

## Podcast Slovenia

### (English version)

**Welcome to the podcast produced as part of the Include 3 project. The title of the podcast is: stay Inclusive - a podcast about inclusion.**

**Can you tell me something more about good practices regarding protected forms of employment, about concrete examples of good practice in Slovenia?**

As an example of good practice, we present the employment rehabilitation of a twenty-three-year-old man who was looking for his first job for a long time and was referred to employment rehabilitation by the Employment Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. In January two thousand and twenty-two, an assessment was made, or rather a preliminary opinion was formed about the level of his work skills, knowledge, work habits and professional interests. In early childhood, the rehabilitated person was found to have a mild impairment in mental development. He attended elementary school with an adapted program, and continued his education in a shortened program of a construction school. During the examination, it turned out that significant deviations were indicated in the field of intellectual abilities, the currently demonstrated general mental abilities were extremely low and belonged to the level of mild mental subnormality. In the field of work functioning, minor deviations were revealed. Manual skills were poorly preserved on average, the rough muscular strength of the cylindrical grip was less suitable for heavier physical work. Work orientation and self-initiative were always good, his work efficiency ranged between twenty-seven and fifty-eight percent. A meaningful inclusion in employment rehabilitation was established with the aim of checking his work functioning and resistance to loads over a long period of time and as help in finding suitable work, for which he was also adequately motivated. The rehabilitation commission of the first level at the Employment Institute of the Republic of Slovenia recognized him as having a moderate degree of identified problems and the status of a disabled person according to the Act on Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of the Disabled and assessed that he needs employment rehabilitation services. The final opinion of the rehabilitation commission was that he is capable of psychologically less demanding work, not squatting or kneeling, in favorable microclimatic conditions.

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He joined the job rehabilitation process in July 2022, in Ozara d.o.o. The training was initially focused on simple manual production work in the production process for a short period of time, and then, until the end of the hearing, the on-the-job training took place on simple manual work within the framework of a protected workplace in a company with disabilities. In a protected workplace within the framework of a company with disabilities, work obligations were tied to simple phases of manual auxiliary carpentry work in the construction of saunas. He was involved in a narrow segment of work available - cleaning saunas, installing wood fiber insulation material in sauna walls and paneling sauna walls, and painting/oiling structural wood. In the work environment, he showed a reduced workload and endurance, and needed a longer introduction to work, continuous monitoring and guidance, and multiple repetitions. Based on the findings and his functioning, he was recognized as employable in an adapted, protected work environment, on simple manual tasks at protected workplaces in the company, and on simpler manual production tasks. During the entire integration period, there was regular cooperation between the rehabilitator, the employer, the Employment Agency and the provider of employment rehabilitation. All participants were continuously informed about labor and social functioning and treatment options. After completing the job rehabilitation process, the rehabilitator got a job in the company where the training took place.

### **What about other examples of good practice in Slovenia? Are there?**

Social inclusion programs are implemented in various work environments, and one of them can be a farm. As an example, we cite the Korenika social farm, which is a recognized example of good practice in the field of social entrepreneurship, employment of disabled people and persons from other vulnerable social groups, and protective employment. In Korenik, they are engaged in organic production and food processing. Under the auspices of their own brand, they produce and sell herbal teas, cold-pressed oils, dried and pickled fruits and vegetables, winter jelly, juices and syrups. They also have a landscaped herb garden and an animal park, which are available for viewing by visitors. In addition to the above, they offer many activities and training for visitors in a pleasant rural environment.

The farm offers a work environment with great potential for employment of people with intellectual disabilities. The combination of meaningful activities in contact with nature and a wide range of tasks are just some of the advantages offered. That is why such practices are appearing more and more often both in Slovenia and in the world. How do people with intellectual disabilities experience their work and the working environment on the farm and what impact does the farm environment have on their well-being and satisfaction at work, was also investigated in one of the diploma theses. It was established that the Korenika farm, where superiors are trained to work with people with various types of reduced ability to work, including people with intellectual disabilities, is perceived as a suitable place to carry out work.

The tasks that the users of the program perform are adapted to their abilities, and they themselves consider them suitable. Precisely because of the possibility of adapting work requirements, the farm is a suitable environment for

employing people with work restrictions. They have the greatest possibility of adaptation in terms of time organization, since the participants work without norms. Their tasks also vary depending on the season, which reduces monotony, and on the other hand, familiar, structured tasks give them a sense of control and security. Users recognize good feelings, satisfaction, security and acceptance in the workplace. As shown in the research, the very possibility of work is of great importance to users, who perceive it as an important asset and show a respectful attitude towards it. For the correct performance of their work, their superiors give them a lot of praise, which fills the participants with pride and increases their motivation to work. External motivation factors are regular payment or other small material rewards. They are also strongly motivated by a sense of belonging, as they repeatedly mentioned the joy of coming to work because of the social climate and the feeling of being wanted.

Another example is the care work center Tončke Hočevar, where they have been developing integrated forms of employment for more than ten years. They engage their users in employment activities such as various jobs in the garden center of Bauhaus and Obi stores and work in the kitchen of Sodexo.

The next example is the care work center in Nova Gorica, where users are included in the Obi store, the Šempeter General Hospital and the Gradišče Retirement Home.

In the conservation work center Polž Maribor, individual users are involved in the Horticulture, where they help with the processing of vegetables, watering flowers, transplanting, cleaning flowers, and some of them do auxiliary work in the garden center of a large shopping center, where they sort and compress waste cardboard packaging.

In 2012, the Draga Work and Protection Training Center opened the Druga violina inn in the old city center of Ljubljana, where people with intellectual disabilities are employed under special conditions as part of protection, management and employment. It enables them to be actively involved in social life and the working environment, and to perform useful work, with which they can maintain work skills and acquire new social and work habits.

### **What can you tell me about the legislation in Slovenia in this area? What is your opinion on it?**

Disability policy in Slovenia is not provided for in a single, umbrella law, but is dealt with in many laws in different departments according to regional legislation. Since 2006, when the first action program was adopted, and since 2008, when the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified, Slovenia has taken many steps in implementing disability legislation. Employment is an important and set life goal for most people. Integration into the work environment has positive effects on the individual due to a good sense of benefit and productivity, a sense of importance in society, social connection with colleagues, the possibility of personal growth as well as income and constant involvement in work. Many studies show that employers are satisfied with employees with intellectual disabilities, as they often exceed their expectations. In Slovenia, there are no official statistics related to persons

with intellectual disabilities. We estimate that there are approximately one percent of persons with intellectual disabilities in Slovenia.

We can conclude that many changes and improvements are needed in the field of employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in Slovenia. One of them would be a necessary change in the legislation, which would make it possible to enter into an employment relationship and thus decent pay, and employers to serve the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities to a greater extent. Not all persons with such problems have the ability, competence and interest to perform work in a normal working environment, so it is unreasonable to expect that they will all be involved in this form of employment. It is important, however, that they have the possibility and the opportunity to try out different forms of work, because only then will they be able to choose and decide what forms of work they will perform.

**This was "stay inclusive - a podcast about inclusion".**

**Ideas and good practices in the transition from protected forms of employment to regular employment.**

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