



BITSE

BARRIERS WHICH INHIBIT THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO EMPLOYMENT

Newsletter 3

April 2014

'Making a difference by changing lives'

One of the main objectives of the BITSE project is to make a difference in the lives of people who are in transition from school to employment throughout the European Union. The partnership results published and disseminated at the project's final conference in Brussels during June 2014, provide the forum through which the 14 partner organisations representing 10 EU member states realise this objective.

BITSE Results & Outcomes:

- Categorisation of COMMON BARRIERS which restrict or inhibit the VET transition process throughout the European Union.
- Best Practice TOOLKIT for identifying Barriers
- Best Practice TOOLKIT for overcoming Barriers
- General RECOMMENDATIONS aimed at informing and raising awareness among all disability sector stakeholders on matters and issues which influence and impact on the transition process from school to employment for Persons with Disabilities.

The BITSE partnership organisations can take collective pride in producing such results and outcomes which are ambitious, innovative, and transferable throughout the EU, and which have the potential and capability to change the disability landscape forever.



"Making a difference by changing lives" means overcoming the remaining barrier and challenge for all involved by ensuring that the BITSE results and outcomes are effectively integrated into all relevant VET transition programs where practical and possible in order to facilitate and support the full integration and inclusion of people with disabilities into society.

Michael Barrett, COPE Foundation

Meetings & Focus Groups



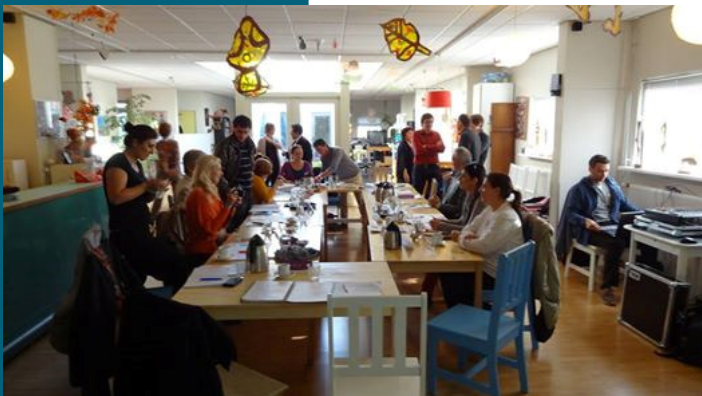
'Putting Heads Together' - Stakeholder Meeting in The Hague

On the second and third of October 2013, a sixth BITSE partnership meeting took place at the Service office in Rijswijk, The Netherlands. The meeting started on the 2nd October and was followed by a lunch at our Brasserie, where a young trainee with learning disabilities from the Middin Expertise Centre (involved in the project) is trained and works as a waiter. He took the time to explain his job in catering, and **Middin Brasserie** was enthusiastic about this and his future plans as a professional.

After lunch the consortium received an engaging guide through the Dorrepaal Estate, a huge public park incorporating a childrens' playground, where people with learning impairments work as gardeners. At the Dorrepaal Villa, where the office and training centre is located, the history of the estate was given, followed by a heart-warming presentation from one of the client's mothers. She has worked as a volunteer on the estate since she and her son took part in the second BITSE project meeting and focus group workshop in Austria. She gave some insight into the results of the surveys and the focus group debates held by members of personal networks in all BITSE countries. This concluded the analysis of all the interviews held with stakeholder focus groups (experts, trainees, trainers/teachers/coaches/support staff, employers, service providers and personnel networks). The day ended with a debate, led by one of the counsellors from the Middin who had joined the meeting and seminar in Bulgaria, June 2013.



Dorrepaal Estate



Haagsche Bluf

Day 2 started at the "Haagsche Bluf", a housing facility in the centre of The Hague. One of the senior residents told his life story, explaining how he went from living in a closed institution in South Africa to living independently, in his own apartment in the city. He emphasised the positive impact this change had on his quality of life. A personal assistant then explained the history, the vision and the recent developments of the Haagsche Bluf.

After the sandwich lunch, prepared and offered by clients working in the Middin's bakery, a stakeholder seminar took place; this involved those organisations which are silent partners of Middin, various Middin employees functioning as an internal 'BITSE feedback group', and the representatives of other service providers.

Gertrude van den Brink, a board member of Middin, officially opened the seminar and introduced a short film on the Middin pilot project "Wajong people (Young Disabled People) on the job, Middin Cares".



Joris Barendrecht, policy advisor at the "CG-Raad" (Chronical disease and disability counsel), explained the recently changed Dutch law on decentralisation.

Harry Haddering, president of Toon - an interest organisation for and by Wajongers (Young Disabled Persons Act) - explained the consequences of these changes to/for people with disabilities. From this he entered into a debate with the policy adviser of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment present in the audience.

To conclude the seminar, Michael Barrett, coordinator of the BITSE project, talked about the results of the this project so far.



The day ended with a forum discussion, moderated by the president of "Platform VG", Willem de Gooyer. All focus groups of the BITSE project were represented during the closing debate by several Dutch organisations.

A networking opportunity over drinks concluded the event.

Rome

On March 5th - 6th the Italian partner hosted the penultimate meeting of the BITSE partnership. This was a very important reunion, as the agenda included addressing the final adjustments to the several inquiries and investigations necessary to achieving the purposes with which this interesting European project started two years ago. Fourteen partner organisations were represented, all from the ten countries involved: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Ireland, Malta and the Netherlands.

Acting as the host, the Italian partner organised everything necessary for the success of the meeting. Rome welcomed all with its unique atmosphere, whilst the warm and pleasant weather also helped! Grand Hotel Palazzo Carpegna, not too far from the city centre and from the Italian partner settle, was booked for all. A conference room for the working meetings was reserved as well. Both days coffee breaks and a buffet at the hotel were served. Evening dinners were held in lovely authentic restaurants that are characteristic of this city



During the morning of the first day the Italian partner invited the Colleagues from abroad to visit the Rehabilitation Centre “Scuola Viva onlus” in which he works. The Group was picked up from the hotel by a private bus that drove it to the centre and back. The visit provoked many encouraging comments and affirmative interest from the guests. In particular the partners were very interested to learn about the specific kind of services provided in an Italian rehabilitation centre for persons with ID. Some activities produced much interest, such as the art atelier, the handcrafts and the gardening with its various branches, particularly as vocational training for the clients. On the other hand both staff members and users of the centre were thrilled to receive so many professionals interested in their work and activities. The visit incorporated all aspects of the centre, with the delegates able to pick up new ideas to bring back home, and gain inspiration.



Scuola Viva onlus



After lunch in the hotel, the partners took important decisions in order to set up the final report of the project. This document will provide important results, thanks to the thorough research carried out in the partners' countries. It will provide an update on the many obstacles still existing that make it difficult for youngsters with disabilities to enter employment once school is completed.

The second day was spent similarly, and concluded with each partner being allocated

a task to prepare for the final meeting – this important seminar will be held in June in Brussels, and will be organised by EASPD.

It has been a great pleasure to have the partners visiting Scuola Viva and working together. We look forward to meeting all of them again during the final convening of BITSE.

ARRIVEDERCI!

Dr Fabrizio Fea,
Associazione Scuola Viva Onlus



Upcoming: BITSE Final Seminar

EASPD will host the final BITSE conference in Brussels on June 19th. The event will be held at Thon Hotel City Centre, Avenue du Boulevard 17, Brussels, Belgium.

Registrations will be open, and more information will be available from April 18th onwards on the EASPD website. We look forward to discussing the outcome of this project.



**Brussels (BE)
Final Seminar
19th June 2014**

Thank You!

We'd like to thank our hosts in the Netherlands and Italy for putting on such successful events. Both meetings were extremely productive, and a great opportunity to further the project's aims. We also really appreciate everyone's attendance, and look forward to meeting again in Brussels!

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