairdresser, tailor, engineering, gardening and many others. However, it is important to point out that there exist specialized classes and additional educational opportunities for students with various forms of disabilities.

Oláhová (2009) pointed, that the quality of education provided in most special schools is lower compared to quality of public school. This makes people with disabilities unprepared and decreases their employability on the labor market. However, it is important to point out that many students with disabilities (depending on a type and a degree of a disability) could be integrated into a classical educational system. The problem lies in the fact that many Slovak educational institutions still do not offer sufficient educational opportunities for people with disabilities. In order to use labor potential which is covered in population with disabilities, it is necessary to increase their access to all levels of high quality education. As an example could be used Comenius University – the oldest and the most prestigious university in Slovakia, specially their Faculty of Art, which built up the elevator in the building for getting to the classes on second to fifth floor for physically disabled students on the wheelchairs only 7 years ago. Till that time no one disabled student using the wheelchair studied psychology, philosophy or languages etc. He or she just could not take part in the lectures.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN SLOVAKIA

Unemployment has social, psychological and economic consequences, as reported by Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, Zeisel (1933), Eisenberg, Lazarsfeld (1938), Mareš (1994), Schraggeová (1996), Buchtová (2002), Hanzelová (2007), Schraggeová, Kopcová (2009) and others. Long-term unemployment is a guaranteed ticket to a world of poverty and hardship. Income support, if any, registered unemployed with the employment, social affairs and family met the conditions for its receipt and this will only happen in exceptional cases only cover the basic needs of the unemployed and as a person gets into debt. The longer one is unemployed, the more aggravated the financial situation. Lack of funds is also reflected in health. People work in sleep mode, which means that they prefer cheaper food, cheaper to buy drugs. Sometimes medications or do not buy, even if they need it. They have a problem with providing basic needs. Therefore the state created some financial and social tools in order to help to unemployed people, especially to disabled people as one of disadvantaged group in open labor market.

As regards to state support for employment of disabled people, there are these three state institutions there – Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR (MPVSR SR), Centre of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR (Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny SR) with Regional Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of appropriate region (UPSVAR). Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR prepares and realized the legislation regarding employment of disabled people. Executive organ for this legislation is Centre of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR, which distributes state financial contributions through Regional Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of appropriate region to the final user of the active employment policy regarding employment of disabled people.

According to USPVAR SR (2012) National Project II - 2 Employment Support for Persons with disabilities was adopted on 25.7.2008 and the timeframe of the project is from 1.3.2008 to 31.12.2013. The project is funded by the European Social Fund (85%) and from the state budget (15%). The main project objectives are: to increase employment of people with disabilities and creating and retaining jobs for persons with disabilities. The project is carried out by the instruments of active labor market policy by the Employment Services Act § 56 Contribution to the establishment of a sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace, § 57

allowance for persons with disabilities in operation or self-employment, § 59 allowance for work operation assistant § 60 allowance to cover the operating costs of a sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace and to cover costs for employees.

According to statistics of UPSVAR (UPSVAR, 2012) in February 2012 registered disabled jobseekers 13,267 (out of 411,801, which is 3.22%). Registered vacancies is only 5911, including for the disabled only 346, so 5.85% of the total number of vacancies registered in Slovakia. In 5992 sheltered workshops employed 10,964 disabled employees. So the more people with disabilities who are registered unemployed at the labor offices, social affairs and family working in sheltered workshops and workplaces that have just been created for this purpose, the withdrawal of funds from the European Social Fund for the 2007-2013 period at the end the year reached 91.69% (UPSVAR, 2012).

Most funds provided in 2010, amounting to 33 025 392.59 €, making it created 2,664 jobs and supported 18,241 jobs. In 2009, under the national project provided a total of 26 104 101.25 €, making it created 2,131 jobs and supported 12,953 jobs. At least it funds under the national project provided in 2008, amounting to 12 938 212.17 €, making it created 1,077 jobs and supported 6,268 jobs. Thus, on average, there were a job for the disabled for 3 741.22 €. The project began in March 2008, and in December 2010 was 91.59% of the depleted budget, and it is almost complete exhaustion of funds, while the project lasts until December 2013. This unfavorable situation plays against sheltered workshops, funded by the national project, as it follows state benefits to pay disabled employees and their work assistants become irregular, which threaten healthy economic management organizations employing disabled people (UPSVAR, 2012).

WELLNEA – ILLUSTRATION OF SHELTERED WORKSHOP AS A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT IN SLOVAKIA

Conclusion of this contribution is aimed to a specific example, which illustrates the continuous training of disabled people employed in a particular social business projects in a sheltered workshop Wellnea Senec in Slovakia, which provides services of beauty saloon (hair-dressing, cosmetics, manicure, pedicure, massage, jewelery), where 5 disabled people (with physically handicap and handicap caused by internal injuries) are working.

WELLNEA would like to prove that disabled people are equal partners in the market and that also disabled people are able to provide services of high quality to public. By this way disabled people want to break down the barriers and prejudices by a human touch. State contributions and social foundations' grants are uncertain income, organisational development is not able to built on that – our aim is to focus on profit from the sale of our services, therefore WELLNEA decided to be social enterprise project.

Revenues for 2 years of its existence amount to € 165 thousand (state contributions represent € 83 thousand and profits € 58 thousand). Net profit from business activities forms 40% of our total revenues. During these 2 years WELLNEA employed 16 people (10 disabled, 4 mothers after maternity leaves, 5 secondary school graduates with no work experience, 4 long-term unemployed people, 12 women). WELLNEA created a flexible team of people, who are all together developing organisation and its services.

Classical SWOT analysis shows this:

Strengths - the widest offer of services with the lowest prices in town, on-line orders, long opening time, card payment, children playground box, social dimension

Weaknesses - social dimension, entrepreneurship on the basis of intuition and trial-error experience

Opportunities – healthy business development thanks to profits from services provided to the public and to companies with more than 20 employees, while our dependence from state contributions decreases, we plan expansion of our services in the future

Threats – start-up investments and loans not returned, insufficient economic development for flipping into profits and for losing the dependency on state contributions

And WELLNEA next development plan is strongly joint with educational and vocational training. Every disabled man in WELLNEA is the chief of his or her services, so he or she needs to watch new trends in beauty services, for example - pedicure (hydro-detox), jewellery (production of jewellery sets), hair dressing (hair prolongation), cosmetics (spray tanning), manicure (artistic gel nail modelling), massage (new techniques of massage). Next, WELLNEA need to provide more than only simple service, so future is in complex programs for body and mind - personal development and self-confidence in accord with the visage and relaxation. Social counselling and Employment Support Agency in conjunction with Work Psychology and Social Work students on practical placements/internships could help another

disabled people in the region to prepare for employment in the open labor market. And at last, it is necessary to be active in participation in the social policy shaping - practical experience of employing disabled people can help us design complex solutions for employment of disabled people in Slovakia.

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