



A model for helping young people with disabilities on the transition from school to the labour market

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Abstract

The transition from school to work, especially the first job, is a difficult step for young people, even more so for young people with special needs. They are at a very high risk of suffering long-term unemployment, which can result in numerous secondary problems, all of which have a negative impact on their quality of life. The significant unemployment problem among young people with special needs in Slovenia is successfully tackled by the project "Young people making a transition to the labour market." The target group is young people with special needs who, due to their problems, usually experience more difficulties in entering the labour market than their non-disabled peers. These are young people with intellectual disabilities, blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, young people with speech impairment, physically disabled, chronically ill, young people with autistic spectrum disorders, and young people with emotional or behavioural deficit/disorders for whom major problems are anticipated during their transition to the labour market and during their employment. The basis for working with young people is an individual transition plan, which is built together with a young person on the basis of their abilities, disabilities, interests and goals. Experience from the project shows that working with young people with special needs demands a multidisciplinary approach, namely bringing together experts from various fields to contribute to an easier transition to the labour market or to the next level of education for this target group. The pilot project, its objectives and working methods will be presented along with a case study showing how a multidisciplinary approach and good cooperation between school, project provider, employer and external institutions can significantly influence the quality of life of a young person with special needs and bring him/her closer to the labour market.



Biography

Mojca Arh, M.A. in Psychology (member of Psi Chi, National Honor Society in Psychology, Cleveland State University Chapter), is currently working as part of a team coordinating the national pilot project "The Development and Implementation of the Transition of Young People with Special Needs to the Labour Market", whose aim is to bridge the gap between an efficient school system and employment services. In addition, she is working as a psychologist in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

Her career includes vast experience in teaching, entrepreneurship, management, and participation in various projects focusing on the unemployed, immigrants and people with special needs as well as on the development of human resources at the local and regional level.

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