

**Quality in Practice:
Stakeholders' view of Supported Employment**

Final report



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1 Introduction

Charlotte Strümpel, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Austria)

1.1 Background

In most European societies issues of anti-discrimination, integration and mainstreaming are keywords with respect to people with a disability, but also to other disadvantaged groups. While there still are many areas in which people with a disability are discriminated against and segregated, there have been a variety of trends to improve integration and combat discrimination (Leichsenring/Strümpel, 1995).

A key area of social integration and increasing the quality of life of people with a disability is the integration into the labour market. Especially on the European level, there have been a number of programmes promoting measures for increasing the labour market participation of people with a disability (Leichsenring/Strümpel, 1997).

Also, with demographic change and the growing costs of social protection systems – e.g. disability benefit systems – the model of excluding people with a disability from the labour market and paying them benefits needs to be revised. In this connection, activation policies are gaining in relevance (Prinz, 2003).

For many years now Supported Employment has been developed as a method to support the integration of people with substantial disabilities into the ordinary labour market. In many cases, these are people that have been completely excluded from work or have been in sheltered work arrangements. Supported Employment (SE) is an instrument to place and support people with a disability (especially learning disability) in ordinary employment and thus assists them to obtain and retain employment. This type of on-the-job support allows learning-by-doing for people with disabilities, thus narrowing the gap between theory and practice, which is especially important for this target group.

Supported Employment has had a long tradition in the United States and Canada. In Europe it has developed rapidly in the last 10 to 15 years, but different countries are at different stages of development. In Norway for example SE-services have been a part of the official labour market policy for people with a disability – especially with severe mental illness – since 1996 (Blystad/Spjelkavik, 1997). In Austria, Supported Employment has been developed since about 12 years (Badelt, 1992).

Currently, in the framework of The European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 of the European Union, the main focus is to raise awareness, to reduce barriers that people with a disability face, promote employment for people with a disability and actively promote partnerships. The prevalence of Supported Employment in a country can be seen as an indicator for the level of vocational integration for people with disabilities and for the level of “mainstreaming” in general in that country. Thus, the QUIP project contributes to National and Community vocational training, employment and disability policies for the vocational integration of people with (learning) disabilities that aim at participation, mainstreaming and normalisation. The QUIP project aims (see 1.2) are in line with the “European Union Disability Strategy” that aims at increasing the participation of people with disabilities and mainstreaming disability in policy formulation and with the “Declaration of the social partners on the employment of people with disabilities”. Also, improving training for people with disabilities through Supported Employment corresponds to the guidelines in the National Action Plans in the participating countries.



With the growth of Supported Employment providers and different approaches in different countries, the issue of quality development in SE has become increasingly important. There have been several projects dealing with different aspects of quality of SE, for example a Handbook for Quality Management in Supported Employment in Germany (Bungart/Supe/Willems a + b, 2001), a European project on continuous quality improvement (Inclusio Transnational Partnership, 1997) and the project SEQA (Supported Employment Quality Assurance) in the UK (O'Bryan/O'Brien, 1995).

Generally, issues of quality development in personal social services have been discussed a great deal in comparison to quality development measures in industry (Evers/Haverinen/Leichsering/Wistow, 1997; Leichsenring, K. /Stadler, M., 1998; Leichsenring/Stadler-Vida, 1999, etc.).

Against this background, the organisations Lebenshilfe Ennstal in Austria and Salva Vita in Hungary took the initiative for the QUIP project. They were especially interested in quality of Supported Employment with respect to the most important stakeholders (job-seekers, employers, public authorities, staff of the SE agencies, etc.) and to define certain quality criteria to improve the process of SE and to strengthen their position when negotiating with public authorities.

1.2 Aims of the project

One of the project's aims was to justify and establish Supported Employment in educational and employment policies for disabled people. This is of special interest for SE agencies in Accession countries, such as Hungary and the Czech Republic, where the participating SE-agencies are the first such service providers in their country.

Apart from that, the project aimed to contribute to augment the discussion on quality in social services and vocational training in general and to establish methods for allowing genuine participation of those involved. Also, it provides methods to operationalise stakeholders' perspectives and thus contributes to common quality standards that will assist authorities in monitoring quality and customer satisfaction.

The *specific aims* of the QUIP project were:

- *defining relevant quality criteria in SE from the point of view of the respective stakeholders (job coaches, job seekers/supported employees, Supported Employment providers, employers, public authorities)*
- *developing joint standards for SE in different European countries*
- *defining other criteria for success of SE than pure quantitative measures*
- *establishing an instrument for the ongoing evaluation of SE-projects*
- *assisting the consolidation of Supported Employment in Accession countries*
- *making recommendations for the further development of SE on project level as well as on a European level*



*Outcomes*¹ of the project next to this *final report* are:

- a website where the project's products can be downloaded,
- a poster on the most important quality criteria for on-the-job training in the framework of SE from the perspectives of the stakeholders and a short summary of the project,
- a manual with various evaluation methods for improving the quality of on-the-job training in Supported Employment projects and guidelines how to involve different stakeholders,
- national reports on the quality perspectives of stakeholders of each SE agency participating in the QUIP project,
- a conference with job coaches, job seekers, employers, policy-makers and managers.

1.3 Methods

The QUIP project used a mix of methods to achieve its aims. In each country (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Norway, Spain and UK) one Supported Employment agency and one research partner participated in the project. The idea was to carry out one “case study” of a SE agency in each country. The project work was divided into six phases: each phase was dedicated to one stakeholder group (managers, job coaches, job seekers, employers, policy-makers). The last phase consisted in bringing the viewpoints of different stakeholder groups together. The following methods were used in the different phases (see the respective chapters for details on the methods used):

The first phase consisted of country overviews, prepared by the research partners and a general description of each project, prepared by the project partners. At a later stage, this was complemented by questionnaires that 7 *managers* (1 in each participating country and 2 in Norway) filled out.

In the second phase 36 semi-structured interviews with *job coaches* were conducted in the participating countries and 1-2 group discussions per country with a total of 38 job coaches took place. The interview partners and participants of the group discussions partly overlapped.

The third phase involved 68 semi-structured interviews with *job seekers* and 1-2 group discussions per country with in total 48 job seekers. In this phase, also the interview partners and participants of the group discussions partly overlapped.

During the fourth phase semi-structured interviews with 50 *employers* (all countries) were carried out; 38 were from the private sector, 5 from the public sector and 7 from the non-profit sector.

The fifth phase consisted of 31 interviews (telephone and personal) with representatives of 21 policy-making and funding organisations on national, regional and local level.

In most cases interviews and group discussions were carried out by the research partners. In some cases job coaches and employment advisers were involved (for details, see phase reports).

¹ All of these products can be downloaded on the website www.quip.at.



For each phase another research partner was responsible. This partner prepared the instruments (questionnaire, group discussion, etc.) according to the issues discussed in the project meeting of the respective research phase. After in-depth discussion via email, the revised questionnaire was then translated into the respective languages. The overall framework for the group discussions was also decided on jointly. Researchers in each country then used specific methods that they were familiar with (e.g. “wave” in the UK; “metaplan” in Austria).

Researchers took notes on interviews and group discussions. Also, in the group discussions flip charts and pin-board paper was used to document results. These formed the basis for the country summaries in English that were prepared by the research partners for each phase. Using the country reports and discussions in the partner meetings as a basis, the responsible research partner prepared a comparative overview for the respective phase (see chapters 2-8 in this report).

Results of these phases were brought together on national level in national team meetings, that the researchers and representatives of the SE agencies (job coaches, managers, in some cases users) took part in. These national team meetings also served to aggregate findings into a quality criteria list on national level.

Quality criteria

The *quality criteria* were generated in a long process. The first stage was that each researcher and practical partner went through the country reports of all the research phases and collected the quality criteria that were mentioned. These were put in tables (see annex) and discussed during the national team meetings (see above). Each country agreed on a table of quality criteria, these were then discussed in the Barcelona meeting. As it was impossible to bring all quality criteria together within one partner meeting, it was decided to establish a so-called “Quality group”.

The “Quality group” (the Austrian and Hungarian research partners) got together in a two-day workshop where all quality criteria lists were brought together and categorized. After the workshop, the Austrian project coordinators formulated the quality criteria, trying to keep closely to the terms used in the national team lists. The partners were then asked to comment on the list. Based on the partners’ feedback, the quality criteria were revised and compiled into a poster of a “quality house” (referring to the concept of the “quality house” in the framework of Total Quality Management).

The poster was then an important basis for the discussion of the quality criteria developed so far at the conference in Budapest. It was used in all workshops (see below). Using the feedback from the conference, project partners worked in small groups in the last meeting in Schladming to revise the quality criteria. After that, some revisions were made by email, finally leading to a 2nd poster, which has a short list of quality criteria at the front and the detailed formulations at the back.

Manual

The *manual* is based on the quality criteria list as well as the experiences made in the different research phases and the methodological comments from the phase reports, emails and discussions in partner meetings. The concept of the manual was discussed in detail at the researchers meeting in Barcelona. Drafts of individual chapters were discussed in the partners’ meeting before the conference in Budapest and in the final meeting in Schladming. A manual feedback group consisting of three partners (Optima, Salva Vita, Projecte Aura) gave continuous feedback on the last versions of the chapters.



Budapest conference

The stakeholders' conference in Budapest involved 45 participants from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Norway, the UK, Spain and Germany. With the exception of Spain, the Czech Republic and Germany, there was at least one representative from each stakeholder group present. The conference offered a keynote speech, individual stories from a job seeker, an employer and a job coach in plenary, the presentation of the QUIP project as well as two types of workshops. The *National workshop's* aim was to exchange stories on positive and negative examples of SE between job seeker, job coaches, SE managers, employers and policy-makers of the same country, and to discuss quality criteria relevant to these stakeholders. In all workshops recommendations were collected on improving SE in their countries.

In the *stakeholders' workshops*, all conference participants from one stakeholder group got together and discussed differences between countries and developed recommendations at an international level from their point of view.

The results of both workshops were presented and discussed in plenary. By using active techniques of facilitation and translation into the languages of all participants, the organisers of the conference (Salva Vita, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research) sought to enable all participants to be actively involved.

1.4 Overview of final report

This report provides an overview of the whole QUIP project. The second chapter gives a short overview of the SE background of all countries involved in the project as well as on the involved SE agencies. The following chapters give an overview of the results of the research phases of the project, each focusing on one stakeholder group: job coaches (Chapter 3), job seekers (Chapter 4), employers (Chapter 5), policy-makers (Chapter 6) and managers (Chapter 8). Each chapter is written by the research partner who was responsible for the respective project phase. Chapter 7: "Bringing stakeholders' views together" summarizes the most important results of the projects and presents conclusions and recommendations.

The Annex contains a discussion of the most pertinent methodological issues encountered during the QUIP project. Also, the long and short version of the quality criteria developed during the project are attached as well as examples for the "original" quality criteria lists we worked with.

1.5 Note on the terms used

In the course of the project, partners agreed on the following terms for the stakeholders involved:

Job seeker / supported employee

We use job seeker and supported employee for a person with a disability who is supported to find a job in the open labour market. If it is not clear whether the person is already in employment or not, both terms are used.

Employer

We use employer for the person or the company employing the person with a disability who is supported to find a job in the open labour market. This can be the manager of the company or the employee's direct supervisor or others who are responsible for the employee within the company.

**Policy-maker / Funding agency**

We use the terms policy-makers for representatives of bodies that are responsible for developing and implementing policies relevant for SE and funding agencies for bodies that are responsible for financing SE. In some countries these can be the same agencies, in others these competencies are split.

Job coach

We use job coach for all staff members that are involved with all phases of the actual SE process of supporting a person with a disability to find and keep a job on the open labour market. In some countries / agencies different tasks are carried out by work assistants / work advisers (e.g. job placement and matching) and job coaches (e.g. training on the job). Since these terms and job descriptions vary significantly from country to country, we have used the term job coach for all these staff members in the course of the QUIP project.

Manager

We use the term manager for all people who have a management function within the SE agency. This can be a person who is only responsible for the SE service or also someone who is a manager of a larger organisation that the SE service is part of.

However, this agreement came about at a relatively late stage of the project and some of the chapters in this report still use other terminology.



2 National backgrounds

Kai Leichsenring, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Austria)

2.1 Introduction

The ensuing national reports are to provide a general overview on policies for disabled persons, in particular focusing on employment policies and Supported Employment in the participating countries. They are based on the questionnaires filled out by the researchers or projects in the first project phase. Table 1 shows some general data for *Austria*, the *Czech Republic*, *Hungary*, *Norway* and the *UK* with respect to these issues.

Table 1: Population, number of (registered) persons with disabilities, unemployment

Country	Population	No. of registered persons with disabilities	General unemployment rate	Unemployed persons with disabilities
Austria	8.1 million	52,333	4%	6,925 (1) – 40,000 (2)
Czech Republic	10.3 million	445,000 (3)	8.8%	41,000 – 58,000
Hungary	10.6 million	N/A	9.7%	32,899
Norway	4.5 million	N/A	3%	50,000
United Kingdom	60 million	6.6 million	5.4%	3,479.373

Source: National reports.- (1) unemployed persons with disabilities (registered); (2) Unemployed persons with disabilities according to the definition of the Employment Service; (3) Number of persons with “altered working capacity”.

As almost the whole variety of Welfare regimes is represented by the participating countries, it is worthwhile to describe, first, some main differences concerning the scope of benefits, the mix between various providers of services and the specific approaches to disability policies.

While in *Norway*, as a representative of Nordic welfare regimes, a wide scope of services and benefits is provided exclusively by statutory bodies, *Austria* represents a mixed system of publicly financed but to a large extent third-sector provided services.

The *United Kingdom* has experienced an increasingly important role of voluntary non-profit providers in the field of disability services since the Government’s decision to contract out local authority services in the early 1990’s.²

A somehow similar development could be observed in CEE countries as *Hungary* and the *Czech Republic*. In *Hungary*, the recent Act on Private Non-Profit Organisations (1998) allows for a regulated contracting of NGOs that had started to mushroom since the early 1990’s compensating for the lack of statutory provision. Financial support for these activities by the state has grown significantly during that period.

In the *Czech Republic*, in 1999, 82.9% of services for persons with disabilities are provided by public bodies (out of which 35.4% by local authorities), 10.4% by church organisations and 6.7% by other non-governmental organisations.

² In Essex, for example, the county wide ‘Into Employment’ supported employment service was set up through a two year development contract awarded to the local Realife voluntary sector development agency.



Thus, even if the importance of the state's role providing services is reduced it is almost exclusively public authorities that are funding and regulating these services – with the exception of *Norway*, where both funding and provision is exclusively defined as a statutory obligation.

In most countries the role of employers is mainly to fulfil obligations that are linked to quota schemes, i.e. compulsory employment (especially for medium and large sized firms) and/or respective payments in case of non-compliance to these regulations. Only in the *UK*, there are tendencies of employers taking a lead in corporate equal opportunities recruitment. This also has to do with a larger focus on corporate social responsibility in the *UK*, an issue which is less common in the other participating countries (in *Norway*, this is also due to the generally low unemployment rate).

While in the CEE countries the traditional approach to disability policies, characterised by a high degree of institutionalisation and segregation, is progressively replaced by more integrative approaches, we witness policies based on equal rights and anti-discrimination legislation in particular in *Norway* and, to a lesser degree, in *Austria* and the *UK*.

Accordingly, one can find a higher amount of separated services and institutions for persons with disabilities in CEE countries, whereas in *Norway* – in spite of a large range of special rehabilitation schemes for persons with disabilities – it is more common to have persons with disabilities participating in integrated labour market programmes.

However, as the transformation process in CEE countries is gaining grounds, we can witness a rapid development towards equal opportunities approaches. For instance, the *Czech* Constitutional Law, of which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is one part, guarantees the non-discrimination of persons with disabilities. In *Hungary*, a National Council for Disabled Persons was installed in 1998.

A common feature to all countries remains the difficulty of defining disabilities and respective entitlements to benefits and services. Given the fact that even within countries there exist different legal regulations with various definitions according to policy areas (schooling, rehabilitation, invalidity pension benefits, employment, care etc.) it seems impossible to find a common denominator for even five countries only.

Even the – in itself problematic – definition of disability in terms of “reduced ability to work” is interpreted in different ways: while in the *Czech Republic*, full “invalidity” and respective entitlements are attributed if a person has less than 66% of working ability, in *Norway* only persons with less than 50% of working ability may register as persons with a disability. In *Austria* registration as a person with disability does not depend on reduced working capacity. Here, people with a medical degree of disability over 50% are eligible to register. In *Hungary*, entitlements differ for persons with a reduced working ability of 40%, 50%, 67% or 100%. In addition, *Norwegian* legislation also acknowledges “social” disability, however without ascribing percentages concerning the ability to work. Similar regulations can be found in the *UK*.

2.2 Basic regulations in employment policies

In spite of the above mentioned differences it still has to be recognised that the mainstream instruments for integrating persons with disabilities into employment remain traditional approaches in the framework of “positive action”. This means that most countries have quota schemes, registration of persons with disabilities, special protection against dismissal, sheltered work and – to some degree – assistance for the adaptation of work places.

In addition, *Norway*, the *Czech Republic* and *Hungary* have integrated regulations concerning persons with disabilities in their General Employment Acts. *Hungary* has also introduced an



Act for Promoting and Providing Employment for Unemployed Persons. The *Austrian* legal framework is characterised by the Disabled Persons' Employment Act. The *UK*, apart from the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act (1970) has also introduced a Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and a Disability Rights Commission Act (1999).

2.3 Supported Employment in five European countries

2.3.1 Introduction

Supported Employment (SE) is growingly acknowledged as an important tool for vocational rehabilitation in the participating countries even if its scope, its definition and respective legal regulations vary between and even within countries (see below). This development has taken place in particular since the beginning of the 1990s when SE initiatives started to introduce this innovative method of vocational rehabilitation.

In the *Czech Republic*, SE has first been introduced in 1995 by "Rytmus", a non-governmental organisation that was inspired by SE experiences in the US, which is the Czech partner in this project. In the meantime, the number of providers has grown to at least 12. An official definition of SE is currently under discussion.

In *Hungary*, the Ministry of Labour has been using the term "Supported Employment" since 1998 in a wider sense for all measures provided by the Labour Market Office, i.e. vocational rehabilitation, guidance, job search, subsidies for employment of persons with disabilities, and technical adaptation. A more strict definition is used, however, by single providers (see "Salva Vita").

In *Austria*, SE was initiated in 1992 by two official model projects catering to persons with a mental illness. Several other initiatives by voluntary agencies followed and organised a first meeting of SE initiatives in 1993. Since 1995, when Austria joined the European Union, Supported Employment has expanded significantly.

In *Norway*, SE has been offered "as an initiative which shall contribute to helping people with vocational disabilities to obtain and to retain work in the open labour market" since 1996 on a regular basis, following a model project phase between 1992 and 1995.

In the *UK*, SE has already a somewhat longer history since the mid 1980's, when a voluntary agency initiated SE for all persons with a learning disability. In 1994, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) amalgamated the Sheltered Placement Scheme (SPS), a wage subsidy programme, with funding for Sheltered Workshops to produce a more flexible service under the umbrella of the Supported Employment Programme (SEP). The Department of Health is funding for SE initiatives that are complying to the definition of the Association for Supported Employment (<http://www.afse.org.uk>) and the one applied in this Leonardo Project. In the meantime, these latter SE initiatives have grown to more than 200 providers offering support to about 11,000 persons at any one time all over the UK.

As a corollary, it can be said that in most countries SE initiatives have developed "bottom-up", starting by pioneers from the voluntary sector. Only in Norway, and to a certain extent in Austria, SE was initiated by the Employment Service and developed on local levels within a national framework project. However, during the past 10-15 years statutory programmes in the area of vocational rehabilitation have increasingly acknowledged SE approaches and methods with some impact from EU programmes that provided for an exchange of experiences and the dissemination of adequate methods.



2.3.2 Legal framework of Supported Employment

In *Austria*, the Disabled Persons Employment Act states that SE is to be subsidised. There are special guidelines stating the task and the target group, financial matters and reporting system. SE projects have to offer open access to the target group, and they have to employ professionals offering advice and counselling. One job-assistant should support 20 persons, and not longer than one year.

In the *Czech Republic*, there is no definition of SE to be found in legislation. In practice, it is seen as a series of services targeted at supporting persons with disabilities to find and keep a job on the open labour market with ordinary wages. The support provided depends on individual needs and abilities and is restricted in time.

In *Hungary*, the wide definition of SE is stated in a Decree from the Ministry of Labour (1998) but includes all kinds of measures in the area of vocational rehabilitation.

With the development of the Supported Employment Programme by the Department of Education and Employment, there exist also in the *UK* at least two different definitions of SE: the Department for Education and Employment has regional Disability Service Teams employing Disability Employment Advisers who act as gatekeepers for Access to Work contracts that can fund a wide range of supports for disabled people who gain employment for more than 16 hours per week. People with learning disability are vastly under-represented in these mainstream DfEE programmes. Programmes following the AfSE definition, and thus the internationally recognised formula, conceive SE as an activity of adequately trained staff to support the job seeker in finding a real job that is remunerated with minimum wage or above with an ordinary employer. In addition, appropriate support should be provided to both the employer and the job seeker.

The *Norwegian* definition of SE has been legally regulated in the “Regulation for SE” with a respective directive and guidelines focus on normalisation and inclusion, and ordinary, paid jobs supported by job facilitators. The target group are all persons with extensive disabilities. While initially the largest group were people with learning disabilities, today it is mostly persons with mental illness who are supported. An important feature of SE in Norway is that each job coach is responsible for working with 5-6 job seekers at any given time, and that the time limitation for each job seeker’s participation in SE is 3 years.

2.3.3 Financing of Supported Employment

Financing is mainly provided by public authorities on national, regional and local levels, and/or by Employment Services. In addition, EU Programmes provide for some funding (about 12% in the UK), as well as donations and contributions from foundations (in particular in CEE countries). In the UK, there also seems to be evidence that persons with disabilities are partially also using their cash benefits to co-finance Supported Employment.

In *Austria*, an additional source for funding consists also in the *Ausgleichstaxfonds* gathering those taxes that are paid by employers that do not comply with the obligation to employ persons with disabilities according to the quota scheme.

2.3.4 Current developments and perspectives

A general move towards social inclusion and equal opportunity policies can be observed in all countries involved. Current debates concerning policies for persons with disabilities are focusing on normalisation and the extension and/or improvement of Supported Employment programmes.



For instance, in the *Czech republic* improvements concerning the definition of persons with disabilities are debated. It has been proposed to give a decisive role to medical experts from the labour exchange offices. Further improvements concern the possibility to participate in rehabilitation measures or training even if the person with a disability is on sickness leave and to work without any income limit while receiving partial invalidity pension. Finally, legal regulations for a new programme on “Supported Employment” are being prepared.

In the *UK*, the Policy Consortium for Supported Employment has recently been commissioned by the Minister for Disability in the DfEE to publish a national framework document for the implementation of Supported Employment. However, this discussion document is not likely to be incorporated into DfEE policy in the short term. At the same time, the DfEE’s newest initiative entitled “New Deal” is being piloted for disabled persons focusing on the provision of Personal Advisers to provide a more co-ordinated service to job seekers. In addition, the Government’s ‘Welfare to Work’ policy demands each public authority to compile a three-year ‘Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan’ that had to be submitted by April 2001. Local partnerships between all sectors were demanded to promote initiatives to assist disabled persons into the labour market. A problem of this generally welcome initiative might be that it forces persons with disabilities to work and to give up entitled benefits.

In *Austria* SE is expanding rapidly. Currently an umbrella organisation for Supported Employment is being founded in Austria. A government programme has just been initiated to improve the employment of people with disabilities (“Behindertenmilliarde”); this will also improve funding for Supported Employment initiatives.

In *Hungary*, it has to be seen whether the growing NGO sector and the tangible results of third sector initiatives will get further acknowledged and supported by public policies and respective financing.

In *Norway* SE has been established successfully as a part of the public employment authorities, and thus as a public service. The role of third sector initiatives thus lies predominantly with advocacy and the political representation of clients.

As a conclusion, there is still a long way to go to define common denominators for disability policies in the EU and accession countries. This is especially true for the SE sector that in some countries is still in a pioneering phase, in others it has entered a more mature phase. Thus, we are working towards a more common understanding of SE, its structural framework, definitions and methods.



3 Project information from the management's perspective

Kai Leichsenring, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Austria)

3.1 Introduction

One of the main aims of QUIP is to define relevant quality criteria in SE from the point of view of the respective stakeholders. The following summary – apart from giving a first overview on projects involved – reflects the perspective of the management from five initiatives in Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Norway and the UK.

The summary is based on questionnaires that were answered by all project representatives (mostly project leaders). As the projects are quite different in size and scope (national programmes as against local initiatives), with respect to organisational structures (public authorities, voluntary non-profit) and development, it will be interesting to find out more about the different views and the modality in which the single projects present themselves, their aims and their approaches to quality assurance.

3.2 General information

Table 2 gives an overview on quantitative developments of the single projects, all of which started their activities around 1995 (see Table 3). All projects are characterised by a rapid growth during this phase, both with respect to staff, clients and budgets. A special case is Norway that is represented with a national programme that is provided by public authorities. The programme was launched nationwide after a model-project from 1993 to 1995. In the UK, an interesting case of public-private partnership has been established, while all other initiatives are voluntary non-profit organisations that have established an SE branch.

Table 2: Numbers of staff, clients and yearly budget 1996-2000

	No. of staff (SE only, incl. administration)		No. of clients in SE		Yearly budget in	
	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000
Arbeitsassistentz Liezen	1	5	5	108	50,000	250,000
Salva Vita	1	7	2	33	14,000	122,000
Into Employment	N/A	31	N/A	194	N/A	1.4 mio.
Norway (1)	150	321	750	1,600	7.6 million	15.2 mio.
Rytmus	5	35	15	90	18,000	68,000

(1) This refers to the national programme of Supported Employment.

Table 3: Year of foundation, legal status and target groups

	Year of foundation	Legal status	Target groups
Arbeitsassistenz Liezen	1996	Voluntary nonprofit	All persons with a disability
Salva Vita	1993	Voluntary nonprofit	Mainly persons with mental illness or learning disability
Into Employment	1996	Public-private partnership	Persons with a learning disability
Norway	1996 (1992)	Public	Persons with extensive disability
Rytmus	1994	Voluntary non-profit	Mainly persons with a learning disability

3.3 The approach to Supported Employment

All projects have their particular definition of SE. Common features are however the support of clients and employers in finding and retaining employment. The aim for all participating projects is to find a real, paid job in an ordinary company with ongoing individual support (limited in time).

“SE is supporting our clients in all questions concerning the job and the realisation of their vocational goals by individual choice (...) and qualification by ‘training on the job’ (...).” (*Arbeitsassistenz Liezen*)

“Supported employment is a time-limited set of services whose aim is to support people in finding and keeping a job in the open labour market on terms of equal payment. The set of services is designed for persons with disabilities requiring a long-term support at the workplace to be able to get and keep a job. The support is based upon abilities and needs of every individual with a time-limit that has to be established.” (*Rytmus*)

“SE is a comprehensive, person-centred assistance for job seekers with a disability to get and keep an adequate job on the open labour market, including the assistance for social inclusion.” (*Salva Vita*)

“SE is a means for persons with disabilities to obtain and retain paid jobs in ordinary working life.” (*Norway*)

“SE is to enable disabled people to achieve their target of paid work in various employment settings and to move out of the benefits culture and achieve equality with fellow workers.” (*Into Employment*)

The target groups of SE projects are generally all persons with a disability, even though some initiatives do focus more on persons with mental illness or learning disability (see Table 2 above). This choice partly depends on financing mechanisms and/or respective goals of the projects. For instance, *Rytmus* sustains the objective “to establish SE as a tool of active labour market policies to help people from the target group to gain and retain a job in the open labour market”. Also *Salva Vita* underlines the political goals in a mid-term perspective, i.e. “to influence the national employment and social policies, respectively (...), to change the attitude on the open labour market (...), and to introduce SE as a new service in vocational rehabilitation”. Most important, for all projects, are the more general goals of social integration, inclusion and normalisation for people with disabilities in working life and society.

In order to reach these goals, main tasks of SE initiatives are listed in the following examples:



Individual career-planning, acquisition of jobs, training on the job, preservation of a job, and tasks to increase awareness of vocational problems concerning the target group (*Arbeitsassistenten Liezen*)

Comprehensive and detailed assessment, involvement of family members and friends, family care (psycho-social assistance), training on the job, job club activities, mediation between employers and employee, advice and guidance (*Salva Vita*)

Profiling, job coaching, on-the-job training, and collaboration with other services involved (*Norway and Into Employment*)

3.4 Specific strengths of initiatives according to their managers

The specific strength of the initiatives involved include their “focus of interest on the clients” and the empowerment of the client “to make good decisions based on good information” (*Arbeitsassistenten Liezen*), “the involvement of employers right from the start”, “enthusiastic staff” (*Rytmus*), their uniqueness in “providing Supported Employment for this target group” (*Salva Vita*), their ability to “directly address the ordinary labour market” (*Norway*), and their uniqueness in offering “in-depth work both prior and, more importantly, after the job has been found” and to support “the employer and the employee to match commercial pressure with individual workers’ ambitions and skills” (*Into Employment*).

While other organisations’ focus often is either on traditional occupational therapy for persons with a learning disability or training for persons with mental illness, training in SE initiatives is only a small part of the support process. In Norway and in the English project “Into Employment” pre-training or preparation for work readiness is not even provided at all as all persons are believed to be “work ready”, and that is the job of SE initiatives to offer the necessary support.

A specific advantage of those initiatives that started “bottom-up” and not within a larger organisation with a long tradition in providing services to persons with disabilities, e.g. *Rytmus*, is that they did not have to overcome traditional thinking in providing services for people with disabilities.

3.5 Quality of Supported Employment: A management perspective on indicators and methods applied

Defining quality of SE means, of course, to act in accordance with the objectives of the service and with the expectations of the clients. Thus, professional support for the target group, job finding and job maintenance are the indicators most often mentioned by the managers. In this respect the *Arbeitsassistenten Liezen*, for instance, follows a well-defined process flow-chart that is part of its guidelines and concepts. *Rytmus* has developed a manual, quality standards and guidelines; the quality control is carried out internally for lack of external quality standards. Also *Salva Vita* is using self-assessment methods adapted from the EFQM model. Some main processes have already been documented and perspectives are to build a quality system that follows TQM principles and methods.

In addition, mutual satisfaction of all parties involved is underlined. For instance, *Salva Vita* carries out surveys based on 10 kinds of questionnaires to all stakeholders, including employees and funding authorities. The *Norwegian* partners stressed the quality indicator of job maintenance, in particular after a longer period (3 years). However, respective surveys or follow-up studies have not yet been carried out. *Into Employment* relies very much on customer satisfaction feedback (employers, employees and commissioners) that is also collected systematically by means of stakeholder groups (“partnership meetings”). Furthermore, new op-



tions on quality raising are regularly gained from other members of the national association of SE.

At the *Arbeitsassistenz Liezen* quality in terms of job maintenance is monitored by systematic documentation and by means of group discussions to reflect on customer satisfaction.

3.6 Transfer and perspectives

The core of our project is to look for opportunities of mutual exchange and lessons (“good practice”) to be learned from each other. Project partners named quite a few issues in this connection: The *Arbeitsassistenz Liezen*, for instance, is proud of its “systematic work with every client and the systematic documentation of our work by a computer supported process”, while *Rytmus* defines its good practice witnessed by the “individual and civil approach to each user, team work, supervision of the staff providing services, ongoing support for the user, the consultation with the families of the users, and respect for the individual”.

Salva Vita proposed especially its elaboration and introduction of a quality system as an aspect that could be transferred to other actors. *Norwegian* partners see the systematic approach (profiling, training and follow-up), organisation issues and the national guidelines as important characteristic to be transferred to other countries, especially as there is positive from using SE methods for people with a range of different disabilities (including social disabilities). *Into Employment* would propose to have a look at the partnership working they have introduced, i.e. shared paperwork, shared training, and shared recruitment.

Nevertheless, there are also aspects in each organisation that could be improved and thus exchange of experience is most welcome. For instance, “increasing the quality of skills in the direct work with users at the work site, more detailed methodology, quality criteria with respect to family co-operation” (*Rytmus*), “developing quality standards with others” (*Arbeitsassistenz Liezen*), “different methods for job acquisition” (*Norway*), “giving the stakeholders more involvement in running the organisation” (*Into Employment*)

Finally, project partners named several general issues on quality of SE, which need to be discussed in the course of our project. Further exchange of experience should thus be organised on the following questions:

- *How can we employ more disabled people within our organisation?*
- *Roles of staff: Should the tasks between the job facilitator and the job coach (and other staff) within the SE process be split up on several people or is it more efficient if one person is in charge of the whole process?*
- *How to organise training, national and regional conferences working on quality matters?*
- *Benefits vs. minimum wages: How to deal with legal frameworks and disincentives to work? How should wages and benefits be combined?*
- *Should there be a time-limit for the SE process in every case?*
- *Organisational problems: What are benefits and problems of small SE teams?*
- *How to prevent rapid staff turn-over amongst job facilitators?*
- *How to measure employers’, co-workers’ and employees’ satisfaction with SE services?*



4 The Managers' Perspective

Yvonne Giedenbacher, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Austria)

4.1 Data collection

The following report complements the preliminary findings of research phase 1, which took place at the beginning of the QUIP project. The focus of this research phase is on the quality of Supported Employment in the view of the managers of SE agencies. Eight persons from six countries filled out questionnaires (see Table 4).

Table 4: Respondents

Country	Organisation	Number of interviewed persons	Method
Austria	Lebenshilfe Ennstal	1	Questionnaire
Czech Republic	Rytmus	1	Questionnaire
Hungary	Salva Vita	2	Questionnaire
Norway	Norasonde	2	Interview
Spain	Projecte Aura	1	Questionnaire
United Kingdom	Into Employment	1	Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for the interviews was developed according to the experiences made during the whole process of the QUIP project and included questions on

- *Position and job profile of the interviewed person*
- *Aims and process of Supported Employment*
- *Quality of Supported Employment*
- *Organisational framework, skills and competencies*
- *Evaluation*

The questionnaire was sent per email to the SE agency managers, most of them gave written answers; two persons were interviewed face-to-face. With the exception of one respondent from Norway, all respondents were at the same time partners in the QUIP project.

4.2 Position and profile

The interviewed persons are all managers of SE agencies but they describe their job differently. Some perform operative and strategic tasks, others mainly operate on a strategic level.

These are the tasks the respondents carry out in their work:



- *Administration*
- *Coordination*
- *Reporting*
- *Funding issues*
- *SE work (assessment of companies etc.)*
- *Development and implementation of new projects*
- *Mentoring, guidance, counselling*
- *Evaluation*
- *Networking, external communication*
- *Development of methods*
- *Aims and process of Supported Employment*

4.2.1 Main aims of Supported Employment

The main aim of the SE agencies is to support job seekers to find paid work – one of the interviewees refer to the goals of SE set by public guidelines on the target groups. Two of the interviewed persons also raise the issue “quality” of the job (e.g. job should match job seeker’s “requirements and possibilities”, “adequate wages”).

There are two interesting divergences: The Norwegian managers concentrate very much on the world of work (“...keep the focus on work integration...”) and the ‘social model’ (“...contribute to the development of the companies and the labour market to be more inclusive...”), while the Spanish manager stresses the importance of social integration and quality of life in general (also outside the work environment) and the personal development of the job seeker/employee. This divergence was often discussed during the QUIP project and seems to be one of the critical issues in Supported Employment, of course also dependent on the national framework in which the agencies operate.

The Hungarian managers also discuss ‘indirect’ aims of their SE agency referring to a general lack of status of Supported Employment in Hungary: raising awareness, recognition by the state, establishment of necessary framework for SE.

4.2.2 Process of Supported Employment

The interviews differ very much in how detailed the process of Supported Employment is described. Generally speaking, the SE process consists of the following steps

- *Initial contact*
- *Clarification and profiling*
- *Job seeking*
- *Job coaching*
- *Maintaining the job*



The Spanish and the Hungarian managers explicitly mention the involvement of the job seeker's family at the beginning of the SE process, the Spanish agency includes the family even in its follow-up activities.

Most of the managers (except NO and UK) raise the issue of training as one of the first steps in the SE process: training of job seeking skills (CZ, HU), social skills training (HU), personal training programme (E), work training (A).

The managers of the Norwegian agency stress the importance of avoiding dependency of the job seeker by avoiding “...relationships that become so close that they create or promote dependency...”. Again, Supported Employment in Norway is depicted as a service with a focus only on working life: “...It is important to keep the focus on work integration, and not on care for its own sake...” The Hungarian SE process on the other hand explicitly includes steps exceeding the pure work integration, e.g. “...family-related, and individual psycho-social assistance...”, which means that the agency provides assistance for the family and the employee during the follow-up phase to accommodate to the new situation and to learn how to profit from it: to live as anybody else and to solve problems.

4.2.3 SE process: The most important steps, the most difficult tasks?

The answers to the question “Which steps of this process do you consider to be the most important?” cover the main phases of the SE process. It is quite interesting that the interviewed managers (5 out of 6 interviews) seem to regard the introduction phase as the most important step in SE:

- *Making contact and exchanging information with the job seeker (5); “...sets the scene for rest of work...” (UK), “...check up the job seeker’s motivation and eagerness with regard to getting a job...” (NO)*
- *Get in contact with employers (2)*
- *Job match (2)*
- *Support (3), “...supporting the adaptation of social norms...”, “...support to maintain permanent employment...”*

The Spanish manager stresses very empathically that “...all of the steps are completely essential...”.

The issue of job seekers’ ‘motivation’, raised by the Norwegian managers, was often discussed during the QUIP project. On the one hand it was objected to by SE experts because it resembles very much the ‘readiness’ concept, on the other hand it was an important issue for many of the interviewed job coaches who regard the motivation to become involved in the SE process and some sort of ‘reality orientation’ as an important prerequisite for successful Supported Employment.

What do SE agency managers regard as the most difficult tasks in the SE process? Here, the variety of answers is even greater. They cover almost all areas of SE. Interestingly enough, the “most important” step in SE (see above), the introduction phase is not mentioned here. The focus is more explicitly on job searching and keeping.

- *“Preparing job seekers (on a personal, emotional, psychological and professional level)”*
- *Maintaining job seeker’s motivation*
- *Job search (2)*



- *Job match (2)*
- *Maintain a job*
- *Support for employers and co-workers*
- *Documentation*
- *Reintegration of individuals with a long career of unemployment*
- *Keeping up the principals of Supported Employment*
- *Let the job seeker take the lead*

4.3 Quality of Supported Employment

4.3.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the SE agency

Asked about the main strengths of the agency, the managers mainly focus on three issues:

- *Professional staff (discipline, co-operation skills, etc.)*
- *Person-centred approach*
- *Involvement of the agency in a bigger network of services etc.*

The ‘main weakness’ of the agencies most often (2x) mentioned by the managers is the problem of resources. Other weaknesses are mainly connected to the issue of staff, e.g. a lack in systematic training for the staff or problems with recruiting new staff (resulting in long waiting lists for job seekers).

Table 5: Main strengths and weaknesses of the SE agencies

Country	Main strengths	Main weaknesses
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making use of all social services • Network with the Labour Market Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick enlargement of staff à need for organisational development • Staff training • Internal network needs development
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled staff with permanent contracts • Co-operation with volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with recruiting new staff (low wages in the social field) à long waiting lists for job seekers
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled staff (co-operation skills,...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overburden • Documentation
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good infrastructure • Variety of job offers • Involvement in a large network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation with parent organisation
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualised approach • Skilled and stable staff • Long-term follow-up • Strong contact with families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-centred approach • Self-determination of job seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources • One target group



4.3.2 High/Low quality Supported Employment

The answers about ‘**high quality Supported Employment**’ focus very much on two aspects of SE quality: ‘outcomes’ (i.e. high quality job on the ordinary labour market) and ‘characteristics of SE process’ (i.e. SE principles).

SE outcomes (i.e. job on the ordinary labour market with...)

- *Team inclusion (2)*
- *Normal wages*
- *Normal social security*
- *Natural support*
- *Career development*
- *Development in qualifications*
- *Job-match*
- *Satisfaction of employers*

SE process characteristics

- *Person-centred approach (2)*
- *Job seeker’s involvement, decisions only made with him/her (2)*
- *Involvement of family*
- *Focus on partnerships (“respect”)*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Clarity and reliability*

Other aspects

- **Structure:** *Skilled SE staff; well-balanced SE agency; job clubs*
- **Process:** *Continuous development of job seeker/employee*

Most of the answers about ‘low quality Supported Employment’ focus on the SE outcomes:

- *Job which is not stable (2)*
- *Job which does match job seeker’s needs abilities (e.g. needs too much job coach input) (2)*

Some aspects refer to the SE process

- *Insufficient contact (e.g. stagnation after the clarification phase)*
- *Insufficient support*
- *No motivation of job seeker*
- *No motivation of family (e.g. over-protective families, no support by families)*



The Austrian manager mentions a structural aspect, the ‘creaming effect’, which depends very much on the SE agency’s target group(s) and the national framework for Supported Employment. This refers to the issue that in Austria each SE agency has to place a certain number of people in the ordinary labour market each year. Thus, there is a tendency to take those job seekers into Supported Employment that are not severely disabled and more likely to find a job.

4.3.3 What do you think ‘high quality SE’ means for...

Asked how other stakeholders perceive high quality Supported Employment, the interviewed managers agree to very high degree with regard to two stakeholder groups: Managers think that employers mainly expect to get a good employee matching the requirements of the job. They also want to get support from the SE agency (UK) with a contact person to turn to (A) and do not want to have “troubles” with the new employee – i.e. “no bureaucracy” and the working process not being disturbed by the SE process (A). Only the Hungarian managers expect the employers to have similar expectations as the other stakeholder groups: Functioning communication, transparency (so that the employers know what will happen next), involvement of all relevant partners (to share the responsibility) etc.

Almost all interviewed managers think that policy makers/funding agencies mainly expect a high quantity of new jobs, the Norwegian managers even think that the types of jobs do not matter to them. The Austrian manager is of the opinion that the policy makers/funding agencies also expect some quality of the SE structure: Skilled and qualified staff, and functioning networks between the SE agency and other organisations.

The interviewed persons think that job coaches focus on

- *Structural quality, such as good working conditions and clear guidelines (A)*
- *Principles of SE (=characteristics of the SE process), such as person-centred approach and transparency (HU) and*
- *Process quality, such as planned co-operation (UK) and help with job search (NO)*

In the view of the interviewed managers the job seekers expect

- *Process quality, such as adequate support or to find a job quickly (A, UK),*
- *Principles of SE (=characteristics of the SE process), such as person-centred approach and transparency (HU) and – above all –*
- *Outcome quality, such as a valuable job with the possibility for career development and social inclusion (A, CZ, NO UK)*

With the issue of accessibility, the Austrian manager raises also one aspect of structural quality for job seekers.



Table 6: What high quality SE means for...

Country	...job coaches	...job seekers	...employers	...policy makers
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good working conditions • Working guidelines • Efficient networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Job (matching expectations) with possibility for career development • Adequate support • Social integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No bureaucracy • No troubles with employee or funding agencies • Contact person • Working process is not disturbed by SE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled and qualified staff • Quantity of new jobs for target group • Good networking with organisations and administrative bodies
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful work • Satisfaction of partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job • Good job coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication • Helpful SE agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of new (permanent) jobs
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional knowledge and skills • Person-centred approach • Needs of partners more important than financial possibilities • Open and good communication • Transparent SE process • Well-balanced agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Individual approach • Confidentiality • Support of independence and self-determination • Involvement of other important partners (e.g. family) • Needs of partners more important than financial possibilities • Open and good communication • Transparent SE process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of important partners (e.g. employers) • Open and good communication • Needs of partners more important than financial possibilities • Transparent SE process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and good communication • Transparent SE process
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help job seekers find a job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a valuable job • Be socially included in the work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a good employee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of new jobs (types of job irrelevant)
Spain			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a good employee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of new jobs
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned cooperation with job seekers (including the search for natural support and a fading plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a job they want quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a good employee • Get support from the agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of new jobs • Number of hours leaving a service

4.3.4 Possible improvements

The interviewed managers see possibilities for improvement mainly in the area of “networking”, on an internal and on an external level. The Austrian manager, for example, wants to improve the networking within the SE agency (between different related services), the Norwegian managers stress the importance of networks with other services of the parent organisation (internal/external networking) and stronger networks with employers expressed by a shift in time-allocation (“...we want to increase the time that job coaches actually spend out there among employer and at work places [...] Perhaps a job coach should spend as much as 80% of their time to such external activities, while normally 50% of their time is spent externally.”). The UK manager sees a possibility for improvement for the SE agency by its becoming more part of the national “Government Employment Strategy”.

Other ideas for improvement are:

- *Developing new structures to meet the needs of a higher number of staff (A)*
- *Improved staff training (A)*
- *Change the funding structure (not for the project, but for the work with each job seeker/employee) (HU)*
- *Continuous quality development in the areas of methodology, organisation and finance (CZ) and*
- *Cross-client work (UK)*

4.4 Organisational framework, competencies

4.4.1 Most important organisational framework for high quality SE

The most important organisational framework for high quality SE mentioned by the interviewed persons mainly belongs to the categories

Job coaches’ characteristics and qualifications

- *Flexibility (2)*
- *Service orientation*

Agency’s organisational framework

- *Continuous evaluation and organisational development (2)*
- *Quality standards (measuring satisfaction, not just numbers)*
- *Efficient infrastructure*
- *Adequate working conditions (e.g. wages)*
- *Working standards*
- *Clear competencies and responsibilities*
- *Equality of status (“...everybody is as important as everybody else...”) of the staff*



- *Sufficient staff*

Networking

- *Functioning partnerships and networking with all partners (2)*
- *(Co-operation with the Labour Office)*

4.4.2 Structure of the decision making process

The structure of the decision making process is very similar in the SE agencies: The managers mainly work on the **strategic** level, making decisions on personnel, organisational development, planning, quality monitoring, co-ordination etc. and engaging in networking (especially with policy makers/funding agencies). The Hungarian manager is also responsible for the complaints procedure. The staff is responsible for the work on the **operative** level: the individual SE process, person-centred decisions, reporting. The Austrian manager says that important decisions (e.g. in case of problems) are only made in the team consisting of management and staff.

4.4.3 Skills and characteristics of an ‘ideal SE manager’ and an ‘ideal job coach’

The ‘ideal SE manager’ in the view of the managers themselves has a combination of professional knowledge and experience (e.g. experience with SE work, experience with people with a disability), key skills (e.g. respectfulness, co-operation skills, networking skills) and management and leadership skills (e.g. focussed on success, ability to give feedback). The managers stress the importance of being a “good leader” that creates an atmosphere of trust and provides the framework for the professional and personal development of the staff (e.g. ability to give constructive feedback, trust in employees’ abilities, treat employees on equal terms).

The ‘ideal job coach’ as described by the interviewed persons has professional knowledge and education (e.g. education in pedagogic, knowledge of disability-related issues, knowledge of the labour market). The Norwegian managers think that job coaches should have a varied background with “...*formal social education as well as experience from practical guiding and communication...*” (NO). The ideal job coach also has a combination of key skills, which are specifically relevant for a person-centred approach such as Supported Employment, which is also based on the idea of networking and partnerships (e.g. empathy, flexibility, persistence, humbleness, mediation skills, networking skills). Above all, a job coach should believe in the abilities of people with a disability and in social inclusion.



Table 7: The 'ideal SE manager' and the 'ideal job coach'

Country	Ideal SE manager	Ideal job coach
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussed on success • Customer orientation • Team orientation • Ability of give constructive feedback • Respectfulness • Leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education in pedagogy • Knowledge of disability-related issues • Knowledge of labour market and work processes • Administration skills • Networking skills • Empathy
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management skills • Leadership skills • Experience with SE work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to provide adequate support • Innovative • Believe in the abilities of people with a disability • Communication skills • Flexibility
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional knowledge and experience • Autonomy • Creativity • Flexibility • Management skills • Systemic thinking • Openness to innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional experience • Autonomy • Creativity • Empathy • Discipline • Persistence • Capacity to deal with pressure • Flexibility
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat employees on equal terms • Ability to give constructive feedback • Influence working environment in a positive way • Trust in employees' abilities • Provide possibilities for staff's self- and competence development • Pedagogic skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humbleness • Empathy • Ability to "not to become a therapist" in SE process • Communication skills • Focus on "matching" many variables • Varied background
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with people with a disability • Knowledge of all involved partners • Co-operation skills • Networking skills (employers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Believe in SE • Mediation skills
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussed on outcomes • Focussed on self-determination • Focussed on quality • Reward the credits to people who do the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-centred • Committed to social inclusion • Believe in the ability of people to work



4.4.4 Written material (guidelines, job profiles) for the staff

All of the managers stated that they have written material for the staff, three specified: guidelines (A), methodological manual (HU), handbook of job description (NO).

4.5 Evaluation

4.5.1 How SE is evaluated at present

The evaluation of the SE agencies at present is mainly based on the (quantitative) reporting to the funding agencies (e.g. Labour Market Office).

Rytmus, *Salva Vita* and *Into Employment* also collect feedback of relevant partners. *Rytmus*, for example, seeks feedback from teachers and parents of job seekers and from the Labour Office staff. *Salva Vita* has an annual assessment of satisfaction (job seekers/employees; cooperating family members; employers; staff; local labour offices as partner organisations; financing bodies). *Into Employment* collects feedback from job seeker/employees and employers, also at stakeholder meetings.

Some of the managers also mention internal evaluation ‘systems’, such as work discussions, regular professional supervision (HU) or reports to the advisory committee of the parent organisation (NO).

The Spanish agency uses a quality development model, the ICQI (Inclusion of Continuous Quality Improvement) as an evaluation tool for its ‘Annual Action Plan’.

4.5.2 Suitable and non-suitable indicators in the present system

Almost all of the interviewed managers discuss the issue of ‘quantity vs. quality’. What is regarded as suitable in the present system? The Austrian manager thinks that there is valuable information in the statistics, which regards kind of results (get a job, keep a job, clearing), age, gender and type of disability. The satisfaction questionnaire (HU) and the collection of stakeholder feedback (UK) are also regarded as valuable sources of information. The Norwegian and the UK managers think that ‘numbers’ are of course important indicators, “...*but not only...*” (UK). The Norwegian managers discuss the issue of quality vs. quantity in more detail: “...*One should be careful with quantitative measures as the only measures. It is important to acknowledge that the SE process will vary according to the individual job seeker’s needs. Therefore qualitative judgements must also be part of the evaluation. On the other hand – if we establish only qualitative measures, there is a danger that the SE process will be too much coloured by care and problematic aspects [...] With regard to evaluation in general, factors like time and money will always be important...*”

Three managers (A, HU, E) are explicitly of the opinion that purely quantitative measures are not very suitable but cause “...*pressure stemming from the system of finance...*” (HU)

4.5.3 Ideas for new evaluation methods and quality indicators

The Austrian manager raises some ideas for new evaluation methods and quality indicators:

Feedback questionnaires (job seekers, employers)

- *Reasons for failure (e.g. Who stopped the process and why?)*



- *Duration of jobs*
- *Intensity of support*

Some of these variables could easily be part of the annual statistics to the public authorities. The Norwegian managers think that evaluation tools and quality indicator schemes especially targeting the employers (e.g. satisfaction with the service) would be useful, but they also raise the much-discussed issue that new evaluation tools should not mean too much time-consuming paperwork for the agency staff. The UK manager develops the idea of

- *Client led questionnaires and*
- *Giving partners information on other schemes (to give them the possibility to compare different services), because “...How can you judge what you have got if you do not have anything to compare it against?...“*



5 The Job Coaches’ Perspective

Milan Polívka, Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (Czech Republic)

5.1 Introduction and method

This report is an international overview of the 2nd phase research results of the QUIP project. It tries to emphasise the most interesting comparative facts and comment on them. The text follows the main points of the group discussion structure – obligatory questions are followed by a brief overview of optional ones in every group of questions.

There were two main methodological approaches during this research phase. As a first step, the staff of the agencies involved in the QUIP project answered a written questionnaire consisting of three major groups of questions (Work process; Individual background/Education; Working conditions/Organisational framework). The results of the questionnaires served as a basis for the next step, which was a group discussion with the staff of each participating organisation. In the group discussions, more time was devoted to questions of quality.

The number of persons asked during this research phase is shown in the following table³:

Table 8

	Austria	Czech rep.	UK	Hungary	Norway
Persons filling in the questionnaire	6 (all assistants)	9 (project leader, 3 assistants, 5 consultants)	3 (questionnaire not usable), 10 semi-structured interviews	7 (4 from SE field, 2 managers, 1 from other service)	4 (all assistants)
Persons who took part in a group discussion	6	7	16	5	4

Most of the country reports mention that the group discussions enabled researchers to gain a deeper understanding of relevant issues. Researchers felt they were provided with more interesting, more focused and more innovative information than in the questionnaires. When planning this phase researchers thought that questionnaires would be helpful to analyse and understand the topic. It seems as if this expectation was not met. Possibly, a better method would have been to conduct structured interviews as the British team has done.

In some cases, we got the impression that the discussion was influenced by the questionnaire. Some responses (mostly the “creative” ones) were the same as those given in the questionnaire.

We observed a difficulty caused by the international character of the research – some questions were not clearly understandable to all partners. For the next research phases, this means that complicated questions should be explained and discussed more carefully within the team. This is especially important in order to ensure comparable translations. Other language difficulties are a result of different meanings of the same words in the various environments. Three examples can be mentioned: “Work quality” was sometimes understood as the quality of the job seekers’ jobs, not the quality of work performed by job coaches / job assistants. “Agency”

³ In this report, we use the name of the country as an equivalent for the name of the project.



was used in two connotations – as an agency of Supported Employment or a funding agency⁴. “Follow-up of the client” is understood as keeping contact with the client after using Supported Employment services or as support on the work place⁵ (the crucial feature of Supported Employment).

In general, all research partners concluded that especially the group discussions functioned well and participants were well motivated and interested in the projects’ aims.

Finally, it seems that we might have tried to analyse too many issues and therefore we have some information on everything, but could not look at the SE process in depth, which is crucial for quality issues. For example, we asked some questions that we already knew the answers to (for example education), instead of asking some specific questions on the process of SE (mentioned in the Norwegian report).

5.2 Job description/ work process

5.2.1 Aims from the job coaches’ point of view

“*To find and maintain paid employment for people with disabilities*” is the main goal of job coaches that was mentioned in all projects. In a majority of participating projects in partner countries (UK, Czech Republic and Hungary) this goal is dominant. One of the British job coaches adds that the jobs that are found have to match the clients’ skills and abilities. This means the integration on the open labour market – which is also the main difference between Supported Employment and other active labour market policies. In this case, it is hard to distinguish whether this view is an official one or if it is the job coaches’ personal view. Since this goal is usually the only official goal of SE as a measure, assistants could easily take over this opinion (as mentioned in the Norwegian report). In the Austrian case this goal is not explicitly stated, which may be due to the authors’ concentration on more concrete goals.

Another important aim of SE that was mentioned by most of the partners is improving the quality of life of job seekers. This aim seems to be dominant for example in Norway. In the Norwegian case there seems to be an inconsistency. On the one hand, a person using SE services is seen as a job seeker not as a client (social meaning). On the other hand, the main goal is improving the quality of life, which is more than placing someone on the labour market and is closely connected to other social provisions.

Concerning the different aims of SE, the respondents in the Czech Republic and Norway stated very general aims. In Austria, the UK and Hungary interview partners voiced also more specific everyday aims. These ‘little’ goals on which SE is based, contribute substantially to creating equal opportunities for people with a disability during specific activities connected with entering the labour market. These goals can be seen as the “sub-steps” of finding and maintaining a job (see the following table). Most of them are directly connected with work with the client/job-seeker, others can be understood as the promotion of Supported Employment in the public or the community by co-operation with other partners.

⁴ If not specified we understand agency as a provider of supported employment.

⁵ In the following we understand “follow-up” as keeping contact with the client after using supported employment services.

Table 9: Goals of Supported Employment

Main goals	To find and maintain a job on the open labour market (mentioned in the following national reports – CZ, UK, HUN, NOR)		Social integration and better quality of life (AUT, UK, HUN, NOR)	
	Subgoals – How to reach goals*			
Type of activity	Subgoals			
Work with client prior to taking up a job**	Raising self-esteem, encouragement, confidence (AUT, UK)	Emphasising the client's strengths (AUT)	Clarification of work abilities (AUT)	Helping in activities connected with gaining a job (AUT)
	Developing each client's perspectives (AUT)	Motivation of client (AUT)	Help the clients to develop an "adult's life-style" (HUN)	Mediation between young people and their parents (AUT)
	Collecting information on client (HUN)			
Work with client on the job	Work place help – guidance, shadowing (AUT, UK, HUN)	Support to staff (AUT)		
Work with other partners	Removing prejudices (AUT)	Promotion of SE – to local agencies and services (AUT, UK, HUN)	Information source to the employer (UK)	Act as a contact person for social service provider (AUT)
	Promotion of co-operation of different partners (AUT)	Sharing information with other partners (UK)	Help families during SE process (HUN)	Information point on employment law and disability awareness (UK)
Other	Forming social networks, develop social aspects of life (UK)	Continuing monitoring (UK)	To ensure the organisation's service high quality (HUN)	To ensure that SE services run without difficulties (UK, HUN)

Note: *The order of the goals does not reflect their importance for the job coaches.

**Many of the goals mentioned within that category could be mentioned in the "Work with client on the job" category as well.

A number of these sub-goals were named by several people. However, it seems that the sub-goals mentioned vary quite substantially between the interview partners. The differences cannot be explained by the job coaches' work profile and position within the SE agency. At this point it is not possible to say if these goals vary between countries as we are missing specific information from the Czech Republic and Norway.

5.2.2 Description of the work process

It seems that the whole process is in general quite similar, while some details differ. Unfortunately, we have only some specific information from national reports that we can compare between countries (e.g. the Austrian report hardly refers to the work process). The following list summarises the information from the reports:



Client receives initial information on SE

Norway, where the client is regularly informed by the Labour Offices, has a special position compared to other countries. This systematic approach contributes to the development of SE and the understanding of it.

First contact with agency

In the Czech republic, in the first meeting the client expresses his/her motivation and expectations, while the job consultant explains the support opportunities the agency can offer. In Norway the first contact takes place at the Labour Office where both sides present themselves.

Collecting and checking information

This phase is common to all agencies. Job coaches compile the profile of the job-seeker, repeatedly meet the client as well as parents and friends, try to establish confidence (NOR), look at previous work experience, try to define likes and dislikes and concentrate on client's abilities (UK).

In the Czech republic, during this stage the job consultant has to decide whether the client belongs to the target group or not. Three criteria are applied: 1) does the person really need job assistance, 2) does the client know what it means to hold a job and personally wants to work and 3) the client has already tried other possibilities for finding a job.

Searching for job and training, trial work place

At the beginning of this stage, the job coach specifies further details concerning a desirable work place (location of job, working hours, salary). In the UK and Hungary, work tasting is common to help the client make an informed choice on the type of work.

The job seekers' individual plan usually states the tasks for the job seeking phase. The methods used in searching for jobs are common to agencies from different environments, but can vary from coach to coach (mentioned in the Czech case and visible from British answers). Most frequently jobs are searched through the local press, the labour offices, on the Internet and through personal networks (CZ, UK, NOR).

Client's abilities are developed – for example interview training (NOR, UK). Job clubs are held as a part of preparation for work (CZ, HUN).

After finding a job

The job coach negotiates important details with employers and helps the employer to apply for wage subsidies and other state support if needed. All clients are supported on the work place to learn the skills of the job and look for ways of sustaining their work (all countries). The rate and exact nature of the support varies from country to country and from client to client. The UK report points to a lack of job coaches, which means that less services are provided than would be useful. In the Czech Republic, the assistants in the beginning spend all working hours with the client (usually up to six months). In that case, the support in the beginning is usually provided by an experienced consultant and later by an assistant. In all countries, the amount of support diminishes over time.

Leaving the client and follow-up

After the “fading out” of support, the person is subject to further monitoring and career development in the UK. Austrian assistants mention a follow-up as an important part of the quality of SE. It seems that in other countries, e.g. in the Czech Republic, when the support on the work place “fades out”, the co-operation with the client ends.

The work process in all the studied SE-agencies is described in manuals. In the case of Hungary it is called “The Green Handbook”. In Norway, the team compiled its own handbook



with concrete work instructions based on the official guidelines and philosophy. In the Czech Republic the Supported Employment manual, where procedures are specified, is in use. The Austrian Arbeitsassistentz Liezen uses a draft of procedures as well.

5.2.3 The most difficult tasks

We observed many difficulties that job coaches have to face. Many of them are specific for one agency only.

Table 10: Difficulties, which coaches have to face

In general	To find a job (UK, HUN)	Difficulties depend on individual situation of client (HUN)	SE is an individual approach, the problem is never the same (NOR)		
Work with clients	Communicatio to the young people that the decisions they make are for their lives (AUT)	Right understanding of clients' abilities (CZE)	To motivate people (UK)	Support clients in the right way and in varying levels of effort (UK)	To handle mental illnesses, how to deal with them (NOR)
	Combining the ideal situation of the clients with reality (unrealistic ideas) (AUT)	Defining adequate amount of help in every instance (CZE)	Disabled people sometimes expect perfect jobs but this does not always happen (UK)	Dealing with client disappointment when no job was found (UK)	
Work with employers	Establish contacts with other companies and convince employers that disabled persons are able to achieve high performance (AUT)	Readiness of companies regarding employment (AUT)	Negativity from employers (UK)		
Work with other agencies	Granting of subsidies from the public sector because there are no long-term contracts (AUT)	Co-operation with other facilities within the Lebenshilfe (AUT)	Lack of support/ understanding from other agencies (UK)		
Other	The problem of becoming a scapegoat due to rigidity of rules and clients' economy (NOR)	Long distances (AUT)	Lack of experience and training in SE (UK)	To deal with the parents (HUN)	Break the tradition of work styles (UK)



Due to the number of these potential problems in providing SE services, it seems that the Norwegian assistants are right when they say: “As SE is an individual approach, the problem is never the same.” The Hungarian view confirms this: “difficulties depend on the individual situation of the client”.

One of the answers in Austria was surprising: “Young people often do not perceive agency involvement as help”. This was stated in connection with the task “communicating to the young people that the decisions they make are for their lives” – AUT. This might mean that it is possible that the client doesn’t want to find a job. Or that they feel that they were put under pressure to go to the Supported Employment agency. These difficulties may arise when in the first phase of the SE-process, the decision whether a person belongs to the target group is wrong. For example, in the Czech republic the three initial criteria have to be met (e.g. he or she is willing to work, see above). Even though there are set criteria, it still depends on the job coaches’/job assistants’ abilities to distinguish who needs Supported Employment and who needs other services, to make sure that the “right” people are targeted by the service.

5.2.4 The role of other actors

Family

The family is in most cases understood as an information source, which can or cannot be used. The rate of family support is absolutely individual and varies from a very important role in the SE-process to zero contact. One of the aims of the job coaches/assistants is to find the right approach to the clients’ families. We have found differences between the projects in the different countries. Some of the job coaches tend to understand family in most cases as a helpful but not crucial partner (e.g. Czech Republic). In Austria, parents are seen as partners with whom an exchange of information and regular contact are necessary and job coaches in Hungary find that it is necessary to understand family background. In the UK we found the whole scale of opinions on family involvement (from very important to not important at all) whereas Norwegian assistants consider the family as a partner to be rather irrelevant (in most cases just a receiver of information). All respondents know that the family is not the only source of information.

Employers

In most cases employers are described as rather passive providers of jobs and wages. In the UK, job coaches / assistants mentioned a few very active and supportive employers. In other countries, active and supportive employers are the exception rather than the rule. In Austria, job coaches/ assistants mentioned that SE-services are in general welcomed by the employers. However, due to special protection against dismissal for registered people with a disability, there is some scepticism from employers to employ people with a disability. In all countries, regular contact with the employer is understood as being helpful.

Clients

Clients are the most important group in SE (AUT, NOR). He/she should be a motivated, active, flexible partner who makes a big effort to find a job and secure it (UK). Job coaches/assistants should give them space to express their own needs and expectations (AUT).

Funding agency

This role is mostly taken over by the public sector in the studied countries. In Norway, it is strictly the government, which provides money and the framework for SE. In Austria, different public agencies are responsible for the funding of SE. Here, job coaches criticised the



steering body, which makes decisions on SE, and looks at quantitative (“numbers”) criteria only, not providing real involvement and partnership. One of the British job coaches/assistants mentioned that the funding agencies should listen to practitioners.

Other providers

We have no information from countries other than Austria, where the bizarre situation arose that the competition between providers is such that there is no information exchange between them.

5.2.5 Other issues (optional questions)

Factors of unemployability

In the Czech case, all clients have finally found a job, so it is not possible to define factors of unemployability. In all countries, job coaches/assistants say it is crucial to focus on clients’ abilities, not on their disabilities. Even in cases where at first glance it seems that the clients’ abilities are minimal, clients are able to work if the right job is found and the client is supported adequately. In the Norwegian case, factors that may prevent employment for a job seeker are a mixture of psychological, emotional and social problems. Salva Vita says that all clients are capable of work but there are clients that are not willing to work.

Working time distribution

The division of time between different activities depends on the staff members’ position within the SE-agency.

In Hungary, the management spends half of its time to secure financial resources and has no direct contact with clients, families and employers. Job coaches/assistants spend 10-20% of their working hours with documentation, only a little time is spent for further preparation and training.

In the Czech Republic the project leader spends the least time (30%) with clients in comparison to job consultants (40%) and especially to job coaches/assistants (80%). Assistants are not in contact with actors other than employers and spend very little time on further education and individual preparation (5% both).

The Norwegian case reveals quite a different picture. It shows that 30-45% of job coaches’/assistants’ time is spent with clients, up to 30% for individual preparation, up to 20% with meetings and discussions and the same proportion with employers.

5.3 Quality aspects of Supported Employment

5.3.1 Success/Failure

Employment assistants do not evaluate the success or failure of their work primarily on the basis of how many people are employed in the “first employment sector”. In their view, success should not be defined merely through figures, also the process of their work itself should be seen as a criterion for quality (AUT). Success in their view is not directly connected with fulfilling the given goals (see the “Aims” chapter). It means that most assistants can evaluate their own work as successful even if a job is not found (see the following chapter 3.2 on good/bad job). The smaller steps toward fulfilling the main goal are regarded as being satisfactory. There is a wide range of aspects of success.



Table 11: Aspects of success

General success	Finding a paid work place – for long-term as most successful (CZE, HUN, UK, NOR)	Achieving expected results (HUN)	Right job match (UK)	Becoming independent on the work place (CZE)	
Progress	Being able to fade out in time and employment to remain successful (UK)	Client cares for himself/herself (at least is making progress) (UK)	Successful working steps carried out independently (AUT)	Clients increased confidence and independence (UK)	Small steps toward the aim (CZE)
Satisfaction	Client is content with social service provider and vice versa (AUT)	Partners' satisfaction (job-seeker, Labour Office, job seeker's family) (NOR)	Positive feedback (AUT)	Client enjoys his/her work (HUN)	Getting clients enjoyable employment; clients are happy and pleased with their work (UK)
	Helping clients achieve hopes/dreams in employment (UK)	Making client valued (UK)			
Professional evaluation	Professional recognition and development (NOR)	Agency known in society (HUN)	Professional sector respects the organisation (HUN)	Another demand for agency services; development of SE in educational system (HUN)	
Relations between partners	Establishing a personal relationship with client (AUT)	Exchange with other institutions is working (AUT)	Good relationship with employer (HUN)	Improve the relationship between the clients and their environment (society, parents) (HUN)	

One may also categorise the aspects of success in the following way:

- Getting people into work on the open labour market – *long-term placement, paid job, maintaining a job, make clients part of society again;*
- Integration – *improving clients' relationship with their environment;*
- Job-seeker's satisfaction – *positive feedback, establishing a personal relationship, help to achieve personal dreams in employment;*
- Client's steps toward independence
- Fruitful co-operation with other institutions and partners – *satisfaction of family (in some cases), employment policy institutions (mentioned only in the Norwegian report), keep good relationship with employers, growth of the knowledge of SE and the agency in society.*

In most cases failure is the opposite of success (the goals and sub-goals are not fulfilled).

Table 12: Aspects of failure

General failure	Opposite of the success factors (NOR)	Client loses job (HUN)	Job breakdown; not finding a job (UK)	When finding a sheltered job only (HUN)
No progress	Termination of progress (HUN, CZE)	Client leaves the agency in the middle of the process (AUT, HUN)		
No satisfaction	Client or employer is not happy with our service (UK)	No interest for SE methods (HUN)	No possibility to help – out of agency limits (HUN)	
Lack of co-operation with partners (misunderstanding of roles)	Environment (parents) undermines the activity (AUT)	Lack of co-operation with other agencies (UK)	Regular refusal from employers and community (HUN)	Employer employs the client because he feels pity for him/her (HUN)
Professional failures	Inability to assess client's skills (UK)	When the real client problem is not recognised (HUN)		

An interesting analysis has been done by the British researchers, who tried to identify obstacles and threats that make it difficult to be successful. They have found troubles with accessibility of SE, lack of time for work with clients, a less developed transition system and a quality of the environment which sometimes undermines the clients' activities (similar factors are identified in the Austrian report).

5.3.2 When do job coaches/assistants do a good or bad job?

In most of the cases it is not possible to separate a good or bad job from successes and failures, although we have signals that the quality of performed services is rather focused on processes and on satisfaction with work performance during the respective SE phase. The idea is that even if a job is not found the job coach's work can be excellent. A relevant result of the Supported Employment process can also be the clients' decision not to work or to look for alternatives to full-time paid work. This aspect has been mentioned in the Czech and the UK reports. We can see an inconsistency in Hungarian assistants' opinions. On one side they refer to a strong connection between a good quality job and placement of the client (80% of answers), on the other side they think it is possible to consider their job as being done well even when they do not succeed in finding a workplace for their client.

Quantitative measures cannot be the only quality criterion (AUT, CZ, HUN, UK), on the other hand it is necessary to take for example the number of placements into account. It seems that it is extremely difficult to find out other criteria that make sense. In Hungary and the UK, the satisfaction of customers and feedback from different stakeholders are underlined. Possible changes in day centres' attendance can provide us with some information as well (UK). That the evaluation of work strictly follows different manuals is disputable too – as the manuals cannot include all possibilities that come up in reality (CZ).

Table 13: When do job coaches/assistants do a good job?

Individual progress, eventually job matching	Suitable job is found (HUN)	Social integration and individual development (NOR)	Securing a job and maintaining it (UK)	Co-ordinating the client's abilities with the requirements of the job (AUT)
Positive feedback	Satisfaction of the client with the new situation (AUT)	Feedback from employers (AUT)	Positive feedback from clients, their families and employers as well (HUN)	Job-seeker satisfaction (NOR)
	Fulfilling a client's aspirations (UK)			
Individual approach	Clients are job matched individually (UK)			

Note: Czech respondents did not know how to define a good job.

We provide only a few ideas of what “doing a bad job” means for job coaches/assistants, as only two national reports mention this.

Table 14: When do job coaches/assistants do a bad job?

Assistant tries to push through his/her opinion instead of listening to the client (CZE)	Consultant/assistant does not balance the rate of assistance at every moment (CZE)	Misjudgement in process of verifying persons of target group (CZE)	Not enough listening to employer, the pressure on him (CZE)
Lack of employer and staff support (UK)	Placing in unsuitable job (UK)	Too much help (UK)	

The view from the perspective of the Supported Employment agency is similar to the assistants' one (UK). Salva Vita assistants add some additional factors: more and better feedback from employers, agency can find places for more clients than before, an increase of professional reputation, an increase in demand for dissemination of the methods used and acceptance of the annual report. The Norwegian authority has a “classic” view: success means to place as many people with a disability into ordinary jobs at the lowest possible costs leading to the reduction of national disability pension costs. It seems that British funding authorities are not quite as strict because they mention efficiency measures (number of placements, documentation) as well as customer satisfaction.

5.3.3 Quality meanings

The following quality aspects from the point of view of the clients have been mentioned by job coaches/assistants:

- *Finding the right job quickly (UK, NOR, HUN)*
- *social contacts (CZE)*
- *participation (NOR, HUN)*



- *finding friends (HUN)*
- *social inclusion (UK)*
- *wage improvement (CZE, HUN, NOR)*
- *services focused on the individual – encouragement, guidance, being listened to, feeling motivated and confident (UK)*

There is a wide consensus on what job coaches/assistants consider to be employers' expectations of SE-services. Job coaches are of the opinion that employers simply would like to avoid any additional costs in terms of either money or time.

We could hear opinions such as employers want.

- *the agency to take over all extra work with the client*
- *no troubles with the client*
- *no additional work*
- *the agency to be available to assist when requested*
- *an adequate amount of work for the wages they pay*

5.3.4 Factors influencing quality (asked only in Austria and the Czech Republic as a starting point of the group discussion)

Austrian and Czech reports refer to factors influencing the quality of SE in the view of the job coaches/assistants.

A wide variety of contributing factors were mentioned, which in fact do not differ from the project leaders' view in these cases. They all concern part of the agencies' life: organisational conditions (see point 5), personal requirements (point 4), feedback from clients and employers, co-operation with team colleagues (see above), the legislative framework.

This really fits to the overall structure of the group discussion and assures that we did not miss any important factor of quality when preparing the questionnaires.

5.3.5 Individual background/education of the job coach/assistant

Key skills and abilities

“The assistants come from very different training and career backgrounds,” says the Austrian report. This statement is valid for other partners too. Job coaches/assistants usually have previous work experience but not necessarily in related fields of activities. “Soft” abilities and skills seem to be more important than formal education. One interview partner in the UK mentions that education is overvalued in the area of SE. Basically, it is welcomed by job coaches, if the team is made up of persons with different educational and professional backgrounds.

In some projects there is quite a high fluctuation of job coaches / assistants. In the Austrian project, the most experienced assistant has been working there for less than 3 years (and has now changed her job within the agency). The Czech experience is similar. Here, there is high fluctuation of job assistants (providing coaching on the job) but not of job consultants.



Job coaches/assistants mention the following characteristics that they and their colleagues should have:

Table 15: Important characteristics of job coaches/assistants

Soft skills	Empathy, listening (NOR, HUN, AUT, UK)	Flexibility (AUT, CZE, UK)	Patience (NOR, UK, CZE)	Creativity (CZE, HUN)	Solution-oriented (NOR, HUN)
	Understanding for individuality (AUT, CZE)	Organisation talent; time management; work discipline (AUT, HUN, UK, CZE)	Good knowledge of disability topics (CZE, UK)	Reliability; confidence (UK, NOR, HUN)	Perseverance (AUT, UK)
	Tolerance (AUT)	Team capacity (AUT, UK)	Communication skills; negotiation (UK, HUN)		
Hard skills	Computer skills				
	Driving licence				
	Economic understanding				

From the assistants' point of view the ideal job coach does not differ much from an ideal professional employee anywhere. The specific feature is a stronger social orientation. S/he should be a member of a team and therefore specific characteristics can differ. The ideal employment assistant should have (based on the Austrian report):

- *practical knowledge,*
- *sales talent,*
- *business competence,*
- *expert knowledge,*
- *manual skills,*
- *social competence.*

The Norwegian report describes the ideal job coach as an educated team worker with experience from private business. It is important to have a mix of people with different backgrounds and experiences in a team since the composition of a job coach team is very important.

5.3.6 Ideal education

“Education is not that important”, is valid for all countries. The most important are abilities and skills, which have to fit into the team puzzle. Nevertheless some specific knowledge on disability, employment or benefit issues is also regarded as being important.

Table 16: Ideal education of job coach/assistant

Austria	Czech Republic	UK	Hungary	Norway
not specified	Crucial abilities not dependent on education	Benefits	Close to practice	Seeking ideal education is irrational as variation and diversity are needed
	Formal education requirements for respective positions – not strictly observed	Disability awareness	Give a lot of new information	On the college level and additional specific vocational rehabilitation training
		Housing and manual handling	Complex	Pedagogy
		Employment law		Psychology
		Sales and marketing training		Sales and marketing
		Communication training		
		No need-specific education		
		University of life		

5.3.7 Other issues (optional ones)

Further education of job coaches/assistants (and initial education as well) are not the strong areas within the agencies' life. On the one hand we observe the interest of job coaches to improve their abilities and specific qualification (they do ask for specific education and a systematic educational approach), on the other hand systematic education does not exist. In almost all projects, further education of staff is decided case-by-case and there is no systematic policy in the agencies. Further education seems to be able to contribute to the quality of Supported Employment, especially in an environment in which most of the job coaches come from very different backgrounds. Some are of the opinion that it is not really possible to prepare job coaches for this work – experience is most important. This, however, is seldom heard. Learning from other SE teams in the region is asked for in Norway.

Table 17: Needs for further education

Austria	Czech republic	UK	Hungary	Norway
	Supervision	Ongoing training in benefits, disability, specific areas of disability	Management skills	Development and guidance in pedagogy related to psychiatrics
			Knowledge of laws (finance, labour)	How to motivate people with mental illnesses
			Family-therapy training	Sales, marketing
			PC knowledge	
			Marketing	
			Education of the handicapped	

In the Norwegian report job coaches state that they are not *prepared to handle job-seekers' psychiatric/psychological problems*. Also mentioned is that it can be difficult for job coaches if they are given the role of scapegoat by the employer when difficulties with the job seeker occur. Another difficult situation that job coaches are confronted with is the frustration by time-consuming rigidity of rules and measures that are to be followed to obtain legal rights for the job seekers.

Job coaches choose this job because it is a meaningful task to help people to achieve better quality of life and integration into society (HUN, NOR). This work can help society to develop tolerance and integration. For some of them it is a challenge to work in a “pioneer field”, for others there is the possibility to earn a better wage than in another job (HUN). Austrian assistants expected direct contact with clients, independence in work, teamwork, variety of responsibility and the possibility to re-enter social work.

5.4 Organisational framework/working conditions

We have realised that job coaches in most cases regard organisational issues as given and not as being especially problematic with respect to performing their job. They are mostly focused on the work with the client and in most cases underline the good productive interpersonal relations within their agency, which allow them to share their experience and professional knowledge. In general the life in the participating SE-agencies does not differ too much from that in other social service organisations (with regard to organisational requirements). Clearly defined competencies and responsibilities in combination with a strong leader, work guidelines, regular meetings and the evaluation of work in a team of colleagues as well as work autonomy are important, but not always available.

In second place we may mention good remuneration and the appropriate technical background (infrastructure).

We have seen that in all agencies there exists written material about the main organisational issues and usually job coaches have good knowledge of it. The case of Britain where job coaches/assistants hardly mention existing policies is an exception. But we could in some cases observe that coaches feel bound by these basic materials and say that their work is more coloured than can be captured in a brochure (AUT, CZ). In some cases project leaders see this



quite differently and encounter difficulties in convincing staff of the importance of such material.

Table 18: Important conditions necessary for high-quality work performance

Austria	Czech Republic	UK	Hungary	Norway
Clear definition of responsibilities, structures	Functional rules and sensible managing	Support from management	Social contacts and interpersonal relations	Wage
Guidelines for working procedure	Education system	Further education and training	Professional growth	Good leadership in the team
Training	System of recruiting	Chance to talk to other job coaches – being part of a team	Definition of competencies and responsibilities	Social contact among members of the team
Continuing education	Enough time for direct work with client	Community support and sufficient number of social workers	Management	Professional autonomy
Regular and up-to-date exchange between staff, and also with management	Give the employees opportunity to make their own decisions	Recognition of individual responsibility	Wages and remuneration	Further education and technical equipment is seen as less important
Supervision	Clearly-defined competencies and responsibilities		Further education and training	Opportunities for improving: better understanding among employers; counselling on mental problems among clients; wages
Flexible time	Adequate number of assistants		Technical assistance	
Smoothly operating assistant team used to working together	Enough money for complete programme and employees as well			
Technical equipment	Open communication within agency			
	Technical background			

All agencies have established formal systems of information exchange among staff. We have gathered some details about the Czech and Hungarian systems, which have common characteristics. Both are based on regular meetings and on internal and external supervision.

The discussion has revealed a few *problematic topics* in the organisational field from the assistants' point of view. Resolving these issues can lead to improvement of the respective SE-services.

Austria

- *Regular and up-to-date exchange between staff doesn't work,*
- *Supervision is not encouraged by management,*
- *No formal training system (for newcomers and others),*
- *Internal manuals which have to be followed are too general,*
- *Co-operation with Lebenshilfe as responsible body is not good enough.*



Czech republic

- *Lack of job assistants, which is probably caused by limited financial resources,*
- *Definition of competencies seems to be available in manuals but is not so clear in reality,*
- *Informal exchange of information is not regarded as perfect,*
- *Work control is sometimes considered as insufficient.*

UK

- *Problematic co-operation with other agencies,*
- *Little mentioning of existing policies,*
- *Low morale and low numbers of social workers and community support,*
- *Communication is not good enough,*
- *More staff needed in some regions.*

Norway

- *Contacts with the Labour Office (selection of job-seekers) are not satisfactory,*
- *Co-operation with the outside treatment system should be improved,*
- *Missing contacts with the professional psychiatric system and exchange of information,*
- *Insufficient methods for evaluating clients,*
- *Lower financial contributions,*
- *Team work not developed enough and some difficulties with qualification.*

5.5 Summary and conclusion

During the second research phase 36 coaches/assistants were questioned and 38 participated in group discussions. Both research methods have been focused on similar topics relevant for studying Supported Employment, especially its quality aspects.

The main goals of SE in the job coaches' opinion are to find and maintain paid employment for people with learning disabilities and improving the quality of their lives. However, behind that main goal coaches/assistants see their mission also extended to everyday work with the client. Completing the smaller steps toward the main goal can also be seen as success. We can find these subgoals at every stage of the SE-process and in connection to all participating partners (clients, employers, families, official authorities etc.).

Aspects of success stem from all parts of the job coaches' work:

- *Client's progress on any stage of the SE-process,*
- *Satisfaction of the client, partners and coaches themselves,*
- *Reward by the community,*
- *Fruitful co-operation with all partners.*

The main point of the QUIP project is defining quality criteria of Supported Employment. Coaches/assistants reject evaluation based on numbers only. On the other hand they do not



have many ideas for alternative approaches. It seems this is an extremely difficult task for everyone. They proposed only a few ideas but without further specification. Some of them underlined the satisfaction of customers and feedback from different stakeholders. The only specific contribution was the observation of possible changes in day centres' attendance.

Supported Employment is quite a standardised measure when we look at the methods usually used or successive procedures even if compared on an international level. First contacts between the SE-agency and clients serve as a time for expressing their expectations, opportunities, motivation and roles. All coaches/assistants then try to check gained information, contact client's friends or family, repeatedly meet the client and build mutual confidence. They strive to define likes and dislikes, evaluate client's abilities. Coaches/assistants and clients both look for jobs. Clients have to be an active member of the team. The last stage common to all agencies is provision of support at the work place, helping the client to accommodate on the job and to learn the skills needed. Of course, there are some varying details in different countries. In some countries the agency's care does not stop with the "fading out" of the on-the-job support. In Norway the entry into the SE-process is quite unified (through the Labour Offices).

Coaches/assistants have to face a large variety of difficulties. Most of them are revealed when working with a client (proper way and amount of support; how to motivate them; how to handle different illnesses and impairments; communication etc.). Co-operation with other partners often brings problems to solve as well (communication with employers; fruitful co-operation with similar or supplementary agencies, parents). It is evident that coaches/assistants see their most difficult obstacles in overcoming the "soft" conditions of their job. They didn't mention lack of equipment or money as crucial issues.

The coaches'/assistants' characteristics and necessary background correspond to the previous statement. Flexibility, empathy, creativity, communication skills and team work are preferred over formal education or any "hard" skills.



6 The Job Seekers' Perspective

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6.1 Introduction and method

This report is based on national reports from questionnaire-based interviews with a total of 68 job seekers/clients in Supported Employment organisations in Austria, Hungary, UK, Czech Republic, Spain and Norway. A total of 48 job seekers also participated in group discussions carried out after the questionnaire interviews. The interviews took place in the late summer/early autumn of 2001.

All national reports mention problems with the methods used. In Norway also organisational and geographical problems arose that were connected to the practical aspects of the interviews.

The most frequently mentioned problem was that the interviewees (partly people with learning difficulties, see 2.1.) had trouble answering general or abstract questions. It is also mentioned that the interviewees were not able to judge the professional background, skills & characteristics of the job coaches that were asked about in the questionnaire. The Czech report writes: "Communication with some of the respondents would have been impossible without the job assistant's help ... Generally, we have gained better answers on questions focused on the particular aspects of the process and characteristics of the jobs than on questions concerning the quality and evaluation of the process". The UK report writes: "In practice, we found that the questionnaire worked reasonably well but contained too many closed questions and relied heavily on the sensitivity and creativity of the interviewer to enable the interviewee to respond in sufficient depth to the sense of the question being asked".

"Having a job" was not a condition for an interviewee to be included in this sample. The focus was on the Supported Employment process. The Hungarian report states, "the clients were selected from the whole process of Supported Employment, not only clients from the follow-up phase". In the Norwegian sample, also former job seekers in Supported Employment were interviewed. The reason for this was to get as much information about the Supported Employment process as possible, and as such it was a point to also include persons that had participated in the Supported Employment process in the respective organisation earlier.

6.2 Job seekers' individual background

6.2.1 Disability

While in some countries the interviewees largely represented a single type of disability, the total international sample represents a broad range of disabilities. Partners in Spain and UK have mainly interviewed people with learning disabilities, while in the rest of the countries job seekers with various and multiple disabilities are represented in the sample. This is due to the fact that the projects in UK, Spain and Hungary mainly cater to those with learning disabilities whereas the other projects address job seekers with a wider range of disabilities.



Table 19: Disability

Austria	Hungary	Czech Republic	Norway	Spain	UK
Dysthemia	Severe learning disability	Spastic wheelchair user	Diabetes/ Physical disability	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
Problems with Alcohol and Drugs, Social Problems	Moderate learning disability, epilepsy	Not specified, slow working speed	Fibrom/neck-shoulder	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
Physical disability	Moderate learning disability	Down's syndrome	Learning disabilities	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
Spasmodic Disorder	Moderate learning disability	Not specified	Mental/reading & writing problems	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
Learning disability	Moderate learning disability	Learning disability, psychotic difficulties	Physical disability, mental problems	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Hole in the heart
Epilepsy	Moderate learning disability, epilepsy	Hearing impairment, haunch difficulties	Mental problems	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
Hearing Impairment, Learning disability	Moderate learning disability, dyslexia	Psychotic difficulties	Mental problems, fibrom	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
Physical disability	Partial intellectual dysfunction	Not specified	Reading & writing problems	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
Learning disability, mental disability	Moderate learning disability, partial intellectual dysfunction	-	Brain damage, learning disabilities	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Learning disabilities
-	Severe learning disability	-	Social disability, physical disability	Learning disabilities, Down's Syndrome	Back injury
-	-	-	Mental problems	-	Learning disabilities
-	-	-	Learning disabilities	-	Learning disabilities
-	-	-	Phys. retarded	-	Learning disabilities
-	-	-	Brain damage,	-	Learning disabilities



Austria	Hungary	Czech Republic	Norway	Spain	UK
			reading & writing problems		ties, hearing impairment
-	-	-	Learning disabilities	-	Learning disabilities
-	-	-	Reading & writing problems, asthma/eczema	-	-

6.2.2 Gender and age

Both sexes are well represented in this sample, with an age span from 17 to 54. Most of the interviewees were between 20 and 39. Hungary differs from the others with all its interviewees being in their early 20s. The sample in Austria also contains very young persons, while interviewees in their early 20s are not represented in the Norwegian sample.

Table 10: Gender and age

Austria	Hungary	Czech Republic	Spain	Norway	UK ¹
F, 17	F, 20	F, 20	F, 26	F, 26	22
F, 21	F, 20	F, 32	F, 28	F, 29	25
F, 28	F, 20	F, 34	F, 31	F, 30	25
F, 43	F, 20	M, 30	F, 32	F, 44	27
F, 44	F, 24	M, 21	M, 20	F, 45	31
M, 18	M, 19	M, 22	M, 23	F, 48	34
M, 18	M, 21	M, 26	M, 25	F, 50	34
M, 32	M, 21	M, 32	M, 29	F, 53	36
M, 18	M, 22	-	M, 34	F, 54	36
	M, 22	-	M, 36	M, 25	37
-	-	-	-	M, 28	39
-	-	-	-	M, 30	41
-	-	-	-	M, 30	41
-	-	-	-	M, 37	47
-	-	-	-	M, 40	51
-	-	-	-	M, 47	-

¹ The national UK report does not state interviewees' gender.

Table 21: Age distribution

Under 20: 5
20 – 29: 29
30 – 39: 20
40 and over: 14

6.2.3 Jobs and work experience

Half of the interviewees in this sample have previous work experience. However, it has not become clear whether previous work experience is a mechanism that gives a person easier



access to a job via Supported Employment. The Czech Republic report states, “only one person who works now has previous work experience, thus previous work experience does not, on its own, guarantee success in Supported Employment”.

55 of the 68 interviewees reportedly have a job now, although it is not always clear if it is a permanent or temporary job, or work trials. The UK report states that “12 interviewees said that they had jobs at the time of the interview although later questions indicated that some of these were for very low hours and may have been paid work trials. 4 interviewees were not in work”.

6.2.4 Goals and expectations

The goals and expectations of participating in Supported Employment among the job seekers interviewed in this sample are to get a “permanent job”, a “suitable job”, a “paid job”, or a “better-paid job”. According to the *Hungarian* report, all interviewees come to Salva Vita to get a job. Except for one person, all interviewees tried to find a job before they came to the Supported Employment organisation. A few of them had been working before, but not with a binding contract in a legal way. The main expectation among the interviewees is to obtain a job for a long time. One interviewee expects a better job; two expect a suitable job, and two prefer a job near to their home. The interviewees also have expectations regarding the quality of the job, and two of them note that they would like to ensure the financial basis for their living.

In the *Austrian* case, “the expectations of the young clients go beyond the mere job and include a strong social component, the importance of the relationship with the job coach. The answers of the adults especially show one thing: At least some of the interviewed persons do not hope for just *any* job. Thus, the *quality* of the job is an important part of their considerations, which is reflected in statements such as ‘*a certain job*’ or ‘*To make things easier (at work)*’.”

Very few interviewees in this sample ‘chose’ to use the Supported Employment organisation through prior knowledge or as a choice between several other agencies. For example, the *Austrian* report states that none of the interviewed persons seems to have chosen this Supported Employment initiative intentionally, for example on the basis of information about the service. Moreover, they were referred to the initiative by other agencies or came across it by chance.

For most of the interviewees, there seem to be no other alternatives to Supported Employment. Often it is used by referring agencies as “the last possibility (when others failed)” as is stated in the *Czech* report.

6.3 Process and quality of Supported Employment

6.3.1 Referral route

While the public Labour Market Service seems to play an important role in most of the featured countries, the referral route to the Supported Employment organisation shows both similarities and differences across the countries.

In the *Czech Republic*, job seekers were first informed about Rytmus from different sources – relatives, friends, social workers, labour officers. Someone’s advice is the only way to reach Rytmus.



In *Spain*, most job seekers in this sample made contact with AURA through their previous school.

In *Norway*, all job seekers, in line with the national public Supported Employment regulations, came to *Romerike Arbeid med bistand* from the Labour Market Service. But the interviewees *initially* came to know about the organisation from various sources: The Labour Market Service, Sheltered Workshops, the Social Security Office, school, family and the local Community Activity Centre.

In *Austria*, the parents very often initiate young people's cooperation with the *Arbeitsassistentz Liezen*, whereas in the case of adults the regional *Labour Market Service* plays an important part.

In *Hungary*, all clients of Salva Vita previously came from the Labour Market Service. However, over the last year 50% came from the Labour Market Service and the rest knew the organisation from other sources, like special schools.

In the *UK*, a social worker or day care officer referred the majority of the sample, in line with the existing commissioning arrangements for *Into Employment*.

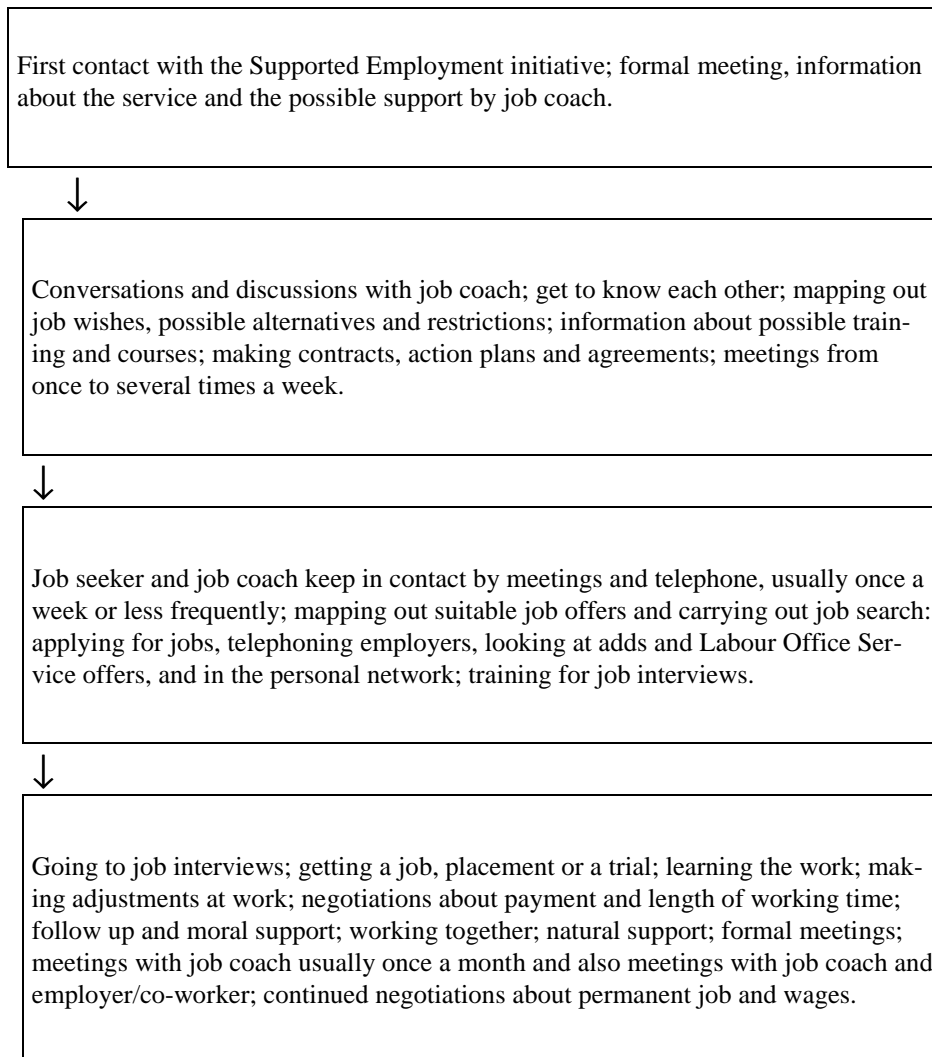
Job seekers in this sample have participated in the Supported Employment organisation from three months (*Hungary*) to up to ten years (*Spain*). In some countries, like *Austria* and *Norway*, there is an official time limit for participation in Supported Employment.

6.3.2 Cooperation

Some of the national reports give outlines of steps of co-operation with the Supported Employment organisation. Although it is argued in the national reports that steps in the process do not necessarily follow any chronological order, or that the steps vary greatly by individual, a general picture of the Supported Employment process presents itself that may look something like this:



Figure 1 The Supported Employment process from the point of view of the job seekers



6.3.3 Planning and user-involvement

The job seekers in this sample say that there has been some sort of planning which can be interpreted as user-involvement within the Supported Employment organisation. But it becomes clear that making process plans or action plans based on user-involvement is not a very well developed feature of the Supported Employment organisations in this project:

“After the first contact with the agency the assistants meet clients several times for defining the individual plan, where goals, ways how to reach them and some dates are stated. Job seekers participate in the process of definition of this plan, but they are not able to describe their own contributions. When asked for more detailed information on this plan they usually mentioned the nearest steps only” (*Czech Republic*).

The *UK* report states that there is a general lack of awareness of the role of written plans by most interviewees. Those that expressed a clear opinion said that they were aware that they had contributed to the plans, at least verbally.

All job seekers in the *Norwegian* report say that they had an influence and that they contributed, both to the written plan/scheme/report, or to the process in general. The way they con-



tributed was by talking and taking joint decisions concerning the next step. All but one of the respondents knew an answer as to what the next step would be, but they did not link their answers to any written plan. Rather, they answered in general terms, such as: “Stay in this job” or “Get a contract for a steady job”.

The *Hungarian* report states that the interviewees could not understand the meaning of “planning”. Instead they were asked about the particular steps of planning. Most interviewees know the next step in the process, and two interviewees said that they discuss the next step in the process week by week. But responses from other interview partners were that there was no planning, that one could not remember or that no answer was given. The interviewees do not feel that the Supported Employment process is planned; rather it has a “flexible plan – to confirm the next step”.

6.3.4 Obstacles to obtain a job

The interviewees were asked which obstacles they saw regarding their own participation in the labour market. The following is a list of reported obstacles for obtaining and maintaining a job in the open labour market:

Table 22: Obstacles to obtain a job

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bad shoulder • tempo and time • don't learn quickly • afraid • rejected • not needed • whiplash • depressed • not needed • problems with writing • bad arm/hand • unsafe with others • nervous • asthma • allergies • muscles • reading and writing problems • problems with theory • health problems • bad hand • don't understand rules • benefits stop me working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nobody to help, family worries • panic attacks • don't get a fair chance • people's reactions, people look down on me like I'm simple. • talk a lot • problems with deafness. • don't have good concentration span • lost all confidence • learning disability • age • not enough professional experience • few vacancies with office work • not enough specialised knowledge • restricted mobility
---	--

According to the *UK* report, problems cited appear to be disability-specific (i.e. deafness, back injury) or misunderstandings from people making mistakes in the workplace because they did not realise the ‘rules’.

The *Austrian* report indicates that young persons tend to make a distinction between “obtaining” and “maintaining”: “*I think maintaining a job is not so hard. But finding a job...*” This “optimism” might be explained by the fact, that young people’s experiences on the labour



market are rather restricted, which also means that they have had less bad experiences. In the opinion of the interviewed people, the main obstacle for obtaining a job in the open labour market is their disability. They make a remarkably clear distinction between their actual disability (for example physical problems with some jobs) and the handicaps resulting from the disability (for example prejudices of employers and colleagues). The interviewed adults stated that they had problems in obtaining *and* maintaining a job. They do not make a distinction between these two functions: “*It’s not easy. It’s difficult.*” In general they see more obstacles than the young people do, which may be a result of many years of experiences with the world of work.

The *Norwegian* report makes a distinction between “obstacles to obtain/retain a job” and “disability”, arguing that the former is the respondents’ own views, while the latter is a combination of job coaches’ views and those of the Labour Market Service.

6.3.5 Co-operation and support to overcome obstacles

The importance of *a personal relationship* between the job seeker and the job coach is emphasized in most interviewees’ answers to what a successful co-operation is. Important prerequisites in the relationship between job seekers and job coaches are:

Table 23: Important prerequisites for successful Supported Employment

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an open and nice atmosphere• good contact and easy talks• personal guidance• trust• discretion and professional secrecy |
|---|

Most interviewees are very satisfied with their Supported Employment organization. The report from the *Czech Republic* states that all but one of the job seekers understand their disadvantageous position on the labor market, so they are patient and usually don’t expect immediate success. Although some of them haven’t found a job yet they all positively evaluate the co-operation with the job coach.

Interviewees in this sample understand that the job coach helps them to overcome a variety of obstacles. The support that is asked for is a kind of permanent psychosocial and practical support not found elsewhere and which raises job seekers’ chances on the labour market, a door-opener to working life. One important factor appears to be the *availability* of the job coaches and their willingness to provide a wide range of support depending on the job seekers’ needs. Interviewees valued both practical and relationship-based support equally. Below are two tables containing lists of concrete support factors, categorised as “psychosocial support” and “practical support”.



Table 24: Psychosocial support factors from the point of view of the job seekers

Get started, sell myself on the labour market, pushing, good talks and conversations, somebody that is always accessible, social and moral support, anxiety reduction, identification of positive and negative sides, security, be treated as an adult, stop my worrying, make me happy, cheer me up, friendliness and equals terms

Table 25: Practical support factors from the point of view of the job seekers

Find a job, find the right job, find a suitable job, write applications, call employers, make appointments, training for and participation in job interviews, apply for a job, adjustments on the job, disposal of time, learn the job, travel, make agreement on wages, get to know the work place, look for job possibilities, meet and talk with the employer, a guarantee to the employer, get suggestions, access to work places, help job seeker to behave, help job seeker to be patient, help improve personal hygiene, technical training, applying for sponsorships, fill in forms, accompany job seeker to other authorities, help with paperwork, training to do a more difficult job, telephoning, get things explained, get answers to questions

According to the *UK* report, most interviewees mentioned their personal experience of being discriminated against and welcome the ‘advocacy’ of an employment adviser – someone who was clearly on their side. Job seekers in this sample will happily recommend their Supported Employment organisation to others. Reasons are, for instance: “Because I have the feeling, that I’m taken seriously, that they help you. That you feel like a human being, because I have to say in the Arbeitsmarktservice (labour exchange), you are in and out very quickly.” “Because they really look, that you can find something ... Because they help you, and they are all cool” (From the *Austrian* report).

6.3.6 Improvement factors

It is a general result that the interviewees in this sample hardly made any concrete proposals on how to improve Supported Employment. The *UK* report writes: “Most interviewees appeared to think highly and fairly uncritically about the agency and the staff involved with them and found it difficult to cite improvements or voice criticisms ... A general positive response suggesting an uncritical acceptance that Supported Employment is a ‘good’ thing but also perhaps indicating that people are not able to judge between a good agency and a bad one due to a general lack of comparators”.

The Spanish report states: “The most successful moment in their [job seekers] co-operation with their job coach is when they started the job or when they had an open-ended employment contract. They don’t think of any moment in which the co-operation wasn’t successful.”

Although it was difficult for the interviewees to suggest improvements of Supported Employment practices, the interviewees gave valuable answers to what they like and what they dislike. What they like is:

Table 26: What interviewees like about Supported Employment

- to get a job/a permanent job/a suitable job
- a job with good/better wages, with good environment, and friendly people



- a new start/a new life
- to work with normal people
- politeness
- a job coach that matches/adjusts to the job seeker

Such factors can point to areas of possible improvement. Likewise, what the interviewees dislike can be a concrete list of improvement factors for a Supported Employment scheme. What they dislike is:

Table27: Dislikes in Supported Employment

- no job
- some of the jobs
- some of the bosses, some customers, low status, low wages
- insisting or dictating job coaches (power relations, master – client)

An interviewee mentions: “I don’t like that Supported Employment is called rehabilitation; I think it should be an offer to any pupil after school; I don’t like that Supported Employment appears to be something special – that only makes me special” (*Norwegian report*).

Below is a list of examples of unsuccessful co-operation between the job seeker and the job coach, which may also show evaluation points for improvement:



Table 28: Examples of unsuccessful co-operation in Supported Employment

If I had the feeling that they would let me fall	I didn't like the conversations between my boss and my job coach about my progress.
My job coach didn't quite understand my problems; thought they were mental problems, but my main problem comes from earlier strains. I got proof of that when experts checked me	Too little contact with the job coach, wish I got more follow-up at my work place, had a lot of questions. I was told the job coach wouldn't disturb me, that I needed to concentrate on my job and not talk so much and ask questions
The job coach is too serious	My job coach didn't do enough to check possibilities for a steady job after the try-out phase.
Co-operation with no equal rights	If you do not get on well with your job coach
A bit too much contact with my job coach in the beginning	My job coach could have participated more in the adjustments at work
I didn't like to have to list up friends and acquaintances to investigate job possibilities.	My job coach didn't do enough to check possibilities for a steady job after the try-out phase
My job coach is not the person that I had hoped for, could just as well have fixed things by myself via the Labour Market Service, the job coach is not very active or enthusiastic, won't find me a job	My first job coach was not very eager and not very up-to-date.
The Supported Employment organisation does not have a good public profile – people at my work place didn't know it	Took too much time before I got a job, didn't like to lose 2 job coaches
A job coach that was too prevailing, couldn't cooperate, too much pressure to get a job quickly, did not feel secure	

6.3.7 Skills and characteristics of a job coach

It appears that job seekers want their advisers to be *multi-skilled* and *always ready to listen*. According to the interviewees of this sample, a job coach must be a supporter, one that gives the job seeker a push, one that can find the job seeker a suitable job, one who can talk with potential and actual employers, one that can raise a job seeker's self-esteem, a person that creates a safe atmosphere and improves the job seeker's chances on the labour market. The *UK* report comments that the responses tended to indicate that 'soft' skills (listening, honesty, integrity, confidentiality) were more immediately important than 'harder' skills, i.e. support at and for interviews. It is not clear if this holds true for the other countries.

The following profile of a "good job coach" incorporates factors from the national reports:



Table29: Profile of a “good job coach”

responds to the person’s needs	empathy, communicative skills, value opinions	is concerned with problems	sensitiveness for those in need of support
takes a person’s impairments into account	sympathetic, friendly, patient	ready to help	open, obliging
politeness, not directive	is able to deal with people	not too serious	advocate on my behalf
expert-knowledge and qualifications	support at the workplace	accompanying at job interviews	social support
helps to find a job	a matching age	discreet/confidential	follows up on job seeker

6.4 Description of the current jobs

6.4.1 The jobs

The *UK* report noted that the only employment the questionnaire focused on is either current or predates involvement with the agency. This suggested an assumption that agencies only get one job for each client. This obviously is not always the case.

For those in the sample that hold a job, the typical pattern seems to be part-time work. The Spanish report shows that all 10 interviewees were working 20-25 hours per week from Monday to Friday. The Norwegian and Austrian samples also feature persons that hold a full-time job (Austria 5 and Norway 2.)

These jobs, part-time and full-time, are mainly identified as “the odd jobs”, or the low qualified jobs, often described as “assistant”. The following list features types of jobs mentioned in the national reports:

Table30: List of jobs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant at hospital • Assistant department store • Assistant in warehouse • Auxiliary work beside the gardener • Auxiliary work beside the warner • Auxiliary work in a printing house • Auxiliary worker in the kitchen • Bar assistant • Bookshop • Cantina assistant • Carpenter apprenticeship • Catering assistant • Cleaner • Cleaning at Supported Employment organisation • Cleaning in a hair dresser's • Cleaning tables at coffee shop • Clothes shop • Coffee shop assistant, cleaning tables • Controlling mobile phones in an automated system • Data operator • Factory production assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeper in a sports service • Kitchen assistant • Kitchen help • McDonald's • Office cleaner/general assistant • Office clerk at hospital • Office clerk at reception • Office clerk at university • Office clerk in a bank • Office clerk in a foundation • Office help (training course) • Office switchboard • Packaging • Petrol station help • Restorer at supermarket • Sales assistant apprenticeship • School cleaning • Shop assistant • Waitress assistant • Factory production work • Goods recharger • Hair dresser assistant
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Jobs are mostly assistant jobs and those usually associated with disabled people. Jobs are typically found by the Supported Employment organisation (more seldom by the individuals themselves) in the private sector.⁶ However, some jobs are also found in the public sector, notably in Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic and Spain. Austrian job seekers have jobs (training courses) in non-profit organisations.

Most jobs for the persons featuring in this sample exist in smaller work places, in this project defined as having less than 50 employees.⁷ The number of employees in workplaces for people featuring in the samples from Austria, Norway, the Czech Republic and Spain is mostly less than 50, but the Norwegian, Austrian and Spanish samples also feature work places with more than 100 employees. The Hungarian sample features persons working for the most part in large workplaces (over 50).

Those that work report that they are happy and integrated, they talk with colleagues, but have very little relations with their colleagues outside or after work hours. However, most of the interviewees seem to be happy with the kind of everyday contact with colleagues.

All interviewees stated the key role of the job coach in helping them find their current job. Responses from interviewees clearly indicate that the job coach's role in working directly

⁶ The national UK report does not contain information about sector.

⁷ The national UK report does not contain information about number of employees.



with employers to change attitudes is greatly valued. All interviewees said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their job.

People do receive help from colleagues in a variety of ways but nobody stated that they had anything more than normal, helpful relationships with their colleagues.

6.4.2 Dislikes about the jobs

Most interviewees had difficulty thinking about anything they would like to change – either reflecting the generally uncritical perception of job seekers or the genuine appreciation of a good job match that includes natural support. Below are lists of factors indicating what they don't like about the job. These are categorised in “integration dislikes on the job”, “job external dislikes” and “practical job dislikes”:

Table31: Integration dislikes on job

- don't get paid for holidays
- feel that I work for free for the employer
- the odd jobs
- the wages
- too low status
- didn't feel welcome among the colleagues in the beginning
- didn't like some of the customers
- it doesn't always work well with my boss
- it's always me who must adjust
- some communication problems
- the boss didn't treat me well
- to be told to do other things
- would have preferred to work with people of my own age, more grown-ups

Table32: Job external dislikes

- don't like to get up early
- long way to travel

Table 33: Practical job dislikes

- checking toilets
- clean floor and dishes
- clean floors
- come to late
- should have learned more computer work
- they're happy with me socially but they claim that I'm not 100% effective in my job so I'm not very well paid
- throw away old food in the Cantina
- washing the buffers
- what I do wrong



6.4.3 What job seekers like about their job

The list below indicates that interviewees were clear that they liked the whole ‘package’ of having a job – wages, status, friends and even the exercise:

Table34: Likes about the job

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact with customers – working with people • contact with people • friends • get along with everybody • getting out of my flat • good to finish off at 2 o’clock – no responsibility after work • I walk, sit, stand – nothing is one-sided • lot’s of different things to do • meet new people all the time • meeting and talking to people • meeting new people • money • my colleagues and the environment • need not do the same all the time • never nervous to go to work • nice colleagues and customers • nice environment – just what I need today • no one ever argues with me • no quarrels • sense of having my own company – something to get up for • sense of responsibility • something’s happening all the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that I need no education • that it’s easy to do the work • that it’s well paid • that they miss me when I’m not there • the challenges in making food • the co-operation • the exercise • the fresh air • the people and the clothes • the social environment • the socialising • the team work • the way I’m treated • the work • time passes quickly • to do a good job – I love my job • to do my tasks • to fill up products • to make it nice • to mix with colleagues • to see the place clean • to work 5 hours each day • to work with food • to work with my boss and my colleagues • young team
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All those currently in work were happy with their roles suggesting that the agencies are making competent job matches based on individual preferences or service users are still uncritical and have modest expectations. The *UK* report argues that given the relatively low hours and low pay present in this random sample, further questioning may be necessary to ensure that expectations are at least as high as those of other non-disabled people in the labour market.

The *Austrian* report highlighted two different kinds of quotations from interviewees: All interviewees said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their job. Only two young persons, who are in training to become an office help in the so-called *Eingliederungshilfe*⁸, would like to have a “real” apprenticeship or job. (Nevertheless, they told us, that they are satisfied with the atmosphere at their work place). Another young person we interviewed emphasised that he could have claimed a “sheltered work place”, but now has a normal place in appren-

⁸ The project *Eingliederungshilfe* of the Lebenshilfe runs since February 2001 and offers a two-year qualification to become an office-worker.



ticeship training. These two answers may be interpreted in such a way that not the work *per se* is important, but also in how much the work place is a normal one (in the sense of “normalisation”). Together with a wish which has been described already earlier (to find an adequate job, for instance appropriate to the qualification), “to find a real, interesting job” seems to be – at least for some clients – another important quality criterion of *Supported Employment*.

6.5 Summary and conclusions

This report is based on national reports from questionnaire-based interviews with a total of 68 job seekers/clients in Supported Employment organisations in Austria, Hungary, the UK, the Czech Republic, Spain and Norway. A total of 48 job seekers also participated in group discussions carried out after the questionnaire interviews. The total sample represents persons with a broad range of disabilities that are participating in Supported Employment. Also, both sexes are well represented, with an age span from 17 to 54. Most of the interviewees were between 20 and 39. Half of the interviewees had had work experience before they entered Supported Employment and their *goals and expectations* are to get a permanent job, a suitable job, a paid job, or a better-paid job.

While the public Labour Market Service seems to play an important role in most of the featured countries, the referral route to the Supported Employment organisation has both similarities and differences in each country. However, it seems that very few interviewees chose to use the Supported Employment organisation based on prior knowledge or as a choice between different agencies.

For most of the interviewees, there seem to be no alternatives to Supported Employment. Job seekers in this sample have participated in the Supported Employment organisation from three months to up to ten years. In some countries there is an official time limit for participation in Supported Employment.

Steps in the Supported Employment process do not necessarily follow any chronological order. Steps vary greatly by individual. We have found that making process plans or action plans based on user-involvement is not a very well-developed feature of the Supported Employment organisations.

Overall, the interviewees appear to be very satisfied with the Supported Employment organisation. The importance of a personal relationship between the job seeker and the job-coach is emphasised in interviewees’ answers to what is a successful co-operation in Supported Employment. Important prerequisites in the relationship between job seekers and job coaches are an open and nice atmosphere; good contact and easy talks; personal guidance; trust; discretion and professional secrecy. Required support factors from job seekers are both “psychosocial” and “practical”. It also appears that job seekers want their job coaches or advisers to be multi-skilled and always ready to listen. All interviewees stated the key role of the job coach in helping them find their current job.

The typical jobs where job seekers can be found, are largely part-time, and are mainly identified as “the odd jobs”, or the low-qualified jobs. Most jobs exist in smaller work places (less than 50 employees). Those in work report that they talk with colleagues, but apparently they have very little relations with their colleagues outside or after work hours. However, most of the interviewees that have a job seem to be happy with the kind of everyday contact with colleagues and they are satisfied or very satisfied with their job. Interviewees had difficulty thinking about anything they would like to change. This may reflect either the generally un-critical perception of job seekers or the genuine appreciation of a good job match.



7 The Employers' Perspective

Tony Phillips, Realife Partnership (UK)

7.1 Introduction and summary

This fourth phase of the Leonardo 'QUIP' (Quality in Practice) project focused on the employer's perception of the quality of one Supported Employment agency from each of the following countries: England; Hungary; Czech Republic; Austria; Spain and Norway.

This paper summarises the authors' view of what constitutes the main findings of the research and their implications for the final stages of the two-year research programme with the QUIP project.

Researchers in each country used a semi-structured interview format designed to capture common issues that relate to Supported Employment services in each country whilst also allowing for open conversations on any matter identified as important by the individual employer. Fifty interviews were carried out in total.

At the design stage, the views of co-workers (colleagues in the workplace) were also seen as important to gaining an overall picture of the employer's view. Whilst co-workers do not have the legal responsibility of recruitment and workforce development, they have a crucial role in ensuring the success of any Supported Employment placement.

Employer's responses were very positive and uncritical to such a degree that questions can be raised about the effects of low expectations and a relative lack of comparative experience that would allow the employer to judge a good service from a mediocre one. Researchers in all countries reported that several questions required considerable additional explanation before the employer felt confident to respond.

7.2 Summary of main findings

Employer sectors:	Private sector:	38
	Public sector:	5
	Not for profit sector:	7
Company size:	Over 100 employees	10
	50-100 employees	15
	under 50 employees	26
Company activity:	Retail sector:	18 supported employees
	Community:	12 supported employees
	Leisure sector:	10 supported employees
	Services:	9 supported employees



Catering:	7 supported employees
Manufacturing:	4 supported employees
Education:	4 supported employees
Environment:	4 supported employees
Housing:	3 supported employees
Building:	1 supported employee
Health:	1 supported employee

Employer expectations: 'No expectations' at 33% of the sample (see table 2)
'Ongoing support' at 17% of the sample (see table 2)

Type of impairment:	Learning disability	32
	Physical	13
	Mental health	4
	Sensory	3
	Social	1

(Note: at least three supported employees had more than one personal impairment)

Overall satisfaction: 98% of employers questioned stated that they were satisfied with the services provided by the Supported Employment agency (see table 3)

Essential skills required of employment advisers:

Social skills	75%
Technical skills	14%
Knowledge	11%

(see tables 4 and 5)

Reason for employment:	Employee's suitability	37%
	Social reasons	27%



7.3 Discussion of results (selected)

7.3.1 Employer profiles

Table 35: Amalgamated table of company details by sector

Company type		Sector	No. Employees	No. employees with a disability	Type of disability
1	Leisure	Private	52	3	Mental health/visual
2		Private	under 50	1	Learning
3		Private	over 100	2	Learning/Hearing
4		Private	over 100	1	Learning
5		Private	under 100	1	Learning
6		Private	under 100	1	Learning
7		NFP	5	1	Physical
8	Retail	Private	56	1	Learning
9		Private	550	3	Learning/Epilepsy
10		Private	28	1	Learning
11		Private	35	3	Learning/Physical
12		Private	50-100	1	Learning
13		Private	over 100	2	Learning
14		Private	8	1	Learning
15		Private	50	2	Learning
16		Private	24	2	Physical
17		Private	50	2	Mental Health
18	Building	Private	22	1	Learning
19	Health	NFP	230	3	Physical
20		Private	over 100	1	Learning
21	Manufacture	Private	30	0	
22		Private	over 100	1	Learning
23		Private	50	1	Learning
24		Private	50	1	Not stated
25		Private	110	1	Social
26	Services	Private	7	1	Mental health
27		Private	15	1	Learning
28		Private	under 50	1	Learning
29		Private	under 50	1	Learning
30		Private	40	1	Learning
31		Private	140	1	Learning
32		Private	50	1	Physical/Sensory
33		Private	3	1	Physical
34		Private	26	1	Mental Health/Physical
35		Housing	NFP	9	3
36	Catering	Private		1	Learning
37		Public	11	1	Learning
38		Private	45	4	Learning/Physical
39		Private	10	1	Learning
40	Community	NFP	4	2	Learning/Physical
41		NFP	2	2	Learning



42		Public	13	1	Learning
43		NFP	27	6	Learning/Physical
44		NFP	12	1	Learning
45	Education	Private	50-100	1	Learning
46		Private	50-100	1	Learning
47		Public	38	1	Learning
48		Public	over 100	1	Physical
49	Environment	Public	50-100	1	Learning
50		Private	under 100	3	Learning/Physical

The majority of employers operated in the private sector (38/50) with 5 from the public sector and 7 from the voluntary or not for profit sector. 26 companies had less than 50 employees; 15 had between 50-100 employees and 10 were large organisations with over 100 employees. The sample is not large enough to draw any real conclusions about the implication that smaller companies are more likely to employ a disabled person through a Supported Employment service, but this does raise an interesting issue for further research.

7.3.2 Employer expectations

Table 36: International summary of employer expectations (General and 2.2)

Employer expectations (amalgamated)	Amalgamated responses	%
No expectations	8	33%
Ongoing support	4	17%
Giving the support necessary to employ the disabled person	4	17%
Advice and guidance when needed	2	8%
Close co-operation	2	8%
Giving us an employee as soon as possible	1	4%
Respecting our company culture	1	4%
Help with travel	1	4%
Not burdening other employees	1	4%

Comment

The low level of employer expectation (table 2) and the high level of employer satisfaction (table 4) tend to suggest that employers are grateful for any support they get. This is even more relevant when judged against the results in table 6 ('nothing needs to be improved' at over half of the sample) and 'employee's suitability' and 'social reasons' given for the reason to appoint a supported employee in the first place (table 7). The fact that 98% of employers stated that their needs had been met (table 3) is hardly surprising given the statements above.

In reply to a question about the qualities that employers might look for from a Supported Employment service, there was a variety of responses ranging from the clear requirement of

'they have to avoid everything that could put a burden on other employees'

to the sensitive response of



‘an agency that once having integrated an employee into a working environment, knows when to stand back to let them develop their confidence by making mistakes and learning from them’

One employer summed up the balancing act in saying that

‘In general we can say that employers try to avoid extra costs, but in reality they are not so strict’

One particular employer opted for a full 'social model' response by implying that they wanted the Supported Employment agency to be a partner in the move towards social inclusion in saying

‘More than a service I look for a co-operation’

7.3.3 Employer needs and identification of essential skills

Table 37: International summary: meeting employer needs

Employer needs met (amalgamated)	Amalgamated responses
Yes	49
No	1

Table 38: International summary: Essential skills for employment advisers

Essential skills and characteristics (amalgamated)	Amalgamated responses
Patience	9
Empathy	8
Good communicator	6
Knowledge of disability issue in the labour market	4
Respect	3
Good knowledge of the company	3
Flexibility	3
Humanity	3
Realism	3
Kindness	3
Qualifications	3
Previous experience	3
Perseverance	3
Good technical skills	2
No specific skills	2
Availability	1
Honesty	1
Health and Safety	1
Decision-making	1
Courage	1
Sense of humour	1



Table 39: International summary: Employers' views of essential skills for employment advisers by category (2.4)

Essential skills and characteristics (categorised)	Amalgamated responses	%
Social skills	48	75%
Technical skills	9	14%
Knowledge-based	7	11%

Tables 38 and 39 are taken from the authors' own judgement on categorised responses from employers from all participating countries. It could be argued that many social skills listed in table 38 are actually technical skills but there is a clear difference between employers' statements that suggest specific areas of technical ability (e.g. Signing, previous experience, other impairment specific skills) rather than personal characteristics like empathy and patience.

7.3.4 Suggested improvements

Table 40: International summary: Employers' views of possible improvements

Areas for improvement (categorised)	Amalgamated responses
Nothing needs to be improved	27
Organise meetings for employers	4
Don't know	3
Marketing and public relations	3
Better liaison with other agencies	2
Better job matching	1
Increase duration of wage subsidies	1
Be less naïve	1
Speak clearly	1
Maintain regular contact	1
Better preparation of supported employees	1

Given the difficulty in getting employers to attend interviews, conferences and seminars experienced by the UK team and others over the past 15 years, it is surprising to hear that 8% of employers would like to have meetings organised for them to discuss disability issues. For example, one employer said

'the Supported Employment agency should organise meetings for employers'.

This could be an area of major difference between countries who have a less developed Supported Employment sector and those where employers are beginning to feel the additional pressures that an active equal opportunities policy can bring.

The perceived use and value of wage subsidy programmes clearly differs from country to country. One employer working in a country that makes heavy use of wage subsidy as part of an overall government strategy said:

'The free time (without pay) that we had for 1 month is too short, 6 months is better for the employer and the employee can feel more safe.'

Levels of contact between employers and Supported Employment agency staff vary according to the needs of each employer and each supported employee and the majority of the employers appeared to be happy with the general frequency of contact.



However, one employer commented that more attention could be given to follow up calls after the initial placement and support period has proved satisfactory to all concerned. The suggestion was

'Perhaps she (employment adviser) could come or give me a call once a month'

suggesting that a regular 'check in' might be even more helpful than a call-out service to deal with difficulties.

The political dimension was also stressed by one employer who suggested to the Supported Employment service that

'They have to exploit the legal system as a pressure on the employer'

A general lack of competition by competition provides one explanation for the employers' high satisfaction rates.

7.3.5 Employer's reasons for employing disabled people

Table 41: International summary: Employers reasons for employing disabled people

Reason for employment (categorised)	Amalgamated responses
Employee's suitability	15
Social reasons	12
Employer's own commitment	6
The agency convinced me	5
Promised to get the job done	2
Financial incentive	2
Legal reasons	1
Successful trial period	1

Most employers stressed the obvious link between the work that needed to be done and the employees' ability to do the job. However, there was a very strong additional motivating factor based on the employers' own personal conviction that employment was something of a 'rights' based issue.

One of the two Spanish agencies in the study based its work on a model that assumed each employee should complete a trial period to prove that the worker was going to be an effective member of the team. The employers' response confirmed the efficacy of the approach:

'During the trial period the worker proved efficient in doing the job.'

Although this does raise questions about the exact criteria any employer would use to judge what 'efficiency' actually means. The responsibility would rest with the job coach to ensure that the employee was trained effectively and supported by co-workers. One employer summed up the model by saying:

'the agency is expert in the integration process and we as employers make it valid'

The employers who were clear about their social conscience motivation responded with heartening insight. One employer commenting on the ups and downs of recruiting said

'Each of us may be affected by a disability anytime...

If it works, it's OK. If it doesn't, well, it doesn't'



whilst another was clear about a key reason for recruiting a disabled person, that appeared to carry equal weight with the person’s ability to do the job well:

‘It is probably compassion’

7.3.6 Contracts, pay and perks

Table 42: Interview, contract and payment summaries by country

Country	Interview		Contract		Paid		
	Yes	No	Yes	No			
Austria	3	2	4	2	Six paid with three receiving financial support from the Labour Market Service		
Spain	10	5	13	2	Thirteen paid. Two responses not known		
UK	6	1	6	1	Six paid. One response not known		
Hungary	5	1	6	0	Six paid although one contract negotiated to contain ‘no financial responsibility’		
Czech Republic	7	0	7	0	Seven paid including three ‘special rates negotiated’		
Norway	6	1	7	0	Six paid. One employee not paid		
Summary	74%	26%	86%	14%	Paid	Not paid	Not known
					90%	4%	6%



Table 43: Company training, company perks and social inclusion

Country	Company Training		Company Perks		Social Activities	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Included	Excluded
Austria	2	4	6	0	5	1
Spain	8	7	14	1	15	0
UK	7	3	8	2	8	2
Hungary	1	4	5	0	5	0
Czech Re- public	1	6	5	2	5	2
Norway	6	1	7	0	7	0
Summary	50%	50%	90%	10%	90%	10%

In terms of remuneration and company perks, the majority of employers do not appear to distinguish between supported employees and any other employees. However, the Norwegian team noted that they had anecdotal evidence that some wages might only be ‘pocket money’ and most countries reported similar difficulties in steering employees around the difficult balance between benefit payments and earned income. In some cases this led to employees being worse off working than they were on benefits, as in this example

‘We agreed to give the employee standard pay rate but the employee lost money that way because he lost the social benefits money.’

7.3.7 Employer’s value judgements

The general view that employers preferred supported employees to simply be part of the team was summed up by one employer’s comment that

‘The employee is treated as an individual and given the independence to tackle his allotted task – if he needs help he will ask’

Even when the employee demanded extra attention, some employers were happy to stretch their own responsibilities to ensure the supported employee was included.

One employer commented:

‘Yes, sometimes it means extra work. But I have to tell you – for such problems, I always have the time’



One employer described their natural supports stance in the warm-hearted phrase

'the Employee has a personal protector'

We have already commented on employers' positive reactions to Supported Employment staff but there appears to be a slight difference in the way they describe the contribution of the actual supported employee in some cases.

One employer commented:

'We have neutral experience, it is good for her, we haven't got any profit from it'

In terms of employers' overall experience of the pros and cons of employing disabled people in general through Supported Employment projects, reactions vary from the extremely negative

'Having him here has taken far too much of my time – I was not prepared for that'

to the interesting critique of some possibly over-zealous job coaches

'The negative side has been in some case to give him too much support so that it has increased his "dependence" when the contrary is desirable'

This perceptual anomaly demands critical attention. Supported Employment services should be judged on the quality of the job applicants but we are seeing clear evidence here that employers view the job coaches as the experts – creating a further barrier to genuine acceptance of the need for diversity to be reflected in the workplace.

One employer, clearly searching for a way to express regret and frustration, spoke about the important yet subtle interpersonal nuances that make for effective working relationships

'We can't smile together – he doesn't make the initiative'

7.4 Further key questions and issues for discussion

1.1 Issue: Positive feedback syndrome

Question: Are we asking the right questions in the right way?

The general lack of critical comment leads us to question the usefulness of

- a) the questions that we asked
- b) the way that we asked them and
- c) the experiential basis upon which employers could make a comparison with other services

The small size of the sample and the clear differences in national programmes, culture and service delivery assumptions makes it impossible to do more in this paper than to raise the above questions as key issues for further research.

3.2 Issue: Expert syndrome

Question: What is the role of SE agencies and employers in problem solving? Who should lead?

Some of the employers interviewed in this sample were clear that they wanted to be in control of the employment process and expected the Supported Employment agency to treat them as a 'client' with as much care and attention as they treated the job seeker. Others saw the employment adviser as the expert and expected them to take control of the induction process.

3.3 Issue: Personal experience syndrome



Question: Are employers who have previous experience of people with a disability better potential employers?

It would appear from this limited sample that employers who have either direct personal experience of previous employment situations that have included disabled people and/or a past or existing relationship with a disabled person will be more sensitive to the political, social and ethical reasons for creating a more diverse workforce than employers who have had narrower life experiences. This has interesting implications for marketing SE services and attempting to target receptive companies and individuals who are more likely to see beyond the stereotype of seeing 'disabled' as meaning 'less-able'.

However, a note of caution is needed here because several employers in this sample cited 'soft' reasons for their recruitment decision, which could be construed as being patronising by some disabled activists.

3.4 **Issue:** Elephant repellent syndrome (The Quality Debate)

Question: Do employers know the difference between good and bad practice?

This important issue opens up the whole 'open market' debate. As there is no evidence of competition in any one area by rival Supported Employment agencies, none of the usual market forces are present to create a quality hierarchy.

No employer mentioned the need for this kind of mechanism but it was also clear that most employers did not really have a clear expectation about what they expected in the first place.

The responsibility for quality development appears to rest with the good will of the Supported Employment agency and, to a lesser extent perhaps, their funding agency (see phase 5 report for the policy-makers' perspective)

8 The Policy Makers' and Financers' Perspective

Miklós Csiszar, Hungarian Quality Development Centre for Industry and Trade

8.1 The method

All 6 countries participating in the project took part in the survey, too. Altogether, 31 interviews were carried out with representatives of 23 organisations. These 23 organisations represented 11 legislative and 12 financing bodies on national, regional and local level. The detailed list of the organisations interviewed is shown below in Table 44.

Table 44

Country	Policy-maker	Financer
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations (national level) Provincial Government of Styria (regional level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Office of Social Affairs/Styria (regional and local level) Labour Market Service Styria (regional and local level)
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section for Employment Policy of Persons with Changed Working Capacity – part of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (national level) Labour Office District Písek (regional level) Labour Office District Ceske Budejovice (regional level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Service Department (national level)
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex County Council Social Service Department (regional level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex County Council Social Service Department (regional level) Department of Work and Pension's Employment Service (regional level) Essex County Council enterprise Division, Essex County Council Social Service Department (regional level)
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directorate of Labour (national level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional/Country Labour Market Service (regional level) Local Labour Market Service (local level)
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Rehabilitation and Learning Disabilities at the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs (national level) Employment Institute (national level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Employment Fund /OFA/ (national level) Metropolitan Labour Centre /FMK/ (regional level)
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Labour and Social Service (national level) National Institute for Community Integration in Salamanca (national level) Department of Labour of regional government (Andalucia) Department of Labour of regional government (Catalunya) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Labour of regional government (Andalucia)⁹ Department of Labour of regional government (Catalunya)¹

⁹ These organisations are involved in the policy-making process as well as in funding.



The interviews lasted for 30-60 minutes on average. In some of the countries the list of the questions to be asked at the interview was sent out in advance so that interviewees were able to prepare. This seemed to work well in these cases and can be recommended for similar interviews.

During the interviews the question of whether interviewees should speak on behalf of their organisation (CZ) or should express their own opinion (H) was raised. Consequently, when conducting further surveys it is important to distinguish between the official view of the agency and the personal view of the interview partner. There should be enough space for the interview partner to voice his/her personal opinion. At the same time, when evaluating the interviews it is important to consider the official view, the one that is accepted by the organisation in question. For this reason, when conducting the interviews as well as when analysing them, it is vital that these two areas be kept apart.

The Norwegian partners decided to opt for a group interview. The advantage of such a method is that it ensures the meeting of different partners, who at the same time can familiarise themselves directly with the opinion of other financing bodies and legislators. Additionally, if well prepared, at a group discussion participants will be motivated to share their opinions.

On the other hand, finding a time that is suitable for all those concerned can be difficult, and conducting a group interview requires expertise. However, provided that it is prepared professionally, it can be a very successful way of carrying out an investigation and can be recommended instead of individual interviews.

Finally, several countries found that partners having a closer contact with the organisation providing the SE service put forward concrete, practical suggestions and also formed a definite opinion about the service and the organisation providing it. At the same time, those partners who were in more distant contact with the organisation made recommendations that were more general and less practical.

These findings have to be taken into account by an SE agency carrying out a self-evaluation. They need to be considered when deciding what type of information the organisation requires and what the aim of the evaluation is – to assess the financier or the legislator.

Alternatively, it may be that different partners will need different types of questions, which can ensure that the investigation will be more exact.

8.2 Co-operation between the SE agency and policy-makers / funding agency

The questions relating to co-operation were put only to the representatives of the organisations who were in direct contact with the SE provider. The majority of these were representatives of financing bodies. At the same time, a great number of legislators stressed the importance of their existing good contact with the SE provider.

In all the countries participating in the project all those questioned judged their relationship with the SE service provider to be good, or in some cases very good. This was further supported by the fact that the majority of the interview partners have been in long-term contact lasting for 5-10 years with the SE service provider.

Various views were listed as reasons for a good contact with partners, for example, accurate data documentation and communicating this to the funding agency (H) and pleasant atmosphere (A) were mentioned. Some elements were present in all countries. The most important of these that were present in the reports about four countries (A, S, N, H) were co-operative problem-solving and participation in co-operative development. Moreover, active and con-



tinuous contact establishment came up in two countries (CZ, H), similarly to accurate data documentation and communicating this to the funding agency (N, H).

In relation to possibilities for improving co-operation, different suggestions were made. National features also became apparent as was the case in earlier stages of the QUIP project. For example, in Austria the most important obstacle to co-operation seemed to be the high turnover rates for job coaches.

It is interesting that in the Czech data it appears that co-operation would benefit if financiers were able to spend more time with the SE service or with co-operating with the SE service provider. The Hungarian results already draw attention to the lack of a national framework, since the financier identified the improvement of co-operation between NGOs and the government as a possibility of improving its relationship with the service provider. Linked to this is the finding of the British summary that identifies the development of a framework for providing SE service as the necessary element of improvement. While in Hungary the most important expectation is the establishment of the framework, in Britain suggestions were made for its development.

This remark supports a claim that has already come up several times during the project. According to it, candidate countries just as well as some EU countries are significantly behind countries like the UK, Norway or Austria in the development of a national framework for providing SE service. More information about this topic is provided by the fact that in the field of SE only the UK, Norway and Austria have national (Norway, Austria) or regional (UK) policy guidelines.

8.3 Aim of SE

All those questioned considered the aim of SE service generally known. In listing the aims and classifying them the harmony with the aims of the organisation in question (financing and legislative aims) was highlighted. The responses of the different countries are summarised in Table 45.

In the majority of countries, employment in the ordinary labour market was listed as the first aim of providing SE service. In several countries this was supplemented by the explanation that it is an important aim because it contributes to the social integration of people with disabilities.

Table 45

Country	Aim of SE
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New jobs in the first labour market • Maintaining employment contracts which are in danger of being terminated • Sub-targets • Intensive, tailor-made work with the client: motivating the job seeker, know-how about the regional labour market situation etc. • Functioning network of related services, for example: Clearing at schools, work assistance, job coaching etc. • Social inclusion through integration into the first labour market
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting social integration • fighting against discrimination • fighting against exclusion • promoting employment/decreasing unemployment
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to find a permanent* job for as many people with disabilities (pwd) as possible in the first labour market • to promote social integration
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the most important aims are to help job seekers in a proper way to get and keep ordinary jobs with a salary • result is often that job seekers get a part-time job, combining salary and disability insurance
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SE promotes social integration of people with disabilities (pwd)
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting social integration • fighting against discrimination • helping to decrease unemployment

The importance of finding long-term employment was emphasised in almost all of the countries. However, “long-term” had different meanings in different contexts. For example, one of the Hungarian interview partners considered a six-month long placement to be an acceptable and long-term result. In his opinion, a person with disabilities can gain valuable experience in even such a short period of time. This experience in turn will help him/her to find longer-term employment step by step.

In two countries (A, N) retaining the job surfaced as an aim. This is a very interesting issue because, for instance, within the Hungarian system the SE service mainly supports the placement of unemployed people. In relation to this, in two countries (CZ, H) reducing unemployment was explicitly listed as an aim of the SE service.

Thus, in each country the target group of the service is considered to be different, depending on whether people with disabilities who already have a job but need help in retaining it are targeted.

A further interesting conclusion can be found in the Norwegian summary. It emphasises the dependence of the nature¹⁰ (working time and salary) of the job on the person with disabilities.

¹⁰ Here, by the nature of the job only the working time and the corresponding salary are meant. It does not, however, refer to the type of work, i.e. whether someone is a cleaner, a porter or a kitchen hand.



This means that the person's salary and working time are very important, but the type of work, such as the position of the person should also be considered. They regard part-time job placement and multiple financing of salaries acceptable, too. By the latter we mean that part of the supported employee's salary comes from social benefits.

The conclusion about part-time placement is supported by the practical experience of another country (H), too. There, the majority of clients questioned during the project worked in part-time employment.

Social integration was identified as the second most important aim in 5 countries (A, CZ, S, UK, H). At the same time, it is obvious that not all respondents put social integration in the first place. In relation to the issue of social integration it is interesting to mention that in two countries (CZ, H) the questions of fighting discrimination and exclusion, and ensuring equal opportunities were raised as aims of SE. Both these countries are EU candidate countries and have recently transferred their political systems from socialism to capitalism. It may be proof of the fact that in these and similar countries ensuring equal opportunities for people with disabilities has not yet been achieved. At the same time, such a finding supports the conclusion arrived at earlier, according to which in these countries the social side of the service is of great importance.

In contrast, in Norway and the UK the financiers unambiguously established that the SE service is first and foremost a labour market service.

In the Austrian report the main aims of SE were divided into sub-aims. This shows that it is useful to specify sub-aims in order to evaluate the success of an SE service.

The Norwegian report was a good example for this, where the characteristics of the work were broken down into sub-categories.

A further example is provided by the British summary. It contains a statement that lists the development of the improvement of the responsibility of the person with learning disabilities as an important element of social integration.

Sub-categories for the important aims of SE were formed in each phase of the project. The results are summarised in the "Quality Criteria" developed in the course of the QUIP project¹¹.

The elements collected by the financiers and legislators fit into this system of aims and are similar to the aims articulated by other stakeholders in the SE service.

In relation to the aims there was a question about when the SE service is considered to be successful. All those questioned identified successful job placement as the most significant criterion of success. It is believed that the SE service can facilitate social integration in various ways, but integration through employment is its main objective.

Czech respondents clearly distinguished between entering employment as a success criterion and offering additional services provided for clients. It was considered to be a success if clients received the help they needed. This indicates that while in the majority of the countries the financiers and legislators consider the SE service a labour market service, for the Czech policy-makers/funding agencies the social part of the service is equally important.

Also, an additional success criterion was mentioned in the UK, i.e. that the client becomes increasingly independent as a result of using the SE service. Here, there is a direct link between the articulated aims and the judgement of success.

¹¹ Quality criteria for providing SE were collected as a result of the QUIP project, based on interviews with different stakeholders.



The responses collected in all the other countries suggest that although the aims of the SE service cover a wide range of areas, they are not in accordance with the official system of success criteria. As a result, the assessment of the success of the service by the funding agency is carried out in a relatively confined area. This might cause problems when attempting to assess the link between success and financing. The success criteria identified by the respondents are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 46

Country	SE success criteria
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complying with the contracts between the SE initiative and the Federal Offices for Social Affairs • other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous reduction of support • job meeting the needs of the job seeker • clients identifying with a certain job, qualification (especially for young people) • satisfaction of the job seeker • motivated SE team
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job is found, client becomes independent and secures the place in the future (what does this mean?) • not necessarily a job - “Success is that a team of professionals solves individual needs of the client and that the client can find such help”
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustained employment
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting people into ordinary jobs • job seekers get as common working conditions as possible • the job coaches have faith in succeeding with the work they do
Spain	
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting employment, personal responsibility • sustained employment • person’s own response

8.4 The process of SE

When examining the elements of the SE service, financiers and legislators were firstly asked about their knowledge of these elements.

On the one hand, financiers know the steps of the SE process very well since without such knowledge it would be impossible to determine whether the service was worthy of financing. On the other hand, a much more varied picture is found when assessing the knowledge of the SE process of the legislators: in some countries (e.g. in Hungary) they have detailed knowledge of the whole process, in others, depending on the legislator, the level of familiarity with this process differs greatly.

Consequently, it is questionable how legislators can provide a suitable background for this kind of service without detailed knowledge of the process. Moreover, it would be important to know how legislation and the practice of SE services can be harmonized. Such a question poses smaller problems in countries possessing a national framework for SE service provision because in their case the agreement between the framework and the service is at least partly achieved. However, during the QUIP project it became obvious that countries not yet possessing a national framework face more serious problems. In their case it is the role of legislators



to create some kind of an agreement. However, without thorough understanding of the system of SE, this might cause difficulties.

In Hungary the Salva Vita Foundation tries to assert influence on the legislators by personally informing them (i.e. lobbying). The Foundation also intends to initiate common development projects, with policy makers in the future.

The other important conclusion of investigating this area was that respondents do not necessarily see the success of the SE service in any of its particular steps, but in the characteristics of the whole process. The responses given to the different success factors of the process are summarised in Table 4 below. Among these factors we can find the tailor-made nature of the service, which was mentioned in four studies (CZ, N, S, H).

The other important feature is the involvement of the family and environment of clients, which was also listed in four countries (CZ, S, A, H).

In this respect, there appears to be a significant difference between the countries involved in the QUIP project. In some participating countries interview partners consider the involvement of parents an important priority, and they are indeed very active in mobilising them. They consider it an inseparable component of the process (CZ, H, S, A). At the same time, in the practice of other countries the contact with the family is only part of the SE service in certain justified situations (N, UK).

The third most important feature is appropriate contact with clients and other stakeholders (A, H). For instance, in Austria it are not only the contacts with employers, clients and the family that are mentioned, but also those with other organisations.

The following element was considered important in one country each: good atmosphere within the organisation (A), continuous contact within the organisation providing the service (N, H) and trust between client and job coach.

Apart from the general characteristics of the SE service, financiers also defined the elements that they consider to be of high priority in view of the success of the service. In Norway, Austria and Hungary respondents think it important to conduct an assessment as to the needs and abilities of clients. Moreover, Norwegian respondents stressed the significance of locating new employers and the follow-up of the process. At the same time, Hungarian respondents thought that a trial work period is important because it provides a chance for a better evaluation of clients (i.e. what they like, what they know and what they are capable of doing). This also helps to prepare clients for real jobs.

In summary, it can be observed that apart from assessing the client there was no other element in the SE process that both financiers and legislators thought to stress in view of the success of the service.

Table 47

Country	Important steps/tasks in the SE process
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-operation with the job seeker (“security”) • co-operation with the companies and the colleagues • functioning co-operation between different relevant organisations • figures of “cases” and employment arrangements agreed upon in the contracts should be met • support with organisational matters • co-operation with other relevant protagonists (e.g. teachers, parents) • handling of persons’ data between different organisations • clearing job seekers’ professional perspectives • functioning assignments • social support outside the employment environment
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most important is the client-oriented character of SE • real co-operation with client and family • an atmosphere of trust and openness, possibility of choice are important for good service
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting and convincing the employer • preparing employment • trial work → suitable person for the job • preparing the client and the working environment • continuous personal help for the clients – time limit problem
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the job seeker gets the opportunity to say what is important for him/her • get to know the job seeker by meeting him/her in their private sphere (get to know the job seeker as the person he/she is) • important to work with the employers and find suitable work places according to the different abilities and needs of the job seekers • the geographic dimension: Sometimes, there are many possible employers (e.g. in cities) and you might not have to work so hard to find a suitable job. In other places, with fewer employers, it might be necessary to work harder to find jobs.
Spain	-
United Kingdom	-

8.5 The characteristics of a job coach

Respondents defined a wide range of characteristics job coaches should possess. The answers were summarised and grouped by country and are shown in Table 5 below.

The responses can be divided into two larger groups, into the so-called soft skills of job coaches and the professional attributes.

The former is built up of a variety of characteristics, whereby the detailed description varies from respondent to respondent. The characteristics listed here are, e.g. commitment, tolerance and patience. Traits that were mentioned in all countries were empathy or responsiveness and good communication skills.

In relation to personal characteristics, the Czech report states that financiers consider soft skills more important than professional knowledge when assessing the preparedness of candidates.



The second group of professional characteristics also shows a varied picture. Several country reports state the importance of knowing the demands of the labour market (H, S, A) or being aware of educational and training practices.

The Austrian report mentioned the professional experience of job coaches as an important consideration influencing their suitability for the job. This is all the more important because for the SE service provider in Austria participating in the study – but also for SE in Austria in general – the turnover of job coaches is a high-priority problem. Among others, this could also be linked with the fact that job coaches lack professional training and experience.

Finally, it is important to point out one of the conclusions of the Norwegian report. There, the financer calls attention to the fact that within the service provider it is not so important that each and every job coach possesses all the necessary qualifications and characteristics for the job. However, the job coach teams within the organisation as a whole should have a good mixture of the required qualifications.

Table 48

Country	Job coach skills and characteristics
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft skills • Economic Level • Ability to negotiate • Economic understanding • Psycho-social Level • Sensitiveness • Self-confidence • Psychological understanding • Ability to co-operate with different organisations • Ability to collect information • Personal maturity • Ability to co-operate with customers • Ability to cope with set-backs • Knowledge/Training • Economic Level • Knowledge about industrial law • Knowledge about the labour market • Knowledge about subsidies • Work experience • Training in the economic field • Knowledge about occupational matters • Psycho-social Level • Training in the psycho-social field • Training in the field of people with disabilities • Interview and counselling techniques

Country	Job coach skills and characteristics
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important are the soft skills, the human features. • Soft skills • Social skills, empathy, tolerance, perseverance, communication skills, listening, respectfulness, creativity, patience, independence • Education and specific information • Education in the social sector, Social/psychological education, Pedagogical education, Knowledge of systems of active employment policy measures, benefits and pensions, knowledge of services within the region
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • empathy • ability to cooperate • patience, tolerance • Knowledge to be developed • good communication skills • professional experience (psychological knowledge)
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The composition of the job coach team is most important. • Communication and social skills seem to be the most important skills/characteristics. • empathy • psychological insight • working experience • experience of working with disabled persons • practically inclined • social skills (e.g. able to communicate and co-operate with others) • concerned about job seekers' resources more than problems • be able to work with many things at the same time • have the ability to find people's potentials, what they are good at
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, trained, innovative, patient, knowledgeable of community resources and how to make them accessible • Knowledgeable of pwd, Knowledgeable of labour market, trained to apply SE technologies, with ability to mediate between employers, pwd and families.
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vision/focus/sensitivity/enablement (the person in the shadow) • knowing when to speak and when to be quiet • marketing-analyse jobs-teach jobs-understanding disability • a good care co-ordinator

8.6 The strengths of the SE service and areas of possible improvement

According to the respondents, a general strength of the SE service is that it is able to achieve its aims (see point 3: job placement and social integration – S, N, CZ, A, UK, H). The Austrian survey emphasises that even the numerical data shows that this is a successful and effective service for the integration of people with disabilities through job placement.

The second most important strength is the fact that the service is tailor-made and flexible (S, N, CZ, A, UK, H). This makes a quick reaction to problems possible. In the opinion of the respondents it is important to react to emerging problems quickly and thus they think that flexibility within the service and the organisation is indispensable.



In relation to this the Norwegian report underlined the importance of the fact that job coaches were always easy to reach, which is a basic condition for a quick solution to problems.

One of the areas for improvement is the professional knowledge of job coaches. It is a prominent danger that the quality of the service depends to too large an extent on the professional knowledge of job coaches. This was identified by five countries in some form or another (S, N, A, UK, H). Such identification indirectly suggests that the quality of the service depends on the professional knowledge of job coaches. In the Norwegian report such dependence was viewed as an element contributing to the vulnerability of the process.

The lack of awareness of the service among employers and in society in general was articulated as a weakness in two countries (H, A). In the respondents' opinion, PR activities addressing a wider range of people would be necessary in this field.

In two countries (N, CZ), another element identified as an area for improvement concerned the "job coach-client" contact. A high degree of dependence between job coach and client was considered to be an important weakness of the service. As a result, if the job coach leaves the process altogether, the client might feel his position endangered and consequently longer-term employment for the client might be questioned.

Apart from the above-mentioned areas of strengths and weaknesses respondents identified numerous others. Moreover, depending on outside factors, some of the strengths appeared as weaknesses in some countries and vice versa.

For example, while in Great Britain the SE service was considered as cheap compared with similar services, in Spain and the Czech Republic the high costs of the service were mentioned as weaknesses. Also, while in Austria easy access and the already existing network of SE providers were considered to be strengths, in Spain difficult access and in Hungary the lack of a network of SE providers were mentioned as drawbacks.

It can be seen from these suggestions that apart from the identified common elements, depending on the national SE framework and environmental factors different strengths and areas of development were identified by the respondents. The summary of these can be seen in Table 6 below.

Table 49

Country	Strengths of SE	Weaknesses of SE
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working on the spot ("direct contact") • sensitiveness for the individual case ("tailor-made packages") • promoting the personal development of the clients • extension of the "normal network" (e.g. Labour Market Service etc.) • easily accessible • "close to reality" (jobs on the first labour market) • quantitative success ("figures of clients and job arrangements") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high staff turnover • staff lacking experience • staff lacking job know-how • at present not enough organisations offering this service • "waiting lists" • staff lacking training • too much oriented towards social policy • not enough legal framework for the service • lacking permanent PR



Country	Strengths of SE	Weaknesses of SE
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complexity of provided care (2) • troubles on workplace are solved immediately • reflects client's and employer's needs and provides feedback • open to different types of disability • eliminates discrimination • helps to open society to people with disabilities • respects individuality • helps client to find work • assistants have enough time for clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closer co-operation with labour offices is missing • quite expensive service • not enough consequential services • sometimes it seems that assistants want to find job more than clients (difficult to recognize real client's wishes) • stay of assistant on the workplace is not mentioned in any law (possible troubles in case of injury, insurance, competencies) • weak client's position on the workplace after leaving • demotivating role of subsidies
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concentrating on permanent job • promotes the development of communication of the clients • gives working experience • helps clients adapt to the working environment • helps clients and employers • provides help to the friends and family • ensures treatment of the individual cases • helps the family background (multiplication effect, improvement of individual living conditions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of legislation • lack of long-term funding (tender system) • not known among employers (is this right or what is meant?) • lack of professional background (education is not sufficient) • in Hungary only special target groups are involved in the SE service (mentally disabled people)
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possibility of integrating people into ordinary work • can give good follow-up to both job seeker and workplace, both practical and social support • flexibility in the support from job coach (<i>ad hoc</i> help when and where it is needed) • job coaches are very available • are able to work with few job seekers • can be out working directly on the job seekers' working places • good knowledge of the labour market's demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vulnerability when the job coach teams are small • job seeker can get very connected/dependent on the job coach because of the close co-operation/relationship • sometimes when the job seeker is on his/her own (after the 3-years period in the initiative), he/she can't manage to keep the job, because he/she can't do without the SE support • vulnerability when the job coaches quit their jobs • in some cases the integration in ordinary workplaces leads to the role of a "mascot" for the job seeker and not to the integration of him/her
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support & zero rejection • individualised support • on the job training • looks after personal autonomy • working with families • accompaniment to labour integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it depends on the rules of the market • temporary contracts, to take the available jobs etc. • difficult to apply to people with great need of support and if so it is more expensive
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working-away from day centres • a role model overcoming fear of disability • individual focus based on outcomes • can be cheaper in the long run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff can become too much of a role model • danger of over-identifying with the individual • over-dependent intrinsic rewards are very personal – can expect too much from an individual • limits choice?



Selecting areas for improvement is in close connection with the identified strengths and weaknesses. Respondents formulated improvement potentials in relation to the already identified areas. Thus, answers to these questions further supported the detailed findings above. As it can also be seen, responses vary from country to country in agreement with identified weaknesses. However, similarities could also be found here.

In countries where the national framework connected to the SE service and legal background does not exist (CZ, H, S), financiers and legislators see this as a potential area for improvement.

The lack of stable, long-term financing was identified as a general problem in four countries (CZ, H, A, S).

Respondents in several countries see a strong development potential in the training and further education of job coaches. This is in agreement with the earlier defined weakness according to which financiers believe that the quality of the service is largely influenced by the professional and general experience of job coaches.

Additionally, in several countries there are recommendations to improve the PR activity associated with the SE services to improve their visibility, this was also mentioned among the weaknesses.

Table 50

Country	How could SE in general be improved?
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better training • selection of clients • avoiding the “oversaturation” (for example with PR) of employers • more interaction with employees (i.e. more PR) • more organisations should provide Supported Employment • longer-term contracts with the Federal Offices for Social Affairs • new “figures of success” within the contracts • better differentiation between a “real client” (with an official SE-contract) and those people who only receive counselling • no “waiting lists” (At present there are some initiatives which are not able to provide their service for everyone asking for it) “At least some sort of clearing should be provided then.”
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the key problem is seen in the fact that a legal definition and official status of SE are still missing • labour services are not defined separately from social services resulting in problems with funding SE • real Czech standards of SE, standards that fit for Czech conditions (“Actually there is only a translation of Norwegian standards in use.”)
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal background should be clarified • SE should be integrated into the labour market services ⇒ possibility of permanent finance • there should be SE services all over the country • modelling the process (what kind of disabled people are to be employed in given jobs?) • extensive communication of the model to human resources managers • education of the job coaches should be improved



Country	How could SE in general be improved?
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer SE also to other vulnerable groups, e.g. long-term unemployed people and people of foreign origin • SE could offer a more differentiated support to, e.g. people with psychiatric disabilities. Give them the opportunity to start working maybe one day a week over a long period, and then increase it to several days when they feel more familiar and secure with the work • a more formal co-operation with others in the rehabilitation system (e.g. the local offices of social affairs, the local health care system) • more information about SE to possible employers in society. This may encourage some of them to try out the initiative • increase and/or maintain the job coaches' qualifications (the job coaches ask/wish for more qualifications on marketing)
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new regulations to promote this system of labour integration • more support and funds from Administration/Governments
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SE as a coaching service • recognise validity of role not just for vulnerable people but input of everyone's development • getting messages out and about • "Access to work" • more training to carry out support • the "Welfare to Work" agenda will help – Working with all types of disability on a local basis

8.7 The evaluation system for SE

If we look at the evaluation systems for SE in each country, it can be said that their basis is very similar. However, individual and specific solutions or implementations are found in different countries.

At the same time, in one of the countries (CZ), the evaluation system for SE has not yet been developed. It is, in fact, being developed at the moment. In the Czech Republic applications for financing are evaluated; however, after an application is considered successful, no further evaluation is done or required. In contrast to this practice, in the other five countries there is a system of very comprehensive and regular evaluations.

In all the five countries mentioned above, applicants have to hand in monthly reports with statistical data (e.g. the number of job placements or clients included in the service) related to the SE service. The data is broken down into categories based on the types of disabilities. This is used as a basis for evaluating the success and efficiency of the service.

Additionally, various organisations and financers in contact with the different types of services provided require written reports at different times. Reports may need to be written with the regularity of about two to six times a year. Such reports usually ask for more comprehensive statistical summaries. In some of the countries, reports of this type contain a professional and a financial review (H), too.

In each country an annual summary report of achievements is required. In almost all cases, such a report must be supplemented with a financial review.



In addition to written reports, with the exception of two countries (CZ, UK), site visits are conducted everywhere. There are two aims of site visits. The first type of aim is mainly to improve co-operation with the SE agency. In countries (S, N) where the aim of the annual report is to improve co-operation, the objective is to evaluate the work together and to discuss tasks to be done in the future.

The second type of aim is partly to jointly evaluate the SE providers' work. However, also sampling the documents and then checking them is part of the visits (especially in Austria and Hungary). In these cases, both the control of the client-related and financial documents are carried out by the financier.

The reviews mentioned above are undertaken twice a year at dates agreed upon in advance, in given intervals (A, N). At the same time though, for instance in Hungary, the contract of the organisation providing the SE service allows for the possibility of a site visit, it does not make it compulsory (S, H). An interesting conclusion is that in countries already having a national framework for providing SE services, site visits are planned regularly.

It can also be seen that in countries where the national framework for the SE service has already been developed (N, UK, A), the individual evaluation of a specific organisation is linked to the national evaluation system.

In general, next to the local and regional data collection and evaluation a national evaluation system is at work, too. For this system data are provided by SE agencies, too.

However, a national evaluation system is built on collecting a wider range of data. In the Norwegian system, national surveys are carried out, whereas in the English system the evaluation sheets filled in by clients have an important role.

In summary, it needs to be emphasised that establishing national evaluation systems should be on the agenda in the near future in countries where this is not yet the case.

When examining the indicators of the evaluation, it can be seen that financiers in all of the mentioned countries are endeavouring to evaluate the SE service both quantitatively and qualitatively and are trying to develop indicators measuring quantity and quality respectively with varying degrees of success.

The Austrian and Hungarian reports underline the fact that financiers still consider it problematic to assess the quality of the SE service. Hungarian financiers see an enormous potential in developing this side of the service. They considered the need for creating a fairly complex evaluation system to be the most important problem. Also, developing such a system would require more money from financiers, and at the same time more work on the part of the users.

In relation to this issue, one of the Austrian financiers said that in a great number of cases the financier does not have access to a reliable methodology developed to evaluate the quality of the service.

In relation to the evaluation of quality, the Norwegian report expresses that at present defining the quality of the service poses a problem. This is because different partners consider different quality criteria to be important for them. The present project may provide help here, through the quality criteria defined in its course.

Based on Appendix 1 containing the summary of the different national evaluation systems, it can be seen that the SE service has generally accepted indicators. Such are, for example, the number of clients whose job placement was successful or the length of time spent in the service. These generally accepted indicators are for the most part quantitative and refer only indirectly to the quality of the service or not at all.



Indicators developed to assist the evaluation of the quality of the SE service promote a much narrower view. In a great number of cases, the point of view for evaluation is marked as quality criteria in the answers given by the financers (for example, good co-operation and communication among partners). These are, however, mostly indicators that are not useful for evaluation. Such responses support the conclusion arrived at earlier, i.e. that the evaluation of quality cannot only be broken down into quantified indicators. In contrast, it requires the development of a complex evaluation system, and in a great number of cases a new methodology, too.

At the same time, in three countries (UK, A, H) a new element appeared in relation to the qualitative evaluation of the SE service. This can facilitate the evaluation of quality to a great extent. It is the collection of feedback from partners and measuring their satisfaction. In Britain a similar evaluation system has already been developed at the national level. In Austria and Hungary financers mentioned that partner satisfaction will be incorporated in the evaluation system in the future. Furthermore, the Hungarian financer has been supporting the adoption of quality evaluation criteria for two years at the Salva Vita Foundation, which has focused on measuring the satisfaction of clients and colleagues for a long time.

As quality, a little simplified, means nothing else than satisfying the expressed and latent expectations of both clients and supporters, the types of satisfaction measurement mentioned above might play an important role in evaluating the SE service.

It needs to be noted here that when defining quality in general, not only partner or customer criteria are taken into consideration, such as legal compliance, appropriateness for use, or satisfying social and environmental criteria. These are all equally important (dealing with the field of quality development the 4 + 1 levels of quality are identified: the first level is legal compliance – the second level is the appropriateness for use – the third level is satisfying specific client needs – the fourth level is satisfying latent client needs + the last additional level is taking social considerations into account).

8.8 The financing system for SE

In relation to financing, a very important question, which has also been mentioned above, arises that influences the form of financing to a great extent. The question is whether Supported Employment is a social or a labour market service?

The type of funding agency depends on the main focus in the respective country. In most countries there is a mixed system of financing involving several agencies.

In countries where the national framework for SE has already been developed (UK, A, N and in this case S too), potential financers have also been defined. In the Czech Republic and Hungary ways of financing are not clearly defined and a system with mixed financing is still being developed.

At the same time, it also needs to be mentioned that since in Hungary the present government considers SE service to be a labour market service, the question of who and how will finance its social aspects is raised. This is a contradiction because in Hungary the social aspects of SE are also emphasised. Answering this question on funding is one of the most important tasks for the future.

When evaluating the financing systems, the most important problem encountered in each country regardless of its national framework or legal background is the issue of one-year contracts.

At the moment, in each of the countries SE service providers have only one-year contracts. Given this system, service providers find it difficult to formulate long-term goals.



Very often it cannot be predicted what exactly the financiers agree to support when undertaking the financing of the service. For instance, whether they will finance the further education of job coaches or internal quality development, and also to what extent.

Several financiers regarded improving the current short-term financing system as an area of potential development, which further supports the view that this problem needs to be tackled.

Establishing national frameworks could play an important role in this, especially through the development of detailed strategic plans. These provide input information for the SE provider for outlining its own long-term plans.

In relation to this issue, other potentially significant factors are co-operation between financiers and service providers in the development of strategic plans and the discussion of former strategic plans. The practical elements of this already exist in several countries in an informal way.

In summary, it can be concluded that although in some countries the framework for financing the SE service has not yet been developed, both financiers and legislators consider Supported Employment and its financing to be important.

Furthermore, although the countries participating in the project have different national frameworks (e.g. legal background, financing system, network for the service), one can find a great number of basic features shared by all of them. These have been described in detail above.

At the same time, numerous different methods and applications have been developed in the various countries, which could provide practical ideas and a good basis for improvement for the other countries.



9 Quality in practice – Bringing stakeholder views on the quality of SE together

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This chapter brings together the main results of the different phases of the QUIP project. It is based on the previous chapters, the European project meetings as well as on the final conference in Budapest. Its aim is to summarize the main discussions during the course of the project, to identify crucial points in the development of quality in Supported Employment and to present recommendations for possible improvements.

After discussing some methodological issues of the project, the chapter goes on to summarize the most important views on quality of SE from the point of view of the individual stakeholders. The main findings of the project will be presented along outcome, process and structure aspects of the quality of Supported Employment, that are summarized in the last section on conclusions and recommendations.

9.1 Overview of stakeholders' views

9.1.1 Job coaches

The view of the job coaches on quality of Supported Employment in general encompasses all levels of quality criteria (outcomes, process, structure). As with other stakeholders, one of their main focuses is on finding a job with the job seeker on the open labour market, but also aspects of empowering the job seeker and supporting him/her to make the right choices are relevant to them. They also have a detailed overview of the process of Supported Employment and also unsurprisingly, the most detailed view of the framework conditions they need in their organisations to do a good job.

In some cases (e.g. Norway) it seemed that job coaches' statements were very close to those mentioned in national, regional or agency guidelines. This raises the question in how much the job coaches voiced their personal views or focused more on the "official" aspects of SE that they would be expected to adhere to. Possibly, this reflects a lack of consistent or detailed questioning on the part of the interviewers or a weakness in the questionnaire.

What are job coaches' quality criteria?

The most important focus of job coaches is *getting people into work on the open labour market*. The main aspects are a long-term placement, a paid job and maintaining a job. The central issue is the *job match*, i.e. "the right job for the right person" and that jobs are matched individually to coordinate the job seekers' abilities with the requirements of the job ("help to achieve personal dreams in employment").

Apart from that *supporting the job seeker to make his/her own decisions*, user involvement, to enable job seekers to take steps towards their independence – e.g. "to help the job seeker develop an 'adult's lifestyle' " – and thus to enhance the job seekers' *quality of life* are crucial.

All in all, *job seekers' satisfaction*, which means positive feedback on the SE process and his/her satisfaction with the job, is also seen as being important.



Also, the *fruitful co-operation with other institutions and partners* like the job seekers' family, working together and keeping up good relationships with employers, cooperating with other services and with policy-makers is seen as a key to quality in SE.

Job coaches in most countries agree on the main elements of the process of SE (see quality criteria in the annex). One of the most important aspects seems to be “*defining the right amount of support at each point in time*”, but also communicating to co-workers and finding natural supporters is a key point here.

Job coaches are also very clear and detailed on the *adequate organisational framework* necessary for them to do a good job and name a wide variety of these conditions. These are clear organisational guidelines or stating clear competencies. Working conditions such as adequate wages, autonomy and career opportunities are not only important for supported employees but equally relevant for job coaches.

What do job coaches see as barriers to quality?

There are a variety of problems that job coaches are confronted with in their jobs. From the country reports one problem is that *information exchange and communication within their organisations* is lacking and that they do not receive enough *feedback on their own job performance*. Also difficulties in *external cooperation* like lack of community support, lack of cooperation with the outside treatment and psychiatric system, competition with other SE as well as other rehabilitation services are reported.

Also *national and regional framework conditions*, like the legal structure, rules and regulations pose problems. These are, e.g. cooperation with labour offices, issues on benefits and loosing them (referred to as the “benefit trap”). Likewise a lack of funding was mentioned repeatedly, as the job coaches at the Budapest meeting put it: “Money, money, money – it isn't funny”.

Societies' attitudes, like lack of a social network, employers' lacking motivation to employ people with a disability as well as continuing segregation and negative attitudes of young people on the streets towards people with a disability still cause problems. Job coaches find it hard to deal with that supported employees are integrated in the labour market, but are confronted with discrimination in everyday life.

A key issue that job coaches in all countries are confronted with repeatedly is how and to which extent to involve the *family* of the job seekers. In some cases the family might be too active and tries to take over control of the SE process, in other cases the family is not supportive enough. Sometimes job seekers explicitly ask to have their families left out of the SE process.

Dealing with the differences between – partly unrealistic – *expectations of the job seekers* and the reality of the labour market is another dilemma that job coaches find themselves in. Important issues that job coaches have to deal with are whether the clients are willing to work, their high expectations regarding wages or status, deciding whether Supported Employment is the right service for the job seeker and whether the respective job seeker actually belongs to the group targeted by the SE agency.

One key to understanding job coaches' situation is what the job coaches called “*capacity constraints*” in their workshop at the QUIP project's final meeting in Budapest. These are the impossibility to satisfy all the needs of a client at the same time, too many clients, not enough time to do their job in the best way, too much stress, too high expectations of those involved and the general feeling of pressure. The main difficulty seems to be that job coaches have to cater to all types of different needs and that they thus easily slip into the role of being seen as a scapegoat when things go wrong.



An issue which came up in all phases of the research, but was first mentioned in the job coaches phase, was the *high turnover of job coaches* which was seen as a large barrier to high-quality Supported Employment. This is discussed in more detail in section 4.

9.1.2 Job seekers/ supported employees

The job seekers/supported employees are most interested in the outcomes of SE and in aspects of the “individual SE process”. They hardly have any views on structural aspects of quality in SE like the organisational and the national framework.

What are job seekers’/supported employees’ quality criteria?

Unsurprisingly, the job seekers’ and supported employees’ main focus is *getting a job*. There are many aspects of their job that are important for job seekers and supported employees: they especially want a permanent job, a suitable job, a paid job, a better paid job or “a real, interesting job”. They like elements of their job like the tasks, the feeling of accomplishing something or being responsible for a certain activity. The most successful moment in the SE process for the interviewed supported employees was when they started their job or when they had an open-ended employment contract. Here it is important to mention that it became clear that job seekers do not merely want any job, but that the *quality and the suitability of the job* to their needs have to be adequate too.

The other most important issues of quality in SE from the point of view of the job seekers/supported employees are the *personal relationships* and *being part of a social network*.

On the job, they like *colleagues and a boss they get along with*, meeting with their colleagues as well as talking and joking with them. Most supported employees report that they are in contact with their colleagues during work, but usually do not meet their colleagues outside work hours. However, most of the interviewees voiced satisfaction with their social contacts at work, although there were some negative examples, where people did not feel welcome among their colleagues in the beginning or where they had communication problems.

With respect to the SE process, job seekers and supported employees value their *personal relationship with the job coach* very highly. Important prerequisites in the relationship between job seekers and job coaches are an open and nice atmosphere, good contact and “easy talks”, personal guidance, trust, discretion and professional secrecy. Their view of quality of SE is obviously linked to the job coaches, and they are able to provide a wealth of information about what they like or dislike about them.

They expect psychological and social support as well as practical, “hands-on” support from the job coach (“The job coach should actually do something as well as talk”).

Aspects of *psychological and social support* that job seekers/supported employees like are when the job coach helps them to become more secure, having good talks and conversations with the job coach, receiving moral support and anxiety reduction. Job seekers/supported employees want a job coach they can trust, who helps raise their self-esteem and who shows empathy. It also appears that job seekers want their job coaches or advisers to be multi-skilled and always ready to listen. What they do not like is if the job coach is too serious, puts too much pressure on them or is not eager and up-to-date. In most cases, interviewees reported positive relationships with their job coaches. Also, failures in the SE process and in finding a job were seldom attributed to the job coaches.

Practical support mainly involves finding a job, like writing applications, calling employers, making appointments, training for and participation in job interviews and of course providing support on-the job. All interviewees in a job stated the key role of the job coach in helping



them find their current job. Job coaches should also give practical support outside of the job but also help the job seeker to improve personal hygiene, filling in forms or accompanying him/her to authorities.

Another key issue is the *role of the job seeker/supported employee in the SE process*. They want to be taken seriously, be treated as an adult and on equal terms. Also job seekers/supported employees do not want the job coaches to dictate what they should do and they do not like it when job coaches and employers talk about them and not with them. The issue of letting the job seekers/supported employees make their own decisions and involving them actively in all stages of the SE process was discussed extensively throughout the whole project (see also 4.2). Another theme that came up especially at the final conference in Budapest, was to train people with disabilities as job coaches and thus strengthen the idea of peer support.

What do the job seekers/supported employees see as barriers to quality?

Although it was difficult for the interviewees to suggest improvements of Supported Employment practices, they did give detailed answers to what they like and what they dislike.

In some cases job seekers did not find their job coaches helpful or they had too little contact with the job coach. Also, a supported employee was unhappy about conversations between her boss and the job coach about her progress, without having been asked herself. Concerning integration in the job, supported employees don't like issues like too low status, not getting paid for holidays, not getting enough wages or not being treated well by the boss. There are also some practical things job seekers don't like about their jobs, like certain tasks ("checking toilets", "throwing away old food") or doing things wrong or coming too late.

9.1.3 Employers

Next to the supported employees, employers are the most important element of the SE process, because the job seekers will not find a job without their contribution and commitment (Cimera, 2002). However, for the employer, the Supported Employment process as well as usually one (or two) supported employees of (possibly) many employees in all are just a small aspect of their work. It seems that employers have the lowest expectations of SE of all the stakeholders represented in this project.

Employers' main focus is the *outcome of SE from their perspective* – namely to have an employee who can do the job at hand well without causing problems. They look at the concrete results of SE as it affects their work and not the concept and the framework conditions behind SE.

Whereas for most of the employers the *reason* to hire a person with a disability was because he or she was *suitable for the job*, a large proportion also gave *social reasons* for employing a person with a disability. An interesting difference between countries becomes clear when looking at the Czech republic and Norway. In the Czech Republic almost all employers mentioned social reasons for taking on the supported employee. One employer mentioned that the supported employee in his company was actually not productive and another employer stated that an extra job was created for the supported employee. In contrast to that, in Norway almost all employers said they employed the supported employee because they needed labour and this person was suitable for the job.

Employers' perspectives on quality criteria of Supported Employment will vary depending on which motives they have for hiring a person with a disability. If the reason is suitability for the job, then the key to quality will be whether the supported employee can do the job. If it is



for social reasons, it will probably be enough if the supported employee is not disruptive and does not cause trouble.

Employers basically want a *sense of security* when working together with the SE agency and *not permanent guidance and support*. They would like support to avoid problems, a *flexible reaction to problems*, advice and guidance when needed – “to be able to contact the employment adviser as and when necessary”. Also, they look for *good and clear information* as well as advice and guidance from the SE agency on Supported Employment, the job coaches, the job seekers, possible subsidies and paperwork. Employers make a point about not having job coaches involved too much. An important issue in this connection is the fading of support over time. This brings up the question how the job coaches’ support of the supported employee interacts with the support offered by colleagues and employers and who takes the lead in supplying this guidance at which point in time (see 9.2.3.).

A good job coach has several functions from the point of view of the employers. First of all they see the job coaches’ role as helping to *share and reduce risks* so the experience will not be a defeat for the supported employee. Risk sharing is also important to increase the feeling of security for all partners involved in the SE process. Also, the job coach should play a key role to *avoid wrong decisions* by those involved in the SE process as well as in *protecting the supported employee from failure*. To fulfil the expectations on communication mentioned above, the job coach should be a good communicator. All in all employers stress the importance of a job coach’s *social skills* over all other qualifications. They appreciate job coaches who are patient, show empathy and who understand the company culture. All in all, the job coach’s role is seen as being able to *give the employers the confidence to employ people with a disability*.

At the Budapest meeting employers stated that *SE’s individual approach* to the job seekers and the whole situation is crucial to secure its success. It was also suggested to allow for enough time in companies for the SE process to secure this individual approach. Specifically, all employers emphasised the importance for both employers and employees of a *trial period* before any decisions are made. In the trial period there should be no obligations apart from all partners being obliged to do their best. This is seen as a prerequisite for the successful integration of a job seeker into a company.

Employers evaluate SE negatively, when they have to spend too much time on the SE process, when the supported employee gets too much support from the job coach and when the whole situation causes too much extra work for the employer and the co-workers.

9.1.4 Policy-makers / funding agencies

Representatives of policy-makers and funding agencies are relatively far away from the process of SE and see mainly outcomes as well as framework aspects of the quality of SE. When looking at the views of policy-makers one has to keep in mind that they have a personal view on SE, but also very clear official guidelines on how to evaluate SE. These are not always easy to keep apart.

Most interviewed representatives see the main aims of SE in providing *paid work on the open labour market*, which is in ordinary settings, permanent and steady. But, also the general aims of *promoting social integration and combating discrimination* were mentioned in almost each country. While, as in the employers’ case, the policy-makers’ focus in the Czech republic is more on the social aspects of SE – like accommodating to the needs of people with a disability – and it is also seen more as a social service, in Norway and the UK it is clearly seen as a labour market service with the dominant aim to place people with a disability on the open labour market. An interesting finding is that none of the policy-makers mentioned the aspect of



career development or the actual quality of the supported employee's job. There is, however, mention of securing long-term jobs, that means different things in different countries and is not always clearly defined.

All policy-makers questioned in the course of this project were of the opinion that *SE contributes substantially to job placement and integration of people with a disability* and it is seen as a good service especially for people with learning disabilities. Another strongpoint of SE from the point of view of the policy-makers is the *individual, tailor-made approach* using a variety of relevant methods.

The policy-makers in the project – as all other stakeholders – have come up with a long list of *skills and characteristics that a job coach* should have. A Norwegian policy-maker stressed the importance of a job coach team, which has a good mix of qualifications. Respondents in several countries see a strong potential for improvement in the training and further education of job coaches.

Barriers to high-quality Supported Employment as seen by policy-makers are: *high turnover rates, a lack of job coaches' professional knowledge, the lack of PR and awareness of SE among employers and the general public as well as the missing legal framework*. Also, waiting lists as well as a lack of follow-up and accompanying services were mentioned. Policy-makers in Norway and the UK mention that it can be a weakness of SE that job coaches become too much of a role model and that thus the supported employee is too dependent on the job coach.

In countries where a *national framework for SE* does not exist (Czech Republic, Hungary and Spain) this is seen as a potential area for improvement. Also, the lack of stable long-term funding was mentioned in four countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Spain). In most countries funding is on a one-year basis, in Norway on a three-year basis.

Most countries involved in the project have certain *evaluation guidelines* that are mainly quantitatively oriented. These are in Norway, among others, the number of job seekers per job coach and in Austria the number of placements per year. In the UK there are no fixed performance rates and in Hungary not only performance is looked at but also process steps.

Most interviewed policy-makers see the necessity of *monitoring quality using both quantitative and qualitative measures*. However, in most countries the focus is still on quantitative measures and ways of assessing aspects like job seeker and employer satisfaction are still being developed.

9.1.5 Managers

Managers' views on the quality of Supported Employment are focused on the one hand – as with all other stakeholders – on the *outcomes* of SE which include a job on the ordinary labour market, with team inclusion, normal wages, natural support, career development and developing qualifications as well as a good job match. On the other hand the aspects of high quality in SE that managers mainly mentioned are *general characteristics of the SE process* like the person-centred approach, involving job seekers as their own decision-makers and issues like involving the family and confidentiality.

While aspects of the organisational framework were hardly mentioned by the managers, when asked for the main factors for high-quality SE, a variety of aspects were named when they were specifically asked about the *agency's organisational framework*. Important issues here are continuous evaluation and organisational development, defining quality standards by measuring satisfaction (not just numbers), working standards as well as clear competencies and responsibilities. Staff should have adequate working conditions (e.g. wages), there should



be an equality of status in the team (“... everybody is as important as everybody else ...”) and a SE-agency needs good staff. Also managers see the importance of functioning partnerships and *networking* with all partners.

An un-matching job, missing motivation of the job seeker, and some interventions by families are seen as *barriers to quality*.

The *main strengths of the SE agencies* in the view of the managers are their professional staff (discipline, co-operation skills, etc.), the person-centred approach and the involvement of the agency in a bigger network of services etc.

The main *weakness of the SE agencies* most often mentioned by the managers is the problem of resources. Other weaknesses are mainly connected to the issue of staff, e.g. a lack in systematic training for the staff or problems with recruiting new staff (resulting in long waiting lists for job seekers) or overburden of the currently working staff.

The interviewed managers see *possibilities for improvement* mainly in the area of “networking”, on an internal and external level. The Austrian manager, for example, wants to improve the networking within the SE agency (between different related services), the Norwegian managers stress the importance of networks with other services of the parent organisation (internal/external networking) and stronger networks with employers expressed by a shift in time allocation (“... we want to increase the time that job coaches actually spend out there among employer and at workplaces ...”). The UK manager sees a possibility for improvement of the SE agency in its becoming more part of the national “Government Employment Strategy”.

9.1.6 Summary of stakeholder views on quality of SE

Looking at the overview of the individual stakeholders’ views of Supported Employment and the individual phase reports the following points become clear:

There is a broad agreement about the most important aspects of the SE-model by all stakeholders. That means, *a broad consensus* on the outcomes, elements of the process as well as elements of the framework necessary for SE.

At the same time there are different opinions on single issues between stakeholders and other experts and/or across countries. All stakeholder groups see the element of a “job on the open labour market” as the key to quality in SE. It becomes clear that it is not the mere job that is the quality criterion, but several elements of the job. However, not all stakeholders focus on the quality of the job.

Having said there is broad agreement, at the same time we notice that everybody sees only those aspects clearly (and views them as more important than others) that are close to their own focus. As we have put it “*everybody sees SE through their own window*”. A complete view of the quality of Supported Employment can be gained if one puts these different perspectives together. This is not a surprising finding, but one that should be kept in mind when working with different stakeholders to improve the quality of SE.

Job coaches have the broadest view of all – as all aspects of the Supported Employment process are their job (except in those cases where tasks are divided, for example between “employment advisers” and “job coaches”). They have an overview on almost all points of the outcomes, process and the framework conditions. Their broad view became clear from the fact that in the national tables of quality criteria, providing the points mentioned by which stakeholders, we noticed that the job coaches had mentioned the largest variety of aspects. Also,



this impression was enforced by the “scoring exercise”¹² with respect to the quality criteria in Budapest.

The *job seekers* are most interested and see quality in the outcomes of SE – “finding a good job” – and in various aspects of the “individual SE process”, especially their relationship with and support from the job coach. Quality criteria concerning the structure of SE, like the organisational framework of the organisation or the national framework are hardly important for them. Different “characteristics of the SE process” (e.g. flexibility, user involvement) are also important for them.

While *employers* focus on the element of outcome relevant to them – a productive employee – they also see some elements of the “individual SE process” like training of the job seeker/supported employee, “follow-up” and “support and co-operation between job coach and job seeker”.

Policy-makers mainly look at the framework conditions of SE and do not have a detailed view on the process variables of SE. For policy-makers also the outcomes in terms of finding a job were important, however they looked less at opportunities for career development than other stakeholders did.

Managers mainly focus on quality criteria concerning the outcomes and characteristics of SE. They also concentrate on the “national framework” and “organisational framework”.

The element of “*user satisfaction*” seems to be very relevant to job seekers, employers and job coaches, but not as important for public authorities and managers who focus on other criteria.

9.2 Main findings

9.2.1 Differences between countries

Some differences between countries emerged repeatedly throughout the course of the QUIP project:

- *Norway and the UK are those countries with the most extensive experience in SE. Norway’s specificity is that SE is part of the national framework, i.e. issues of regulation, funding etc. are less problematic than in other countries. Hungary and the Czech republic only have had SE services for a short period of time and the agencies participating in the QUIP project are virtually the only providers of SE in their countries. They have an important role in helping to develop adequate policies for SE in their countries. Spain and Austria are somewhat in the “middle” – in Austria SE has developed rapidly over the last 10 years and the first Supported Employment agency in Spain was founded 13 years ago.*
- *Whereas in Norway and the UK, SE is seen in a strong labour market context, the focus in the Czech republic is more on the social role of Supported Employment. In Hungary, Austria and Spain both aspects, the social and the labour market aspect, are present in issues of Supported Employment.*
- *Differences in countries can be found in the tradition of integrating people with a disability into society and how recent strong segregation policies are. Again, in the UK and Norway integration policies have been the most long-standing, while the Czech Republic and Hungary have had the most recent history of segregating people with a disability. This is also connected to the amount of other rehabilitation and integration services for people*

¹² At the final conference in Budapest we asked stakeholders to score which three quality criteria of a list they viewed as being the most important.



people with a disability that are available and issues of competition, co-ordination and harmonization.

It seems that while in Hungary and the Czech Republic the missing legal framework and lack of funding is an important issue, Norway and the UK are dealing with a lack of enthusiasm and creativity in the area of SE – perhaps because of the more elaborated structure, innovation and entrepreneurship have decreased.

Some interesting specificities of the SE agencies involved emerged during the project. While in some agencies all tasks within the actual SE process are carried out by one person, in other cases competencies are split between the “employment adviser or assistant”, who works with job seekers to find a job and the “job coach” who accompanies the supported employee to the job and supports him/her there. Rytmus in the Czech Republic also works with volunteers who fulfil the same tasks as job coaches do.

9.2.2 Outcomes of Supported Employment

While all stakeholders in all countries regarded finding a job on the ordinary labour market as the most important outcome, still very many questions emerged in this connection.

What is a job?

A paid job on the ordinary labour market sounds quite clear-cut. But looking at it in detail, one of the challenges in the course of the QUIP project was to find out under which conditions supported employees really work. Elements of a paid job on the open labour market that were identified were, e.g. a wage in accordance with other workers in the same job and working in a setting where there are not only disabled employees (see quality criteria). In reality, supported employees in different countries receive different combinations of wages and benefits or wages that are partly carried by the employer and partly by wage subsidies. Also, some supported employees seem to work together with a majority of people with a disability.

An important issue is also the working time of the supported employee. The majority of the participants in the QUIP project worked in part-time working arrangements. While this was not explicitly discussed in the framework of the QUIP project, in other contexts, the amount of working time is seen as a quality criterion. Wehmann, Grant Revell and Brooke (2002) state employment outcomes at 30 or more hours a week as a quality indicator, as it brings better access to higher wages and other potential benefits. At the same time, hours worked per week should reflect the individual preferences of the supported employee.

The definition of what a job on the ordinary labour market is, is generally becoming less clear with the rise of irregular employment arrangements – i.e. limited contracts, flexible working times, changing working conditions – and will thus also pose a challenge for the future of Supported Employment.

Can SE be of good quality if it does not succeed in finding a person a job?

Probably one of the “hottest” and most debated issues in the course of the QUIP project was the role of outcomes other than a paid job on the ordinary labour market.

Whereas the process of clarifying whether the job seeker wants to work and under which conditions, is seen by all of those involved as an important element in the SE process, the common understanding between SE experts who have worked in the field for a long time, is that the choice for other alternatives like participating in training or volunteering can be an important step in the SE process, but not a desired outcome of Supported Employment.



At the same time, the process of clarifying the job seekers' professional perspectives and possibly choosing other alternatives to a paid job on the ordinary labour market is a very important part of the job coaches' work. Especially job coaches are of the opinion that even if a job is not found the job coach's work can be excellent. They say that a relevant result of the Supported Employment process can also be the clients' decision not to work or to look for alternatives to full-time paid work. This aspect was clearly mentioned in the Czech and the UK reports on job coaches' views. The Hungarian job coaches refer to a strong connection between doing their work well and the placement of the client in a paid job, but they also consider their job as being done well even when they do not succeed in finding a workplace for their client, but can offer them other suitable options or services.

This discussion is especially relevant for the view of SE from the perspective of integration policy as a whole. On the one hand it is important to state that SE agencies should not be misused as an agency to clarify job seekers' job perspectives. On the other hand, since this is one of the important elements of an SE agencies' work and the sound basis on which matched jobs can be found, it can be a misrepresentation of the job coaches' work in practice if supporting the job seeker to take the decision to pursue other outcomes such as volunteering, training etc. is not recognized adequately.

The issue seems to be especially relevant in countries with a wealth of service providers (e.g. in Norway) to promote the integration of people with disabilities, where it is crucial to define the profiles of these services clearly in order to avoid confusion and competition.

Some of the job seekers were reported to be not especially interested or motivated to find a job. In this connection we asked the question Why do job seekers participate in SE, if they do not want a job? This has implications for which types of people are targeted by SE agencies and whether the users of these services are informed well enough about the services' aims.

Labour market vs. social role of SE – job and/or quality of life?

The overall aims of Supported Employment and the main area of focus are very closely related to the question of the outcomes just discussed. In the course of the QUIP project there was repeated debate on whether finding a job, social inclusion or quality of life were more important aspects of Supported Employment. It seems to be common agreement that quality of life is the ultimate goal that is to be reached by finding a job.

However, there are big differences in the acceptance of the importance of these areas for the quality of SE in different countries. In Norway and the UK in general the main focus of SE is the labour market focus and thus finding a job. However, also in these countries job coaches do stress the importance of social and psychological support and a holistic view of the job seeker in the Supported Employment process. In Spain, Austria and Hungary both aspects are balanced in the views of the different stakeholders. In the Czech Republic several stakeholders – also the policy-makers and employers – stressed the social role of SE .

A key question here is how much emphasis is placed on issues other than job finding. These are improving other spheres of life like free time or counselling and advice for other personal and social problems. These aspects are valued highly by most of the job coaches interviewed and also mentioned in the job coaches' workshop at the final meeting in Budapest.

There is a dilemma here: On the one hand, it is recognized that a holistic view of the job seeker is very important and that the relationship aspect between job seeker and job coach is a key to good Supported Employment. Also, it is recognized that it is useful for the job seeker to have one main support and contact person and that dealing with several professionals at the same time can be very confusing. On the other hand, the focus on aspects other than finding a job can lead to not finding a job quickly enough, losing the main focus of Supported Em-



ployment, giving too much support to the job seeker and enforcing the job seekers' dependency on the job coach. From this follows that the preparation phase can take too long. The QUIP project has shown the importance of focusing the SE process on finding a job and of referring job seekers/supported employees to other services for other types of support if necessary. However, this also depends on the availability of other suitable services that varies from country to country and region to region.

This issue of transition of “social service attitudes” to “working life attitudes” of job coaches, but also other stakeholders involved in Supported Employment is very interesting. It could be that at the beginning of developing this type of service the “social service attitude” dominates (see Czech Republic), whereas in the course of the development of SE services as well as other services for the integration of people with disabilities the “labour market attitude” becomes more pertinent (see Norway and the UK).

Quality of jobs and career development

Another problematic aspect when looking at the quality of SE is the stakeholders' view on the quality of the job and opportunities for career development. Whereas for job seekers and job coaches a high quality job, including good wages, interesting and transparent tasks (see quality criteria) are very important as well as opportunities for developing their jobs, employers and policy-makers do not (or hardly) focus on these aspects. Other work on quality in SE also emphasises the importance of meaningful competitive employment, the quality of the job and career development opportunities as indicators for the quality of SE (BAG-UB, 2000; O'Bryan/O'Brien, 1995, Wehman/Grant Revell/Brooke, 2002).

The dilemma here is that typical jobs where the job seekers that participated in the QUIP project were found, are largely part-time, are mainly identified as “the odd jobs” and “low-qualified” jobs with a low status. Most supported employees work in smaller companies with less than 50 employees. In this case it becomes clear, that the aspect of opportunities for career development and quality of the job are high standards that in most cases are still not implemented in practice.

9.2.3 Characteristics of the Supported Employment process

There was a broad consensus of the stakeholders on the most important characteristics of the SE process. Some aspects seemed to be very clear and work very well and others posed some problems in practice.

Flexible and person-centred approach

The aspect that SE is a flexible and person-centred (tailor-made) approach oriented towards the needs of the job seeker/supported employee and those of the employer, was agreed upon by all stakeholders involved. The flexibility and individual focus of SE is very important and central for all those participating in the QUIP project. This aspect of SE is one of its clear strengths, seems to be working everywhere, with very few barriers to quality.

Right rate of assistance

Connected with the flexibility of the approach is that the right assistance at the right time should be provided and that help and support are available when needed. This seems to be the case most of the time and there is widespread satisfaction with this aspect of SE among participants in the QUIP project.



Customers, clients ... or partners?

When talking about the job seekers, employers and policy-makers the term "customer" has come up repeatedly. A key issue in the SE-process is whether these stakeholders should be treated as customers, i.e. somebody you are selling a service to who is a mere consumer of the service, in which case his/her satisfaction is the only indicator of the quality of a service. A view that has emerged within the QUIP project is that these stakeholders should not be merely seen as customers (of course stakeholders' satisfaction remains an important outcome) but as partners or co-producers in the process of SE. It has become clear that a prerequisite for high-quality Supported Employment is when all involved stakeholders work together to reach the set goals.

The focus in the interviews and group discussions was mainly on what the job coaches can do to support the other stakeholder groups. What was missing was a focus on what the other stakeholders can do to support the job coaches, each other (with the exception of the natural support discussion, see below) and the Supported Employment process. Some interview partners – especially policy-makers and employers and in some cases job seekers/supported employees – did not see themselves as partners but as passive recipients of the SE service.

This leads to the question as how much a job coach leads the SE process and at which points in time the other partners, e.g. the job seeker or the employer will take on a leading role. An important step in improving the quality of Supported Employment is to augment the stakeholders' roles within the SE process and to create adequate framework conditions for SE. SE agencies should focus on developing partnerships with the different stakeholders and work together to achieve their aims rather than seeing stakeholders as customers whose expectations they need to fulfil. Having said that, of course there also needs to be a focus on job seekers', employers' and policy-makers' expectations, but they should also be confronted with the expectations of the SE agency towards them to be able to offer a high-quality SE service.

The QUIP project has shown that Supported Employment is about bringing people from completely different cultures together and enabling them to work together to achieve the aim of integrating people with a disability into the ordinary labour market. It is also about creating framework conditions to enable communication between and joint action of those involved. Tools and instruments to do this have been developed during the QUIP project and will hopefully help to improve this aspect of quality in SE (quality criteria, manual, final conference in Budapest; see www.quip.at).

Involving job seekers/supported employees (self-determination and user involvement)

In connection with seeing stakeholders as partners, the role of the job seeker/supported employee was discussed repeatedly and is a key to quality in SE.

The term "user involvement" was raised again and again. However, there seem to be quite a few aspects to this:

- *The first aspect of user involvement is actually self-determination and concerns whether and how the job seeker is encouraged to make his/her own decisions in the SE process.*
- *The second issue is whether and how the job seeker is actively involved in the Supported Employment process or whether he/she is more of a passive recipient of the job coach's services. This concerns aspects such as whether the job coaches makes telephone calls or fills in paper work for the job seeker or whether the job seeker is encouraged to do these things by him/herself.*
- *The third level is in how far the job seeker/supported employee is involved in influencing the (quality of) service provision on agency level.*



- *And the fourth aspect is enabling job seekers/supported employees to advocate their needs and interests in the development of SE at a regional and/or national level.*

Repeatedly we wondered “Are we really listening to job seekers/supported employees?”. There seem to be quite substantial differences between the type and scope of user involvement in different countries. In all countries, supporting the user to make his/her own decisions and to be actively involved in the SE process was stated as an important aspect of SE. However, when looking closely at job coaches’ answers it seems that in practice still a lot of decisions and practical tasks are done “for” and not “by” the job seeker/supported employees.

Concerning the other aspects, there is a long tradition of involving users in areas of service provision and advocacy on a regional and national level in the UK. Within the QUIP project, the UK team was the only team in which supported employees were actively involved. In the other countries this aspect of user involvement is less developed. All in all there is great potential for improving the quality of SE through paying more attention to the job seekers’/supported employees’ role and involving them systematically not only in their own SE process but in the development of service provisions and developing SE services on a regional and national level (Inclusio Transnational Partnership, 1997).

We see that in many cases job coaches still see job seekers as being in need of their help rather than being able to make their own decisions and be actively involved in all stages of the SE process. The low degree of reported reflective participation and user involvement raises questions about the methods in use in Supported Employment. While there is the rhetoric to help job seekers help themselves, job coaches are in some cases missing the tools to do so. There should be reflection on and a further look at how job coaches can help job seekers to help themselves, how to enable them to make their own qualified choices and to raise awareness of job seekers in this respect.

This issue of raising awareness of the job seeker is important for the following reason: Job seekers do want to be taken seriously, do not like it when job coach and employer talk about them and want to be treated as adults. However, with the exception of job seekers in the UK, there is no explicit mention by job seekers that they would like to be involved more in their own SE process and would like to be involved in improving SE service provision on different levels.

Another issue that was raised, was whether or not it was possible for the job seeker to change job coaches. This element of choice should also be an important aspect of user involvement and self-determination.

Role of the family

The role of the family came up repeatedly during the QUIP project. Job coaches reported that the job seeker’s family may sometimes be a barrier to high-quality Supported Employment. A result of our work is that job coaches have to be very sensitive to when the job seeker’s family should be involved in the SE process and when it is best left out. Here, it is crucial to listen to the job seekers and consider his/her individual situation and wishes.

Confidentiality

Job seekers mentioned that they wanted job coaches to keep personal information that they have given them secret and not share it with anyone else unless they are given permission to do so. This should be considered when giving other agencies or the employer information on the job seeker/supported employee.



9.2.4 SE Process

The elements of the SE process were quite clear and there was a broad consensus among stakeholders on them (see quality criteria). However, there were a few controversial points that will be explained in the following.

Accessibility

An aspect of SE where improvement is needed in most of the SE agencies that participated in the QUIP project, is how people actually find the SE agencies and how quickly they can access their services. Whereas the referral routes to SE in Norway go through the labour market service and are quite clear, other countries report diverse and more unclear referral routes. It was reported that not enough information is given to people about SE by other agencies (e.g. Labour Office, social workers), hence qualified choices are difficult. Several job seekers attributed their participation in SE to chance. We concluded that at present it is very hard for a person with a disability to choose SE as a supporting service.

Also, Rytmus in the Czech Republic reported waiting lists for their services, as there are no other providers of SE that job seekers can access.

These two points raise another dilemma. On the one hand the unclear referral routes and the fact that job seekers are not informed sufficiently on SE services would mean that it would be advisable to improve information and marketing of the SE agencies especially with respect to those organisations referring job seekers but also to the general public. On the other hand, if SE agencies have waiting lists and cannot answer to already existing demands, then wrong expectations may be raised if the SE agency engages in further publicity. For example, Salva vita in Hungary is very careful with its public relations work in order to avoid waiting lists. It tries to find a good balance between raising new demands and the capacities of its service.

Target groups

When looking at the accessibility of SE, the question comes up which job seekers are targeted by the SE agency. In principle, the SE agencies involved in the QUIP project all cater to people with a disability (some are focussed on people with a learning disability) that need substantial support in order to find and secure a job on the ordinary labour market. Wehman, Grant Revell and Brooke (2002) identified the quality indicator “employing individuals with truly significant disabilities”. In reality there are two trends that can endanger this stance.

Some SE agencies report that they have shifts in the types of clients accessing their services. However, this is not necessarily empirically supported. There is, however, evidence, e.g. in Norway that there has been an overall increase of job seekers/supported employees with psychiatric disabilities accessing SE services.

Also, there has been a trend to raise the numbers of placements expected per year (e.g. in Austria). This can lead to a phenomenon referred to as “creaming” where those who are more likely to be placed on the ordinary labour market are chosen as clients of SE rather than those needing more support and being less likely to succeed in finding a job. This is an example of how quantitative criteria can endanger the quality of Supported Employment.

It is advisable for SE agencies to review the number of job seekers from time to time according to disability, gender, age and previous work experience in order to evaluate if the target group they should be catering for is really being reached or whether those that are supposed to be accessing SE are being left out. Job coaches in the Czech Republic report difficulties in judging which job seekers to include into the SE process and which job seekers to refer to other services.



In the framework of discussions on mainstreaming, the idea of opening SE for other groups, not just for people with disabilities is becoming more pertinent. This becomes clear if one looks at the design of the European Union's EQUAL-programme, that aims at harmonizing measures for a wide variety of disadvantaged groups (e.g. immigrants, women, long-term unemployed). Mainstreaming elements always lead to the question whether this causes competition between user groups and whether this again has the consequence that especially disadvantaged groups (like persons with a severe disability) are not supported adequately.

Job seekers' expectations and motivation

One delicate point discussed during the project was what SE agencies expect from the job seeker. Job coaches mentioned that the job seeker should in principle be willing to find a job and be willing to work. This basic level of motivation, interest and curiosity should not be mixed up with the job seeker having to be "job-ready" which is not a prerequisite, but an aim of Supported Employment.

Also, job coaches mentioned repeatedly that many job seekers come to them with unrealistic expectations about the type of job they want, the amount of wages or status. Dealing with these unrealistic expectations in practice is one of the challenges job coaches face.

Job match

The match between the supported employee and the job is the most important aspect of SE. This view is shared by all stakeholders and overall job matching seems to function well in the agencies involved in the QUIP project. It is about getting "the right job for the right person". On the one hand there should be enough time to enable a good matching process – employers in the Budapest meeting mentioned that there must be sufficient time for the SE process – on the other hand there should be a focus on finding a job quickly and enabling the job seeker to learn on the job. In this connection the trial phase which is usually used in most agencies (except in the Czech Republic) can help the job seeker as well as the employer to see whether the job at hand matches the job seekers' needs and abilities.

Social and psychological support

"It is ALL about the job – if you feel unhappy or have any other problems, it will affect your job." (Job seeker)

Job coaches and job seekers stress the importance of support other than finding a job, like support in case of problems with the family or questions of housing etc. This point was controversial among members of the QUIP project team (see discussion above under 2.2).

Natural support

A much-discussed theme in the QUIP project was also the role of the employer and the co-workers in the SE process. In the development of SE in the last years, a large focus was put on enabling co-workers and employees to support the supported employee. In those countries, where SE is developed, improving natural support is a big issue. In Hungary and the Czech Republic the role of the co-workers and employers as supporters is not such an important issue in the debate on Supported Employment, although the SE agencies there do involve available support at the workplace to establish security when reducing support.

In many cases natural support seems to be available. Several positive examples of natural support were mentioned at the final conference in Budapest, for example an Austrian co-worker who regularly drives her disabled colleague home. However, some needs for improvement were mentioned. The need to train and inform co-workers on dealing with and



supporting the supported employees was identified. Also, job coaches should be trained and informed on how to activate the potential for support within the company.

Follow-up

“Actually long-term support is happening. It would be good to know more about that.” (QUIP project partner)

The need for staying in contact with the supported employee after the actual Supported Employment process is finished was identified in all countries. There has been some confusion on the term follow-up. On the one hand it is seen as the phase after the supported employee is settled in his /her job, but still has regular contract with the job coach (ongoing support). On the other hand it is support or contact between the SE agency and the supported employee after the actual SE process is over. An important quality criterion is to enable ongoing support for as long as necessary. However, the exact type of support and keeping track of supported employees differ substantially.

There is a need to find out how supported employees are doing after the actual SE process is over, to see how successful SE really is. More attention should be given by the SE-agencies to the follow-up of supported employees after the actual SE process is over. There is the problem that there is usually no funding for this type of activity which makes it difficult to maintain. Also, further research on the long-term follow-up of supported employees would be needed

9.2.5 Framework conditions

A variety of framework conditions were identified throughout the course of the QUIP project. The most important ones are those concerning the working conditions of the job coaches and the legal and organisational framework of SE on a regional and national level.

Mission statements of projects

Mission statements of an SE agency as an element of ensuring quality was not mentioned by any of our interview partners and participants during the project. This was identified as an important issue by experts and is included in other work on quality of Supported Employment (BAG-UB, 2000; O’Byrne/O’Brien, 1995) and thus, the QUIP project team decided to include this point in the quality criteria list.

Organisational issues

The organisational framework of the agencies participating in the QUIP project is very different. Some are smaller organisations providing different services, among them Supported Employment (Salva Vita, Hungary; Rytmus, Czech Republic; Project Aura, Spain). Others are SE services that are part of a larger organisation (Arbeitsassistentz Liezen, Austria; Arbeid med Bistand Romerike, Norway). Into Employment in the UK is a network of different organisations providing Supported Employment in Essex.

Being part of a larger organisation can lead to problems of organisational and cultural differences between the Supported Employment service and the rest of the organisation. Also, within a large organisation there are different interest groups when it comes to distributing resources. Finally, a SE provider that is part of a larger organisation is usually dependent on decisions made in the larger organisation and may lack autonomy.

A healthy organisational framework is an important basis for high-quality Supported Employment and good teamwork as well as good communication are essential. In many cases, functioning communication between colleagues was reported. At the same time there were also suggestions for improvements like introducing regular team meetings or supervision for



staff. Clear guidelines for the tasks and responsibilities of individual job coaches are also prerequisites for job coaches doing a good job (see discussion on work adviser/job coach below).

High turnover

One of the largest barriers to quality that was identified in the framework of the QUIP project was the high turnover of job coaches that was reported in each country. At the Budapest conference a Supported Employee from Austria demonstrated very clearly that he has had four different job coaches in the course of his SE process.

The high turnover of job coaches is quite problematic given the high value job seekers/supported employees and employers place on the personal relationship with the job coach. This discrepancy between the role of personal relations for the user and the high turnover/change of staff is a phenomenon encountered in other social services too (Wild/Strümpel, 1996).

High turnover among job coaches seems to have several reasons. One key to this is that there is quite a discrepancy between the high degree of personal and professional skills and challenges involved in being a job coach and the quality of their working conditions. All stakeholders that were interviewed and took part in the group discussions mentioned long lists of skills and knowledge that job coaches need. Also, many different tasks and challenges job coaches are confronted with were mentioned in the course of the QUIP project. On the other hand, their working conditions in terms of pay, status, autonomy and opportunities for further education do not seem to match the expectations geared at them (although this does differ from country to country).

In the job coaches' workshop of the Budapest meeting it became clear which challenges job coaches have to deal with. She/he has to mediate between many different types of people from completely different settings and has to meet their expectations. This can also lead to job coaches being a scapegoat for different stakeholders in the SE process.

Job coaches' working conditions should entail the same quality criteria that the supported employee's working conditions should have. They need to have the same opportunities for empowerment and career development. It is not realistic to expect job coaches to support job seekers to find jobs that have better working conditions than their own.

Job adviser/ work assistant / job coach

The complexity of the SE process and the large variety of tasks leads to the relevance of having different people responsible for different aspects of the SE process. In several of the participating SE agencies, different staff members work on different parts of the SE process (UK, Austria, Czech Republic). The job adviser or work assistant is usually responsible for the first phases of the SE process whereas the job coach accompanies the supported employee to work and supports him/her there. However, the exact division of tasks varies from agency to agency. In one of the project meetings a working group stated that it was important to define the two roles of "job coach" and "job adviser" clearly. This does not always seem to be the case. In Norway, one job coach is usually responsible for the whole SE process. Given the complexity of job coaches' tasks, this splitting of tasks that seems to be quite common may be one possibility to improve the quality of Supported Employment.

Job coaches' training and further education

Given the high turnover among job coaches and the complex tasks and challenges they are confronted with, issues of basic qualifications and further education as well as selecting job coaches are a central point for improving the quality of SE.



All stakeholders listed many qualifications job coaches should have. These were many different soft skills as well as several knowledge and experience criteria (see Chapters 2-6). Whereas many stakeholders stressed the importance of the soft skills, especially social skills over other qualifications, there was a strong case for improving the educational framework for job coaches. Some interview partners seemed to think that life experience, a positive personality and positive attitudes towards people with a disability and employment is enough for a job coach. However, given the high demands placed on job coaches this is definitely not the case.

In most of the participating countries there is neither basic education nor systematic further education for job coaches. Also, in many of the participating agencies there is no systematic opportunity for job coaches to participate in any type of training courses. Again, the same quality criteria should be applied here as concerning the supported employees, namely that needs for career development and training should be reviewed regularly. Some job coaches mentioned specific types of skills they would like to acquire, e.g. dealing with specific kinds of client groups (like people with psychiatric disabilities).

There is a need to review job coaches' opportunities for training in the different countries involved in the QUIP project and offers for further education through or by the individual agencies for their job coaches and to develop training opportunities like those that exist in, e.g. Germany or Ireland.

Networking / Public relations

All aspects of networking and public relations in SE play a big role for quality and were identified as an area where improvements are needed in participating agencies.

Local cooperation between different institutions was mentioned several times. It is rather the question of how to cooperate with other providers of SE as well as other services and at the same time deal with competition between providers. Especially with respect to the fact that SE should focus on labour market outcomes and refer job seekers/supported employees to other services if necessary, good cooperation between services – also in the direction of ideas such as “single action plan” or “one-stop-shop” – is essential. This is especially relevant if one wants to offer user-friendly services that are adapted to job seekers'/supported employees' needs. For countries with a wide variety of services this is more important than for countries where competition is not (yet) such an issue (Czech Republic and Hungary).

Another interesting point in connection with networking and public relations is how to contact and access employers. In the interviews with employers it became clear that in some cases employers hire people with a disability for “social reasons” which is sometimes connected with personal experiences with disability or people with a disability. The question was raised how an employer's personal experience of disability influences his/her reaction to SE. While social reasons and personal experience may have a role to play as a door opener, public relations work and contacts with employers should go beyond this.

If employers think people with disabilities have a “right” to work in the labour market and to be included in society then maybe the supported employment agency could encourage employers to convey this message in their marketing. Also the SE agency should think of ways of valuing the commitment of these employers by press articles or a prize for employers (see www.csreurope.org). An example of this is the so-called “Job Oscar” awarded to companies who employ people with a disability in the Region of Ennstal in Austria where the Arbeitsassistentz Liezen is situated.

Raising awareness for people with a disability in society was especially discussed at the final conference in Budapest. Supported employment measures will only be successful in the long-run if people in society at large are aware of the importance of integrating people with a dis-



ability into society and into the ordinary labour market and when this thinking is shared by the majority of the population in the respective countries. Whereas publicity campaigns for people with a disability have until now been led by a social and charitable approach, in the future raising public awareness should focus on integration and anti-discrimination of people with a disability as a human rights issue¹³.

Laws and regulations

The regional and national framework for SE was a much-discussed topic during the whole QUIP project. In the accession countries Czech Republic and Hungary the missing legal framework is one of the biggest barriers to quality that the SE agencies are confronted with. Also, Spain reported on a lacking legal framework for SE. While Austria does have guidelines on SE and some references to SE in the legislation on employment of people with disabilities, these regulations are currently changing. In Norway there is a functioning financial and organisational framework for Supported Employment on the national level.

With the exception of Norway, funding Supported Employment was seen as a problem in all participating countries. In many countries there are mixed funding arrangements that are very complicated and involve a fair amount of bureaucracy. Stable and ongoing funding was identified as an important element of the framework needed to provide high-quality Supported Employment (see also Melvyn, 1993).

The time limitation of Supported Employment services was discussed several times. In most countries involved in the QUIP project the Supported Employment process is limited to one year, with the exception of Norway (three years) and Spain (no time limit). On the one hand, it is considered as good for the motivation of the job seeker to find a job if he/she sees the time limit. On the other hand, it can be a substantial barrier to ongoing support, which does not seem to be an issue neither for policy-makers nor for job coaches. It should be kept in mind though, that good processes need time. While there are these set time limits in most of the countries participating here, in many cases there is also the possibility of extending the time limit.

Concerning policy-makers' evaluations and monitoring tools, financing should not only be related to quantitative placements but also to aspects of quality of SE as developed in the QUIP project and to continuous quality monitoring in SE agencies. Most importantly, the quantitative criteria set by funding agencies should not jeopardize the quality of Supported Employment.

A general barrier to integrating people with a disability into the labour market that is also encountered in Supported Employment is a general issue known as the "benefit trap". In many cases job seekers lose their benefits when entering employment. If their employment is not successful they have to go through the whole application and assessment procedure again. In other cases the job seekers' wages are lower than the benefits they receive which also creates disincentives to work. In some countries, e.g. the UK, already some adjustments have been made. However, this is an issue that still has to be dealt with in many countries (Prinz, 2003).

Geographical issues

Some practical problems in connection to geographical distances were reported in Norway and in Austria. On the one hand job coaches need resources (e.g. time, drivers' licence) and

¹³ This is also in line with the European Union's and the European Disability Forum's approach to the "European Year for People with a Disability" 2003. Its main aims are to raise awareness for and reduce barriers to the integration of people with a disability and to actively involve people with a disability themselves.



infrastructure (e.g. car) to be able to cater to job seekers/supported employees and employers in different areas. On the other hand, these same barriers make it difficult to find a job for people with disabilities, who in many cases also have mobility problems.

Quality assurance

The SE agencies participating in the QUIP project have different approaches concerning quality assurance and monitoring. While SE services in Norway function according to national guidelines, Salva Vita in Hungary has been working on quality monitoring for three years now. They assessed the satisfaction of different stakeholder groups and have also developed a yearly self-evaluation and development system according to the EFQM model.

All in all it is clear that there are not enough resources – on an organisational as well as a structural level – for quality assurance and monitoring processes other than those prescribed by policy-makers. It is difficult to allocate resources for quality improvement processes when securing funding for core services is already a challenge not easy to master. SE agencies should include a commitment to quality monitoring and assurance in their mission statements (see above). At the same time public authorities should not only look at outcome measures but also commit resources to enabling SE providers to engage in quality assurance activities.

9.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

9.3.1 Conclusions

The QUIP project shows again the *value of SE for integrating people with a severe disability* – who in former times were not even regarded as fit for work at all – into the ordinary labour market and the potential that this approach has for reaching the goal of integration and anti-discrimination of people with a disability into society as a whole. Keys to quality in Supported Employment are a paid job in the ordinary labour market, an individual tailor-made approach that is planned and systematic, partnership and cooperation between as well as active participation of stakeholders coming from very different cultural backgrounds (public, private, non-profit, disabled, non-disabled etc) as well as sound framework conditions.

A positive development is that there are *more and more agencies offering these services*, e.g. in Austria (since 10 years) and in Hungary and the Czech Republic, where efforts to integrate people with disabilities into mainstream society are only fairly recent. There is evidence that developing and building up projects like this under unstable framework conditions involves a lot of creativity, enthusiasm and personal commitment of those involved. Whereas stable framework conditions and long experience in SE (like in the UK or Norway) have advantages, there is a lack of innovation and entrepreneurship reported in well-established systems.

In general the *Supported Employment process*, including planning and profiling as well as job match (see quality criteria for details) *works well and is successful*. More attention should be paid to the actual working conditions of the supported employees in terms of where their income comes from (wage subsidy, benefits), opportunities for personal development and further education on the job as there is quite a discrepancy with reality here.

With the increasing complexity of society, there is an increase of jobs that involve mediation between different groups of people. *Job coaches are a good example for this kind of “intermediary” jobs* and for the problems connected with them. Job coaches’ tasks involve a high amount of personal commitment, adjustment to different people and expectations as well as a large amount of skills. In all countries involved in the QUIP project this is in sharp contrast to opportunities for basic training, further education, wages and other aspects of job coaches’ working environment. In order to be able to support job seekers to find jobs with adequate



working conditions and chances for personal development, job coaches also need this type of working conditions.

On the European level there is a strong stance on *actively involving people with a disability* in developing disability as well as labour market policies. Also, creating and sustaining partnerships between stakeholders is a keyword regarding most major social policy areas on the European level. However, in many cases the tools, know-how and awareness are missing with regard to how to actively involve partners from different cultures and with completely different levels of awareness and thinking in improving a policy area. The instruments used in the QUIP project show how to promote exchange between stakeholder groups within a country and within stakeholder groups over countries.

With *increased competition on the labour market*, high levels of unemployment and the tendency to push certain groups, like older workers, out of the labour market, it has to be kept in mind that there is the danger that Supported Employment and integration into the ordinary labour market will not be available to the most disadvantaged on the labour market – those it is meant for – but for less disadvantaged people.

With growing evidence that current disability policies in Europe, involving high-benefit and social insurance levels are not sustainable, *activation policies to integrate disadvantaged persons into the labour market* are becoming more and more important. Supported Employment has many elements that can be relevant to other policy areas, like the tailor-made approach, planning, type of mediation and the type of involving partners. There should be more exchange between persons working in the area of Supported Employment and other general policy areas to see how these can profit from each other.

In general the *role of employers* and the reasons why they make efforts to employ people with a disability need to be re-examined. Some employers, especially in countries with a longer tradition of integrating people with a disability into society, see people with a disability as an employee like anyone else. Others regard employing people with a disability as their social responsibility and their contribution to societal values. In the UK and the US there is a growing focus on “the business case” for employing people with disabilities. This means that it is recognized that people with disabilities are customers and users of a company’s products. Employing people with disabilities within a company can lead to a better acceptance, better image but also to products that are more accessible to people with a disability and can thus improve the companies’ overall standing. These different motives behind employing people with a disability should be taken into account in the activities and efforts of an SE agency to involve employers and raise public awareness.

In the QUIP project, in interviews with employers in Austria, in some cases employers did not regard these persons as having a disability and were only reminded when interviewers mentioned this. There will always be the contradiction that, on the one hand, policies for the integration of disadvantaged groups that are focused on *anti-discrimination and equal rights* will either be targeted at those that are disadvantaged but then need to define these people as being different from others or they will be inclusive and create framework conditions that are conducive to all – but this, on the other hand, may exclude those for whom they would be most important (Marin, 2002). This is a dilemma in the discussion on mainstreaming in general.



9.3.2 Recommendations

The recommendations presented in the following are recommendations collected throughout the QUIP project, mostly those formulated by the working groups that different stakeholders participated in and again discussed in the final partners' meeting in Schladming. They are recommendations for the SE agencies themselves, the regional and national policy level as well as at the level of the European Union.

1. Improving stakeholder involvement in Supported Employment

- *All involved stakeholders should focus on developing their roles as partners and co-producers of SE rather than having a provider-consumer relationship.*
- *Stakeholder involvement in policy development and decision-making should be common practice on regional, national and European level.*
- *Exchange between stakeholders should be secured on agency, regional, national and European level.*
- *The meeting design trialled in the framework of the QUIP project is a useful and viable tool for bringing stakeholders together and enabling their active participation.*

2. Rethinking the role of job seekers/supported employees

- *The job seekers/supported employees should have the right to make their own decisions at all stages of the SE process.*
- *Job seekers/supported employees should be actively involved in every stage of the Supported Employment process.*
- *Job seekers/supported employees should be actively involved in processes of service provision within the agency and in developing policies on regional, national and European level.*
- *People with a disability should be encouraged to become job coaches and offered training for this.*

3. Developing the role of employers and co-workers

- *National and international company reference lists should be developed to help employers that have not yet opened their companies for people with disabilities to identify those that have.*
- *Employers committed to employing people with a disability should create networks on national and international level and work together to promote the integration of people with a disability into the ordinary labour market and into society at large.*
- *Employers as well as SE-agencies should spread positive experiences more extensively among employers that have not yet opened their companies for people with disabilities.*
- *More systematic information and training for co-workers on working together with people with a disability should be offered. This can be promoted by policy-makers, e.g. by linking subsidies for employers to the availability of this kind of information and training.*



4. Confirming the role of job coaches

- *The main focus of the SE process should be on a good job match and should clearly focus on the job, not on therapy.*
- *Job coaches should not be decision-makers but facilitators, supervisors and give practical support to job seekers. “The job coach should do something as well as talk.”*
- *To support the empowerment of job seekers, job coaches need empowering working conditions and an encouraging environment. Thus, job coaches’ working conditions should be examined carefully and improved.*
- *Supported Employment agencies should improve opportunities for job coaches to participate in further education and training.*
- *Action plans must take into consideration the problem of turnover, which may be a problem not only concerning job coaches but also for employers, mentors, co-workers and others. High turnover may increase possibilities for failure among supported employees.*

5. Improving the regional, national and European framework

- *A legal framework for Supported Employment should be set in place at national level in countries where it does not yet exist (e.g. accession countries).*
- *Long-term stable funding for Supported Employment should be secured.*
- *Referral procedures and accessibility of SE services should be re-examined and improved.*
- *Supported Employment should be complemented by a good network of other services that promote the integration of people with a disability (e.g. housing, counselling, leisure activities).*
- *Basic training as well as further education programmes for job coaches should be (further) developed on the national level.*
- *A European training programme for Supported Employment encompassing training available on national level (e.g. Norway, Germany, Ireland) should be developed with a special focus towards accession countries and training people with disabilities to become job coaches.*

6. Improving visibility of SE / Raising awareness

- *SE agencies as well as other stakeholders should actively disseminate more information on Supported Employment and on employing people with a disability and thus improve their visibility.*
- *SE agencies and other stakeholders should contribute to raising awareness for people with a disability in society as a human rights issues. The European Union Year of People with a Disability 2003 should be used as a starting point to initiate concrete and concerted action in this respect.*

7. Making a firm commitment to improving the quality of SE

- *Policy-makers/funding agencies as well as SE agencies should commit resources to improve the quality of SE.*



- *SE agencies should involve stakeholders in improving the quality of their services and offer them appropriate information and framework conditions to do so.*
- *The manual for self-evaluation of SE-agencies developed during the QUIP project should be disseminated and SE agencies should be encouraged to use and improve it.*
- *The quality criteria developed in the QUIP project should be the basis for discussions on agency, regional, national and European level. They should be brought together with other existing quality criteria in SE and improved to secure an international understanding of the quality of SE.*
- *Cross-country benchmarking with all stakeholders should be continued and extended.*
- *Inviting policy-makers or other stakeholders from different countries should be used as a means to improve the quality of Supported Employment on a national level.*



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11 Annex

11.1 Reviewing the methods used in the QUIP project

As a whole the mix of methods used, the qualitative focus as well as the participatory approach proved very useful in attaining the goals of the project, such as eliciting quality criteria from the point of view of the stakeholders, fostering exchange between different stakeholders and enabling participants from different countries to learn from each other. There were a host of methodological issues discussed throughout the project. They are outlined in this section, putting the main focus on areas for possible improvement.

11.1.1 Practical issues

Questionnaire / Interviews

As outlined in the introduction, a separate questionnaire was designed for each stakeholder group. All in all the interviews with stakeholders were very productive and elicited interesting results, though some areas for improvement were identified:

- Especially in the first questionnaires there was a tendency towards redundancy, meaning that there were several questions that elicited similar answers from the interview partners. As the project progressed, experiences from the first phases could be incorporated to improve further questionnaires.
- Another issue that arose was that the questionnaires did differ quite substantially from each other. This was necessary as we assumed different aspects were important in different ways for the stakeholders. However, this made the stakeholder results less comparable and raised the question whether differences in stakeholder groups reflect their viewpoints or the questions asked. On the other hand the questions were sufficiently open to allow interview partners to express their views.
- In principle, the research partners had agreed beforehand that the interviews with the job seekers, the employers and the policy-makers would be carried out by researchers and not by job coaches. For practical reasons some of the interviews with job seekers/supported employees were conducted in the presence of job coaches. Also, the UK partners had employment advisers/job coaches carrying out the interviews with employers. In retrospect this did not prove to be useful, because it prevented the interview partners from being able to voice critical points freely.

Group discussions

The group discussions proved to be very helpful instruments to elicit the stakeholders' views on quality. Group discussions were done with job coaches, job seekers and with a mix of stakeholders. Especially in those settings where job seekers did not get together and exchange views earlier (e.g. Norway), the group discussions also contributed to improving the participants' confidence and communication. Some partners experienced groups where participants were not active. In such cases, sometimes assistance is needed for certain participants or the methods used in group discussions need to be reviewed. Also, sometimes it can be advisable



to offer separate group discussions for job seekers/supported employees with similar types of impairments.

Separate research phases

The fact that each phase involved a separate empirical stage meant that each research partner basically had to conduct five small empirical studies from the beginning (questionnaire design) to the end (analysis and report). This involved a great amount of organisation and personnel resources. It would be advisable in a similar study to collect the empirical data for all stakeholders in one phase. Designing all the questionnaires at the same time would also make it easier to link the questionnaires to each other. A positive aspect of this approach was the possibility of reflecting the point of view of one stakeholder group at one time and being able to concentrate on this.

Language

We were confronted with difficulties with language on several levels throughout the whole project. Firstly, for some project partners, working in English was a great challenge and also translating questionnaires as well as results into one's national language and back was not easy. Second, there was the challenge of terminology. During the course of the project a wealth of terms came up that were being used differently from country to country. A glossary was collected in the course of the project (see annex).

Thirdly, difficulties with language came up in interviews and group discussions with job seekers/supported employees, employers and policy-makers. Some of the questions asked in interviews and group discussions with job seekers/supported employees proved to be too difficult and/or were too abstract for those interviewed. In the interviews with employers, there were several questions, that were formulated in "sociologist/social service speak". Thus, it was concluded that interviewers were not especially successful in speaking the employers' language. In the course of the QUIP project it has proved crucial to adjust the language used to the respective stakeholders. This is one of the biggest challenges in a project such as this one.

Researcher/practical partner

One of the specificities of the QUIP project was that there was one partner who represented the SE agency and one research partner in each country. All in all this combination of partners from different fields contributed to the richness of the project and stimulated many useful and meaningful contacts and discussions. However, in some cases the following problems occurred:

- Since the two partners had to work together very closely in each country, one difficulty was that the practical partners partly might have felt threatened through the "evaluation role" the research partner played. In some cases practical partners did not share the opinion of the researchers on certain points and did not always find ways to clarify these differences in opinion. In a future project it would be advisable to clarify the role and the relationship between the SE managers and the researchers in advance.
- At the project meetings, several issues were discussed which were not necessarily relevant for the practical partners. At the same time, other points were left out or not discussed in adequate detail because of the composition of the group.
- At the first project meetings there were too many people at the partner meetings (15-20 people) to foster a productive work atmosphere in plenary. Throughout the project we did, however, increase work in small groups and also held a separate researchers meeting before the partners meeting in Barcelona.



- In two countries there was some difficulty with carrying out the research because of shifts in the research team during the course of the project. In Spain there was also the problem that the Spanish team did not have funding from the LEONARDO-programme¹⁴.

11.1.2 Evaluation vs. generating quality criteria

The main aim of the QUIP project was to elicit quality criteria in Supported Employment from the point of view of the stakeholders. However, throughout the project there was the tendency to add evaluation aspects to the questionnaires and group discussions. These two aspects (evaluation vs. generating quality criteria) were confused repeatedly during the project, led to some unclarity in our work and a wealth of discussions ensued in person and via email. While it took a large amount of effort to separate quality and evaluation aspects, the differentiation between the two became clearer in the course of the project.

Also, there were repeatedly discussions while designing the instruments for the respective research phases in how far existing quality criteria should be incorporated into the research or whether to leave the questions as open as possible to leave the respondents room to articulate their own criteria. While some questions did turn out to be based on existing quality criteria (like characteristics of the job or characteristics of job coaches), an effort was made to leave the methods open enough to elicit respondents' own views.

Positive evaluations

The questions connected to evaluation and satisfaction of all the stakeholders were answered very positively in most cases. A high amount of satisfaction was voiced by all stakeholders. At first glance it seemed that there is a very positive overall view of Supported Employment among the participants of the QUIP project. However, when looking closely at the results of the group discussions, interviews and Budapest conference, there was also a wealth of critical comments, conflictual points and concrete suggestions for improvement over all stakeholder groups.

Several phenomena were discussed in connection with the high degree of satisfaction expressed with the Supported Employment services involved in the QUIP project:

- For one, the choice of interview partners might have been biased. Mostly interview partners were chosen on a voluntary basis and thus, there was a tendency that those people were interviewed who were the most willing to participate in the study. These are likely to be persons who have had positive experiences with SE and have positive feelings towards the SE agency. However, especially in the employers' phase, partners had agreed to try to also interview some employers where things had gone wrong. While some interview partners belonged to this category, for future studies and for evaluation of quality in SE agencies it will be useful to more systematically target those stakeholders (especially job seekers/supported employees and employers) where things have gone wrong or an employee has lost his/her job.
- Also, it was difficult to gain exact information on practical details of each Supported Employment process and what was actually being done in each SE agency. Here, more site

¹⁴ Spain only entered as a partner after the project started, so no LEONARDO-funding was available. The Spanish Association for Supported Employment as well the projects "Project Aura" and "ASPANDEM" participated in the project and dedicated financial and personnel resources to the project. While the Spanish team did participate in all project phases, some of their activities during the project were somewhat reduced compared to the other partners, e.g. only two participants could attend the final meeting in Budapest.



visits and local involvement would have been helpful as well as asking more detailed and concrete questions.

- One important issue in this connection is in how far the participants in the study were able to compare the service they received with other service providers. In most cases this comparison (and thus competition between different providers) does not exist (especially in countries where the involved SE agency is the only provider in the country). There seems to be a phenomenon also encountered in other relatively new areas of social service provision, like home help and care for the elderly (Wild/Strümpel, 1996; Leichsenring/Stadler, 1999). This is that clients/users are so pleased that they receive the type of support offered in the first place that details of the support are not relevant to them in determining satisfaction. Also, in some cases interview partners – e.g. employers – are not interested in the details of the provision but only if “it works or not”.
- All in all, it seems that employers’ and job seekers’/supported employees’ expectations concerning the SE agencies in general are not very high. On the other hand there is evidence in work on quality in Supported Employment but also on social services in general that quality is not merely meeting clients’ expectations, but offering them services that go beyond their expectations as in “going the extra mile” (Bissonette, 1994; Wild/Strümpel, 1996).

11.1.3 Analysing the data and presenting the results

“Your way of generating quality criteria simply by asking stakeholders is a bit too simple” (QUIP project partner)

Another question that was raised was whether we analysed our data in enough detail or whether more analysis would have been necessary. A wealth of information was generated during this project. At some stages it seemed overwhelming and difficult to process. In a future project it would be advisable to specify the analytical framework more precisely at the beginning of the project and allocate more time to data analysis and interpretation.

Quality vs. quantity

A general problem we had in the course of the project was confusion about the nature of the instruments used. Whereas the focus of the research was qualitative in nature – as reflected in the aims and the sample sizes – some partners focused on designing questionnaires with a quantitative emphasis and in some cases the summary report represented the qualitative results in a quantitative fashion.

Listening to what people say

As the main aim of the project was about understanding what stakeholders had to say about the quality of supported employment, the question whether we succeeded in doing this was raised repeatedly. It was not always clear whether we were representing the views of the stakeholders in our reports or whether the views of experienced SE practitioners among the project partners – and thus elements of what is a “common understanding among the SE community” – were being duplicated. In the course of the project we became very sensitive to this issue and made an effort to represent the actual views of the stakeholders in the final results.

This problem was especially relevant for developing the list of quality criteria (see annex). It was a matter of repeated discussion how closely the quality criteria should stick to what participants in the project actually said or in how far important issues that were not mentioned by stakeholders be included. All in all we tried to stick closely to stakeholders’ views. However,



in some individual cases, quality criteria were added that were seen as especially important by a group of project partners and that were cited in other known publications on quality criteria of SE.

11.1.4 Products

Quality criteria list

All in all the methods used to generate the quality criteria were very useful (see intro) albeit very time- and energy-consuming.

There were discussions on the exact function of the developed quality criteria, and on the extent to which they were idealistic and normative. All in all the quality criteria in the list represent a high standard of quality. In practice there are a variety of framework conditions that are in contrast to many of the areas mentioned.

It is hard to differentiate between what constitutes Supported Employment, what is a minimum standard and which aspects actually contribute to the quality of Supported Employment.

Budapest conference

The Budapest conference proved to be a very useful tool in understanding stakeholders' views on the quality of SE and of allowing exchange between stakeholders and over countries. Using active facilitation techniques, having partners responsible for the national project teams and creating an overall communicative atmosphere were the basis for the meeting's success. Having two people – a service user and a practitioner – chair the meeting was very successful.

One thing that became clear was that more time is needed especially to accommodate to people with learning disabilities and to allow for their active participation. One other critical issue was, that while most stakeholders were quite well represented from each country, there were very few employers there. Also, some of those responsible for the country teams had the tendency to invite those stakeholders they worked together with closely. For the future special care should be given in choosing and inviting participants so that all relevant stakeholders are represented and that also those are invited, that are not yet in close co-operation with each other. This conference design can be used as a tool for bringing stakeholders together on a variety of issues.

Manual

The manual was compiled using the quality criteria and experiences made with the interviews and group discussions. After reaching a general agreement about the aims and contents of the manual, draft versions of different chapters were discussed in partner meetings. The manual is seen as a first step towards assessing quality in SE from the point of view of stakeholders in several European countries. Feedback of the experiences of those using it in practice is needed to improve and possibly revise it in the future.

As a whole the mix of methods used, the qualitative focus as well as the participatory approach proved very useful in attaining the goals of the project, such as eliciting quality criteria from the point of view of the stakeholders, fostering exchange between different stakeholders and enabling participants from different countries to learn from each other. There were a host of methodological issues discussed throughout the project. They are outlined in this section, putting the main focus on areas for possible improvement.



11.2 Glossary

Staff, employee, job developer, job coach, job facilitator, employment advisor, trainer

Rytmus (CZ)	Salva Vita (H)	Lebenshilfe (A)
Job consultant Job assistant (on-the-job)	Social worker Job coaches (job acquisition / job experience / training-on-the- job)	Work assistant Work „accompanier“ (on-the- job)
Norasonde (NO)	Projecte Aura/Aspandem (E)	Into Employment (UK)
Job coach	Job finder Job coach (on-the-job)	Employment advisor Job coach (on-the-job, in case of high support)

- People with a disability, disabled people, handicapped people, people with a handicap, people with special needs („pc-term“: people with a disability)
- Client, user, trainee, employee, job coach client, job seeker
- Learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, mental retardation
- Mental disability, psychiatric, psychological disability
- Work quality – sometimes quality of work performed by job coaches, sometimes quality of job of the job seeker
- Agency – supported employment agency (project / initiative) or funding agency
- Customer, public authorities, financer, funding agency
- Supervision (as in the work place / outside of the work place)
- Real job, open labour market, ordinary labour market



11.3 Short description of participating SE agencies

11.3.1 Arbeitsassisstenz Liezen (Austria)

The *Lebenshilfe Ennstal* was founded by parents of children with intellectual disabilities in 1980. Several services were built up in five locations in the district of Liezen to help people with disabilities: One type of service is occupational therapy with specialized training in different areas. In all of these locations there are housing opportunities for people with disabilities with support when they need it. Also, the „Frühförderung“ offers support services for 40 families with young children with a disability.

The *Arbeitsassistentz Liezen* (Supported Employment agency) resulted from a LEONARDO-project in 1995. The aim of the project was the vocational integration of persons who have been excluded from work. Now the project has Supported Employment for adults and youth, with two staff members for each group. It also has a „clearing“ service for teenagers, 2 job coaches and one staff member responsible for public relations. This shows that the *Arbeitsassistentz Liezen* has a wide variety of offers for integration into the labour market for people with any type of disability. Over 180 clients a year use the agency's services.

11.3.2 Rytmus (Czech Republic)

Civic association RYTMUS helps young and adult people with learning disabilities to live, work and learn in standard living conditions usual for their peers. Rytmus was founded in 1994. We provide services at these programs:

- School For Everyone. The goal of this program is to support individual inclusion of children with special needs into the system of regular schools.
- Sami za sebe. The goal of this program is to support self-advocacy development of people with learning disabilities in their everyday live.
- 3Supported Employment And Transition Phase from school to work. The goal of this program is to help people with learning disabilities to find and keep a job at the open labor market; the goal of Transition phase is to help students with disabilities in their transition from the school to an employment at the open labor market using individual trainings.

We have four job coaches and approximately ten job assistants as volunteers in our SE agency in Prague. They support 34 job seekers/employees at present. As a part of the EU PALMIF project “ Piloting the complex of Supported Employment services” two branches of RYTMUS were established at another regions two years ago. Presently Rytmus carries out a new project in the framework of the EU Equal initiative. The main goal of this project is to enlarge Supported Employment to all regions of Czech Republic, to realize a new kind of SE profits and include SE as a one of CR's Pro-Active Employment Policy tool with emphasis on teaching of workers and adhering standards of SE services.

11.3.3 Salva Vita (Hungary)

The Salva Vita Foundation is a not for profit organisation (privat initiative and registered as an organisation for public benefit). It was founded in 1993 and is an independent organisation. The aims of Salva Vita are promoting the inclusion of people with learning disability into the society and to assist their social integration by Supported Employment and other person cen-



tred services. The Foundation makes itself responsible for the continuous development and dissemination of its services.

The target group of our services is primarily people with learning disability, but due to the occurring high demand we also cater to people with multiply disabilities, like autistic and epileptic clients with moderate learning disabilities.

The activities of the Salva Vita Foundation cover Budapest and its surroundings.

Next to Supported Employment Salva Vita provides

- „*Transition from school to work*”
- „*Job Club*”
- „*Theatre-goers*” program
- *Dissemination – staff training*

The whole staff of Salva Vita are 10 full time employed people and we are working with other experts on a part time / contract base according to the needed expertise.

In the SE services 3 colleagues who are social workers are working with job seekers / employees (and with their families) and we have two colleagues working with employers. Training on the job is provided according to the employees’ needs and working capacity of the colleagues.

At present we have 49 employees in the active (individual) follow up phase. We have 56 job seekers in different phases of the SE process. We have some supported employees (8 people about), who did not wanted individual follow up and are participating in the Job club meetings and facilities.

11.3.4 Arbeid med Bistand Romerike (Norway)

Arbeid med Bistand Romerike (hereafter AB) was founded in 1997, as one of many such services starting as a result of the positive experiences made from the national pilot SE-project from 1992 – 1996. All SE-services in the country is today part of the national labour services official program for persons with disabilities.

AB works toward social integration of persons with disabilities in the community through getting normal, paid jobs. In addition is AB a part of the official labour services agenda for helping people with disabilities getting jobs instead of passively receiving disability pensions.

AB is today based in Skedsmo, a community north of the Norwegian capital of Oslo. The service is organised as a part of the labour service company Norasonde AS, who function as our service manager and mother organisation. Norasonde offers a wide range of other services for people with disabilities, such as vocational training, education in work related topics, social training and a sheltered workshop.

AB serves the region known as Romerike, with approx. 250.000 inhabitants, and get its job seekers from three separate major labour service regional offices. The region is large geographically, ranging from densely populated, industrial areas close to Oslo to clearly rural, small enterprise areas in the northern part.

The service has eight full time positions, all as job coaches. The job coaches are responsible for every aspect of the SE-process, from mapping the jobseekers interests and resources, contacting employers, to follow-up on the work place.



The target group is at broadly defined as anyone who "needs support to get and hold a job", and as such AB works with jobseekers with a wide category of disabilities. The most common is learning disabilities, mental health problems, social or behavioural problems and purely physical disabilities.

AB has a minimum number of jobseekers that each job coach must work with. This number is decided on a political level, and at the moment is set at six persons per job coach. With eight job coaches this means there are a minimum of 48 persons actively getting support by AB.

The maximum duration of the service is three years per jobseeker. In 2002 the average time spent in the service was about 1,5 years.

11.3.5 Into Employment (UK)

Into Employment is a partnership of 5 Supported Employment agencies providing services to disabled people in the County of Essex, the largest County Council in the UK with over 1.5 million residents.

The 'Into Employment' members are Linked Employment (Essex Social Services), OnSite (Realife Trust), Hoursworth (NELMET), 4U (New Possibilities Trust) and Pathway (Mencap).

Each agency works to the same service specification, staff salaries and quality standards.

The partnership was formed in 1998 following a two development contract awarded by Essex Social Services to the Realife Trust.

'Into Employment' is one of three employment and training partnerships operating in Essex. 'Into Enterprise' focuses on the development of social enterprises and 'Into Learning' focuses on vocational and non-vocational training.

11.3.6 Projecte Aura (Spain)

Project Aura is a non-profit organisation, which was founded in 1989 with the aim of improving the quality of life of people with learning disabilities by including them in the open labour market. It began with 10 job seekers. Today we have 75 participants, 8 of them looking for a job and the rest working, most of them are people with Down Syndrome but there are also other type of learning disabilities.

Project Aura is located in the city of Barcelona so most of the jobs are urban ones, some of the worksites are: supermarkets, offices, fast food restaurants, hospitals, public government agencies, universities, hotels. Our staff is made up of 2 co-directors, 1 agency coordinator and 4 job coaches. There is an organisation called "Amics del Projecte Aura" (Project Aura's Friends) made up of parents, relatives or friends which help us with their ideas and support.



11.4 Results of the workshops at the final ‘Quality in Practice’ conference

11.4.1 Recommendations from the Austrian workshop

For job coaches

- There should be a standardized professional profile, and
- systematic initial training and further education.

Natural support and support to employers should be improved through

- Better and more information for employers and co-workers
- Earmarking funding for employers for training co-workers to support for pwd or for mentoring

The SE-provider should

- provide good material /information/documentation for new job coaches (dealing with turnover).
- Job coaching on the job is a good method and should be kept up.

National framework should be improved by:

- Raising awareness in public on people with disabilities (especially with regard to young people and bullying).
- Rethinking the quota system and the compensatory levy.
- Receiving support from the Chamber of Commerce and other agencies.
- Introducing qualitative criteria for success, such as long-term work places.
- Quantitative criteria should be realistic and not jeopardize the quality of the SE agencies work.
- Holistic view of vocational integration over the life-span – one person should be responsible for the client at any given time
- Synchronizing subsidies for SE-providers.
- Systematic process of SE

11.4.2 Summary of the Czech workshop

This short report summarizes the outcomes from national meeting that has been held during the international conference in Budapest in the beginning of December 2002. The conference served the unique possibility for presentation draft outcomes from Quality In Practice project and receiving the feed-back from all stakeholders. The most expected results of the national meeting were the recommendations to the project concerning the quality criteria of supported employment. The meeting took more than two hours and a half in the afternoon of the first conference day. The results were presented on the plenary session.



Participants of the national meeting:

- job consultant
- ex-job consultant in Rytmus (now project leader within another social agency]
- job assistant
- job seeker (now help worker in a grocery store, before 26 years in a bakery]
- researcher

It is visible that Czech team was less diversified than others, representatives of national authorities/funding bodies, employers and agency leader were missing. It is necessary to take into account that team was imbalanced when reading this report. Participants concentrated rather to specific issued of their work than to general comments to the project. The client-participant of the meeting was due to her disability rather observer of discussion.

Method

- All participants should present their own story concerning supported employment and pointed out interesting or important issues from their point of view. It was the aim that was not completed in intended way. The session started with stories, but most time we spent in discussion the quality issues.
- Discussion about the poster – Quality House. We tried to discuss the idea of Quality House and the poster how it is looking like.
- Preparation of plenary presentation – whole team

Recommendations to the project

- Stress basic principles of approach to people with learning disabilities. Job assistants/consultants would prefer official outcomes from the project stress the basic principles. It is probably need of Czech team only, but the participants expect that the situation is similar in Hungary.
- Most important issues from the assistant/consultant point of view (to be highlighted in outcomes; connected to Quality House):
- The most important are “characteristics of the process”, esp. activity of client; client’s right to make own decisions in every moment; right rate of assistance.
- The problem of coaches’ wages (to be emphasized). National meeting pointed out this issue as important (different opinion to previous research phases) and as too slightly mentioned within project outcomes.
- The capacity difficulties should be stressed. In Rytmus the waiting list is still getting longer. The problem is not only that possible client have to wait for service, but the motivation of the client during waiting period and fact that client’s situation can widely change in period that is near one year now.
- Assistants/consultants think that project doesn’t deal with volunteering too much. They would add that volunteers have to have the same training as “standard” assistants and have to fulfill the same requirements. From their experience it shouldn’t be a common approach.
- Trial period (to be emphasized) is one of the most important things that enables find suitable job.



Poster “Quality House”

- It would be better to use Quality Street as a major metaphor. Street fits much better for the supported employment – it provides enough space for everyone, can reflect possible development. House could be understood as a tool for separation not inclusion.
- To add “right to decision in every moment” to Characteristics of process
- To change: selection of client → target group; training off the job → training of the abilities no directly connected to job; key qualifications → key abilities; support to every client → support to client wants it.
- Too complicated graphics of the poster

11.4.3 Summary of the Hungarian workshop

This report summarizes the National workshop of the Hungarian team, which was held during the QuiP Conference on 11th of October in Budapest. This material contains the process description, the participants’ list and the results of the workshop.

Participants list:

- Financing bodies & policy maker representatives (5 persons): István Vass, László Baranyai, (Labour Office), Csilla Szauer (Ministry of Employment Policy and Labour), Gábor Kovács (Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs), Orsolya Polyacsó (Open Society Institute).
- SE organisation management (1 person): Andrea Dávid
- SVA employees (6 persons): staff of SE: Éva Jásper, Görgy Tárnok, Benedek Horváth, Szabolcs Hajnal, Anna Sipos; programme leader of Transition from school to work: Rozália Palkovics; programme leader of East-
- Employers’ representative: Géza Nyilasi (Pesthidegkúti Ökumenikus Általános Iskola – managing director of an ecumenical school)
- Clients (2 persons, both working already): Mónika Vasas, Kristóf Gyarmati
- Researcher (1 person): Miklós Csiszár

As a result of the Hungarian role (hosting the conference) this group was the biggest one, therefore it was very hard to involve all participants.

Process description of the workshop

Introduction:

The researcher introduced the aim and the process of the workshop. After this all the participants introduced themselves.

Preparation of “contact chart”:

In this section the group intended to find all the relationships between the different stakeholders of SE in Hungary. In this task the group defined the type of the relationship between the different stakeholders.

“Ideas about SE at Hungary”:



In this phase the participant introduced their expectations about SE and told their opinion about the SE service's strengths and weaknesses in Hungary and in general.

In this phase the participants gave some advice that how the SE service can be improved.

Discussion about the Quality House:

In this phase the researcher introduced the concept and the details of the "Quality House". After this explanation the participants told their comments regarding the house. Secondly all the participants chose the three most important criterions from the elements of the house and marked their "dots". Finally the group discussed the scoring of the "Quality House".

"What I get / learned during the workshop":

In this phase the participants collected what they got and learned during the workshop.

Preparation for the plenary presentation:

In this phase five volunteer participants and the workshop moderator (the researcher) prepared some material for the presentation.

They collected and summarised together the key issues of the workshop.

Results of the workshop

Statements from the "SE contact chart":

- Now three different financing bodies are at Salva Vita in connection with the Supported Employment service. The representative of these bodies set out that it would be good a new kind of cooperation between the different financiers. They prefer to discuss the financing system of Supported Employment how they can share the financing tasks in SE service.
- At the Hungarian system Salva Vita has some other services, which support the Supported Employment service. These services help the dissemination of SE and help to form the society's view about disabled people (assist raising awareness).
- One of them is the programme "Transition from school to work" - for students of (segregated) schools educating young people with learning disability which offers them to acquire work experiences, and allow that they can enter the labour market with proper skills and knowledge.
- The other one is a kind of Dissemination:
- On the one hand: staff training in group homes, day centres and other involved organisations from different part of Hungary. It can provide to the development of the national SE network.
- On the other hand: dissemination in East-East countries.
- It is not defined in Hungary - as a result of the governmental changes - if or how far Supported Employment is a social or an employment service. Now the Ministry of Employment Policy and Labour is responsible for SE as an employment service on policy level. In this case they cannot finance the so-called social part of the service because of legal limitations (for example family members' assistance).

Results of the "Idea about SE at Hungary" discussion:

- Long term employment on the open labour market was the most important aim for each stakeholder in SE. The employment was emphasised as an important part of integration into the society.



- Secondly they emphasised the social integration of disabled people. With this statement they approved that social integration is more than to get work on the open labour market.
- In the participants' opinion this integration cannot start at work. In that case some other effective effort is needed for the integration before the disabled people start to look for job. SE can achieve the aims in connection with the social integration with other supports (support of family, support of the cultural integration, changes of society's view).
- Now SE has two different part of services (elements). The firsts are direct services, which are in direct connection with the employment of the clients (comprehensive and detailed assessment of the client, training on the job, etc.). The other kinds of services are not in direct connection with the employment, but these help to maintain the long-term employment (support of the family, psychosocial support for the client, assistance in the cultural integration, etc.). Now in Hungary the governmental financing bodies can finance only the direct (labour market oriented) elements of SE. But all representatives agreed that the indirect parts are as important as the direct ones with respect of the efficiency of SE.
- "Talking with the Salva Vita's employee" was important for the clients.
- Tailor maid (individual) process was important for all the stakeholders and they were explained what exactly mean this: adequate problem handling; individual assessment of the client; individual tempo during the SE service
- "Assistance in the administrative tasks in connection with the clients' employment" expectation comes from the employer.
- In Hungary is important the "selection" of the client, which is a Hungarian speciality (harmonisation of needs and supply/strength of the service). At the time Salva Vita offers its service primarily for people with middle or moderate learning disability, and for people with multiple disabilities, autistic and epileptic clients with a learning disability.
- The employer's representative was thinking about who is the disabled people. Because in his experiences people who are not working for longer term on the open labour market need help to get work just as disabled people. In this situation it would be very important to extend the supported employment service to other target groups.
- From the point of view of one financer and the service organisation (Salva Vita) it would be good to establish a kind of model, which is adaptable for different part of the countries in different situations. In this case a detailed description of the process is necessary. It needs also a measurable system with well-defined measures, which can help to evaluate the service results (both: quantitative and qualitative measures).
- The employer prefers some financial and other kind of support for the employment of disabled people.
- The financer and the SE organisation miss the national framework. In Hungary is not clearly defined the position of SE service. In this case the SE organisation and the financer have to look for the right solution: available financing possibility of the SE year by year.
- The final statement was that in connection with disabled peoples' integration there is no known better service than SE. In that case SE is the best solution for the disabled peoples' integration.



“Quality House”

- All the participants were satisfied with the Quality House. They realised that all of the expectations’ were in the house (moreover they found some new idea).
- In the participants opinion some of the definition and the translation are not enough precise, so the participant offered to look over the materials.
- The different stakeholders agreed that they have different expectations against SE, but in SE, as in the other services, the process has to focusing on the clients. “The client first” is the basic principle in the SE.
- The participants miss the learning activities (benchmarking) in the “Quality House”. They said that it is very important to know other system and not try always to develop new kind of solution for the problems, which were solved by other organisations before. It is important to learn from each other and to use others’ experiences.

Importance of “Quality House’s” elements

- Other advices for the improvement of SE
- Establish the national framework.
- Implement national network (learn from each other, increase the accessibility of the service).
- Form the view of society (employers, clients, families, social profession) in connection with disabled people.
- More PR of SE service.
- Measure of the efficiency and effectiveness of SE service.
- Solve the comparison of the SE’s efficiency and effectiveness with other services.
- Defining how to share the finances of the different elements (direct and non-direct labour market oriented) or harmonising the founds.
- Solve the quality assessment of the SE organisations (some kind of accreditation system).
- Handle that kind of elements what are not measurable in the SE.

“What I get/learned during the workshop?”

- In this discussion all the participants agreed that was very useful to hear personally the different stakeholders view about SE. This workshop helps to understand each stakeholder’s statements and help to understand some differences.

Some opinions about the workshop

- It was great to link the names with faces.
- It was great to see that it is not the final way of SE as we are working now.
- We saw the possibilities for the future.
- It was great to learn from each other.
- It was good to see that decision-makers would like to find the best solution and they are very committed.



- I heard some very important things for me in connection with SE.
- It was great to see how different parties try to cooperate and try to find the best solution for one aim.
- “We are in the same boat.”

11.4.4 Report from the Norwegian workshop

Headed by Øystein Spjelkavik (Work Research Institute).

Participants

Åse Almvang (Skeidar Oslo AS), Per Brannsten (Directorate of Labour), Elisabet Røhme Sivertsen (Directorate of Labour), Tor Ove Gjersvik (AB Romerike), Einar Madsen (AB Romerike), Yngve Moxness (AB Romerike), Eivind Rivrud (Akershus University College), Grete Wangen (Akershus University College).

Presentation in plenary session

Elisabet Røhme Sivertsen (Directorate of Labour) and Yngve Moxness (AB Romerike).

The aim of the workshop: A) Find similarities and differences among the represented stakeholders in regard to experiences with supported employment. B) Through the exchange of experiences to produce recommendations for further development on supported employment in regard to defining quality criteria.

The workshop started out with a short presentation of the participants and a general discussion about SE and the QUIP project, and then went over to the stakeholders' stories. The general discussion revealed that partners in QUIP have very different starting grounds; from countries involved in pioneer work to countries with national programs.

There are also differences in who the targeted persons for SE are. Spain for instance works with people with Down's syndrome whereas job coaches in Norway expressed that they would like to see more people with learning disabilities in SE. We also found that there are differences in the work of job coaches around among the countries; in some places their role is very wide and varied, whereas Norway is concerned about how to limit and define the job coach role.

The participants discussed the methodology in SE and emphasised that the methods are suited for other professional areas and in other services. In Norway, however, it is important to distinguish between the national SE program and the method.

Representatives from the directorate were concerned about the qualitative development of SE in terms of the Norwegian requirements specifications recently been implemented. They were also concerned about being in the role to order service from SE

The job seeker told a story that emphasised the job coach as some kind of basic guidance person who helps job seeker to make his own decisions.

The employer focused on the importance to organise SE in way that it leads to some kind of sharing of risks involved by hiring a supported employee; the existence of a competent job coach that operates within the framework of a stable organisation means that the risks anticipated by employers are reduced – in effect, as noted by all group participants, this means that different stakeholders share the risks involved, also the supported employee as a responsible person..



The employer told a story that focused on the duration of time, and argued that it is important to use enough time in the SE process in order to establish a definitive job contract and a meaningful day. The time must be used to establish good follow-up routines and routines for effective cooperation. This was a point also job coaches and job seeker agreed to.

A job coach presented a story which emphasised the importance of well-being at work and possibilities for career development. The job coach's story also illuminated the importance of asking questions in a way that gives the job seeker opportunity to really express how she/he feels

Participants at the workshop were all different people with different focus on SE, but we all seemed to agree to the same goal: the goal for SE is work and the process leading to the goal must be holistic and have a clear perspective on work. The stories presented at the workshop all reflected this common ground. The stories presented were very personal stories, and therefore it would be incorrect to present them in this report. However, the stories were illustrative in terms of reflecting this common view amongst the participants and the recommendations were also reflected by the personal stories.

The following points were generated from the stakeholders' stories:

- *A prerequisite for good cooperation in supported employment means that*
 - all actors at the workplace are involved
 - other services that may be necessary to a successful SE process are involved
- *Job match in supported employment means*
 - meaningful employment to the supported employee
 - jobs that ensures inclusion of the supported employee at the workplace
 - steady jobs to supported employees
- *Quality systems in supported employment should*
 - focus on routines and methods
 - be interwoven in national framework and clear intentions
 - produce stable and suitable organisations for SE performance
- *Action plans in supported employment*
 - are based on a user's perspective
 - include career planning and career development
 - focus on resources and possibilities, not diagnosis and problems

The workshop produced nine recommendations for the development of a good quality SE process (should not be understood as a priority list):

- Focus on job match and a meaningful work.
- Focus on equal terms for all employees, including employee with a disability at the workplace.
- Focus on job coach as supervisor, not decision maker.



- Get a job quickly and focus on enough time (for job coach and job seeker) to achieve independence for job seeker. Less focus on job preparations and assessments prior to job
- Focus on ongoing process evaluation of each individual SE-process.
- Focus on job, not therapy (referrals to others).
- Focus on risk sharing between stakeholders.
- Develop clear guidelines and requirements for the SE services.
- Secure exchange of experiences for stakeholders of the SE process; sharing competencies

The participants of the workshop also worked with the “quality house”. Stakeholders made comments and put marks on what they held to be the most important criteria featured in the house. The result of this exercise is handed over to the responsible researchers of the QuiP project in Vienna.

11.4.5 Report from the Managers’ workshop

Workshop headed by

Michael Stadler-Vida, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research

Workshop participants

Walter Lackner, Lebenshilfe Ennstal (Austria), Brian Gregory, Into Employment – Essex County Council (UK), Andrea Dávid (Salva Vita Foundation, Hungary)

Workshop programme

- The reports available
- What are the problems at present?
- Recommendations
- Preparation of the presentation

Recommendations

- Recognition of the governments; to form a legal framework and funding systems
- Raising awareness of the benefits of SE by all media opportunities
- Developing networks to share tasks in order to move SE forward
- Networks to share experiences
- Adapting and developing training systems based on experiences of other countries
- Implementing a structure of SE in the Accession countries
- Developing criteria and measures for SE

11.4.6 Report from the Job coaches’ workshop

There are two sets of the outcomes from that meeting.

The most important things from the coaches point of view in the SE:



Society attitudes

- lack of the social network
- lack of motivation for employers

Clients' readiness

- Too healthy/too bad jobseekers
- Realism
- Is the client ready to work?
- Getting the right referral to work with (who wishes work)
- Support for parents
- Working in a large district – mobility
- Is the SE the best service in respective case
- Target group

Co-operation

- Insufficient co-operation between the agency and some Los
- Rules regarding benefits contradict each other

Capacity

- Cannot satisfy all client's needs at the same time
- Too many clients
- Not enough time to do the job in the best way
- Stress
- Constraints from family – too high expectation
- Waste of job coaches' time
- Limited scope
- Time limit – how long you can support the client
- Pressure

Money

- Money, money, money – it isn't funny
- Limited funding
- Funding for finding a job only

Rules

- Lack of legislation
- Too many rules of economic in the system to the target group



- Too good social net (Norway, UK)
- No feedback – there is so many elements in the system and nobody take the responsibility to tell me if I am doing the good job or not and how to become better
- Organizational difficulties – unclear rules
- Being between client and employer and policy makers

Recommendation to the quality criteria

Appropriate clients

- (Re)motivation client to work
- Length of SE involvement
- The emotional effects into account
- Realistic preferences

Network

- Co-operation with other services
- Other systems don't work
- Lack of network
- Family is too active/takes control
- Others decide instead of client
- Family is working against the jobseeker
- Family arrangements (work & family) – network
- Role of partners (esp. family)
- Health services

System

- Good job match – right job right person
- Career development can really help
- Clients' own decisions are crucial
- Be available – follow up
- User involvement
- How to communicate to co-workers
- How to find natural supporter
- Social integration/inclusion through work experience
- Social value of work
- Coaches' profile



JC & Service attitudes

- Success-oriented
- Job coach is also a social worker

11.4.7 Job seekers' workshop report

The workshop included job seekers from Norway, Czech Republic, Hungary, the United Kingdom and Austria. Translators were on hand to ensure that every participant was able to speak up in their own language. The overall atmosphere was relaxed with plenty of shared laughter but with an impressive level of insight on a range of quality issues.

Participants found that their experiences were very similar across all countries and were largely complimentary about their job coaches, SE agencies, employers and actual jobs. However, there were a good selection of positive critical comments which are noted in full section by section

The workshop was given a clear structure by the facilitators using preprepared flip chart sheets and a range of post-it notes. This allowed each workshop member to actively participate by making a short presentation of their own thoughts and comments at each stage of the exercise in front of the whole group and then sticking their written comments (noted down by supporters or translators if necessary) on the pre-prepared flip charts. Each job seeker was then able to decide if they wanted to present their own recommendations to full conference. Those that did were supported by the facilitators or their own personal translator.

It is clear from the feedback that job seekers value relationships highly, both at work and from the SE agency staff This basis of trust appears to be very important and leads to the expectation that the job coach will do far more than simply support the job seeker to get the job Two job seekers were able to comment on the relative merits of at least two previous job coaches, showing a high degree of insight and clear quality judgments about what works best for them.

All participants agreed that they would have liked more time to share views and comments.

Who are we?

- Thor Ove
- Klaus
- Kristof
- Tony
- Moni
- Eva
- Jana
- Brigitte
- Mark
- Eva

What we think about.....

Our job



- My colleague is fast
- Like having to open the boxes
- I like the sugar and the chewing gum
- I like doing the price of soups, milk and beer
- They are all my colleagues there
- Would be better in the afternoon
- I am my own boss now
- Not so good on travelling and benefits
- I like everything about my job can talk with elderly people
- I like distributing food
- Everything is fine, nothing is bad
- I have work all day - I don't get bored, it's varied
- Very tiresome! too much work, I get tired
- Team working
- Friends
- Good fun
- I would prefer to get paid by the employer, not the government
- I get a lot of responsibility
- Not enough money - benefits
- Get paid the same if I do a lot or a little. No bonuses
- 50-70% of the people at work speak English. Good for culture!
- I feel OK and don't black out if there are only 1-2 people
- It's OK because I know the people
- Yes, I like my job but not every task
- Not so good when people should do things for themselves

Our employer:

- She is so sweet with me, sometimes strict but treats me as her own daughter
- My boss is cool but sometimes he explains things that I know already
- I am a good boss!
- I like the bosses as people
- I would like to stay but it's not so secure
- Too fast - and sometimes tense



- Should have a clearer structure - not so chaotic
- I can't do 15 things at the same time
- Too many people telling me what to do - there should be just one

Our SE agency

- Good organisation - quick help
- The SE agency was not advertised you found out about it on your own
- Good job coach - stayed until you could do the job. Came to see me from time to time
- The club is very good. It is good that they found this job for me. They help. They even took me from school to training.
- They are very helpful. There is a good atmosphere. Practical things are important too
- Needed to have my computer skills on my CV but they were not interested
- Ok now
- Too much about results - not enough on the steps

Our job coach

- Good. Very supportive. Changed my life. Supported back to life.
- Would like more training on networking but the job is restricted
- Can now speak more honestly and openly - more about me than them?
- At first just suggested things I was trained for - too limited
- Last worker was good - used to be an employer and gave pointers.
- Visited me for a long time and we talked. She passed me on to
- someone who is better for me. She is sweet.
- She is very nice and cool but sometimes strict which is good for me.
- Should be more in the fist than the mouth
- I like my job coach because he is nice, fair and gives me advice

Quip Job Seekers workshop recommendations

- It's ALL about the job - if you feel unhappy or have
- any other problems it will affect your job.
- The employer should be sensitive to the person and not judge by the cover of the book.
- There should be clear rules and guidelines from the employer so you don't trip over the line - information is very important
- The job coach should actually do something as well as talk



- The job coach should be the one to find information on training opportunities and other support (like counseling or advice - they should be the one person to trust to talk to about all other things to).
- Some service users should be trained to be job coaches
- Service users should be involved at all levels in the SE agency
- There should be team meetings at some time to share information (like international conferences)
- A job coach should have 'more in the fist than in the mouth', they should be cool, helpful and keep things top secret.
- The SE agency should provide training on the right job, give fast help and be practical.
- The employer should be a good caretaker, take a personal interest and have a clear structure.
- Club activities could be more frequent, more theatre visits and excursions too.
- We could edit the club newspaper on the computer
- SE agencies should think better about the future
- The job coach should make sure the job seeker doesn't do anything wrong

11.4.8 Report from the Employers' workshop

Headed by

Øystein Spjelkavik (Work Research Institute, Norway) and Grete Wangen (Akerhus University College, Norway)

Participants:

Åse Almvang (Skeidar Oslo AS, Norway), Jan Martin (England), Geza Nyilas (Pesthidegkúti Ökumenikus Általános Iskola, Hungary), Gertraud Diechtl (Kurbad Heilbrunn, Austria)

Presentaion in plenary session

Åse Almvang (Skeidar Oslo AS, Norway), Jan Martin (England) and Gertraud Diechtl (Kurbad Heilbrunn, Austria)

The aim of the workshop: A) Find similarities and differences in the represented countries in regard to employers' experiences with supported employment. B) Through the exchange of experiences to produce recommendations for further development on supported employment in regard to defining quality criteria.

It appeared that it was much easier to identify similarities than differences. During the discussion of the exchange of experiences, the following points of similarities were identified:

- The SE process is a structured process, and this structure seems to be the same in each country.
- All participants emphasised the importance of valuing the supported employee as an individual and part of a team at the working place.
- All employers emphasised the importance for both employers and employees of a trial period before any decisions are made.



- All employers emphasised the importance of the supported employees on pay roll.
- Job coach's role: Risk sharer; communicator; close relations; avoid wrong decisions; fading of support over time; to increase the feeling of security for all involved partners of the SE process; problem pointed out is turnover among job coaches.
- Supported employment: This is not a charity operation; it improves or makes better awareness of the work environment in general.
- Values: Is an educational process; important to show evidence, success stories to employers
- Process: SE is a gradual approach (job coach à job coach & mentor/co-worker à mentor/co-worker); employer and employee have close relationship; there must be sufficient time; protect employee from failure; awareness of promotional and career possibilities; inclusion in ordinary company training
- Clarification needed: Are there big differences among the countries concerning SE and the public sector?
- Suggestions for improvements of SE: National and international company reference list; spread experiences; more active and proactive information on SE needed; anti-discrimination act; avoid exploitation; rely on job coaches knowledge when doing their job – i.e. with legal issues, benefits etc.

The discussion that followed the exchange of experiences focused on what stakeholders held to be the most important issues in this list. This is what the participating employers agreed upon as being the most important issues of the SE process, given in priority order:

- The SE process must be given sufficient time in companies. It is important to have enough time.
- Job coach increases the feeling of security for employer and employee. Employer & employee have a close relationship
- Protection of employee from failure

The participating employers agreed that these are the most important suggestions for improvements of SE:

- Develop national and international company reference lists – this will help employers that have not yet opened their companies for people with vocational disabilities to identify those that have. The use of reference list is very normal in companies..
- Spread positive experiences more extensively among employers that have not yet opened their companies for people with vocational disabilities.

The participating stakeholders held this issue to be the most important problem identified with the SE process:

- Action plans must take into consideration the problem of turnover, which may be a problem not only concerning job coaches but also employers, mentors, co-workers and others. High turnover may increase possibilities for failures among supported employees.

11.4.9 Report from the Policy-makers' workshop

Summary of discussions



- There are certain plans and regulations for SE in each country – but implementation is sometimes a problem.
- There was a discussion on the issue of impact of political change on disability policy and on SE.

Several new measures have started:

- A: disability billon, clearing
- H: pilot projects
- N: new requirement specifications
- There was also a discussion of bureaucracy as framework conditions for SE – lump sums in N vs. single receipts in A

Specifications for funding SE:

- N – No. of job seekers per job coach
- A – Number of placements per year
- UK – no fixed performance rate
- H – not only performance, but also process steps
- UK – best value thinking „money makes money“

Recommendations

- Improving performance of SE- providers and policies by benchmarking accross countries.
- Improving policy framework by „cross country lobbying“. Inviting people from other countries ministries to develop SE in own country (Possible funding: EQUAL programme, EU-Year of people with disabilities, INTERREG programme).
- For quip project- share implementation plans on web, email addresses on web for all people who were there.
- There is a need to consult, engage and/or involve stakeholders in policy development and decision making processes (is being done partly on different levels in different countries).
- SE- providers should inform the public, governments and policy makers about their services and what can be acheived through SE. One method of raising public awareness for people with disabilities is to communicate good examples.
- Public awareness for people with a disability should be raised as an equal and human rights issues and not as a „patronizing“ social issue (use EU year).
- Improving cooperation between employment services and SE-agencies. E.g. regular meetings (in some countries this is already the case „site visits“, „discussion forum“).



11.5 Perspectives of quality in Supported Employment (“Quality criteria”)

I) OUTCOMES OF SE

1. The job seeker finds and keeps a **paid job on the ordinary labour market**.

- There is a **valid contract of employment** agreed by the employer and the employee.
- The employee’s **wage is adequate**. That means the same level as colleagues doing the same job and normal company perks.
- The employee has a **stable job**. That means he/she has a permanent contract or a short-term job that could be extended into a long-term job.

2. The employee has a **job that matches his/her preferences, skills and abilities**.

This means that it is based on his/her interests, gives opportunity for individual development and provides positive challenges.

- The workplace has a **positive atmosphere**. That means an atmosphere of trust, fun, security, work satisfaction and comfort.
- The **employer is satisfied**. That means that the employer sees the person as a valuable employee and is clearly interested in the employee’s development.
- The **employee feels in control**. That means he/she is working independently, asks for help if needed and takes responsibility for him/herself.
- The employee has a **valued job with clear tasks**. That means that the employee is clear about what is required and receives regular feedback from co-workers and supervisors.

3. The employee is a **valued colleague** and a **full member of the team**.

- **Natural support** is in place. This means that the employee is supported by his/her co-workers and the employer.
- The employee is treated as a colleague and is **incorporated into the work team**.
- The employee has a **good relationship with co-workers**.
- The employee has the **opportunity to get involved in out-of-work activities**.

4. The employee has **opportunities for career development**.

This means the employee is able to develop his/her job with the current employer or has the opportunity to develop his/her career with a different employer.

5. There are a number of alternative choices a person can make, even if for the time being he/she is not able or does not want to find a job on the ordinary labour market. The clarification of the vocational situation of the job seeker can be a possible, but not in itself intended outcome of SE. The goal of SE is to find and keep a job on the ordinary labour market and the SE agency should not be misused as a clearing agency.



II) SE PROCESS

1. Characteristics of the SE process

1. The **job seeker/employee is involved from the beginning to the end of the SE process**. Systematic cooperation with him/her is vital for the success of the SE process. He/She is responsible for his/her career, so **decisions are only made by him/her** with the support of the job coach.
2. The **family, friends and professionals** of the job seeker **are involved in all phases** of the SE process **if the person wants this**. This means they are well informed and their ideas and support are welcomed.
3. **SE is focused on partnerships**. The main partners are job seekers who need support to get and keep a job, employers and co-workers. Partners are valued and treated with respect. That means partners are taken seriously, being listened to and accepted as they are.
4. The basis for a successful SE process is **good information, communication and collaboration for/with all partners**. Information should be easy to understand for all partners.
5. The SE process needs to be **clear and reliable for all partners**. All partners know in all phases of the process what will happen next and what is expected from them.
6. **Confidentiality** is ensured throughout the SE process. Information about the job seeker and the company is treated confidentially. All data and computers are protected against access from unauthorized persons.
7. The SE agency has a **flexible and person-centred approach**. That means tailor-made support to the job seeker and the employer and that the SE agency **quickly responds to partners' needs**.
8. The SE agency ensures **continuity of support**. The responsible staff members are introduced to the job seekers and employers. If possible and desired by the job seeker the contact person stays the same during the entire SE process.

2. Making contact and exchanging information

1. The job seeker and the employer are **welcomed in an open and inviting atmosphere** at the SE agency.
2. They receive **appropriate information** about the SE agency and the ordinary labour market.
3. The **job seeker is willing to become involved in the SE process**. That means he/she agrees to find work on the ordinary labour market.
4. The **SE services** offered to the job seeker **are well described and clearly defined in a service agreement**. The service agreement involves all important aspects and responsibilities of each partner throughout the SE process
5. The **SE process is designed individually for each job seeker**. If possible the job seeker should have the choice of different support persons and kinds of support.

3. Vocational profiling and planning



1. The basis of the SE process is **collecting relevant information** on the job seeker and his/her vocational situation **with the job seeker** and other persons. The goal is to identify the motivation, interests, attitudes, abilities and support needs of the job seeker and realistic aims for further career development.
2. The process should also include job tasters and **work experience options**.
3. **Profiling and planning** are based on the job seeker's interests and abilities.
4. An **individual, flexible plan** is developed with each job seeker.

4. Job search

1. The **job seeker is supported to find the best possible job**, which matches his/her interests and abilities.
2. The **job seeker is informed about different kinds of work** and has seen different work places.
3. The job seeker is offered **appropriate support and training to find a job**, e.g. support for job selection, job applications, job interviews and job negotiations.
4. The job coach **analyses and assesses the possible work sites** with regard to the tasks, the work culture and the support needs to match the requirements of the job seeker and the employer.
5. The **employer is supported to find an employee that matches his/her requirements**. The employer gets clear information about the available support to hire a job seeker with disabilities.

5. Training on the job and further education

1. The employee is offered practical **training on the job** by a job coach and/or co-workers, including a supported work practice if needed.
2. In addition, the employee has **opportunities for training and further education off the job** like skills training, training of social skills and self-advocacy.
3. The employee's **training and education needs are identified and regularly reviewed**.

6. Support and cooperation at the workplace

1. The **employee, the co-workers and the employer** receive **appropriate and flexible support at the workplace**.
 - The employee receives **personal support** to learn and perform the job tasks, to integrate successfully into the company culture and the work team.
 - **Co-workers and the employer are actively involved** in this process and receive the necessary support and information to successfully include the new colleague.
 - There is a **focus on risk sharing** between the employer, the employee and the job coach. That means that responsibilities in case of problems or failure should be divided amongst the partners.
2. If needed, **job modification and supportive technology are used** to accommodate the work site.



3. The **job coach seeks and gives regular feedback to all involved partners** and is available when needed.
4. Employee and employer receive **useful information and help with the paperwork** in connection with the employee's job. This includes information on accommodating to the disability, legal information in connection with the employment and information about other support resources in the community.
5. The job coach can provide **mediation between the employee, the co-workers and the employer**. The job coach reacts quickly in case of difficulties and supports all involved parties to avoid and to solve problems as early as possible.
6. The job coach seeks to have a **good personal relationship** with the employer and the employee and stay in regular contact.
7. The **support is provided only as long as necessary**. The job coach fades with time.
 - The reduction of support is systematically planned.
 - The **employee and the co-workers are actively involved to organise the natural support** in the company and, if possible, a time limit for the support is identified.
 - On the other hand the employer and the employee can contact the SE agency whenever needed and **ongoing support is possible** for as long as necessary.
8. The SE agency establishes a **follow-up system for the employer and the employee**. The job-coach keeps contact with the employee and the employer over a longer period of time. The desired rate of follow-up is determined together with these partners.
9. **Career development is supported**. The employee is assisted to move to a better position in the company or to change a current job if wanted or needed.
 - **Risk assessments are up-to-date** with all known and predicted changes to the current job.
 - The **vocational profile** and ideal job match are **up-to-date**.
 - The employee's **changing preferences are noted at regular reviews**.

III) SE STRUCTURE

1. Job coaches' characteristics & qualifications

1. The job coach has **professional knowledge**. That means he/she is familiar with relevant issues, has initial education in the field of SE, has practical and economic knowledge and is aware of the position of SE within the whole system of services.
2. The job coach has **professional experience**. That means work experience and/or experience in related unpaid activities, e.g. voluntary or family work.
3. The job coach has a **combination of key skills**. That means e.g. communication and cooperation skills, patience, kindness, flexibility, creativity, working discipline, empathy, willingness to help, conscientiousness, problem-solving skills, trust-worthiness, ability for self-reflection and self-confidence.

2. SE agency's organisational framework



1. The SE agency has a **mission statement** focussing on the goal of inclusion of all people with disabilities.
2. The SE agency has a **clear and effective organisational framework**, which enables unproblematic and effective organisational operation.
 - There are **working standards**, clear guidelines, defined processes and methods as well as an official job-description for the staff.
 - There are **clear competences and responsibilities** within the organisation.
 - The **administrative work** within the organisation is **efficient**. That means documentation systems and administration are useful and easy to use.
3. The SE agency has **good working conditions for job coaches**. That means adequate salary for staff, steady labour contracts, working autonomy in the professional and financial sense, as well as an adequate infrastructure (e.g. computers, cars). These good working conditions are a prerequisite for a **low turnover of staff**.
4. The SE agency **has effective internal communication and information exchange** that enables teamwork. That means there is regular exchange of information between staff, regular professional consultation and the opportunity to share work experiences within the organisation.
5. The SE agency ensures opportunities for **professional development and training of job coaches**. That means the job coach has the possibility for professional growth, the opportunity to participate in systematic and planned further professional training and in supervision.
6. There are **clear guidelines for defining target groups** for the work of the respective SE agency.¹⁵
7. There is **good accessibility for job seekers**. That means there are no obstacles to the SE service in a physical and psychological sense.
8. The **quality** and the effectiveness of the professional work of the SE agency are **monitored regularly and developed if necessary**.
- 9- **Data and feedback** are **regularly collected** from all stakeholders, and their satisfaction is measured.
 - There is a **regular strategic review** of the SE agency's work.
 - There is a **complaints procedure** with a guaranteed action plan.
 - That also means **increasing the services** of the SE agency and extending the service for new client groups
10. If applicable: There is **effective co-operation** with the **parent organisation** to maintain the principles and practice of SE.

¹⁵ It is important that SE is available for those people who need extensive support to get and keep jobs on the ordinary labour market. This issue is also relevant for the "SE process".



3. Networking

1. The SE agency and the job coaches **actively build relationships with employers**. That means, they find new employers and involve them in the programme, they keep contact to interested, aware and involved employers, amongst them significant and well-known companies.
2. The SE agency and the job coaches engage in **networking with other SE agencies and other services**. That means developing co-operation with other agencies and services at the organisational level as well as regarding the support of the individual job seeker, and participating in arenas/platforms of such networks.
3. The SE agency engages in **public relations work** and external communication. That means e.g. preparing society for the integration of people with a disability as well as being a good example for others and working against prejudices. It also means increasing the reputation of the SE agency and its services within society and among employers.
4. The SE agency **co-operates with policy-makers/funding agencies**. That means, e.g. that the SE agency can contribute to the national political and legal framework of SE.
5. The SE agency is encouraged to engage in **local, regional, national and international networking**. That means the agency actively builds relationships with relevant organisations, e.g. advocacy groups, family organisations or national organisations of SE.

4. National and regional framework for SE

1. There exists an **adequate legal framework for SE and community inclusion** in the country. That means e.g. there are regulations and laws to fund SE services and a system of training for job coaches and there is a priority for the inclusion of people with disabilities in community-based services.
2. There is **long-term, stable funding of SE**.
3. There is **professional recognition of the principles and practice of SE** in the region and in the country.
4. The SE service is **easily accessible for job seekers**. That means e.g. SE is included in the whole package of labour market provisions, a job seeker is informed of the services by responsible agencies and can use the services without a long period of waiting.
5. There is an **education system for SE** at the national level.

