

WP 2 / Activity 1

National Report SLOVENIA

OZARA d.o.o. / 3.02.2023 / Maribor_V1

HdBA
Hochschule der
Bundesagentur für Arbeit
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Project ID: 2022-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000088595

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1 Introduction

The social definition of disability states that it is the environment that makes a person with a defect or disparity into a disabled person. The environment limits their activities through transport infrastructure, construction and communication barriers, and last but not least through employment practices. Disabled people are classified as more difficult to employ, as it is more difficult for them to obtain employment due to reduced work capacity, workplace inadequacy and prejudices and lack of information on the part of employers.

In the context of the ZaVse/4ALL project (Bratuš Albreht et al., 2019), they found, that the main reason for the worse position of disabled people on the labour market in Slovenia is primarily in the attitudes of employers and wider society towards their employment. According to these findings, even legislation that supports the employment of disabled people cannot significantly affect their actual employability if employers are not in favour of it. Thus, in addition to encouraging legislation, the awareness of employers and adequate and timely information about possible incentives is also essential. The employer can apply to the public guarantee, alimony and disability fund of the Republic of Slovenia for the reimbursement of the costs of adaptation for a disabled person who needs adaptation of the workplace or means of work due to disability. In practice, we already know several good examples of various adaptations of workplaces and environments, which enable the employment of disabled people in a normal working environment. Various technical and ergonomic adaptations and architectural adaptations, consideration of lower work efficiency and individual needs are especially common. In Slovenia, there are special forms of employment, which are one of the state interventions to promote the employment of disabled people. Their main purpose is training, improvement or maintenance of working abilities and transition to open employment (Brate, 2014).

The inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in the working environment is an important factor that affects various areas of their activity. It enables them to develop work skills, independence at work and social and communication skills. People with intellectual disability (hereinafter– ID) experience a sense of usefulness, satisfaction, and success through work, which develops a positive self-image and increases their self-confidence. **The inclusion of persons with ID in an adapted working environment within the open labour market** contributes to greater equality between people and a more inclusive society (Kosmač, 2021).

1.1 Social policy and labour market policy concerning people with disabilities (data in general)

In the field of work and employment, various reasons usually intertwine, which make it impossible for an individual to take advantage of all the rights that belong to them. People with disabilities are one of the vulnerable groups on the labour market who are subject to discriminatory processes (Boštjančič, 2018). Individuals who form a certain vulnerable group on the labour market often encounter a modest self-image and a low level of self-confidence, experience interpersonal or institutional victimization, are accompanied by a feeling of being grateful to the state, and fear that demanding better services would have negative consequences and lead to new exclusions. Research conducted in EU countries (2015) shows that disability is one of the forms of discrimination in the field of employment and work (50% at the EU level, 42% at the Slovenian level) (ibidem).

Work is a goal-oriented activity through which material and personal needs are met. A profession is a job or activity that is usually carried out with the aim of obtaining material goods and requires the individual to have knowledge and skills for implementation, which he/she acquires in various education programs (Drobnič, 2014). The Labour Relations Act defines a worker as a person who is in an employment relationship with an employer through an employment contract. The employee is voluntarily involved in the employer's work process, in which he personally and continuously performs work and receives a salary for the work performed. This law also prohibits indirect and direct discrimination based on health or disability (Employment Relations Act, 2013). Nevertheless, persons with more severe forms of ID (moderate, more severe and severe) are excluded from this legislation.

Employment is important for every individual and has a positive impact on various areas of human activity. Work develops a sense of dignity and self-worth, represents a means of self-expression, offers economic self-sufficiency and promotes social cohesion (Burge, Quелlette-Kuntz and Lysaght, 2007, in Kosmač, 2021).

In the last twenty years, there has been noticeable progress in the field of employment of the disabled in Slovenia, which was helped by the established quota system for the employment of the disabled and a more developed network of employment rehabilitation providers. With this shift, many people with disabilities, who were once considered unable to participate in the open labour market, became employed. In recent years, efforts to develop support and adaptations in the workplace and opportunities for employment of disabled people in the normal/regular working environment have been increasing. The state encourages employment in the normal working environment by developing a system of supportive employment and

professional services, and by providing financial incentives for professional support to the employer, the disabled and the working environment, provided by providers of employment rehabilitation.

1.2 Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and its influence on social and labour market policies and regulations (national program, status quo)

The Slovenian Constitution stipulates that human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed to everyone regardless of personal circumstances, and with the addition of Article 14 in 2004, disability is also listed as a personal circumstance. The Constitution thereby explicitly emphasizes the right to equality of disabled persons before the law, i.e. that no one may be neglected due to disability. It therefore follows from the constitution that disabled people have the same rights and obligations as other citizens. However, it is necessary to take into account their special needs and ensure equal treatment and realization of all human rights. Therefore, the state must undertake to take effective and appropriate measures to enable disabled people to achieve and maintain the greatest possible independence, physical, mental, social, (work related) professional inclusion in all areas of life. (VIR).

With a modern disability care policy, Slovenia is comparable to other developed European countries. It is a country that strives to realize the principles of social justice and equal opportunities for all. Even before the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol in 2008, it adopted its first Action Program for the Disabled 2007-2013 in 2006 and then another in 2014, which ended at the end of 2021. Much before that, in 1991, Slovenia adopted the Concept of Development Strategy for Disability Care. It was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention and the Optional Protocol without reservation. Thus, both have become part of our internal law and can be directly applied.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines persons with disabilities as persons with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in connection with various obstacles, may limit them from fully and effectively participating in society on an equal basis with others. In Slovenia, the status of a disabled person is given on the basis of various laws, and through the provisions of these laws, disabled people can exercise their rights. Some of the most important ones are (Government of Republic of Slovenia, 2022):

- The Act on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- Act on Social Inclusion of Disabled Persons
- Pension and Disability Insurance Act
- Act on Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of the Disabled
- Act on guidance of children with special needs
- The Law on War Disabled Persons

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 sectoral 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. The follow-up of the new and amended legislation is recorded in the Action Programs for the Disabled. The new program covers the period from 2022 to 2030 and includes 13 fundamental goals together with 120 measures that comprehensively regulate all areas of the lives of disabled people (Government of Republic of Slovenia, 2021).

Act on Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (ZZRZI)

The aim of ZZRZI (2004) is to increase the employability of disabled people and create conditions for their equal inclusion in the labor market, by removing obstacles and creating equal opportunities. The law introduces a quota system for the employment of disabled people on the open labor market, presents supportive and protective employment as two options for employing disabled people, and covers the assessment of work capabilities and the employability of persons with the purpose of employment (ZZRZI, 2004). Persons with ID can also acquire the status and rights from this law, but only those with milder disabilities (here and after - LID – light intellectual disability).

Act on the Social Inclusion of the Disabled (ZSVI)

ZSVI (2019) regulates the rights of those persons who have permanent congenital or acquired impairments, due to which they cannot independently integrate into society, fulfil most or all of life's needs and ensure their means of survival. Persons with more severe forms of ID (moderate, more severe, severe) can also receive the status of disabled person based on this law. Until the adoption of this law, according to the Act on Social Protection of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons, these persons were designated as incapable of paid work and received disability benefits that covered only the basic costs of living. To the extent that these persons were employed on the open labour market, they lost all rights and benefits related to their status. ZSVI, however, allows persons who acquire the status of disabled person under this law (including persons with ID) the possibility of switching between the two statuses. A person who acquires the status of a disabled person, receives disability benefits. If he/she gets a job, she is paid compensation in the amount of the difference between the salary received and the amount of the net minimum wage. If the employment relationship is terminated for any reason, the person is again entitled to compensation in the full amount. The purpose of ZSVI is to create the conditions to enable people with more severe forms of ID to live as independently and equally in the community as possible, and to guarantee them the right to social welfare services. In 2022, a provision that enables these persons to be included in social inclusion services on an equal basis came into force. This means that people with moderate intellectual disability - MID (hereinafter - MID) could get a formal opportunity to be employed in a normal working environment (Act on Social Inclusion of the Disabled, 2019)

2 Participation in working life of people with intellectual disabilities

Employment is a life goal for most people. It is the same for people with ID who are able to do so (with adaptations). 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 ID, as they often exceed their expectations. Employees with ID show more pronounced satisfaction and a positive attitude towards work, which contributes to the overall improvement of the atmosphere. They are hardworking, dedicated and respectful workers (Wells, 2018; in Obran, 2022).

2.1 Definition of people with intellectual disabilities (specific data)

The term intellectual disability focuses primarily on the complexity of an individual's psychological problems (Žerak and Masten, 2018). Disabilities in intellectual development are manifested as disorders in neurological development and develop before the age of 18. They are reflected in significantly reduced intellectual abilities and significantly reduced adaptation skills. Reduced intellectual abilities are reflected as e.g. reasoning, learning, abstract thinking and other cognitive functions. Reduced adaptation skills are reflected in the way of communication, self-care, independence, work abilities and other skills of integrating the individual into society.

Depending on the degree of Intellectual disability, mild, moderate, severe and severe Intellectual disability are distinguished. In the criteria for the definition and level of deficits, obstacles or disorders of children with special needs, individual levels or intensity are defined as follows:

- People with mild intellectual disabilities:
They are characterized by reduced abilities to learn, plan, acquire knowledge, organize, make decisions, and perform various tasks. Their thinking is mostly on a concrete level, they communicate with simple phrases and sometimes react less maturely in social situations. With adjustments in the educational process, they can achieve elementary school skills, but they do not meet the minimum standards. They can be trained to live independently and perform fewer demanding professions (Vovk-Ornik, 2015).
- Persons with moderate intellectual disabilities:
They can participate in simple conversations (some using assistive or substitute communication), understand instructions, and can express their needs and wants. Individual skills are developed in different ways and can be trained for simple and undemanding practical work. For more demanding jobs, they need support and different degrees of help, also when integrating into the social environment (Vovk-Ornik, 2015).

- Persons with severe intellectual disabilities:
They can only perform simple and basic tasks, understand basic messages and instructions, orient themselves in their surroundings, but they need protection and guidance. In the area of self-care, they need help from others. They may often have associated movement problems or other developmental disabilities. They can use substitute and supportive communication to communicate with others (Vovk-Ornik, 2015).
- Persons with severe intellectual disabilities:
They can only participate in individual activities, they need constant care, protection, help and guidance. They can rarely develop basic communication skills. Often, in addition to mental disorders, there are severe additional disorders and diseases. They mostly depend on the help and support of their caregivers. (Vovk-Ornik, 2015).

In the past, there was a transition from the health model, which prioritized the health aspect of people with reduced intellectual abilities, but forgot the holistic development, to the social model. **The social model, which replaced the medical model, once again represents the paradigm of treating and caring for people with reduced intellectual abilities. This paradigm includes the aspect of learning as lifelong learning.** The new paradigm also means the recognition of individual virtues and other abilities that need to be developed. The individual is no longer the one who has to adapt to the environment, and the environment must see individuals with all their different needs and treat them as equal members of the community. Disorders in mental development are currently not considered as the final status of an individual, but as a condition depending on the interaction of individuals with intellectual disabilities with their peers and the environment in which they live. The consequence of such a perception of the target group is a different approach, which does not focus on the intellectual development of the individual, but on the level of help they need in one or more areas of adjustment.

Due to deficits of varying intensity, people with ID have problems with inclusion in daily activities, self-care, learning and practical tasks, as a result of which they rarely achieve complete independence (Logaj, 2015). However, it has been proven that over a long period of time, the condition and functioning of people can generally improve with the right help (Association of personal assistance of Slovenia, 2021).

In Slovenia, there are no official statistics related to persons with intellectual disabilities. The target group is handled by different institutions that keep their own records, some of them do not keep statistics because it would be discriminatory (especially for people with a milder form of intellectual disability). We estimate that there are approximately 1% of persons with intellectual disabilities in Slovenia (collected data: approx. 1,200 included in residential units, day centers for children and adolescents with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities; 5,000 persons with intellectual disabilities he is in home care because there are no places in institutions; the rest are included in various welfare work centers.) 85% of people with intellectual disabilities are people with mild disabilities

(IQ 51-70), 10% with moderate (IQ 35-50), 3-4% of persons with severe (IQ 21-35) and 1-2% with a severe disorder (IQ < 21) (RIC, 2014).

2.2 System of protected forms of employment

The realization of the right to work for persons with ID is regulated through various legal acts, which direct individuals to various forms of work and employment.

The employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in Slovenia is regulated by many unrelated legal acts. It is a legal order that is quite lax, with many legal loopholes, and is difficult for the average citizen to understand. Thus, the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities is defined by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Act on Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, the Act on Employment Relations, the Act on Social Security, the Act on Pension and Disability Insurance, the Act on Social Entrepreneurship and the Act on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Depending on the expected ability of persons and the level of support they need at work, in Slovenia we know different forms of employment of persons with disabilities (disabled). The first form is the open market, where disabled people are not offered support at work, as they do it in workplaces where the disability does not hinder the work process. All the other forms of employment presented below offer support to the disabled or persons with intellectual disabilities (IMD) in their integration into work (supportive employment, protective employment, social inclusion programs and protective work centres). It should be emphasized, however, that systematically people with different levels of ID in Slovenia do not have the same opportunities. Thus, only persons with a mild intellectual disability can be included in supportive and protective employment,

Brate (2014) states that in 2009, the majority of disabled people were employed in a regular workplace, while approximately 28% were employed in protective forms of employment. Only 13 disabled persons (0.04% of all employed disabled persons) were employed in supportive employment. The supported form of employment exists, but only in a reduced version and is not implemented to a sufficient extent. Despite the positive data on the effects of supportive employment, the protective employment model is still widely used in Slovenia.

2.2.1 Supportive employment

Supported employment is defined in the ZZRZI as the employment of a disabled person at a workplace in a normal working environment, in which both the disabled person and the employer receive professional and technical support, and the working environment is also adjusted. In Slovenia, only individuals with a mild form of intellectual disability are included in this type of employment, as only those who achieve work results higher than 70% receive a decision on supportive employment. A disabled person can be employed in supportive employment if conditions are

met, such as: the disabled person's ability to perform work at a specific workplace; the motivation and personality characteristics of the disabled person, an individualized program developed and the employer's willingness to cooperate and adapt the work environment and workplace. Supportive employment is one of the most successful strategies and is widespread throughout the world. It enables an individual to choose a job that is in line with his interests, capabilities, needs and previous experience (Bratuš Albreht et al., 2019).

The three basic elements of the supportive form of employment are:

- Paid work: The payment that the individual receives must be proportional to the work performed, or in the amount of the minimum wage
- Open labour market: A disabled person is entitled to employment under the same conditions as his colleagues.
- Ongoing support: The disabled person receives support that is adapted to him, his needs and the needs of employers and colleagues (Bratuš Albreht et al., 2019).

Support is individually tailored and targeted where it is most needed to ensure cost-effective use of resources. An individualized support plan is issued for a person with an intellectual disability and their employer, and people with an intellectual disability and their employers are entitled to subsidies. In the event that employers employ more persons with intellectual disabilities than is determined by the quota system, they are entitled to pay wage contributions, bonuses for exceeding the quota and other incentives.

2.2.2 Protective employment

Protective employment is defined as the employment of a disabled person in a workplace and in a working environment that are adapted to his working abilities and needs. Employment is possible only through employment rehabilitation with a decision on protective employment. With the employer, the person concludes an employment contract in a protected workplace, which defines the method and scope of professional assistance and management of the disabled person at the workplace (ZZRZI, 2004).

People with intellectual disabilities who cannot find employment in the same workplace as people without disabilities can find employment in protected workplaces, employment centres or companies with disabilities, which must employ at least 5 people. The method of working in a protected workplace and the number of protected workplaces are determined by the employer in a general act or in a statement on safety. If he wants to reduce or increase the number of employees, the employer must obtain the consent of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The aim of such jobs is to link several protected jobs into a whole. Employment in a

protected workplace enables a person with intellectual disability to receive a wage subsidy and support services (ZZRZI, 2004).

Before the adoption of the ZZRZI, the civil initiative proposed that a regular employer could employ in the form of sheltered employment and this possibility of employment would not be limited only to employment centres and companies with disabilities. If the protective jobs were employed in larger companies, the employers would not be so burdened. Competence in the event that companies employing e.g. 100 employees and three jobs would be in the form of sheltered employment, it would not be that much lower than in the case of companies that employ e.g. 10 employees. Employment centres are companies that must be market-oriented in order to be financed. Employers must constantly look for suitable work for people with intellectual disabilities and treat them accordingly (Pajk, 2019).

2.2.2.1 Disability companies

Disabled companies employ disabled people who, due to their obstacles, cannot be employed by employers in a normal working environment, as they cannot adapt their workplace (ZZRZI, 2004). They represent a kind of social economy, as they represent the most important opportunity for employment for disabled people, and they provide companies with incentives for employing disabled people and the right to various exemptions and reliefs. Disability companies operate like other companies in the open labour market, except that they do not have to pay payroll taxes and profit taxes, as well as social and pension contributions for workers with deficits, but can use these funds for the development of the company. Employers are entitled to state support for co-financing adjustments to the working environment, the purchase of various accessories and devices, staff training and opening new jobs (Kosmač, 2021). The law stipulates that a company with disabilities must employ and train at least 40% of all employees with disabilities during the entire business year. This quota does not include disabled people who are included in active employment policy programs without an employment contract. An important innovation introduced by ZZRZI is the mandatory employment of one professional worker if a company with disabilities employs or trains more than 3 disabled people. Disabled companies with a larger number of employees must employ at least 1 professional worker for every 20 disabled employees (ZZRZI, 2004) This quota does not include disabled people who are included in active employment policy programs without an employment contract. An important innovation introduced by ZZRZI is the mandatory employment of one professional worker if a company with disabilities employs or trains more than 3 disabled people. Disabled companies with a larger number of employees must employ at least 1 professional worker for every 20 disabled employees (ZZRZI, 2004) This quota does not include disabled people who are included in active employment policy programs without an employment contract. An important innovation introduced by ZZRZI is the mandatory employment of one professional worker if a company with disabilities employs or trains more

than 3 disabled people. Disabled companies with a larger number of employees must employ at least 1 professional worker for every 20 disabled employees (ZZRZI, 2004)

Disabled companies began to appear in Slovenia in the 1970s, when the first disabled workshops began to be held. In 1988, disabled workshops were transformed into disabled companies, as we know them today. In the same year, Slovenia had 11 disabled companies, today we already have 158 (Open data of Slovenia: OPSI, 2023).

2.2.2.2 Employment centres

In Slovenia, the first employment centres started operating in 2006. This was helped by the large number of unemployed disabled people who could not find employment in ordinary companies. In addition to favourable legislation, the establishment was also helped by the interest and desire of the municipalities to see improvements in this area.

Employment centres employ disabled people exclusively in protective jobs, where they must be guaranteed permanent and uninterrupted work. Employment centres are defined as legal entities that provide jobs to those with disabilities who achieve between 30 and 70% of the expected work results. The general act defines the number of protective jobs and the number of professional employees, which are financed from public funds. They provide work primarily at their headquarters, but occasionally also at the premises of business partners or at home. The work takes place in a stress-free working environment, where there are no high standards, fast pace and where their limitations are taken into account. Employees perform production (assembly of small products, food processing, production of paper packaging, carpentry work, agricultural work, etc.) and also service work (society program, data entry, helping in the kitchens, photocopying, etc.) (Brate, 2014). There are currently 67 employment centres in Slovenia.

2.2.3 Social inclusion programs

Social inclusion programs are social programs aimed at supporting, preserving and developing the work skills of people with disabilities. They are intended for those who, due to their disability, are not employable according to a decision on unemployability issued by the Institute of Employment of the Republic of Slovenia after completion of employment rehabilitation, disabled persons of category I with a decision of the Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance without the right to a disability pension, and persons with a physical disability and intellectual development (even with a moderate intellectual disability), who do not have the possibility of inclusion in appropriate social welfare services. Social inclusion programs are implemented by contractors selected in a public tender published by the ministry responsible for the protection of the disabled, in which the conditions for the implementation of the programs are determined (ZZRZI, 2004). The aim of the programs is to maintain and develop

the working abilities of the disabled (work content) and to encourage social inclusion (social content). Work content includes all activities aimed at maintaining and developing work skills, obtaining work condition, work competences, endurance and workload of users/disabled persons. Social content is aimed at acquiring and developing social skills and empowering disabled people and includes activities such as: motivation, acceptance of one's own disability, personal growth, acquisition of functional knowledge and competences for success in life and work, functional and computer literacy, user assistance activities when overcoming personal hardships and problems, implementing preventive measures to maintain health, implementation of lifelong learning and the like. The ratio between work and social content of the program is determined by the contractor himself, and the volume of work content must not be lower than 50% and not higher than 75%. The program lasts 8 hours a day, all working days of the year, and disabled people participate for a minimum of 6 hours a day, or even 4 hours with an appropriate doctor's certificate. The implementation of the program for an individual disabled person is carried out in accordance with the individual plan, where it can also be determined that part of the program is carried out in a normal working environment or outside the premises of the program provider, as long as this is to the greatest benefit of the disabled person and professional support is provided with the appropriate staff (Public tender for the selection of providers of social inclusion programs, 2019). Disabled people who join the program.

2.2.4 Protective work centres

Many adults with ID who have a more pronounced need for help (persons with moderate, severe and severe intellectual disabilities) are included in social welfare services in care-work centres, protective work centres (here and after - VDCs), where they perform adapted forms of work that are intended for people who are unable to live and work independently and need help with care. These are management, protection and employment services under special conditions, which enable those involved to preserve the acquired knowledge, acquire skills and strengthen social habits with the aim of promoting creativity, a sense of usefulness, self-affirmation and enabling the user as much independence as possible. Said services, which include accommodation, food, technical care, transport and social care (occupational therapy, psychological and counselling treatments) are fully financed by the state budget. In order to encourage the efforts of users, it is also possible to reward work under special conditions, and all users are included in the reward, including those who, due to their disability or age, are unable to fully participate in the work process under special conditions (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social matters and equal opportunities, bd). Adults with intellectual disabilities, adults with personality disorders or more severe sensory disorders (vision, hearing disorders) and adults with congenital or acquired injuries to the locomotor apparatus, central or of the peripheral nervous system (with head injuries) (Rule on standards and norms of social welfare services, 2010). "Employment" under special conditions includes such forms of work that enable beneficiaries to maintain acquired knowledge and develop new skills. It also covers ensuring conditions for safe work, adapting machines and work

tools to the capabilities of the beneficiaries, introducing them to work, developing working skills and skills, monitoring the work process, purchasing resources and tools, transporting work materials and selling products. Employment is carried out in a protective work centre or in another organized form. If the service is provided outside the premises of the protective work centre, the protective work centre must simultaneously provide a companion for one or more beneficiaries based on personnel norms in the field of social care and prepare a support plan for the beneficiary in such a way that the conditions for the safe work of the beneficiary are ensured. "Management" mainly refers to the design, implementation and monitoring of individual plans/programs, maintaining acquired knowledge and skills and learning new content and skills, maintaining and developing social contacts and cognitive abilities of the user, maintaining acquired skills and developing greater independence. Management also includes cooperation with the user and his relatives, cooperation with other professionals and organizations, organizing creative activities and active integration into the environment. "Care" includes care, support and assistance in areas of daily life, such as personal hygiene and care, putting on, removing and dressing shoes, movement, communication, meeting physiological needs, organization and care during arrivals and departures, and escorting during transport in accordance with an individual plan. The service of guidance, protection and employment under special conditions is holistic and individualized and takes into account the individual's needs for safety, acceptance and love. The content of the work in the VDC is adapted and managed in such a way that the learning of social and skill skills is no longer a simulation, as in the pedagogical process, but a way of everyday life, i.e. it is derived from the needs of everyday life. The service is performed in such a way that the user is placed in an active role as much as possible, as a co-participant in the process of service implementation. (Community of protective work centres of Slovenia, bd). that the learning of social and technical skills is no longer a simulation as in the pedagogical process, but a way of everyday life, i.e. it is derived from the needs of everyday life. The service is performed in such a way that the user is placed in an active role as much as possible, as a co-participant in the process of service implementation. (Community of protective work centres of Slovenia, bd). that the learning of social and technical skills is no longer a simulation as in the pedagogical process, but a way of everyday life, i.e. it is derived from the needs of everyday life. The service is performed in such a way that the user is placed in an active role as much as possible, as a co-participant in the process of service implementation (Community of protective work centres of Slovenia, n.d.).

K. Kosmač (2021) found out in the research which forms of employment under special conditions and to what extent are implemented by VDCs in Slovenia. VDCs most often offer their users four different forms of work. The research showed that most VDCs implement cooperative and own programs (Kosmač, 2021). Otherwise, the work usually takes place individually or in groups, with each group having a work instructor who supervises the work process and guides the users in their work.

Forms of work in VDCs:

- Cooperative program

As part of the cooperative program, the VDC connects with the providers of cooperative fields, it depends on the possibilities and needs in the home environment and the abilities of the users (CUDV Draga, n.d). Cooperative work includes simple manual work, such as washing, cleaning, assembly and packaging of products, simple industrial work, filling, sorting, sorting, light assembly work, production of paper packaging (Nagode et al., 2008, in Kosmač, 2021).

- Own program

The implementation of one's own program depends to a large extent on the ability of the users, technological equipment, spatial possibilities and knowledge, as well as the innovation of the professionals who manage the employment program. Our own program includes sewing, making greeting cards, creating unique products in various workshops (painting and dyeing, woodworking, printing and paper program, making ceramic, silk, glass and decorative products), etc. (right there).

- Green program

The activities of the green program include arranging the surroundings and flower beds, sweeping the yard, working in the orchards, growing herbs and spices, mowing the grass, activities in the garden, etc. (Gantar, 2019, in Kosmač, 2021).

- Integrated employment

Integrated employment is the most inclusive approach for persons with SEN (according to the existing legislation), since persons are included in a regular work environment and perform their work with appropriate support and adjustments. The work takes place in a normal working environment, such as employment at Baumax, Merkur and Obi. In the analysis of the functioning of VDCs, it was found that 26.4% of all VDCs implemented individual forms of integrated employment (Nagode et al., 2008, in Kosmač, 2021). According to a survey from 2015, 34% of VDCs implemented an integrated form of employment (Zaviršek, 2015, in Kosmač). When implementing this form of employment, the VDC must provide a companion for one or more users and prepare a support plan for the user in such a way as to enable him to work safely (Rules on Standards and Norms for the Implementation of Social Welfare Services, 2010). Integrated employment follows the concept of deinstitutionalization and seeks new opportunities for learning and personal growth of users. It contributes to raising the quality of life of users and their dignity and encourages active integration into society (Klančar Golob and Rozman, 2015). Quite a few studies have been carried out in Slovenia and abroad, which highlight the positive aspects of integrated employment. N. Kos (2016) notes that integrated employment is a good practice that also brings advantages to the company itself, in which a person with ID is included (Kos, 2016, in Kosmač, 2021). This form of employment also contributes to the recognition of the company as socially responsible (Klančar Golob and Rozman, 2015). Otherwise, it is possible to see in the literature many advantages that this form of employment brings for people with ID. Among the most common are the elimination of segregation, strengthening the social network, developing work skills, greater self-confidence, independence and personal responsibility of users (Breznik, 2016 and Drobnič, 2002, Zaviršek, 2018, in Kosmač,

2021). Of course, there are also negative aspects of this form of employment. These can be high expectations from employers, the impact of the user's personal problems on work and thus reduced work efficiency, and the need for constant monitoring of the user at work (Kos, 2016, Erbežnik, 2019, in Kosmač, 2021). Otherwise, there are quite a few examples of good practice in implementing integrated employment in Slovenia. These can be high expectations from employers, the impact of the user's personal problems on work and thus reduced work efficiency, and the need for constant monitoring of the user at work (Kos, 2016, Erbežnik, 2019, in Kosmač, 2021). Otherwise, there are quite a few examples of good practice in implementing integrated employment in Slovenia. These can be high expectations from employers, the impact of the user's personal problems on work and thus reduced work efficiency, and the need for constant monitoring of the user at work (Kos, 2016, Erbežnik, 2019, in Kosmač, 2021). Otherwise, there are quite a few examples of good practice in implementing integrated employment in Slovenia.

2.3 The concept of employment rehabilitation in protected forms of employment/ training Concept in Sheltered Workshops

Employment rehabilitation is an individually planned right of a disabled person. It is processual and interdisciplinary team work, which includes services that are provided with the goal of training a disabled person for appropriate work, getting him employed, keeping his job, or progressing in it or changing his professional career (ZZRZI, 2004). Employment rehabilitation services provide professional bases for decision-making on disability, the right to employment rehabilitation and the employability of disabled persons. They also include support mechanisms for carrying out training and organizing the workplace for the disabled. Services include:

- A) Advising, encouraging and motivating disabled people to take an active role
- B) Preparation of an opinion on the level of work skills, knowledge, work habits and professional interests
- C) Help in accepting one's own disability and informing about the possibilities of inclusion in training and work
- D) Help in choosing appropriate career goals
- E) Development of social skills and abilities
- F) Help in finding suitable work or employment
- G) Analysis of the specific workplace and working environment of a disabled person
- H) Creation of a plan for adapting the workplace and working environment of a disabled person
- I) Creation of a plan for the necessary equipment and resources for work
- J) Training at a specific workplace, or in a chosen profession
- K) Monitoring and professional assistance in training and education
- L) Follow-up of a disabled person at the workplace after employment
- M) Real-time evaluation of the success of the rehabilitation process

N) Evaluating the achievement of work results of disabled employees

The services improve psychomotor coordination and skills, strengthen psychophysical endurance at work, acquire work habits, get to know and get used to technological procedures and organizational rules, integration into the work and social environment, and training for safe work and employment.

The process of employment rehabilitation is divided into two phases:

- Phase I - Service B (Evaluative diagnostic treatment): The purpose of the service is a comprehensive assessment of the individual's current work and social functioning, his capabilities, potential, interests and obstacles, relevant factors in the environment, opportunities for inclusion in employment and education. The service is the starting point for assessing the status of a disabled person and assessing the need for further employment rehabilitation services. The service is provided from 15 to 90 hours per person.
- II. phase (Process): Purpose II. the phases of employment rehabilitation are the improvement of social competences, the development of constructive behavioural patterns, a more effective performance when integrating into work and in other social situations, better cooperation in formal and informal social environments in the work team, knowledge of more constructive ways of reacting and solving conflict situations, changing negative attitudes, ideas and stereotypes, establishment of conditions for the transfer of skills to the wider social environment, improvement of self-image, expansion of the social network and reduction of social isolation. The goal of training at a specific workplace is to develop work habits, work efficiency and personal adaptation to the work environment, which in turn improves the employability of people and the possibility of advancement in their professional career.

After the employment rehabilitation has been completed, the Institute makes an assessment of the disabled person's employment opportunities based on the monthly reports of the employment rehabilitation providers and the final evaluation of the set of ZR services. The assessment must show the orientation: unemployability, employability, whether the disabled person is employable in a normal work environment, in supportive or protective employment, what jobs he is qualified for and what support services or adaptations he needs in the workplace and/or work environment.

Employable disabled persons are those whose work efficiency is higher than 30%. ZZRZI (2004) envisages different types of exits to employment:

- Employment in a normal work environment (above 95% efficiency),
- Employment in a disabled company (between 70 and 95% efficiency),
- Supportive employment (between 70% and 95% efficiency),
- Protective employment in an employment centre, can also be in a protective workplace in a disabled company (between 30% and 70% efficiency)

A person is not employable if, despite rehabilitation, adjustments to the workplace and working environment, he cannot achieve work results equal to at least one third of an employee in a normal workplace. ZZRZI (2004) provides for inclusion in the social inclusion program for cases where the decision determines that the disabled person is not employable. The program is intended to support and preserve the working abilities of the disabled (ZZRZI, 2004).

2.4 The concept of counselling and guidance in protected forms of employment (SV)/ Counselling Guidance Concept in Sheltered Workshops

The SV program pursues goals from the work and social fields, which are realized through the concept of directed/guided counselling and mentoring.

Objectives - work area:

- labour and social integration and prevention of social exclusion,
- the development of the individual's work potential and the possibility of reconsidering the employability assessment,
- preservation, maintenance and development of working skills, habits and skills,
- obtaining and maintaining working condition, working endurance and load capacity,
- improving attention, concentration and accuracy at work,
- strengthening the responsible attitude towards work.

Objectives - social area:

- maintaining, developing and expanding the social (support) network,
- development of greater competence in crisis and conflict situations,
- empowering the individual in all areas of life,
- development and improvement of social competence, communication skills and management of stressful and burdensome factors,
- development of personality adaptability, personality growth,
- development/strengthening of independence, self-initiative and greater activity in changing one's own life situation.

Based on their abilities, functional capacities and interests, users are included in auxiliary, simpler segments of work activities within the production and service programs of a company with disabilities, which implements a social inclusion program, based on individually set goals written in an individual plan. In addition to our own, work

activities are also provided in cooperation with external business partners. Examples of work activities: production work of varying complexity, auxiliary work assembling cardboard packaging, auxiliary carpentry work, arranging green areas, cleaning the surroundings, cleaning rooms, selling your own creative products, simpler sewing work. People with ID engage in the simplest, customized phases of work, with additional, highly detailed explanations, guidance and direction available to them in a clearly structured and managed work environment. These are simple and non-normative jobs in which users are involved on the basis of expressed preferences and retained skills. The jobs that are available to users are of different levels of difficulty, but mostly they are sedentary, simple manual jobs that take place without an imposed pace or norm. Only individual users whose abilities are better preserved and have fewer health restrictions can participate in individual more demanding activities. These are mainly group forms of work, but individuals are also allowed to work individually. Most of the work activities take place at the locations where the program is implemented, individual works are also carried out in the field (e.g. landscaping), and to a lesser extent work activities are also carried out in a normal work environment. Only users who want and are able to do this type of work are involved in such forms of work, of course under appropriate mentoring and with professional support. The jobs (jobs) performed by the users are customized, and the customizations differ depending on the target group of users. Most of the time, these are adjustments to working time and space (adjusted working time, reduced working time, shared working time, more frequent breaks, gradual return to the workplace, change of place of work, change of work environment), adjustments to workloads and reduction of the experience of stress (reduction of workload, greater variety of work tasks, setting short-term and long-term goals at work, redistribution of work within the work group) and training and support (access to mentoring, professional and interpersonal support of colleagues at the workplace, additional training, lectures, constructive giving of instructions and feedback). Social activities are also a very important part of the program, which includes creative, psychosocial and leisure activities, solving crisis interventions, counselling and lifelong activities. Social content is carried out in close cooperation with the local environment, through connections with various organizations, societies, the health system, etc. Users participate in social activities according to their own needs, wishes, interests and abilities, and they are encouraged to find at least something that suits them in the selection of activities, or to make their own suggestions regarding the desired activities. All activities within the framework of social content are led by suitably qualified professionals and colleagues, in cooperation with external contractors. Examples of social content: individual psychosocial assistance, action in the event of crisis situations, cooperation with external institutions with the aim of helping with personal matters, personal counselling, health promotion, social interaction games, visiting cultural events and events in the local environment, various gatherings, computer courses, literacy and foreign languages, creative workshops, parties and excursions.

The set goals of the program are continuously followed with guided functional/work occupation according to the expressed wishes and interests of the individual, with individual and group psychotherapeutic, socio-therapeutic, psychoeducational, etc. supportive therapeutic measures - use of methods and techniques for developing specific

skills such as: communication, social skills, assertiveness, problem solving, control of problematic behaviours and/or aggression, methods and techniques of social learning, promotion of social leisure activities that strengthen the social network (recreation , trips...). All activities are accompanied by selection evaluations and user feedback (motivation, thoughts, views, vision, individual progress), which form the basis of an individual plan. An important component of the integration process is the active participation of the user in all phases (individual planning of integration into work and social activities, evaluations on a weekly, monthly and annual level). The individual goals defined in the individual's individual plan are regularly monitored. The work and social integration of the individual is assessed, progress, stability or decline in the workplace or in the social field is defined. The evaluation is given by professionals who are directly involved in the work process with the users and regularly monitor them, and they also evaluate themselves. User empowerment and the impact of inclusion in the social inclusion program on the individual's quality of life are also monitored on an annual basis (Ozara d.o.o., 2020).

2.5 Transition from a protected form of employment to the real labour market/ Transition from Sheltered Workshop to the labour market

The main purpose of employment under special conditions is to prepare and train an individual for employment on the open labour market. There is not much data on this topic for Slovenia. Brate (2014) cites research from the evaluation of VDCs, that in the period between 2005 and 2007, 38 persons passed from the regular program of VDCs. Of these, 25 persons moved into integrated employment and one into employment rehabilitation. In his research, Brate (2014) notes that there are disabled people in Slovenia who are employed in sheltered jobs, even though they have the skills to be employed on the open labour market. By analysing the research, she found that there are about 20.14% of disabled people who could be employed in a standard workplace. The transition from a protected form of employment to the real labour market in Slovenia is hindered by employers' prejudices, lack of jobs and lack of skills and knowledge of disabled people. The closest thing to the transition from protective forms of employment to the open labour market is integrated employment by VDCs and employment centres. If we wanted to achieve changes and improve the transition between protective forms of employment and the open labour market, in addition to radical changes in legislation and the improvement of employment policy, we should also improve the education system, inform employers and society, and eliminate communication barriers.

3 Examples of good practices/Single case of Good practice

3.1 The concept of employment rehabilitation/ Vocational training concept

As an example of good practice, we present the employment rehabilitation of a 23-year-old man who was looking for his first job for a long time and was referred to employment rehabilitation by the Institute of Employment of the Republic of Slovenia. In January 2022, an assessment was made, or 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 sub normality. In the field of work functioning, minor deviations were revealed. Manual skills were poorly preserved, the rough muscle strength of the cylindrical grip was less suitable for more difficult physical work. Work orientation and self-initiative were always good, his work efficiency ranged between 27% and 58%. 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 first-level rehabilitation commission at the ZRSZ recognized him as having a moderate level of identified problems and the status of a disabled person according to the ZZRZI, and assessed that he needs employment rehabilitation services. The final opinion of the rehabilitation commission was,

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, on-the-job training took place on simple manual work within the framework of a protected workplace in disability company. 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. It was included in a narrow segment of available work - ie cleaning of saunas, installation of insulation material made of wood fibres in sauna walls and insertion of MDF panels on sauna walls and painting/oiling of structural wood. In the work environment, he showed reduced workload and endurance, and needed a longer introduction to work, continuous monitoring and guidance and multiple iterations. 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 labour and social functioning and treatment options. After completing the job rehabilitation process, the rehabilitator was employed in the company where the training took place (Ozara d.o.o.,

2022). was recognized as employable in an adapted, protected work environment, in simple manual work in protected workplaces in the company, and in simpler manual production work. 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 labour and social functioning and treatment options. After completing the job rehabilitation process, the rehabilitator was employed in the company where the training took place (Ozara doo, 2022). was recognized as employable in an adapted, protected work environment, in simple manual work in protected workplaces in the company, and in simpler manual production work. 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 labour and social functioning and treatment options. After completing the job rehabilitation process, the rehabilitator was employed in the company where the training took place (Ozara doo, 2022). employers, employment agencies and providers of employment rehabilitation. All participants were continuously informed about labour and social functioning and treatment options. After completing the job rehabilitation process, the rehabilitator was employed in the company where the training took place (Ozara doo, 2022). employers, employment agencies and providers of employment rehabilitation. All participants were continuously informed about labour and social functioning and treatment options. After completing the job rehabilitation process, the rehabilitator was employed in the company where the training took place (Ozara doo, 2022).

3.2 The concept of counselling and guidance

Social inclusion programs are implemented in a variety of work environments, and one of these can be a farm (agricultural holding). 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 Korenika, 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, many activities and trainings are provided for visitors in a pleasant rural environment (Korenika, n.d).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 people with intellectual disabilities experience their work and working environment on the farm and what influence the farm environment has 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 ID, is experienced 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. They are proud of themselves and their products, and they feel a great deal of responsibility towards their work and products. As a contribution of inclusion/work, the participants highlighted the creation of new friendships and inclusion in the social process with colleagues, superiors and visitors. They also highlighted a sense of belonging, security and solidarity, as well as good working relationships. As shown in the research, the very possibility of work is of great importance to users, who perceive it as an important good 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 have repeatedly mentioned the joy of coming to work because of the social climate and the feeling of being wanted (Obran, 2022). External motivation factors are regular payment or other small material rewards. They are also strongly motivated by a sense of belonging, as they have repeatedly mentioned the joy of coming to work because of the social climate and the feeling of being wanted (Obran, 2022). External motivation factors are regular payment or other small material rewards. They are also strongly motivated by a sense of belonging, as they have repeatedly mentioned the joy of coming to work because of the social climate and the feeling of being wanted (Obran, 2022).

3.3 Transition to the real/first labor market

3.3.1 Examples of integrated employment – VDC

One of the examples is VDC Tončke Hočevar, where they have been developing integrated forms of employment for more than ten years. They involve their users in employment activities, such as various jobs in the garden center of the Bauhaus and Obi stores and work in the kitchen of the Sodexo company (VDC Tončke Hočevar, n.d.)

The next example is the VDC in Nova Gorica, where users are included in the Obi store, the Šempeter General Hospital and the Gradišče Retirement Home (VDC Nova Gorica, n.d.).

In VDC Polž Maribor, individual users are involved in Horticulture, where they help with the processing of vegetables, watering flowers, transplanting, cleaning flowers, and some of them perform auxiliary work in the garden center of a large shopping center, where they sort and compress waste cardboard packaging (Breznik, 2016).

In 2012, CUDV Draga opened the Druga violina inn in the old city center of Ljubljana, where persons with ID 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. In addition to basic catering activities, such as various cultural and artistic events, training, product sales, etc. (Bužan, 2016).

As K. Kosmač (2021) found in her research, examples of integrated employment include:

Help in the garden center (Obi, Agraria), where users help customers with transport, water and clean flowers, fill pots with soil, work in the warehouse, stick codes on products and stack products on shelves.

Cleaning of cultural halls, arranging sports areas and surroundings.

Various auxiliary work (assembly and sorting of semi-finished products, painting, varnishing, shredding of waste electronics, assistance with car washing) performed in various companies.

Work in a store where they help sort products into packaging, prepare materials, stack boxes and stack products on shelves.

Help in the kitchen (washing dishes, preparing salad, cutting vegetables and fruits) and confectionery activities (help in preparing desserts).

Help on the farm, where they perform easier farm chores.

All these examples prove that even people with MID can do a wide variety of jobs, as long as they are in line with their interests and abilities. In the beginning, they need adequate support, adjustments, guidance and guidance from a work instructor, but gradually they become more and more independent, responsible and reliable at work (Kosmač, 2021).

4 Conclusion

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 a life goal for most people. It is the same for people with ID who

are able to do so (with adaptations). 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 ID, as they often exceed their expectations. In Slovenia, there are no official statistics related to persons with intellectual disabilities. It is estimated that there are about 1% of persons with intellectual disabilities in Slovenia (RIC, 2014).

Depending on the expected ability of persons and the level of support they need at work, in Slovenia we know different forms of employment of persons with disabilities (disabled). The first form is the open market, where disabled people are not offered support at work, as they do it in workplaces where the disability does not hinder the work process. All the others offer support to the disabled or people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in their integration into work (supportive employment, protective employment, social inclusion programs and protective work centers). Systemically, people with different levels of ID in Slovenia do not have the same opportunities. Thus, only persons with a mild intellectual disability can be included in supportive and protective employment, and persons with a moderate intellectual disability only in protective work centers and, exceptionally, in social inclusion programs.

We can conclude that many changes and improvements are needed in the field of employment of persons with ID in Slovenia. One of them would be a necessary change in the legislation, which would enable people with ID to enter into an employment relationship and thus decent pay, and employers to serve the employment of people with ID to a greater extent. Not all persons with ID 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. Lačen (2001) states that it is necessary to take into account their right to choose, as this puts them in an equal and active relationship and gives them freedom.

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[HdBA – the University of Applied Labour Studies](#), as the national institution responsible for the education of specialists to work in the Federal Employment Agency, has a particular expertise on questions of vocational education and training (VET) and counselling with regards to such questions. This includes the education and training of counsellors working in the specialist departments for supporting people with disabilities who are, among other things, responsible for assigning clients into the VET section of sheltered workshops. HdBA has a specialised chair for inclusion studies and focused resources on this area over recent years.

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[OZARA](#) service and disability company d.o.o. is one of the national key service providers in the field of vocational rehabilitation and social inclusion. Enjoying indisputable status of professional authority in the field of training, employment of persons with disabilities, social inclusion, vocational and employment rehabilitation in Slovenia, OZARA d.o.o. brings crucial resources to the consortium by transferring its knowledge regarding the needs identified in the scope of project proposal. It has around 150 potential end users, and tens of professional workers and mentors, supporting these disadvantaged groups.

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[The VHS Bildungsinstitut](#) (Adult Education Centre) is the educational service of the Christian Labour Movement (CAB) in East Belgium, in the German speaking Community. The CAB is the largest social movement in Belgium. The VHS is engaged mainly in social-political learning activities, such as trainings for project coordinators for cultural and social projects, and in the ACADEMY 50+ in training for elderly people in different subjects such as politic sciences, sociology, philosophy, history, cognitive stimulation, etc. After 2015, the VHS coordinated the integration pathway in East Belgium with language classes (German) on different levels and civic lessons for all people coming to the German speaking Community. The VHS is also involved in trainings for unemployed persons in application techniques, and integration into the labour market. These are also topics that are discussed in several Erasmus+ projects.

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[SYNTHESIS](#) Center for Research and Education Ltd is a pioneering organisation which initiates and implements projects of positive social impact, with a focus on social inclusion and accessibility of services and products for everyone. SYNTHESIS is one of the leading institutions in Cyprus in the fields of social entrepreneurship and social innovation. It founded and manages HUB NICOSIA, an educational centre and a community of organisations with cultural, environmental and social aims. SYNTHESIS main target groups are people from the marginalised/ disadvantaged / vulnerable parts of the society, such as youth, adults and the aging population, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, people with physical and mental disabilities.

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[VšĮ "eMundus"](#) has a broad expertise in the development of various ICT applications. The mission of eMundus is to actively promote the development of the knowledge society by developing services related to educational activities, information technology, innovation and practical applications in education and social activities, ecology, healthy lifestyles and harmonious education in order to ensure quality cooperation.

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