

Hanna Żuraw Ph.D. University of Warsaw

Social Efficiency of Professional Activity Programmes of People with Intellectual Disability Problem –Report of Performance of European Community Project

There is a specific group of disabled people. These are people with intellectual illness. Common observation and research show that type of otherness deliver especially negative feeling such as contact limitation, reluctance to help /Hebda-Czaplicka 2003/. To minimize this contact is subject to struggle for professionalists, who are involved in treatment process of intellectual disability. It is very common in literature to find statement as mental illness is like leprosy for environment. Even at hospital there is a special separated area for staff and for patients. Doctors and nurses are present in a corridors extremely rare. Behaviour between intellectually disabled and staff is characterized by lack of trust. Everything is forbidden for intellectually disabled, they have problem at the job market even in the reemission period. Such kind of behaviour causes depersonalization and increase of illness symptoms. Intellectual illness is like self - prophesy. Disabled are pushed out of social life.

To decrease negative thinking of intellectually disabled there are provided some special activities. One of them was “Partnership to development” or “Face to face with Job market”– model of temporary employment.

Aims of project

The aim of Project is implement changes in social consciousness, to break stereotype that intellectual illness make people unable to self-reliant life and Job. Tasks of the project are:

- to organize temporary employment for intellectually disabled people,
- diagnosis of employers attitude towards intellectually disabled: recognition of social distance inside this group, source of knowledge on psychology and life of intellectually disabled,
- diagnosis of employers attitude towards open market research in terms of intellectually disabled employment, opinion on project tasks accuracy, reasons for employment of intellectually disabled, knowledge on governmental policy in terms of intellectually disabled people, analysis of changes in law in terms of employment of intellectually disabled.

This project focused on opinion of employers on diagnosis efficiency.

Who were the employers? Who and how was examined?

People who decided to take part in this project were characterized by social features which we can considered as sympathetic towards weaker people. Most of them were representatives of a dozen or so companies 5/8, ¼ were representatives of big governmental institutions and 1/8 –self governmental establishment. Most of them were women 5/8, over 40 years old 2/3 graduated from universities -5/8. They were involved in such kind of the research before (5/8).

To fulfill the diagnosis needs there were created special research tools to allow to recognize opinion on Project and attitude towards people with intellectual disability. There was examined: social distance, opinion on their psychic features, life situation source of funds, families, friends, welfare and job access.

1. Employers opinion towards accuracy of Project tasks and benefits of employment of people with intellectual disability.

Most of employers (7/8) considered Project as an important idea to extend tolerance, stimulation social inclusion, and increase employment of intellectual disabled people. Rarely knowledge of intellectually disabled and chances for them seemed benefits to them. They declare open atmosphere and consent to presence of disabled people in mainstream of social life .

A little bit different attitude employers towards intellectually disabled we can observe in practice. Employers' views on the reasons of employment of people with various psychic crisis show instrumental treatment applied by employers. More than half of employers (5/8) organized temporary employment due to the financial aspects /granted by government /. In less numbers were anxious on manager high skilled, well prepared worker and opportunity to promote their own company. To sum up the employers derived profits from employment of intellectually disabled.

Also it is worth to notice that employers know about big social distance between people with intellectual disability. They admitted that the disabled are 'stigmatized' and also self – marked, symbolically infected, who pay for financial and psychological risk of employment people with intellectual disability. Almost everybody said that polish government doesn't take any steps in that terms or they don't know about it. These data show there is no interest of employers in terms of job activity. This causes feeling of alienation in area of organizing employment for disabled. Financial support, incentive, they ask for, may become form of compensation for isolation and stigmatism.

2. Suggestion of incentive for employers

Employers noticed that increase of employment of people with intellectual disability is first of all stimulated by financial support, incentive, financial relief, refinance of position for disabled with intellectual disability, grants for earnings. The thought that promotion and information activities were fully needed:

- Organization of meeting with employers, former participants of such kind of programmes
- Wide range idea of temporary employment
- Making available information on life of people with intellectual disability and about mental illness
- The third category of proposal concerned solutions in terms of work organization for people with intellectual disability. – especially need to organize special area for work, certificated workshop with special determined range of activity: very simple post and to involve special agencies for special dedicated tasks.

- From breaking stereotypes point of view the last category is the most important. It indicates lack of knowledge in terms of illness of people with intellectual disability, keeping social distance towards disabled in spite of participation in that project. They seemed to consider intellectual disability as a psychic disability.

3. Concepts of people with psychic problem in mind of employers.

A/ Sources of knowledge on psychic illness and life of people with psychic problem.

More $\frac{3}{4}$ interviewed pointed TV, especially movies as a basic source of knowledge in the area indicated above. This source seemed to be sometimes non-objective and it is unable to be enough. Receiver of this kind of message gains clear information about social oriented intention of sender. This transmission is usually only one way transfer. There is not any intellectual requirement to interpret this data. This kind of presentation seems to be the most popular and show reluctance to search for real knowledge even by well educated people. They focused on emotional movies and intervention programmes on TV.

Based on emotional movies and feature films and drama they only could recognize tragic events of social life of intellectually disabled people, their abnormal behaviour, emotional disturbance, aggression, poverty, loneliness, poor skills, staying at hospital. Less they knew about hard working people with non-average skills with mental disability. This kind of message creates negative stereotype of people with mental disability.

B/ Extend of social distance and features of intellectually disabled people in opinion of employers

There was a big social distance from temporary workers and employers. It was shown in employers' utterance in the area of criteria of kind of work for people with intellectual disability- very simple job on special position in the protected area. So that is why disabled are considered as little gifted people. This thinking and knowledge from emotional features movies draw a negative picture of intellectually disabled people. These people arouse reluctance or tendency to avoid contact as destructive human being. Disabled are considered as relative strong, without a need for help. They look like 'normal', they can move, can see, can hear, etc. Why we should help them ? We should help blind people (according to 7/8 of tested), rare handicapped with wheelchairs, where disability is clear and obvious, when helper can feel powerful and competent. Lack of help for intellectually disabled people comes incomprehension of heart of the matter of suffering and perception processes.

People with intellectual disability problem are still evaluated as poor, alone, emotional disturbant and passive. They are the same, but different, from another world, sometimes somewhere between two worlds, not determined to the end. They arouse doubts. They are ill or not? It is not a discrimination, but hidden handicappism. It is a form of traditional handicappism. The more new is national explanation not to be against employment of people with intellectual disability but let them work in special protected area. High level educated tested showed aversion handicappism attitude towards disabled. As the more so as people who considered themselves as liberal are in a conflict with their world of values and subconsciousness negative emotion towards people with mental disability. This kind of people try to keep untouched picture of themselves as person without any prejudices, avoiding blatant discriminating behaviour. According to this theory they have to change their mind in

positive way if there is no prejudice against dysfunction. Increase of negative behaviour could be present only in situation of handicappism, means non- clear social norm /Stephan i Stephan 1999, page 60/. Some explanation delivered theory of remorse amongst people with low level of prejudice. These people can find out inaccordance between ideal and real behaviour and they engagement in activity in this field. /Stephan i Stephan 1999, page 63/.

To sum up gained results shows us hidden handicappism, when people are able to stop being intolerant and discriminative, but people who renounced prejudice experience feeling guilty about being discriminating. The atmosphere between people with intellectual disability and 'normal people should be better. But group conflict is still present, so the more so as some group gained extra privileges.

References:

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