



PROVIDING SHELTERED
EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED
YOUNG PEOPLE

Sheltered employment in the 'Util Deco' authorised protected units

Information review: October 2015

ROMANIA

The rationale behind the practice is that sheltered employment in an authorised unit can be used as a period of transition towards the free labour market for young people with disabilities. Participants are employed within the 'Util Deco' protected units of the Alaturi de Voi Foundation (with three offices located in Iasi, Constanta and Targu Mures). They are regularly trained and supported to enhance their skills and keep their jobs, as well as to produce quality and competitive products and services that are sold on the open market. In early 2013, there were 74 employees, including 36 youngsters with disabilities, working in the 'Util Deco' authorised protected units in the three centres of Iasi, Constanta and Targu Mures. The number of participants with disabilities has increased from 15 in 2008 to 36 in 2013.

Name of the PES

Fundatia Alaturi de Voi, Romania (ADV Romania)
Close to You Foundation, Romania

When was the practice implemented?

2008 – on-going

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The local PES offices of Iasi, Constanta and Mures counties are responsible for registering young people with disabilities.
The General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection of Iasi is responsible for referring potential participants to the practice.

Which social groups were targeted by the practice?

Jobseekers:
▶ Young people with disabilities (including HIV/AIDS) aged at least 18

What were the practice's main objectives?

The practice aims at providing sheltered employment for young people with disabilities (including people with HIV/AIDS) aged at least 18.
'Util Deco' uses the revenues obtained from the delivery of services and the sale of goods produced in the three centres for social purposes and for the further development of the workshops. Apart from the revenues received from sales, legislation exempts employers who hire disabled people from payroll tax. Counselling, professional guidance, qualification and mediation services are provided to the disabled by the Foundation free of charge.

What activities were carried out?

The following activities are carried out by 'Util Deco':

- ▶ Recruitment and selection processes according to a set of qualification criteria.
- ▶ Support for employed people provided by a multidisciplinary team of specialists (social workers, trainers/instructors, professional guidance counsellors, human resource and work security experts) to facilitate the work and social integration of people with disabilities.
- ▶ Social and vocational evaluation process of youngsters with disabilities (integrated individualised plan). They are placed in a programme of counselling and professional guidance to identify their needs and to facilitate effective employment in a protected unit. The employment is based on a legal work contract under Romanian legislation.
- ▶ Individual or group counselling and professional guidance are conducted on the basis of people's abilities, work capacity and the available options.
- ▶ Vocational training courses and regular support for participants are provided in the form of workshops, e.g. tailoring, hand-made binding, IT, handicraft, painting, production of decorative candles and document filing.
- ▶ Provision of vocational, social and psychological support according to need.
- ▶ Advice on the free labour market is provided upon request.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

The operation of the structure is as follows:

- ▶ The Iasi 'Util Deco' unit operates five workshops.
- ▶ The Constanta 'Util Deco' unit operates three workshops.
- ▶ The Targu Mures 'Util Deco' unit operates three workshops.

All activities are connected to the specific features of each workshop. On the one hand, there is training for participants; on the other there is production of services and goods. In early 2013, the three units employed 74 people, 36 of whom were disabled.

'Util Deco' were created as authorised units within the Alaturi de Voi Foundation in 2008. The organisation has its own management system and runs independent economic activities through its Iasi, Constanta and Targu Mures centres.

Source(s) of funding

National budget

European Social Fund

Self-funding from the economic activities run by 'Util Deco' protected units

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

People reached:

The number of participants with disabilities has increased from 15 in 2008 to 36 in 2013.

Counselling and professional guidance were delivered to 301 youngsters with disabilities during 2008–2010 (20% more than initially planned); such services were delivered to another 142 youngsters with disabilities during 2011–2012; the number reached 193 in 2013 (against 120 initially planned).

Products:

'Util Deco' have produced several manuals. These cover the rules of operation, including employees' rights and obligations according to the legislation and organisation policy. There is also a specific manual on the provision of psychological support and a manual on social assistance.

Several websites contain information related to the practice and have been updated within the practice:

- ▶ The website www.utildeco.ro describes the services and goods produced by the disabled (in Romanian)
- ▶ The webpage www.unitatiprotejate.ro is a database with Romanian protected units (in Romanian)
- ▶ The webpage www.ropes.ro is a database with vacancies targeted at disabled people, and it also contains useful information on the labour market (in Romanian)
- ▶ A video about the practice can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNbw66JbdtE> (in Romanian).

What outcomes have been identified?

The main outcomes of the practice are as follows:

- ▶ In 2008, 'Util Deco' operated 8 workshops located in the cities of Iasi, Constanta and Targu Mures, while 11 workshops were reported as being operational in 2013 (in line with the initial planning).
- ▶ In all, 24 new jobs for people with disabilities were created and maintained during 2008-2011;
- ▶ Employment services provided to the clients were in line with expectations: they ranged from counselling and professional guidance, providing vocational education, advice (if requested) and sheltered employment.
- ▶ Some 168 youngsters with disabilities graduated from vocational education courses during 2008-2010 in the trades for which the Foundation is certified as a training provider; 279 participants graduated in 2011 (against 240 planned).
- ▶ A further 185 people with disabilities were recruited during 2011-2013 (against 176 planned), while 116 had already graduated out of the 150 expected by June 2013.
- ▶ Three participants were placed in the open labour market between 2008 and 2013, although one returned to work in a protected unit.

What are the lessons learnt
and success factors?

According to the first evaluation, conducted for the period 2008-2011:

- ▶ The qualification courses organised had a positive impact on increasing the abilities and competences of the disabled people, both to find a job in 'Util Deco' and to join the labour market.
- ▶ The evaluator concluded that the practice had not sought to monitor the number of graduates who found a job on the free labour market, as its target was for the placement of participants in the protected units.
- ▶ The tailoring and IT workshops were considered the most useful for finding employment in the open labour market, whereas hand-made binding was mostly required for the 'Util Deco' economic activity.

According to the second evaluation report, conducted for the period July 2010 to August 2012 during the project implementation:

- ▶ Adequate and upgraded equipment in the protected workshops had contributed to an increase in the trainees' abilities and competences and to the success of the socially oriented business.
- ▶ The integrated approach of service delivery to disabled people was successful in ensuring that participants were able to keep their jobs.

More information
on the practice

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/weesp/RO-2.pdf



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