

# Handbook

## Guidance on enabling co-operative working between profit and social profit organisations

Common Way Project



Result of a European learning partnership, with funds from the EU-program



---

“Disabled people represent 80 million persons in the European Union (more than 15% of the population).”

“Disabled people are two to three times more likely to be unemployed than non-disabled persons. They are more likely to be unemployed for longer periods and face higher risks of losing their jobs than non-disabled people. At present, 78% of disabled people are totally excluded from the workforce. Most of them are obliged to depend on welfare grants to survive and as a result, their income is considerably lower than that of non-disabled people.”

European Disability Forum

---

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.



This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

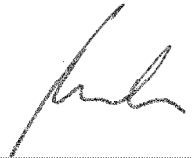
We, the Common Way Partnership, are very proud to present you this “Guidance on enabling co-operative working between profit and social profit organisations”.

Working in partnership is richly rewarding. It can also be very difficult. This guidance invites you to learn from our experiences, making use of the tips within and avoiding some of the pitfalls.


The examples in this handbook will assist your thinking about interacting inclusively within your organisation and administration.

Austria - Caritas





Signed:   
Wolfgang Scheidl


Czech Republic - Ergon





Signed:   
Romana Bělová


Finland - Eteva



Signed:   
Merja Hento

Hungary – Symbiosis Foundation



Signed:   
Monika Szakács

Ideal for All - United Kingdom



Signed:   
Thomas Blake

---

## Contents

Public/Private Cooperation .....	6
Introduction.....	6
The partners .....	7
Grundtvig.....	10
Chapter 1 - Before you begin.....	11
Over all definition of the cooperation aims .....	11
Chapter 2 - Partner identification/Partner search.....	12
How to find a partner? .....	12
Chapter 3 - Preparation for the first visit .....	13
The questions you need to ask yourself:- .....	13
Chapter 4 - We have found our partner. ....	18
How can we work together? .....	18
Chapter 5 – Delivering a Partnership Project.....	20
Management of a cooperation project.....	20
Chapter 6 – What Next? .....	26
Challenges and difficulties .....	26
Chapter 7 - Recommendations.....	33
Recommendations.....	33
Chapter 8 - Lessons Learned .....	36
Chapter 9 - The Business Partners .....	43
Cooperation Partners.....	43
Chapter 10 - Unforeseen consequences of our Grundtvig partnership	48
A few outtakes! (How partnerships become long lasting friendships)	48

Appendix 1 - Austria .....	50
Appendix 2 - Czech Republic .....	52
Appendix 3 - Finland .....	57
Appendix 4 - Hungary .....	64
Appendix 5 - UK .....	71
Appendix 6 – Staff Guidelines .....	75
Appendix 7 - Caritas / Spar timeline .....	77

## **Public/Private Cooperation**

### **Introduction**

This handbook has been developed from a European Project, part of a Grundtvig, Lifelong Learning Partnership 2011-13: Common Way - Bridging the Gap between Profit and Non-Profit Organisations for Integrated Employment. The handbook is the result of work undertaken by a partnership of 5 EU countries, Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary and the United Kingdom, representing diverse, not for profit disabled people's organisations.

The work of the partnership highlights the underlying principles of how Social Profit Organisations (SPOs), have developed effective mechanisms for identifying and working in cooperation with businesses. SPOs are known as Social Enterprises in the UK. The work demonstrates ways to maximise the economic and social benefits for disabled and disadvantaged people and for the businesses in which they work.

The thinking and practices shared have been identified and highlighted throughout this handbook. There is a range of ways to develop partnerships with employers and to find places of work for our clients. The handbook highlights the underpinning principles and lessons learned from the various best practice models developed, tried and tested by partners. The lessons learned have been summarised; in Chapter 8. They relate to each stage of partnership development.

Detailed, practical examples and models have been included in the handbook with the majority contained within Appendices 1 to 5, country by country, at the back of the handbook. These can be used as and when required to help you and your organisation develop and implement a process that will work for you.

We hope the handbook will help you identify and understand how to develop the most effective partnerships. Some of the things that could go wrong and what we have learned from these have been highlighted too.

Every partnership is unique and the cycle of identification, development and implementation will be different. We believe that the principles identified and demonstrated in this handbook underpin all successful partnerships. A clear and shared understanding from the outset, with clearly identified steps throughout the life cycle of the project and

partnership, will ensure maximum economic and social benefits for your clients, yourselves and your partners.

## **The partners**

### **Austria - Caritas is for People with Disabilities. We support integration.**

Our principle “we support integration” describes our mission for our work with people with disabilities. The key tasks of Caritas for People with Disabilities is to support and assist children, young adults and adults with disabilities in the integration process into everyday life; to relieve families and assist the inclusion of people with disabilities into society.

#### Our services:

Living

Integrative kindergarten and after school care centres

Training and education for People with Disabilities

Work/employment for adults with disabilities

Therapy and counselling

Driving school for people with disabilities - Fahrschule Barrierefrei

Teacher training college for social-care jobs

### **Czech Republic - ERGON – Sheltered Workshops**

Ergon is a non-governmental sheltered workshop; a not for profit organisation with a mission to provide places of employment for people with disabilities in the Moravian-Silesian region of the Czech Republic. Ergon was established in 2001 within Silesian Diaconia. In 2004 it became an independent civic association. Over a period of several years, Ergon has gone through significant development. In 2006 it received EU funding for building a facility for assembling goods within an industrial zone in Třinec city. In 2009 a second facility was built. Now, Ergon operates from these two spaces assembling a variety of goods. This has enhanced the opportunities Ergon offers, providing many possibilities for various working programmes.

Ergon runs 3 work programmes:

- assembling and packing work, operating within the assembly facility within the industrial zone.
- a laundry service operating from 2 laundries in Český Těšín and Vsetín)
- a mobile cleaning service

Ergon is an employer with 150 employees with disabilities. Work placements are adjusted to meet the employee's special needs relating to working hours, working conditions and ways of communicating. In this way, Ergon is able to provide people who have various disabilities with the opportunity to work.

### **Finland - Eteva - The Joint Municipal Authority**

Eteva provides housing services, family care and job and day activity services for people who need extra help; crisis and recovery services for people with dual diagnosis – both intellectual and developmental disabilities and psychiatric problems. Eteva's operation is characterised by small units. Work is based on modern disability policies, which emphasise inclusion and involvement. Instead of hospital and residential care, Eteva provides individual services for people with the most demanding needs.

Eteva offers individually planned diverse work and day activities. Our aim is to encourage our clients to undertake a range of activities and seek employment. We support personal growth and development as well as independent life. We implement person centred planning throughout our practise.

We organise work and day activities in Eteva day activity centres, in local businesses and communities, as well as within a mobile day activity service.

Activities include: everyday life skill training, creative arts and crafts, sport activities, working for local businesses, making Eteva's own hand made products, training for working life, supported work and participation in society.

### **Hungary - Symbiosis Foundation, services for persons with disabilities**

Symbiosis Foundation was established on 19th October 1999. It operates in Miskolc and throughout the whole North Hungarian Region. Our organisation provides a wide range of services for people with intellectual disabilities as well as those with autism, their parents, and people with reduced employment prospects. Our main aim is to help the lives of these people and their families and to improve the quality of their lives. We support the education, training, employment and social integration of people who are unable to escape from their difficult situation without help from others. The spectrum of services we offer for



our target group includes social services, employment, training, environment management, youth, culture, sport and protection of interest, is unique in Hungary.

After the rebuilding of and an extension to an old school building, Symbiosis Foundation created a day-care centre for 40 disabled people, and a residential center for 12 disabled adults. We also provide special therapies and rehabilitation activities for our target group here, e.g. theatre, puppet therapy.

Symbiosis Foundation's Barathegy Rehabilitation Farm operates in four hectares near the Bükk National Park in a beautiful environment. The Barathegy Living Centre was built in 2008 and provides a residential facility for 12 disabled and autistic adults. We provide training sessions for disabled people and personal development assistance for several years.

### **United Kingdom – Ideal for All (IFA), promoting inclusion**

IFA is a multi award winning user-led organisation, committed to working to the social model of disability perspective. It is based at one of the country's leading, fully accessible centres for Independent / Inclusive Living located in the borough of Sandwell, West Midlands.

IFA provides a wide range of equipment, training, advice, information and engagement services as well as offering exercise through its horticultural therapy service.

IFA believes disabled people are people first, overcoming social and attitudinal barriers through support and empowerment for the promotion of independent living.

IFA will not act as an activist organisation but campaigns to improve services for disabled people through an intellectual dialogue with commissioners of services.

#### The vision of the company

“By working in partnership with non-disabled people, statutory and voluntary sector organisations, Ideal for All aims to create an environment where abilities of disabled people are recognised and promoted for independent living.”

## **Grundtvig**

The partnership would like to thank the European Union and the Grundtvig Partnership programme for funding the partnership and giving us the opportunity to work with our European neighbours; forging an effective and sustainable working relationship.

The members of the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Partnership Common Way - Bridging the Gap between Profit and Non-Profit Organisations for Integrated Employment are committed to removing the social and physical barriers faced everyday by disabled people.

This has been an invaluable experience for all involved. It would not have been possible without European funding. Greater numbers of our service users will find sustainable employment as a result of the lessons learned and shared by all partners during the lifetime of this project.



## Chapter 1 - Before you begin

### Over all definition of the cooperation aims

Before beginning the process of engaging colleagues and partners in a co-operation, you need to be clear of why you are entering into the partnership. You will need to consider:-

- What are the aims of the cooperation?
- What is the motivation behind the cooperation?
- Who are the beneficiaries of the cooperation?
- How do you create and maintain the motivation of the relevant people?

A full internal analysis is necessary within the lead organisation before an approach to potential partners can be made. Relevant, significant people within the lead organisation have to agree that the cooperation is required, in addition to what it will achieve for the host organisation, before engaging with external partners.

### **What needs to be done internally to be able to implement the project?**

A thought from Austria: 

Caritas is an organisation for people with disabilities. It offers the best possible training and career opportunities for people with disabilities. It broadens the available opportunities for training and jobs, improving employment opportunities for the target group. Caritas is of the opinion, that these objectives could not be achieved without co-operations with profit-partners. This is the motivation and basis for all existing and future collaborations.

A thought from Hungary: 

In Hungary the motivation of companies to employ disabled people is aligned to their financial interests. According to the tax legislation in Hungary, since 2009, companies that employ more than 20 people have to employ 1 person with disabilities as well. If they do not, they have to pay extra tax.

## Chapter 2 - Partner identification/Partner search

### How to find a partner?

- How to find a partner?

An Example from Austria: 

There are many ways to find a for profit company with whom to enter into a cooperation. There are many ways to find a partner within the field of training and work particularly for people with disabilities.

Caritas utilises two approaches:

1. Caritas searches for specific cooperation partners in particular sectors or specific occupations because we want to start a new project (e.g. baker, butcher) or
2. Companies want to work with us because they have a project idea of their own or they would like to employ people with disabilities in their companies.

In most cases the initiative comes from Caritas. We identify an opportunity and specific things we want to achieve. We work out how best to do this and present a strong case to the company.

- A summary of the business partners we have worked with has been included within Chapter 9 of this handbook.
- There is an Appendix for each country providing additional details of how we each found and worked with our own business partners.

## **Chapter 3 - Preparation for the first visit**

### **The questions you need to ask yourself:-**

- Who is the most appropriate representative of our social organisation? Who is the right person?
- How can we collect as much information as possible from our partner?
- How should we introduce our organisation and our concrete aims briefly to convince our potential partner to work with us?

### **Recommendations**

- It is very important to ensure that the management of both organisations are committed to the project aims.
- It is important that one person takes overall responsibility especially if there is a change of personnel during the project's life time.
- Continuity, flexibility and a personable attitude are all crucial factors for successful partnerships.
- Do not be put off! If you can successfully negotiate your way through the initial phase of a co-operation, you will find that it will usually work well and become a lasting and successful partnership.
- The right person to lead the activity might vary from one company partnership to another.
- The right attitude and the ability to generate an atmosphere of trust for both sides, is crucial to the partnership's success.
- A clear and succinct presentation of your ideas, outlining the benefits to the company as well as to your clients and yourselves, is extremely important.

An Example from Austria: 

### **Who is the most appropriate representative of our social organisation? Who is the right person?**

The most appropriate person for representing the SPO will be a staff member with expertise of managing a cooperation between a

PO and SPO. Ideally, the representative would be located somewhere between the highest and lowest management level. That chosen person will report back all relevant information to the CEO and have the authority to make decisions on relevant project issues. The representative should also have the necessary expertise of the subject area.

Feedback from our cooperation partners suggests that it is an advantage if our staff members who work for the employment of people with special needs are young. We believe you need someone who communicates easily and effectively, who is dynamic and has broad horizons with a “we can solve anything” attitude!

In Austria, when we are talking about education, specifically about apprentice training, we are talking about young people between the ages of 16 and 24 years. Finding partners for cooperation is easier if the main topic is “integration of young people within the labour market” as this is a priority for many countries and companies currently.

The most significant factor in finding a partner with whom to cooperate is the image of the SPO. A good reputation engenders trust and good collaboration within a partnership. The benefit for the PO will be a high level of acceptance within public perception and through the media. Working collaboratively with a well known SPO will ensure a win-win situation.

**Example:**

The “Caritas” brand opened doors to initial consultations within all cooperation/projects. It is one of the strongest brands in Austria with 97% of the population aware of the Caritas brand. The image of Caritas nationally had a positive effect on people’s perceptions and was fundamental in kick starting negotiations with many partners.

The negotiation process with Spar succeeded, particularly and especially because:

- The two companies were both big and well known with a good image and a high profile.



- Spar trusted and had confidence in Caritas, particularly in its support of young people with fewer opportunities within the labour market.
- Caritas was identified as an appropriate partner possessing the required skills, experience and know-how for a successful project
- Spar wanted to recruit employees directly
- A stable financial position and Caritas' successes were demonstrated at the outset and conveyed through the image of Caritas itself.

It is a particular incentive for all companies to work with a big and well-known SPO such as Caritas. Everyone enjoys attaching themselves to the coat-tails of a successful company.

### **How can we collect as much information as possible from our partner?**

A range of sources of information need to be utilised to get to know and understand the particular company you intend collaborating with. One easy and quick way to gain first impressions is via the internet and/or the company's website. Reports within the media can be a useful additional source of information.

Thorough research and evaluation of a company is crucial before initialising a conversation. However, a personal contact provides a distinct additional advantage.

Examples:

- **Spar**

Information initially came from our research which highlighted that Spar was one of the best examples in providing good working conditions for its staff members. Trading companies (retail) are surrounded by negative images relating predominantly to the working conditions (unfortunately it is true in the majority of cases). For our young people with disabilities, the image of Spar was a very important factor in planning the cooperation with them.



- **Gragger:**

One young trainee was engaged within the “Organic bakery” in advance and supported by staff members of Caritas. This enabled us to learn more about the bakery, its culture and operating principles.

## **How to introduce our organisation and our specific aims briefly to convince our potential partner to work with us?**

### Option 1

Austria/Caritas introduce their SPO by sharing their aims through a short verbal introduction during the initial contact meeting. Each situation is different. The negotiations will progress differently and develop in a way that results from and meets the needs of different circumstances. They will be different each time. A generic process does not exist. One size does not fit all! The outcomes in each case will vary and be specific to the individual cooperation partner, the project and the people involved.

The primary objective within the first contact meeting is to develop a general and shared understanding of the project aims. Is it appropriate? What is its approximate size, duration, etc?

At the end of the conversation the expectation of each partner must be agreed in detail. The following aspects should be considered in advance:

- 2 to 3 advantages of a cooperation for both sides (PO and SPO) to be clearly identified
- the expectations of each partner, clearly laid down
- the conditions and the minimum requirements of a cooperation to be identified and agreed in writing.

Folders and other printed material can be handed out to the participants at this first meeting, to illustrate any specific points. Information about the SPO should be chosen deliberately to introduce relevant services. An alternative may be a short written introduction of a maximum of two pages.

### Option 2

If the first meeting is exploratory and the project idea is still to be refined, additional detail about the SPO might be needed.



### **Recommended agenda:**

1. Detailed introductions.
2. The main aim of the first meeting (to enter a cooperation) must be highlighted.
3. Two to three advantages of cooperation for both sides (PO and SPO) must be introduced.
4. The specific project idea can be developed during the meeting. Clarifying different possibilities for the cooperation is very important in the context of option 2.

Based on many years of experience we strongly recommend developing a concrete project idea first. It is easier to face a PO. You will have a far more productive meeting.

### **Spar**

- During the initial dialogue with the company Spar, the Department Manager from Caritas delivered a presentation including the specific project ideas. The aims, which were based on the company information collected in advance, were introduced.
- A presentation was appropriate as suitable premises were available and only a small number of people were present.
- It is a very good idea if the first meeting takes place at the PO. The introduction should be prepared conscientiously and the specific idea/offer introduced.
- The second meeting should take place at your own premises if possible as you will be able to present your SPO in a better way. The cooperation partner would then have an opportunity to visit current projects and experience your work for real.
- Hosting your guests with e.g. a dinner prepared by your own “training kitchen” if possible, would create a wonderful impression of your organisation.
- Use whatever means are necessary to demonstrate the strengths of your organisation!

Please see Appendix 7 - The Spar Timeline/Gant chart. Partnerships can take time. This appendix is one example of the time it took to develop and deliver one partnership and its specific activities.

## Chapter 4 - We have found our partner.

### How can we work together?

- Determine the aims of the cooperation
- Who are the key people?
- Create an action plan. What are the concrete aims?
- Do we need a contract?
- What are the needs of our partner?
- Who has to prepare the client for employment?

### Recommendations

- It is very important and can make the cooperation stronger if you are able to invite your partners to special events and special days where they can see how you work and who your clients are.
- People with disabilities may need more care and special attention specific to their individual circumstances. They may have to be trained for the job individually. A key element might be having a mentor within the working environment from your partner. They could provide specific workplace support.

### An Example with recommendations from Austria:

There should be a contact for each organisation involved

- 1) One named contact on each side is an important condition for a successful cooperation.
- 2) Negotiate a written agreement about the tasks of each contact person.
- 3) Ideally, both of the named people should have the authority to make decisions in relevant aspects of the project.
- 4) Access to all significant information on all levels is crucial; e.g. information from, about and for the CEO, staff members, PO and SPO.
- 5) The named contacts will manage the agreed communication process. They are responsible for ensuring effective communication between partners.

## **To determine the aims of the cooperation**

- The aims of the cooperation will need to be negotiated, written, agreed and signed by all parties.
- Ensure they are worked out in a detailed and clear way.
- Attention must be given to the written aims. Do these truly reflect the intentions of all parties? Beware of unstated, “pseudo aims”. The big challenges in negotiating the objectives will be to make sure all are revealed! If “hidden” aims are leading the work, the project will ultimately fail and all partners will be disappointed.

An open, honest and transparent climate is crucial to ensure an honest conversation takes. This means you have to address problems, concerns, difficulties and individual interests head on. Each partner will have hidden agendas. These have to be acknowledged and aired.

That process will - and is permitted - to take its time.

## **To create an action plan-what are the specific aims?**

It is not sufficient to verbalise objectives only. Partners must put their aims in writing.

A main goal has to be set initially; after negotiation sub-objectives can be identified.

## **Do we need a contract?**

A contract including aims, responsibilities and timescales is indispensable for a successful cooperation. The agreement needs to operate as part of a formal contract which will be signed by all members.

It needs to include:-

- What are the needs of our partner?
- Who has to prepare the client for employment?
- A process for what to do if there is a problem.

Preparation of clients is dependent on the individual conditions of the targeted project. At best, arrangements are planned by the SPO and PO jointly. On the basis of expertise the SPO is likely to assume the greater role.

## **Chapter 5 – Delivering a Partnership Project**

### **Management of a cooperation project**

- How to prepare your organisation for a cooperation i.e. staff and clients.
- What human resources and technical background/equipment will be needed?
- How to evaluate such cooperations?
- What experience/knowledge is needed for good management of the cooperation?
- At what level should the cooperation be managed? (CEO/HR manager etc.)
- What are the methods/tools of contact with the client and with your partner?

### **Recommendations**

- Continuity is essential within a co-operation if the project is to be successful. There can be problems and challenges which will influence the cooperation deeply. These can be managed with due care and attention, good planning and constant, relevant communication at appropriate levels with the right people.
- It is important that one person takes overall responsibility especially if there is a change of personnel.
- If the manager is not fully committed, the whole project can go wrong.

An Example from Austria: 

### **How to prepare for a cooperation in your organisation; staff and clients**

- 1) All parties concerned with the project need to be informed about the cooperation project.
- 2) Whenever a cooperation between a PO and SPO is initiated, the working culture, communication, tasks, etc. of each organisation will be affected and changed.
- 3) Changes in personnel during the lifetime of a project can result in unforeseen and unanticipated changes.

- 4) Even if the same people remain involved in a project throughout, people and organisations change over time. Opportunities to regularly review the management of a project, keeping clear and concrete guidance/notes can help mitigate disruption to activities. Defining changing tasks and roles in very clear language is crucial. This will minimise confusion of roles and the blurring of lines of communication and responsibility/accountability.

When Caritas began working with Spar and took over the running of one of their stores, there were also 6 employees from Spar who came to work for Caritas. These former Spar employees, now working in our Spar-market, saw themselves as Spar employees rather than employees of Caritas. This created some difficulties. It was very difficult to communicate our aims and organisational culture as well as our different way of working from what they were used to. As they were still working in a Spar market it was difficult for them to identify with the special aims of Caritas although they were now on Caritas' payroll and were Caritas employees.

- 5) It is important to be clear:-
- Who is the boss?
  - Who is the manager?

It is appropriate to document officially any changes in personnel. The one person who is responsible for the cooperation must be absolutely committed and able to work on the project and inform all staff members of any relevant activities and changes. Keeping all relevant people up to date is crucial.

### **International Recruitment Agency Cooperation**

There were two people responsible for the International Recruitment Agency /Caritas cooperation partnership. One person was from the International Recruitment Agency and one person from Caritas. It was very clearly stated within the contract from the outset that these two people had to make decisions together. They were able to make decisions for their companies within certain circumstances. For the people actually working within the project, two employees from Caritas, one from the International Recruitment Agency, they were called the "we work together" team. For them, it did not matter who (the person from Caritas or from the International Recruitment Agency) gave them orders because it was clear that the two responsible people had made the decision together and both of them could give orders to the team in the name of both companies.

“The best examples of seamless management lead to the best cooperations.”

### **Spar Cooperation**

The regional manager of Spar (responsible for product range) was not given permission to allocate tasks to staff members. Tasks were always allocated by the shop manager of Caritas.

### **What human resources and technical background/equipments needed in the social organisation?**

The personnel and the technical equipment needed are specific to each project. Caritas took over the whole Spar supermarket with all equipment and all the goods inside the market. In addition to that, six employees from Spar became employees of Caritas. A specific, bespoke bookkeeping system was also developed.

### **This unique bookkeeping process was implemented.**

In the cooperation with an organic bakery, all technical staff and requirements were provided by the bakery. The baker was a former

employee of the bakery and became an employee of Caritas. This was necessary to ensure that the trainees got the best training. If the baker had remained an employee of the bakery, we



would not have had sufficient control or the possibility to steer the process in order for the trainees, our clients, to achieve the best outcomes; in this instance, a qualification.

### **How to evaluate such a co-operation?**

There should be an agreed process with a timescale for evaluating each co-operation. One of the issues Caritas encountered when they arranged regular meetings was that no one from the company felt

the need to attend when it became obvious that the cooperation was working smoothly. The problem was that the project was running successfully and so after the third prearranged meeting, no one thought that these meetings were necessary. The down side of this was that the relationship between the two companies (especially at the CEO level) did not develop into a deeper shared understanding of the cooperation and the importance of the project was not as high on their manager's agenda as it should have been.

As a result of this experience, Caritas now try to get as many informal meetings as possible. There are about 3-5 meetings with the Director of Spar per year that are not "work-related". At the operational level, the people responsible for the project arrange meetings dependent upon the tasks and there are many phone calls between relevant people.

An Example from Czech Republic: 

### **Capacity building of the partnership with STEELTEC CZ**

The partnership between Ergon and STEELTEC CZ started in 2002. Ergon was only able to do a small amount of work because it operated in rented spaces with limited size.

In 2005 the director of Ergon came with an idea to apply for European funds and build a hall for assembly in an industrial zone. STEELTEC CZ company really liked the idea and that was where REAL partnership started. Ergon was responsible for project application and „paper work“ connected with it and STEELTEC CZ provided technical and financial support for cofinancing of the project. In 2006 a new hall for assembling products opened offering enough space for enlarging the assembling programme. Ergon could employ many more people with disabilities and the cooperation could grow. As a result of this good experience, in 2009 Ergon began to build a second hall. Today we operate in two halls in our industrial zone assembling a range of products.

During the partnership

#### **Quality control**

For both companies it was absolutely necessary that Ergon provided high quality work. The partnership is not based on

“charity“, but on qualitative and precise work which follows quality rules of the companies. This is why there are quality controllers employed by partner companies. These people are responsible for quality control of all final products. They are in everyday contact with Ergon staff members. They mainly have to cooperate with team leaders on a practical level. Sometimes it is not easy to ensure open and clear communication between Ergon and STEELTEC or Walmark staff members, but it is essential to work on this. There are common meetings with STEELTEC staff at least once a month where both sides can communicate all the problems and plans which helps prevent possible conflicts.

An ability to provide high quality work is one of the key elements for building new partnerships.

### **Staff**

It is important for Ergon that it has a wide base of employees. There are people with different types of disabilities (physical, mental health, sensory, learning) and with various skills and experience. When offering cooperation to a new company, it is perceived as an advantage and Ergon can respond differently to different requests of companies as required.

### **Seasonal work**

It is an advantage not to rely only on one partner but to have multiple partner companies with different products or services. Ergon cooperates with two main partners in assembling work. Both partners have seasonal products but the high season is at a different time of year for each company. For STEELTEC, the main season is early spring and autumn and for Walmark it is late summer and autumn to winter. Thanks to this Ergon has enough work during the whole year which creates a kind of stability for the organisation and for employees as well. The effective use of resources, including people, helps the sustainability of a project. Annual variations in work load must be considered and built into expectations for each project/cooperation.

**What experience/knowledge is needed to ensure good management of the cooperation?**

**At what level should the cooperation be managed? (CEO/HR manager etc).**



## **Requirements for the manager of a project:**

- Good knowledge and suitable experience within the social/non profit sector
- Experience within the for profit business sector
- Several years of leadership experience because of the complex management situation of social profit and profit objectives
- Willingness to get to know specifics and professional knowledge about the specific subject of the cooperation partner, otherwise the SPO will be at the PO's mercy
- Preparedness to take and manage risks due to facing an unknown situation
- Sociable with an ability to get on with people/a good communicator/personable with a positive “can do” approach.
- The person should be able to “sit between two chairs”. Aims, wishes and expectations of the SPO and PO might diverge in many cases. Negotiations to find common ground have to be managed by that person. Also, the pressure within your own organisation should not be underestimated.
- An understanding of specific aspects of the law where it has specific relevance to the project.
- Experience of problem solving, managing complex relationships and team dynamics. A team leader.

**Guidelines:** Profile of competences - for more detailed information see the “Guidelines” in Appendix 6

## **Chapter 6 – What Next?**

### **Challenges and difficulties**

- What if the people responsible for the cooperation leave the project?
- What if there is not enough support from your organisation/partner organisation? How to convince your staff/partners?
- How to maintain your cooperation project?
- Do you have proper clients/future employees for positions/possibilities offered by your partner?
- Is the project relevant to the region you are targeting? There can be big differences in each region, e.g. if there is a high unemployment rate, elder clients may not be needed by employers who may or may not have a skills gap or employment needs.
- Does your potential partner have information on your target group?
- Are your and your potential partner's needs complementary or mutually exclusive?

### **Other Considerations**

- All clients have different knowledge and skills. You have to find the appropriate tools/methods to ensure that the job is completed successfully and efficiently. It has to work effectively for the business as well as for the client.
- Some of our partner countries have insufficient resources to help the number of clients they would wish to help effectively. Be realistic.
- The government departments in some countries are unwilling or unable to help people with disabilities to find sustainable employment.
- We need to be realistic about the client's ability ensuring appropriate support is in place for each client (and their work colleagues!)
- Assessments, discussions and meetings need to be sufficient but not too intrusive. You need to see things from the business partner's perspective as well as your own.

If we can successfully negotiate our way through the initial phases of a co-operation, it usually works well and becomes a lasting and successful partnership. When a new manager is introduced by the partner it can be a risk, unsettling the cooperation. Sometimes you have to start again almost from the beginning.

It is very important and can make the cooperation stronger if you invite your partners to special events, special days where they can see how you work and who your clients are.

People with disabilities sometimes need more care and special attention. They may have to be trained for a specific job individually. A key element of support might be having a mentor within the working environment from your partner. They could provide specific workplace support.

### An Example from Hungary:

When our client, Judit, started to work for BauMax, the store manager appointed the department manager to be her mentor. She was the contact person for our SEP team and without her help Judit's career would not have been so successful. Judit has now been working for BauMax since February 2011 as a shop assistant.



Most companies are likely to have little information about our clients. If the manager is not fully committed, the whole project can go wrong. For a cooperation to be successful, it is essential to give information to all relevant staff and for the manager to take responsibility locally with his/her team.

All clients have different knowledge and skills. You have to find the appropriate tools/methods to ensure that the job is completed successfully and efficiently.

Zsolti worked in a store house of a huge production company where the components were in boxes. His job was to put the boxes onto the

shelves to prepare them for transport. Each box had a code with four numbers (1000-9999) but Zsolti had difficulty with numbers bigger than 99. The mentors did not know this and the problem did not occur in the work test period because the tasks were different initially. When he started the new task with the boxes and numbers we were told there were problems with Zsolti's work. How did we solve this situation? There was a simple solution. The numbers were separated into two sets of two i.e. 20-10 instead of 2010. The specialist on the team identified this solution. This person is part of our Supported Employment Team. Without that simple idea, Zsolti would have lost his job.

You have to have an open and creative mind and be confident that there will be a solution! The team just have to find it - together!

In many cases people with disabilities have a job that does not require any kind of formal education (e.g. park keeper, cleaner). It is the responsibility of your staff to draw the employer's attention to the qualification and skill of the client and try to "lobby" for a better position.



Another difficulty is the regional differences in Hungary that affect our work and cooperations. In North-Hungary, the percentage of people with disabilities and people with a reduced ability to work is higher than in other parts of the country. Consequently there are more clients for each member of staff to support. There is insufficient capacity to help the clients effectively. Supported Employment Service is financed by the Government Office of Zala County through projects and there is no possibility to enlarge the team. These projects last for one or two years and after that we have to apply for funds again to maintain the service. The social care system (unemployment office, local government, family care offices) is not really prepared to help people with disabilities to find a job and prepare them for work.

An example from Finland: 

### **Challenges and problems**

Sometimes the company we have been working with changes hands and new owners may not be willing to carry on the joint working agreed within our cooperation contract. So far, we have always managed to create a new relationship and a new contract with the new owners and have been able to continue working as before.

It is important to explain right at the beginning how much support is needed and write it down in the contract. Be realistic. If there is insufficient support for the client, this needs discussing. If the contract includes the services of a Job coach, they need to provide support for the client alongside the person who the client is working with in the company.



It is also good to be clear with the Jobcoach`s workplace what his/her responsibilities are as a Job coach so the staff understand what is involved. This will minimise, or hopefully avoid, misunderstandings.

The Job coach needs to be in regular contact with the company where the client works, to become part of the working community. Sufficient assessments, discussions and meetings must be organised, but not too many. You can invite people from the company to come and visit your centre too if relevant.

There are only a small number of our clients that can work independently outside our centre. If the Job coach is present at the workplace with the clients, more clients can work outside of the activity centre. In some activity centres small groups of clients go to work with the Job coach. They work for a few days a week, a couple of hours (max.) each time.

Some of the clients have learning difficulties and some have mental health issues so their knowledge and skills are very variable. Companies do not have much information about our client group so they appreciate all the information and support they can get from our Job coach. When you have got to know each other, the situation becomes more relaxed. People become more natural with one another. The Job coach needs to be careful with the client's information, discussing and agreeing what can be shared.

- In Loviisa, working part-time has not been a problem though companies can not necessarily offer full-time work.
- For clients who need more support and tailor made work at Loviisa, we are starting a small working group where the Job coach/support worker goes to work with the clients.

### **What if people responsible for the cooperation leave the project?**

If a key-figure leaves the cooperation it is important that the project continues. The main issues are:

- Continuity. It is essential if the project/cooperation is to be successful. Nevertheless, there can be problems and changes will have a significant effect on the cooperation.
- The more people involved in and responsible for the project, the greater the chance of continuity if one key figure leaves.
- It is important that one person takes over the main responsibilities and that they include other employees from within their organisation.
- Caritas learned from its experiences that it is essential that the whole of the organisation supports the cooperation and is committed to the project aims. If one key figure changes, the continuity is guaranteed by the commitment of the organisation.
- It is very important to ensure that the management of both organisations are committed to the project aims.
- Within a cooperation project, relations/connections are a key tool. It is always hard if a key figure leaves the cooperation because the network behind that person will be missing too.

### **What if there is not enough support from our organisation/partner organisation? How to convince our staff/partners?**

A main objective of the cooperation is always to achieve key tasks of the cooperation partners. If the cooperation meets businesses' core

values, it is easy to argue for the support required for the cooperation.

If the cooperation meets the key mission of an organisation the incidental tasks will not be seen as extra work. The cooperation will be an additional way of achieving the company's key mission.

### **How to maintain our cooperation project?**

There is no one successful way of ensuring the success of a co-operation. Each "co-operation" has specific difficulties and will need an individual approach.

### **Key recommendations:**

- It is essential to be pro-active. Cooperation will never become routine. That means a greater commitment is needed than is usual for routine work. The people responsible have to be permanently active!
- Communication!

### **Do we have clients/future employees for positions/possibilities offered by our partner?**

You have to think about if the clients fit into a certain company in advance. The main objective of the cooperation is to integrate the clients into the project partner's company. The opportunity for our clients to become real employees is a basic prerequisite within a co-operation or to find new ways of integration, otherwise the cooperation will not succeed.

There can be big differences in each region, e.g. if an area has a high unemployment rate, older clients who may not be offered real jobs.

If there is a "problem" in an area, i.e. people with disabilities have no opportunity to gain employment; this could be a good reason for starting a cooperation.

- A pre-analysis of the company and market need is essential.
- Each co-operation is a one off for its time, place and partner.
- Either the cooperation is designed to overcome initial differences or it should not be started.

### **Does our partner have information on our target group?**

Before the cooperation starts the partner often does not have any information about our client group. A significant aim of the



cooperation is to enable the partner to understand and discover information about the target group; to produce a positive attitude to employment possibilities; to create a “can do” attitude.

An Example from Austria: 

The following examples show how the same problem was handled by different partners

**Problem I:**

Caritas had a successful cooperation with a recruitment agency. After some time a key person was leaving the company. After discussions with the management of the recruitment agency it turned out that the project was not of a high priority for the remaining managers. The key person leaving ended the cooperation because the company’s management was not committed to the idea. The dilemma came about because the whole cooperation was entirely related and dependent on one key figure.

**Problem II:**

Caritas has a successful cooperation with the grocery store chain Spar. After six years, the key figure who initiated the cooperation with Spar (Mr.Buschberger) was changing his position within the Spar group. His leaving affected the cooperation in many ways. There were new and different people acting within the cooperation. The culture of trust had to be developed from scratch. Nevertheless, because of the commitment and involvement of the whole of Spar’s senior management, the cooperation is continuing successfully to this day.



## Chapter 7 - Recommendations

### Recommendations

- Be clear of what you want to achieve; think about whether you can only achieve your goal through a co-operation or if you can achieve the goal in a different, possibly simpler way.
- Choose your co-operation partner wisely and check if your values match.
- Think about the benefit of the co-operation for your co-operation partner and of reasons why they should co-operate.
- Prepare for the first meeting and try to leave with concrete next steps.
- Agree who will be the person responsible for each co-operation partner and write this down in a contract; make sure that the organisation is behind this co-operation.
- Invest enough time into the process of relationship building with your co-operation partner.

“The key lesson: Attitude, help, trust and continuity. You have to find employers with the right attitude; your staff must help both and be on “both sides”!! Acting for the employee and the employer; you have to be able to create a trusting atmosphere. Then you might keep in contact with both of them forever!!”

- Always be honest about your expectation.
- Continuity is essential within a co-operation if the project is to be successful. There can be problems and challenges which will influence the cooperation deeply. These can be managed with due care and attention, good planning and constant, relevant communication at appropriate levels with the right people.
- It is important that one person takes overall responsibility especially if there is a change of personnel.
- It is very important to ensure that the management of both organisations are committed to the project aims.
- If you can successfully negotiate your way through the initial phase of a co-operation, you will find that it will usually work well and become a lasting and successful partnership.

- It is very important and can make the cooperation stronger if you are able to invite your partners to special events and special days where they can see how you work and who your clients are.
- People with disabilities need more care and special attention. They may have to be trained for the job individually. A key element might be having a mentor within the working environment from your partner. They can provide specific workplace support.
- If the manager is not fully committed, the whole project can go wrong.
- All clients have different knowledge and skills. You have to find the appropriate tools/methods to ensure that the job is completed successfully and efficiently. It has to work effectively for the business as well as for the client.
- The involvement of appropriate specialists at appropriate points, particularly to help solve any issues before they arise preferably or as soon as they do arise if not, is crucial. Many clients would have lost their work placement if a “can do” approach had not been the chosen way of working.
- If we have clients with a vocational qualification or higher education it can be a challenge to find a suitable position for them. It is the responsibility of our staff to draw the employer’s attention to the qualification and skill of the client and try to “lobby” for a better position.
- Some of our partner countries have insufficient resources to help the number of clients they would wish to help effectively.
- The government departments in some countries are unwilling or unable to help people with disabilities to find sustainable employment.
- We need to be realistic about the client’s ability ensuring appropriate support is in place for each client (and their work colleagues!)
- If there is a Job coach, they need to support the client and the person who the client is working with in the company.
- It is also good practice to make clear at the Job coach’s workplace his/her responsibilities, ensuring the staff understand the reality and how much the Job coach will be involved in supporting the client at work. This is one way to avoid misunderstandings.
- If a Job coach is involved in your cooperation, they need to be in regular contact with the company where the client works. In this way they become part of the working community. Any potential issues could be “nipped in the bud”.

- Assessments, discussions and meetings need to be sufficient but not too intrusive. You need to see things from the business partner's perspective as well as your own.
- For some partners, if the Job coach can be present at the workplace with the client, more clients would be able to find work placements and job opportunities with real employers.
- When you've got to know each other, people become more relaxed and those involved become more natural with each other.
- The Job coach needs to be careful with the client's information he/she gives out. Confidentiality and information sharing needs to be discussed and agreed with the client first.
- Do not forget; differing needs can be met in a variety of ways! You need to be able to respond differently to different requests from companies as required.
- The right person to lead a cooperation might vary from one company partnership to another.
- The right attitude and the ability to generate an atmosphere of trust for both sides are crucial to the partnership's success.
- Continuity, flexibility and a personable attitude are all crucial factors for successful partnerships.
- A clear and succinct presentation of your ideas, outlining the benefits to the company as well as to your clients and yourselves, is extremely helpful.
- Identify the specific opportunities in your country and your region and exploit them!
- When one partner had a successful relationship with a particular business other EU partners within the project took full advantage of the contacts if the same company operated in their country.
- Remember: it won't always work! However hard you try you need to be able to recognise when to walk away.
- We must do all in our power to make things work; to challenge stereotypes and influence people at all levels; to demonstrate the contribution our clients can make to businesses and the economy as a whole.



## **Chapter 8 - Lessons Learned**

### **Chapter 1 Why?**

The lead organisation must be clear about what the cooperation will achieve for its own organisation before it goes seeking partners to work with.

In some countries, there are financial reasons for businesses to work with people with disabilities. There can be financial consequences if they do not and financial incentives if they do.

### **Chapter 2 How to start**

Some ways of finding a partner:-

Directly, through references, during events such as conferences, professional meetings, networking, on-line possibilities, database searches and on the web etc; with the help of your local Chamber of Commerce or other authorities, or through advertisements in local media.

In most cases, it is the not for profit organisation that takes the lead and searches for a partner.

A personal contact provides a distinct advantage when approaching a new company. Look for potential partners through people you know.

### **Chapter 3 What's worked for us**

Working collaboratively with a well-known SPO will ensure a win-win situation. For example, the cooperation might assist the company in achieving some of its stated goals, for example if one of its aims was to get more young people into jobs and you were able to help with that.

A stable financial position and the successes of your organisation need to be demonstrated at the outset and conveyed through the images your company portrays of itself.

For smaller-sized companies it is a particular incentive to work with a big and well-known SPO.

A range of sources of information need to be utilized to get to know about the particular company you intend collaborating with.

Thorough research and evaluation of a company is crucial before initializing a conversation.

Every situation and new potential partner is different. The negotiations will progress differently and develop in a way that meets the needs of each set of unique circumstances. A generic process does not exist. One size does not fit all! The outcomes in each case will vary and be specific to the individual cooperation partner and project.

The primary objective when meeting a new contact for the first time is to develop a general and shared understanding of the project aims.

You need to be able to answer the questions, "Is this appropriate to your and your clients' needs?"

"Will it achieve what you want it to achieve?"

At the end of the conversation with a new or existing partner, you will need to collate and agree the expectation of each partner in detail.

Two or three advantages of a cooperation for both sides (PO and SPO) should be considered in advance of your first meeting and clearly identified.

Keep printed material used in any initial meetings to a minimum. Be well prepared, succinct and keep it relevant.

We strongly recommend developing a concrete project idea before arranging to meet a potential partner for the first time.

It is a very good idea if the first meeting takes place in the PO. The introduction should be prepared conscientiously and the concrete idea introduced.

The second meeting should take place at your own premises as you will be able to represent your SPO in a better way. The

cooperation partner will have an opportunity to visit current projects and experience your work for real.

Hosting your guests with e.g. a dinner prepared by your own “training kitchen” if possible, would create a wonderful impression of your organisation.

Preparation and a positive attitude were fundamental to success.

Someone who is an expert within your company and experienced at developing cooperative relationships should lead the negotiations with a potential new partner.

The project lead needs to have the appropriate authority to make decisions.

Everyone enjoys attaching themselves to the coat-tails of a successful company.

Use whatever means are necessary to demonstrate the strengths of your organisation.

Everyone enjoys attaching themselves to the coat-tails of a successful company.

## Chapter 4 The mechanics

Partners have a right to expect a high quality of work. They do not accept lower quality just because you are an employer of people with disabilities.

There should be a contact for each organization involved.

- One named contact on each side is an important condition for a successful cooperation.
- Predefined responsibilities and competences will contribute to the development of an effective working relationship.
- Negotiate a written agreement about the tasks of each contact person.
- Ideally, both of the named people should have the authority to make decisions in relevant aspects of the project.

- Access to all significant information on all levels is crucial; e.g. information from, about and for the CEO, staff members, PO, SPO.
- The named contacts will manage the agreed communication process. They are responsible for ensuring effective communication between partners.

The aims of the cooperation need to be negotiated, written and signed by all parties. Ensure they are worked out in a detailed and clear way.

The big challenges in negotiating the objectives will be to make sure all are revealed! If “hidden” aims are leading the work, the project will ultimately fail and all partners will be disappointed.

An open, honest and transparent climate is crucial to ensure an honest conversation takes. This means you have to address problems, concerns, difficulties and individual interests head on. Each partner will have hidden agendas. These have to be acknowledged and aired.

This process will - and is permitted to- take its time.

It is not sufficient to verbalise aims and objectives only. Members must put their aims in writing.

A main goal has to be set initially and after negotiation sub-objectives can be identified. The agreement will operate as a formal contract which will be signed by all members.

A contract including aims and responsibilities is indispensable for a successful cooperation.

The preparation of your clients is crucial and varies dependent on the individual conditions of the targeted project.

At best, arrangements are planned by the SPO and PO jointly. On the basis of expertise the SPO assumes the bigger part.

The clients, the company and all staff need to feel safe and secure within the whole cooperation.

Companies expect flexibility; keeping to agreed time conditions/restraints but also flexible when necessary.

You also need excellent, flexible means of communication to prevent possible problems arising and solving any actual issues as they do arise.

## Chapter 5 Evaluation

For some countries, cooperation partners regularly complete feedback questionnaires for the on-going evaluation of each project. This enables issues to be picked up quickly in a non-threatening way.

There should be an agreed process for each cooperation with an agreed timescale.

Opportunities to regularly review the management of a project, keeping clear and concrete guidance/notes can help mitigate disruption to activities, as personnel or circumstances can and do change during the lifetime of the project.

Be prepared!

Defining changing tasks and roles in very clear language is crucial. This will minimise confusion of roles and the blurring of lines of communication and responsibility/accountability.

It is important to be clear:-

- Who is the boss?
- Who is the manager?

It is appropriate to document officially any changes in personnel.

The one person who is responsible for the specific cooperation, inform all relevant staff members of any changes.

General competences needed by the project lead:-

- expertise and market know-how
- analytical and evaluation skills
- a systematic and methodical approach
- project management ability and experience

Personal competences

- outcome based acting



- operational readiness
- authenticity, loyalty and trustworthiness
- personal responsibility, reliability and the capacity to perform this function effectively
- self-management
- creative minded with initiative; a problem solver and a “can do” person.
- target-orientated leadership

## Chapter 6 What next?

There is no one successful way of cooperating with a business, each cooperation has specific difficulties and will need an individual approach.

It is essential to be pro-active. Working cooperatively with another organisation will never become routine. That means a greater commitment is needed than is usual for routine work. The people responsible have to be permanently active!  
Communication! You can't have too much!

The more people involved in the running and responsibility for the project, the greater the chance of continuity if one key figure leaves.

It is essential that the whole of the organisation is supportive of the cooperation and is committed to the project aims. If one key figure changes, continuity will be guaranteed by the commitment of the organisation.

Sometimes when a new manager is introduced to the partnership by a partner, it can be a risk, unsettling the cooperation. Sometimes we have to start again, almost from the beginning.

It is very important and can make the cooperation stronger if we invite our partners to special events, special days where they can see how we work and who our clients are.

People with disabilities need more care and special attention. They have to be trained for the job individually. A key element for some is having a mentor within the working environment of our partner. They provide specific workplace support.

If the manager is not fully committed, the whole project can go wrong.

For a cooperation to be successful, it is essential to give information to all relevant staff and for the manager to take responsibility locally with his/her team.

The involvement of appropriate specialists at appropriate points, particularly to help solve any issues before they arise preferably or as soon as they do arise if not, is crucial. Many clients would have lost their work placement if a can do approach had not adopted.

It is important right at the outset to explain to the people involved in the company how much actual support will be needed for a successful cooperation.

This needs to be clearly stated in the contract and reiterated as and when necessary.

We need to be realistic about the client's ability ensuring appropriate support is in place for the client.

Differing needs can be met in a variety of ways.

It is equally important to recognise when a partnership would not be suitable as it is to proactively pursue partnerships that will work.

The needs of the organisation and the company need to be complementary for any cooperation to be successful.

If we can find a common theme, the cooperation will succeed otherwise it will not make any sense.

When you have got to know each other relationships become more relaxed. A shared understanding develops over time.

All partners within this project agree that whatever hard work is required and any difficulties that might be faced, the benefits and positive outcomes that result from effective partnerships for our clients and our staff, make it all worthwhile!

It is crucial to create a "can do" attitude and ethos across the partnership.

## Chapter 9 - The Business Partners

### Cooperation Partners

#### Austria Business Partners

**International Recruitment Agency:** the recruitment agency offers consulting and staff recruitment for both employees and employers. The main sectors are: Commercial/Administrative occupations, Contact/Call Centre, Engineering, Industry & Trade and Hospitality. Within 3,500 branch offices in 80 countries (17 within Austria) the agency finds places to work for 3.5 million people per year.

**SPAR:** is one of the most important foods trading companies in Austria. In 1954 SPAR was founded by Hans F. Reisch and 100 independent retailers in Tirol. Today, SPAR sells food all over Austria and is a private Austrian Company. In 2012 Spar employed 40.000 people and had an annual turnover of 5.6 billion Euros. Thus SPAR is the greatest private employer in Austria and growth leader within the Austrian retail business.

**SPAR-Caritas:** the project SPAR-Caritas, offers the opportunity to gain a qualification within the retailing business for young people with disabilities. As a conventional retailer, the Caritas for people with disabilities runs two markets within Upper Austria where people with disabilities can become a retail salesman/woman with a partial qualification.

**BACKma's:** the project BACKma's offers a qualification as a baker or confectioner for young people with disabilities between the ages of 15 and 23. The Caritas for people with disabilities and the Bioholzofenbäckerei GmbH are running the project in cooperation. People with disabilities have the opportunity to gain a qualification or a partial qualification within the bakery business. One of the main aims is to qualify and to mediate for people with disabilities to obtain jobs in the open labour market.

**Bioholzofen GmbH Gragger:** Mr. Helmut Gragger developed a special wooden burning oven for baking bread in 1997. In 1999 the first certified organic products were sold to organic stores in Austria. In the meantime Mr. Gragger runs 3 bread shops on his own, two in Linz and one in Vienna. The special baked bread is

not even available in Austria. In Berlin, the famous cook Sarah Wiener started a cooperation with the Bioholzofen GmbH Gragger.

## **Czech Republic Business Partners**

### **STEELTEC CZ s.r.o.**

Company STEELTEC CZ was founded in 1991 under the business name GARDENA Třinec, s.r.o. The focus of the company activity is serial engineering production focused on garden and small-scale agricultural tools production, hand lawn mowers production and production of other metallic products for the consumer market.

### **Walmark a.s.**

The company Walmark was established in 1990. After initial foreign business activities within the information technology trade and household utensils, the company started focusing on the trade with agricultural products, particularly the export of special seeds for the food industry.

From 1992, the company started to import and then produce pharmaceutical and pharmaceutical formulas, particularly food supplements and healing cosmetics.

The consolidated turnover of Walmark holding in the last financial year (June 2010 - May 2011) reached 97.1 mil. Euros (2.4 bil. CZK). In the same time period Walmark holding has employed 882 employees in the Czech Republic and in its eight foreign subsidiaries.

### **Slezská diakonie**

Slezská diakonie is a non-governmental non profit organization operating since 1990. Its mission is to provide high quality social services to people in need on the basis of christian principles. It provides 100 different social services for about 8 000 clients. It is an employer of more than 500 staff. It operates in 3 regions of the Czech Republic. Its activities are focused on social inclusion of people with disabilities, homeless people, elderly people and families with children.

## **Finland Business Partners**

Tom Allen Ltd. offers geothermal heating services for households and companies.

S-chain with super- and hypermarkets has the biggest market share in food business in Finland.

The IKEA Concept is founded on a low-price offer in home furnishings.

## **Hungary's Business Partners**

### **bauMax**

bauMax is an international family business which started doing business in Austria 35 years ago. bauMax runs 156 markets in nine countries. Apart from Austria they are represented in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria and since 2010 they have also been operating in Turkey. They currently operate 159 bauMax home improvement centres, 15 in Hungary.

### **North-Hungarian PRO-COOP Plc.**

Hungarian National Federation of Consumer Co-operative Societies and Trade Associations–ÁFEOSZ-COOP was formed in 1990 as an employer organisation – to represent the interests of more than 1000 enterprises belonging to the Coop-group including PRO-COOP regional purchase companies.

### **Intern Ltd.**

Intern Ltd was established in 1994 with 100% private capital and with 10 employees. It started with special welding of old machine accessories. Today we work in Hungary and Germany on the construction and rebuild of factories and plants. They employ about 50 people.

## **UK Business Partners**

National Grid recognised that the employment of disabled people was extremely low and that possibly this was related to how managers perceived disabled people in the workplace. A review

took place by IFA to look at how the employment of disabled people could be improved. This included interviewing managers to see what knowledge and experience they had around employing disabled people. Interviews were also carried out with disabled employees to see what it was like working for a company like National Grid. Recommendations were made to where improvements could be made. A DVD was made highlighting some of the issues raised by disabled employees and this was shown at National Grid's national conference. This had a powerful impact on managers.

A user led organisation whose purpose is to support people with disabilities, such as Ideal for All, working with a national organisation, can make a big impact on how disabled employees are treated and how disabled people can gain employment.

### **Quotes from our business partners:-**

“Social commitment is the way bauMax supports people with disabilities. We consider work placement trainees to be valuable members of society, on a par with non-disabled people with all their strong points and weaknesses; we make them part of our team”

(Resource: <http://www.baumax.com/en/about-baumax/mission-statement/social-responsibility/>)

“These companies that get this prize (Socially Conscious Workplaces of the year) today are good examples to help change attitudes towards people with disabilities.”

**Gábor Kiss-deputy major of Miskolc**

“We have absolutely positive experiences with employees with disabilities. People pay more attention to each other and employees have a different attitude since we have people with disabilities in our community. So I can encourage all to do the same!”

**Katalin Molnár, CEO, Intern Ltd.**

On the occasion of opening the second Spar-Caritas market in Alberndorf: “Young persons with disabilities have the opportunity to develop and grow within a realistic working environment.

We are pleased that lived integration is continuing in Alberndorf and consider it as a significant sign of social responsibility.

**Mr. Jakob Leitner, CEO of Spar in Austria.**

## Chapter 10 - Unforeseen consequences of our Grundtvig partnership

### A few outtakes! (How partnerships become long lasting friendships)

- All railways work slightly differently so it's easy to be on the wrong platforms!
- Also to find deserted taxi ranks in the middle of the night
- Beer cellars and the food for our vegetarians hiding under the meat
- Lots of steps in the dark
- Searching for Wi-Fi
- Skinny dipping in Finland's icy lakes and experiencing 24 hours of daylight
- 5 am starts!!!
- Lots of traditional dancing!!! Badly (by us)!
- Delicious deserts, differing eating habits and strange food!
- How many types of beer are there across the EU? We're still trying to find out! Let's hope for new projects!!
- Mini buses we have all known....and loved!
- Non universal signs - when is the men's the men's!! Circles and triangles – we just don't understand
- Interesting road customs and driving experiences
- How many different pork dishes can we offer vegetarians!!
- Understanding each others' personal habits!!!! You do get to know a lot about people when you're together 24/7!!
- Everyone else's amazing language skills!!
- Getting used to each other's jokes and sense of humour!!
- You have to like the unknown! Enjoy trying new things!
- Cutting bread and drinking alcohol! Salutes and traditions
- Celebrating our differences - and that's just between people from the same country!
- You might think something will be different but actually it's incredibly similar!
- Knowing our partners all came from the same strong social value base.
- Being exhausted but extremely satisfied and appreciated when hosting your own transnational visit!
- The extraordinary lengths partners go to for each other!! Going the "extra mile" (kilometre in Romana's case!!) Driving your ever



grateful visitors an hour to the train station after the pleasure of having to get up at 5am and then work all day! Thank you.

- Bringing alcohol as a gift to a temple where alcohol and meat is forbidden!
- And above all - Some amazing friendships!!

....to be continued. (With the agreement of our national agencies)

## Appendix 1 - Austria



---

### An Example from Austria:

The following practice example shows our practical experiences of partner search for a cooperation project with a meat processing company (butcher):

#### Case study: Butcher

Personal interviews with the vocational school for bakers/confectioners/butchers and companies in this sector in Upper Austria who are suffering from staff shortage have focused our attention on the profession butcher. The contact with the vocational school was already given by an existing project (BioholzofenbäckereiGragger)

Researches by the Employment Service (labor market analysis) and newspaper articles about butcher companies, who are looking for employees, have encouraged us to write a concept for the profession butcher and to propose the project idea to the Bundessozialamt (social grantor).

The profession butcher experiences a transition from a physical hard-working butcher towards a strong mechanically supported butcher. The profession offers local jobs and also employment opportunities in related professional fields of work. The sustainable employment was estimated by various parties as very positive.

The search for a cooperation-partner in Linz and the area around took place by active speech of prospective companies.

#### Criteria for active speech:

Good experiences in the collaboration and provision of people with disabilities with the company  
Experiences of the Berufsausbildungsassistenz (work training assistance)

Feedback of the Caritas Personal Service Team (personal experiences)

Number of staff (critical to the number of trainees)

Experiences in apprenticeship training

Contacts through existing partners

Other conditions e.g.: availability, accessibility

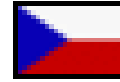
In the selection of the cooperation partners – the commitment by the management and the involvement of professionals who work every day, subsequently with the people with disabilities, are one of the most important points!

What happens between the first contacts up to the contract/contract proceedings (internal preparatory work)?

First, the full internal investigation is necessary before signing a contract. The own organization has to agree the cooperation completely.

What needs to be done internally to be able to implement the project?

## Appendix 2 - Czech Republic



An Example from Czech Republic:

### What is the aim of the cooperation/cooperation project?

The aim of the cooperation is to find innovative and flexible ways for creating working possibilities for people with disabilities through partnership based on mutual benefits, not based on sponsorship or charity. Each partner can bring their own special knowledge and experience for achieving common objectives.

### What is the organization going to achieve with the cooperation?

The organization has the possibility to enlarge its scope of activities and with that to create new working possibilities for people with disabilities.

### Prospective Results/Output/Sustainability?

- good quality working places for people with disabilities
- capacity building of both organizations
- learning from each other
- increase of public awareness about working possibilities for people with disabilities
- cooperation based on mutual benefits

How to find a partner

Are there any formal/informal possibilities to find a partner? (Database, conferences, analysis of networks, experiences, reference etc.)

In our experience many of the successful partnerships have begun with informal contacts (through friends, people we know from schools, family contacts etc). There is also the possibility to contact a new potential partner formally. We send letters or e-mails. It is essential to have a personal meeting with the representative of the company. In our experience it is not enough to just send a letter with our offer.

There is also the possibility of making contacts at conferences, particularly if our organization is an active participant (for example when doing a presentation of our activities).

Example:

Ergon has begun its cooperation with company from the region on the basis of personal contacts with a director of Steeltec CZ. In 2001 there was a cooperation in assembly work (garden tools) and Ergon employed 5 people with disabilities. After two year of such kind of work there was started a new way of cooperation. Steeltec CZ and Ergon became real business partners and together submit an application for European funds for building an assembly hall in industrial zone (investment of 1 600 000Eur). The application was approved and in 2006 there was built the assembly hall with stock. In 2010 there was built the second hall. The cooperation became more structured and professional. In 2010 we have started a cooperation with Walmark (producer of the vitamins and food supplements) and we provide packing services. Nowadays the cooperation with two companies is very closely connected and number of employees with disabilities in Ergon increase to 110 people.

Research – why approach a particular company?

An important factor is mutual benefit from the cooperation. If we can offer something interesting to the company then there is bigger possibility to be successful in the future cooperation.

Because Ergon operates in the north-east region of the Czech Republic, there are not so many possibilities to cooperate with huge international companies in our region so we focus on regional or national companies (mainly companies focusing on production). Our advantage is that we can offer several activities (assembly work, laundry, cleaning services) so we can approach different types of companies.

Example:

In 2010 we have started a cooperation with Walmark (producer of vitamins and food supplements) and this big cooperation could start because we have an assembly hall in industrial zone available so we could follow all the hygienic and logistic rules of the company.

What are the characteristics of a good partner (local company vs. multinational company)?

Openness for collaboration, flexibility, social responsibility, partnership with local company is easier in communication and finding common objective

Joint/common objectives and values

Flexibility on both sides, willingness to start something new and make some effort in it, mutual benefit from cooperation, openness in solving problems, social responsibility – employing persons with disabilities

Feelings/Attitude/Trust – what is the gut instinct?

The gut instinct says that the cooperation cannot be based on a one sided advantage only. It has to benefit both partners.

How will a certain partner affect my public standing/public trust/donors?

It is important for our public standing that we develop partnerships with companies that have a good standing. This positively influences our position in the market. If the cooperation has concrete results for example in new working opportunities for people with disabilities it can be a good demonstration for new companies who might become partners. The cooperation can raise public awareness of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Thanks to successful cooperation some other companies have increased the numbers of people with disabilities that they employ. They have been able to see concrete examples within the work environment.

Why should the prospective partner invest in your idea?

Social and economical benefits from the cooperation, we should show our strengths (for example references from other companies help a lot, we have available a high quality environment

How long is the procedure to find a partner?

It is not possible to say how long it will take to find a partner. It is very often based on personal contacts and on using possibilities and opportunities that present themselves. The flexibility to be able to start a cooperation when needed is very important. We are actively searching for new cooperation partners but sometimes the opportunity comes very unexpectedly.

We can say that it can take 1-5 months from the first contact till the cooperation begins.

Who is the right person?

The team of Ergon consists of people with different levels of responsibility and competence. From a practical point of view the person who is responsible for making and keeping contacts with different partners is a director and also a production manager. There are also staff that are responsible for managing the team of people with disabilities in the working process. The Director represents the company in relation to business partners. They are also the public face, ensuring the public have someone specific to relate to. The Production manager is responsible for the operational delivery of the cooperation providing services.

The most appropriate representative should be proactive and flexible, able to respond and react to varying situations and as changing needs emerge when setting up the cooperation. They are the key to communication with the cooperation partner.

How can we collect as much information as possible from our partner?

The basic idea for cooperation with certain partners comes from personal contacts with other businesses or through referrals from other partners. We can and do use the website to find out the very basic information about the possible partner, but it is always necessary to have personal meeting with the representative of the partner organization.

We ask for references from other organizations in the region where the organisation operates. It is possible to have information about development of the organization, its values and visions from annual reports.

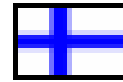
How to introduce our organization and our concrete aims briefly to convince our potential partner?

For the first contact with a cooperation partner we use information materials such as annual reports, power point presentations and small promotional gifts. We always leave business card with necessary contact details.

It is important to keep to agreed time limits e.g. “I have 20 minutes for the meeting”. To introduce our organization and our aims it is necessary to introduce our mission and goals and the services we can offer. We focus on positive aspects of cooperation (a win-win situation for both partners) and we speak about financial conditions and financial benefits of the cooperation. We always speak about the benefit coming from our status as a sheltered workshop which means that the cooperation partner can use special tax benefits if it starts a cooperation with us. The motivation for cooperation is often based on the situation within the labour market. A company which has more than 25 employees should employ 4% of people with disabilities. As an alternative it can buy products or services from sheltered workshops (employers with more than 60% of people with disabilities).



## Appendix 3 - Finland



An Example from Finland:

Project life cycle

How to find a partner

Are there any formal/informal possibilities to find a partner (database, conferences, analysis of networks, experiences, references etc.)?

We live in the small town, where we know the companies and most of the people who are in charge of employing the staff. Therefore we know where to start looking for work for our clients, as we know who to contact. You can find companies by simply walking around and keeping your eyes open, but also there is local business info. In case you don't know the business well, your best idea is to send the company a letter to explain how employ person with disabilities and give details about the person who wants to be employed. The most used ways finding jobs are by observing, local business info and sending a letter. Partnership can be found in adverbs in local papers by companies who are looking for employees.

Meeting city or town leaders is the formal way to find partnerships. You will be able to get the information where the jobs are and who to speak to. For example the mayor of Orimattila advised us to go and talk to the person who is in charge of cleaning work and food supply and two of our clients got employed. The mayor of Askola suggested to the secretary to have an assistant and he advised us to contact the director of human resources to find work in varies offices in Askola municipality (in town hall, kitchen of service center, social security office, school). They found jobs for 8 of our clients.

Companies at Porvoo organize regular coffee mornings, where external visitors sometimes come and do talks. 2008 charity co-collection raised money for people with learning difficulties to find work. With the fund raising organization we got an opportunity to

tell businesses about our clients and the work they do. We passed on the contact details to companies and also Porvoo city council attached information about us to their letters involving businesses. This way we made contact with many local employers and we made our work recognized. We managed to get two new work contracts, one that is still on going and the other one lasted two years.

Research – why approach a particular company?

The whole process starts from the client. Starting point is, that client impresses willingness to work and he or she has practiced the work beforehand, therefore we can be sure the person has job he wants to do.

One of our clients wanted a cleaning work in the local factory. She has already done some cleaning work elsewhere, so we contacted the factory by letter, telling them about our client who wanted to be a cleaner. We then went to the factory and practiced the job and it was satisfactory, so we signed the contract with the company.

Work analysis is usually in practice, when we find a new employment. With the work analysis we discuss what kind of work our client can do and what he or she is able to do. It is about assessing and describing the work. With all the information we have collected we can create the job description. Making a work analysis helps us to create and find suitable work for our clients in the companies.

We always ask the company if we can do the work analysis for disabled person looking for work. If we have been offered employment after the work analysis, then we do a task analysis. In a task analysis we chop up the tasks in a succession order.

Case study: There was a person who had studied property maintenance at vocational college, he was looking for work. At the time Tom Allen was looking for warehouse assistant who is committed, who can manage physical work, is prepared to learn new skills and who can work in bilingual environment (mainly Swedish speaking) Our client got the job and he learned the skills needed in two weeks and he has never had time off apart from holidays.

What are the characteristics of a good partner (local company vs. multinational company)?

It is easy to find local business to come along, if our clients can show they are able to do the work. The local small companies do not employ our clients for “ad sense” but they employ them because they need people. When our clients show they can manage their work, they also been well looked after by the employer.

International companies also employ people, but partly “charity in mind”. The main thing is that our clients are looked after neither equally as the other employees and they are not left alone nor discriminated against, which sometimes can happen. It is responsibility of the work coach, that our clients are treated equally at work, whether it is international or local company.

Characteristics of a good partner are tolerance and willingness to accept different people and they want to bring it out to public.

Good partner can also be nationwide company, especially if their target is to employ disabled people, (in Finland McDonald's and S-market supermarkets). In Finland S-markets have employed many disabled people, so it's easy to contact them in your local area and to get a work contract. Sometimes it's easier to get a work contract to smaller companies, as it's easier to get people in charge involved and them to understand the benefits for both parties.

It is easier to approach to local companies, whether they small or big, because decisions of training periods and supported work are made quicker and the paperwork won't take as long.

Good partnership is fruitful for all parties! It consists of bringing up thoughts openly in conversation. That's why regular meetings and good communication between work place and day Activity Centre is vital. Both parties need to be committed. Day Activity Centre needs to give basic details about the client to the work place, so they can support him or her in the work.

Case study: Tom Allens trade is geothermal. Business idea follow the principle of sustainable development, part of this ideology is also finding work for people with disabilities, as they have equal rights to develop their skills and to be part of building our society.

When our clients go to their weekly floor ball practice, they often tell other people with excitement about their jobs, this works as good advertising for the company. There has been times when customers have rang to Tom Allens and said that they have chosen the company, because they feel it is responsible business, as they employ people with disabilities they must be also responsible to do the work well.

#### Joint/common objectives and values

It is easy to get employment in S- chain supermarkets, as in their values they take social responsibility and they employ people with disabilities. The aim is that in their employment ideology disabled people are part of our society in working life. In one locality S-chain has employed 5 people with disabilities in past 13 years. They have given an opportunity for our clients, if for some reason the partnership has not worked out it has not been the employer's decision.

#### Feelings/Attitude/Trust – what says the good instinct?

Mainly the companies' welcome people with disabilities well, because disabled people are appreciated in our society and they are to be taken into account positively. The first instinct about the company it is not always right. You need to do teamwork for few years, before you can say whether your first instinct was right.

When our sets of values meet, it works for both parties. When partnership stands on the stable and solid grounds there is no fear that it will fall in a first business cycle. Both parties can enjoy open partnership and they will support each other's reputation and outlook in public.

With S- chain the cooperation has been easier than with the new employer as we have been working with them such a long time they have become positive minded about people with disabilities. Still we have worked hard to create trusting and active relationship between our clients and other workers in the warehouse. The key words for our clients, employer and permanent workers are to listening and to mediate, keeping in mind well-being and efficiency at work.

#### How will a certain partner affect my public standing/ public trust?

Case study: Our partner company Tom Allen Ltd. is a powerful local business, whose marketing area covers south coast of Finland. The company is reliable and it has a good reputation in the area, it has won many business prizes for its responsible, successful and innovative work. According to the director of the company, they have never laid anyone off; they have always managed to find suitable work for people inside of the company. Working for the employer like Tom Allen makes people with learning difficulties feel they can trust the company and there is stability in a work.

Why should the prospective partner invest in your idea?

Company is willing to invest to our idea, when we can prove, that person with disability can do the work and the person who did the work previously can be transferred to more demanding job. We challenge the company for social responsibility when employing the disabled person.

How long is the procedure to find a partner?

How long it takes to find a partner depends on locality and the size of the company. Small business can perhaps employ only one person, when bigger chain may employ more people and in many localities (We need to “sell” the idea, that nationwide companies employ disabled people. This work is about to start in Finland) For example; our client who wanted a cleaning job got employed in less than 5 months.

Case study: This process took about 5 months from the idea to the employment. Marketing letter was sent to the employer in May. First telephone conversation was made on June. Meeting with the employer was arranged after summer holidays on August. Training period lasted two months, in that time suitable work was found, health and safety regulations how to use the machinery been thought, work Rota had been planned, written work tasks made and paperwork was done for tax office and institute for social security. In this case the process was slow and steady, but well worthwhile.

- As a Job Coach working in an Eteva activity centre, individual enquiries are made for individual clients.
- A personal approach is made to an employer describing the kind of support a client will receive from the Job Coach.

- Supervisor's contact details are shared just in case the employer needs them.
- Employers are often very busy, so they have little time for meetings. Keep things brief and to the point. If things go well just one meeting with the employer will be enough for the client to be able to start his/her work training.

An example- looking for a training placement in Porvoo for training maintenance work

1. A phone call to the director who was in charge of the area. This followed a preparatory email.
2. I was offered a work training place in principle and at the same time we discussed the practicalities e.g. insurance, pay and lunch times etc.
3. A discussion of the specific job role with the appropriate named manager in charge of the maintenance team, and the planned area of work were identified. The client's wishes and his/her support needs were discussed.
4. At the next team meeting, the specific team who would be working alongside the trainee discussed the details ensuring minimum disruption and maximum involvement of all concerned.
5. Next stage; all the practical details of the training were agreed e.g. start date, place, time, work clothing, organising the lunch, induction day and the possible date for signing the work training contract.
6. The first meeting between the client and the maintenance man was crucial as they would be working closely for at least the next two months. Preparation and a positive attitude were fundamental to the success of the placement.

Living in a small town and knowing the person in charge beforehand, albeit within a different context, was extremely helpful. Living in a small town was really helpful for this project to succeed. The personal touch was key to understanding the perceptions and expectations of the individual trainee, the company and the individual employee.

An initial contract was available from the start. An understanding of the work/training required and the various responsibilities and insurances were clear. A list of all contact details of the people involved was available at the first meeting. Leaving my contact details on a business card gave a professional impression whilst

enabling the details to be shared by all concerned and with other potential contacts.

Once a work training place had been found, it was important to have a named person who would keep in touch. It was his responsibility to guide the trainee after the supported training period had been completed. If a young person requiring special support is to continue learning, learning takes time. Support is needed over a long period. Both parties were clear and had agreed their own and each other's responsibilities.

The target of the work training was to introduce the client to the town's maintenance services through hands on experience. The client wished to apply for work in this field. He had no clear idea of what was involved in maintenance work. This training provided an opportunity to find out more in a realistic way before making his final decision whether to apply for a job here.

Agreeing a contract is fundamental to success. All the tasks and targets were agreed, written up and signed. Everybody had a shared understand of the meaning of the work training for this client and this project.

Flexibility, skill and a willingness to guide a young trainee was a requirement of the people in charge of this small town. Good social skills and the ability to talk about the work are needed too. It took time, but the trainer/employee would then have a young, enthusiastic man to share the job load.

In this case the client was a trainee in the work place. He was registered with the employment office. If the training period worked out well, he would have the chance to move on to supported employment or begin related studies for the profession in the autumn. The job coach keeps an eye on training and prepares the client and employer to sign a work contract if needed.

## Appendix 4 - Hungary



---

### Raising our profile

Symbiosis Foundation, together with two other social organizations in Hungary, gives a special prize for employers in three categories: small, medium and large enterprises. The award ceremony is in December and representatives of municipalities and authorities participate. It is advertised on the website of Symbiosis and in the local media.

A variety of stakeholders and the local press attend the ceremony. It was well attended in December 2012. In addition, attendees from our Grundtvig partner organisations also attended this year.

### How to find a partner?

Are there any formal or informal possibilities to help us find a partner? For example, the use of databases, conferences, analysis of networks, experiences, references etc?

There are several possible ways of finding a partner for cooperation in our region. Our Employment Team contact the potential partners directly via letters or e-mails that contain basic information about our team, our mission and aims, existing legislation. Another formal option for finding a partner in Hungary is the job fair that is organized once a year by our local Employment Centre. Our Employment Team participates in the fair providing information is via leaflets etc and people can make personal contact with our staff.

Cooperation can be through references as well. When a partner is happy with what we have been doing together, they often spread the word about our services and encourage other companies to work with us too.

An informal way of finding a partner is using social capital that has a strong importance in Hungarian society.



Case study: Information days for youngsters (14-18 years) on training possibilities are organized by the Local Unemployment Authority. In parallel with this two-day event, Symbiosis organized a small job fair for people with disabilities and invited other social organisations that have an employment service to join us. Five employers, partner companies - Jabil Hungary, AuchanMagyarországZrt, BecseLászló small entrepreneur, VámosújfaluiKézművesKht., SzocioproduktKft., SzorgoskertNonprofitKft also attended.

### Research – why approach a particular company?

We look for large companies as partners because they are more interested in employing people with disabilities. They also have more jobs/positions for people who have limited educational achievements. Although we have special schools in the city, they do not always provide marketable and useful educational opportunities for our service users. People with special needs receive an education but they have no realistic chance of finding a job with what they have. Another issue is that people with disabilities often work part time. Large companies are more likely to employ people for part time jobs.

### What are the characteristics of a good partner (local company vs. multinational company)?

- There should be a permanent agreed contact
- The partners have to designate a contact person.

Most of our partners are companies that provide a service. They can be more flexible in special circumstances, providing appropriate opportunities and the right context for someone with disabilities who may require it. At a manufacturing company, people might work in two or three shift patterns with flexible, changing hours. This might not suit some of our clients.

### Case study: BauMaxÁruházakZrt

We have been in cooperation with BauMax for three years. At first the local BauMax store offered pre-employment work experience for our clients. Our common aim was to support clients through a transitional work phase preparing them to apply for jobs in the open labour market. Disabled clients worked for BauMax for a few months as trainees.

Local BauMax store employees and management had a good experience with our clients so they were very supportive of the young people with special needs who worked there. There is a good relationship between all employees regardless of whether they have a disability or not. As an acknowledgement of their efforts and activities, the local BauMax store was awarded a Social Conscious Employer of the Year Award in 2009 by Symbiosis. The award can be seen by all employers and customers because they put it has been displayed in pride of place at the information desk in the Miskolc store.

As our cooperation has lasted for many years, Symbiosis has received help from BauMax in other ways too, not just the employment of people with disabilities. In 2010 our farm was damaged by a big flood and we received many wellingtons and later flowers to plant in the area.

BauMax also organize a HUMAN DAY once a year where our clients go and work together with staff members. Symbiosis run a stand for selling the products our clients made in the handicraft workshops.

Joint/common objectives and values

Social responsibility,

Feelings/Attitude/Trust – what is your gut instinct?

How will a certain partner affect my public standing/ public trust/ donators?

Why should the prospective partner invest in your idea?

In Hungary in several instances, the company's financial interest is the most important thing in starting a cooperation. In law every company with more than 20 employees has to employ at least one person with reduced ability to work i.e. a disabled person. If they do not they have to pay a "rehabilitation contribution". Also, if they employ more people with disabilities the government covers a certain per cent of the salary and social security.

Personal motivation can be a factor leading to a cooperation. For example, if somebody on the management board of a company has a family member or close friend with a disability they might be keen to offer support.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has more and more importance in companies' lives so companies invest time and energy in co-operations because it is good for their public relations.

The persuasive personality of Employment Team members is also a key factor in encouraging co-operations to start.

According to one of our partners, BecseLászló, a private entrepreneur, it is very important that Employment Team members are people with a persuasive personality. Companies have to demonstrate that they have all the knowledge and abilities to manage the cooperation.

How long is the procedure to find a partner?

It is different in each case. If the partnership is in the company's interest it may only take a few weeks to start the cooperation.

Who is the right person?

We have a Supported Employment Team with 4 staff members who have attended special training. Anybody from the team would be appropriate to start the cooperation. The training focuses on practical issues, such as:-

- how to communicate,
- how to write an official letter,
- how to react if the answer is NO,
- what to include in the first few minutes of the initial meeting
- important key words,
- stressing positive issues,
- handling complaints techniques etc

It is an advantage if our staff members are dynamic people.

Information:

To find out more about our future partner we can find basic information on the partner's website, in trade magazines/register and through personal contact.

Introduction:

CDs and small videos have been used to introduce ourselves and our services. These include pictures of people with disabilities whilst at work. This method had limitations, especially if we only

had a few minutes to introduce ourselves. We have developed a brochure with the following content:

- Introduction to our service
- Business cards
- Types of state aid
- Relevant legislation

During the first meeting we usually have about 10 minutes so we must be very brief and show a few good examples from other companies. We try to demonstrate possible positions for our people with disabilities. We use an international method (Lantegi-Batuak) for finding the points where demand and supply meet.

It is essential for the cooperation to have a named contact from each organization involved. The contact person from our side is a staff member of the Supported Employment Team and from the companies; it is usually the unit manager.

With some companies, we have a long term cooperation agreement that contains the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

The aim of the cooperation is to enable as many people with disabilities to access the open labor market as possible and to offer our services directly on their site.

Creating a work trial is part of our cooperation but we have a separate agreement for that so as not to put the employer in an awkward situation in case of an unexpected attitude by the authorities. It is signed by the employer, the social partner and the employee.

Our partners need to have a well-prepared employee who knows exactly what his/her tasks are. It helps if they want the client to fit in with existing staff as much as possible.

Example:

If a person needs pictograms we create them before the client starts and the pictograms should be put into a place where they do not disturb the other workers.

Clients practice and prepare how to get to the workplace and keep the time frames and working hours required. They are also welcome to attend out-of-workplace events.

Example:

One of our partners, Phobex Ltd. organised a paintball match as a team building activity. They wanted Szabolcs (our client, a person with a mental disability) to join them but they were afraid that Szabolcs could not tell the difference between a game and reality. Finally they asked our staff member who was the mentor for that client what they should do! She offered to prepare him and go with him to the match. It was good for the client because he felt he was part of the team and it was good for the other employees as they had the chance to get to know more about Szabolcs.

During the first 6 months the mentors go to the partner and they discuss every issue. These 6 month follow-ups are a part of our Supported Employment Service. The companies may need occasionally the follow-up after the 6 months has passed, e.g. something change in the clients life that affects his/her work.

We also need to prepare existing staff members of the company and give proper information with regard to the special needs of the person with a disability.

If the company can have any kind of state aid after employing a person with disabilities they need us to prepare the documentation and all necessary information about the procedure for them.

Sometimes companies need a reference from an existing cooperation.

## Evaluation

The first step of our evaluation takes place one month after our client has started working. It can be a personal meeting or a telephone call both with the partner and the client. We ask them to complete a questionnaire so as to have their feedback and new ideas on our service. The follow-up period lasts six months and during this period we ask for an evaluation every month.

## Level of cooperation

Usually we have the first meeting with the CEO then we cooperate with the HR manager until the work contracts have been agreed.

When the cooperation has started we work with the manager of the unit where our clients work. It is important that the contact people should not change too frequently or if they do have to change, it is essential that they prepare the partners and give them the necessary information in due time.

### Experience/knowledge

To make create a SEP service, the regulation requires two years experience in the field alongside the necessary education. In Hungary, Supported Employment Service is financed from state money through projects and there can be additional expectations (technical background, different education) too.

### Methods/mechanisms for contact

After the obligatory six month follow-up period clients can come to our office any time they need support or they have a problem and we organize a “workers club” every month. We contact the clients and the partners by telephone and e-mail. Symbiosis has special events in the field of employment and we invite our partners as participants or speakers.

## Appendix 5 - UK



### An Example from the United Kingdom

Sequence of Events	Timescales	Actions/Issues
<p><b>How this partner was selected:-</b></p> <p>IQS Travel (an arm of Ideal for All) had a stand at an MS Society conference. National Grid, a large national UK business, were one of the speakers. Their presentation focused on a desire to employ more disabled people.</p> <p><b>Step 1 Opportunity Identified</b></p> <p>National Grid explained that there was still a long way to go to breaking down barriers with their managers' attitudes when recruiting disabled people.</p> <p><b>Step 2</b> A knowledgeable, experienced senior person from Ideal for All pursued the National Grid whilst still at the conference.</p> <p><b>Step 3</b> Followed up by email the next day.</p>	<p>October 2011</p> <p>Day 1</p> <p>Day 2</p>	<p>Their need could be met by our expertise. The partner identified the need themselves and were proactively seeking support. The door was well and truly open.</p> <p>A senior person from IFA with relevant, expertise followed up immediately.</p> <p>Dogged determination from the IFA member of staff and a determined proactive senior manager at National Grid!</p>

Sequence of Events	Timescales	Actions/Issues
<p>Step 4 The original contact was followed up/ replied to quickly; they had forwarded the IFA contact details to their relevant person i.e. with implementation responsibilities.</p>	<p>After 1 month</p>	
<p>Step 5 A month passed! The new person at NG responded to the IFA approach after a month had passed and after being chased. It was a holding response!</p>	<p>Approximately another month late</p>	<p>Crucially, and only after a month, the new contact at National Grid responded after being chased, but with a holding response! The determined IFA contact pursued them offering a positive alternative.</p>
<p>Step 6 A meeting was arranged at IFA's instigation. A face to face meeting with the key person took place.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>After doggedly pursuing the contact a response was forthcoming with a specific date to meet.</p>
<p>Step 7 During the meeting we got to know more about National Grid; what they were trying to achieve regarding employing disabled people.</p>	<p>1 month later</p>	<p>Active listening was crucial with relevant appropriate responses. It was vitally important that we listened and gathered information re what National Grid were actually looking for.</p>
<p>Step 8 On returning to the office an email was compiled with a proposal of what IFA could offer to meet the identified need.</p>		<p>Quick turnaround of high quality information was important.</p>
<p>Step 9 After 1 month and many emails chasing the</p>		<p>Don't underestimate the need of some success</p>



Sequence of Events	Timescales	Actions/Issues
<p>employer’s named contact, we were asked to provide a daily rate to undertake a review of NG’s recruitment process and how it is in reality to be an employee of this company. This breakthrough was exhilarating for us.</p> <p>Step 10 A firm proposal was made as to how we would carry out the work. It involved interviewing employees and managers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We had to respond to the time slots given to us by NG.</li> <li>• We also had to provide reports by strict deadlines</li> </ul> <p>Step 11 A vast amount of research was undertaken throughout the length of the project. For example we needed to know as much as possible about what NG did as an organisation before meeting with their contact so that we could be equipped with the knowledge and be <b>proactive in matching our support to suit their needs.</b></p>	<p>Whenever they requested something from us our response was as immediate as possible.</p>	<p>to maintain motivation.</p> <p>However difficult it is to come up with answers e.g. in this case a cost relevant for the private sector, it is important to do so as soon as possible.</p> <p>The good working relationship between us and NG was paramount. It was important that we communicated with them and delivered what they wanted at the times given to us.</p> <p>The research was on-going throughout so that we were able to write reports that were appropriate for the organisation and to ensure that when we made recommendations they were suitable and within a realistic context.</p>

The total time period from the first contact with this employer, to identify and develop the relationship and to deliver a specific piece of work, took

5 months. To increase the number of disabled employees they recruit will take a lot longer.

An analysis of their recruitment statistics would be needed after a suitable time has elapsed since the end of the training delivered to their managers.

Some key points (heart felt!)

- The whole process from first making contact to submitting the final reports took 5 months.
- We have submitted additional proposals as a result of our work to date based on the recommendations made in the reports.
- We are still waiting to hear with our fingers crossed in anticipation!

**Potential Obstacles :-**

- As co-ordinator of this piece of work I had the responsibility to deliver it regardless of what was thrown my way. The paying customer (NG) would not want to hear about our day to day obstacles. They want the work done regardless of any difficulties we might have at our end, especially when they have set up an interview schedule.

What I have learned from all of this:-

- If you see an opportunity, don't be afraid to approach the representative from the organisation and discuss with them what you can offer.
- More importantly, get their contact details.

The benefits:-

Ideal for All have influenced a national company on how they can employ more disabled people, how disabled people are treated and the support their employees with a disability receive in the workplace. We have also potentially improved the lives of the entire workforce of National Grid. We were asked to review the sickness absence policy. This work is now completed.

The workforce currently stands at 26,000.

## **Appendix 6 – Staff Guidelines**

---

### **Guidelines**

These Guidelines form the basis of training programmes for staff members in cooperations and cooperation-projects with the aim to be able to plan, implement and manage cooperations between the different sectors; and also to improve knowledge in the field of cooperations.

#### **What is the objective of this position?**

- The development of new possibilities for people with disabilities in training and work

#### **What are the tasks and responsibilities?**

- to initiate, plan and manage cooperations and cooperation projects
- to implement cooperations within observance of the cooperation agreements (aims and outputs, budget lines, reporting-systems, regulations between the cooperation partners and involved agencies)
- to hold and take part on negotiations and make relevant decisions within the decision making authority
- to make agreements (e.g. to draw up contracts in cooperation with internal services or contract-partners)
- to make human resource decisions (human resource management) e.g. recruiting, personnel management, ...
- to network with stakeholders e.g. public authorities, investors, ...
- to acquire job Know How (expertise) to the own organization e.g. value-principles, quality-guidelines, mission)
- to initiate and keep alive customer relations (networking)
- to act as a contact person – to maintain the exchange and communication between the partners

#### **Which skills, abilities, knowledge is necessary to fulfill the tasks?**

##### **Profile of competences**

##### Professional competences

- they have professional expertise and operational knowledge
- they know the offers of the own company and have the ability to represent them
- they know the financial and legal frame conditions in their working field

- they identify trends in the labor market and know the regional and economic conditions
- they can assess abilities, needs and personal circumstances of people with disabilities realistically
- they can plan and implement a logical sequence of working-steps
- they can react flexibly to changes
- they have project management and process management skills

#### Personal competences/Acting competences

- they act in a solution- and result-orientated way
- they act active, creative and practicable
- they lead target-orientated – Management by objectives
- they communicate and act trustworthy, loyal and reliable
- they work independently and take responsibility for their decisions
- they are open to changes and developments
- they are oriented on the objectives of the department
- they are well-organized and have a good time management
- they plan their activities independently and set priorities
- they are durable and withstand the daily demands
- they look for innovation and new opportunities for development
- they are actively looking for new work models
- they take initiative and push to come in contact with cooperation partners

#### Social-communicative competences

- they have good communication skills and can lead active and goal-oriented conversations
- they can create a pleasant atmosphere for talks
- they have a respectful attitude toward the profit sector
- they encourage profit companies to take on corporate social responsibility
- they are open to companies and their customers
- they are interactive and can adapt to their customers in conversations
- they have advisory capacity
- they have persuasion and can demonstrate the benefits of cooperation in conversations
- they are able to deal with conflicts and complaints and try to make rapid, constructive solutions
- they are fit in conflict management and complain management
- they have a high willingness to learn and are interested in developments of the labor and social market

## Appendix 7 - Caritas / Spar timeline

