

## Evaluation of: „The standards of diversity communication (SDC) in the workplace“

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Seen products:

- ✓ DVD concerning Standards of Diversity communication in the work place
- ✓ Paper manual concerning Standards of Diversity communication in the work place
- ✓ Manual for employing PwD in the open labour market via DVD

### 1. What are SDC? Why and how they have been used at the free labour market?

First of all it's very innovative to discuss the problems and possibilities to employ Persons with Disabilities (PwD's). This still is very difficult to achieve in different companies in the EU especially during times of economic crisis. Therefore the starting point is very good. This is a possibility to reduce unemployment for groups with further distance of the labour market and opens the possibility to enlarge the educational activities for these citizens.

The SDC tells how to take care of the employment of PwD's and explains the working process in a company and gives possible guidance in order to overcome problems and ensure that also PwD's can have a normal job in working life.

The surplus value of this method is the description of the benefits and the possible solutions in how dealing with PwD's. It ensures a short reflection on the process itself, but also on the needed requirements and the benefits for the company itself when hiring a PwD.

### 2. Are SDC product developed as user friendly for employer users? If negative, what are the limitations?

First of all the contents of the DVD and paper based manual concerning Standards of Diversity communication seems to be promising. Especially the methodology is suitable for adult learning and refers to the transformational aspect of learning of Mezirow (1997)<sup>1</sup>. It gives the possibility for critical reflection on real life situations (by viewing a simulation), followed by a recognition that the current situation should be changed and gives the opportunity to acquire new knowledge in order to improve the situation. The steps missing are the planning of the new events and the implementation in real daily working life. Of course this should be done by the employers after using this manual, but it should be

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<sup>1</sup> Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice. In: *Transformative learning in action: insights from practice. New directions for adult and continuing education*, 74, pp. 5-12.

possible to give some advices for implementation. This has also been done by showing the correct situation. So the SDC product gives the opportunity to learn by reflection referring to the transformational learning perspective of Mezirow (1997).

Secondly the manual for employing PwD's in the open market explains the benefits, recommendations, implementations (by strategic decision making) and examples of employing PwD's. The content is pretty good. Especially the parts concerning the concrete benefits, the view of the managers and HR professionals, the myths and superstitions and the map of procedures for employing PwD's are strong. What is missing are two important things. Firstly some descriptions are mainly based on the situation in the Czech Republic, for example the prices mentioned in paragraph 2.2, the calculation rules of the benefits at page 7, the recruitment of candidates and the examples in part 2. A more European perspective should have an added value to this. Secondly sometimes the lay-out can be improved by giving a better overview. For example the map of procedures is strong in paragraph 4.2, but an overall perspective or scheme would be more welcome to oversee the practical implementation.

### **3. Are SDC developed correctly from the content side? If negative, what is missing?**

The basic contents of the SDC is strong. On the one hand it explains step by step how one should employ PwD's and besides this it shows mistakes and possible solutions to overcome these mistakes. That's a well detailed guidance for employers in order to recruit and employ PwD's. On the other hand it explains the background of 3 categories of PwD's and possibilities for assistance and tools in how to support PwD's at work (after employing them). Also this basic information is well explained and gives a good starting point for dealing with PwD's at work.

What is missing is the European perspective. In some ways it would be nice if one could have explained examples in other countries or describe any references to other sources in different countries. For example in part 2 of the manual for employing PwD's in the open market one mentions that there are Austrian and Danish examples. It would be useful to describe these in order to show how other countries are dealing with employing PwD's.

### **4. Could be SDC disseminated among Dutch (Serbian) employers at the free labour market? If negative, what are the limitations?**

It's possible to disseminate this product and the way of handling with PwD's at work. Translation is necessary in order to increase the possibilities for implementation in a national, regional or local context. But the basic principles of the contents of the guidance of SDC can be used in the other countries in Europe as well.

As mentioned at question 3 before for dissemination it should be necessary to show some European examples and to generalise some inputs in the manual for employing PwD's in the open market.

## 5. Conclusion about SDC and their practical use for employers at the free labour market in Netherland and Serbia

I would recommend using these materials in other European countries like The Netherlands due to the following reasons:

- ✓ The descriptions and basic idea behind employing PwD's in the labour market is innovative and can be seen as creating new opportunities for people with further distance from the labour market.
- ✓ The methodology used refers to the methodology of transformative learning (Mezirow), which seems to be suitable for the learning practice and process of the employers in order to guide the employment of PwD's at work.
- ✓ The contents and back ground materials seems to be very detailed and well explained. Besides this the role plays support the written paper based manuals and make the contents livelier.
- ✓ In order to disseminate the SDC more European examples are necessary and besides this the materials should be translated in the national languages of the specific country.
- ✓ Finally some information can be shown in a more schematic way in order to show the consequences and needed steps of implementation when employing a PwD. In some parts there is a lot of information and it would be more user friendly to give a short overview of it.

***Dr. Maurice de Greef, 24th of March 2015***