

GOOD PRACTICE ROMANIA

Social and professional integration of persons with disabilities (in particular HIV-pos)

Contact person (NCO)

Name and organisation

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General information about the MOGP

Name of organisation and short description

"Close to You" Foundation Romania - The Util Deco Authorized Shelter Unit
10 Vovideniei Street, Iași city, Iași county, Postal Code 700 393, Romania

The "Close to You" Foundation Romania is a non-governmental organization, established in February 2002 by Holt International Children's Services with financing from USAID, as an answer to the need for support expressed by HIV/AIDS-infected and affected people, and preventing the transmission of the HIV infection in the community. The Util Deco unit is an authorized shelter unit of the Close to You Foundation, with workshops in Iasi, Targu Mures and Constanta, accredited by the General Directorate for the Protection of Persons with a Handicap.

Util Deco has 29 employees (out of 77) with disabilities, especially HIV-positive persons, who represent 59% of all the employees in the department of social economy. The economic activity that Util Deco is carrying out is reinvested in social programs. The Close to You Foundation is a member of eight national and international networks in the field and, over its nine years of activities, has received over 30 national awards for its involvement in community affairs.

Website

www.utildeco.ro; www.romtens.ro



Information on the good practice 'Social and professional integration of persons with disabilities'

Aims

- Creating and maintaining jobs for people with disabilities.
- Continuous vocational training.
- Support and assistance at the workplace.
- Creating unique handmade products in the following domains: handicrafts, painting, tailoring, interior design, decorative candles.
- Service delivery in fields such as: hand bookbinding, art of printing, screen printing and on-site archiving of documents.
- Product distribution in fields such as: IT, office supplies, stationery, hygiene products, personal protective equipment etc.

Target group

- Young people with disabilities, particularly HIV-positive persons coming from both families and the child protection system.

Description

- The three units of the foundation (Iasi, Constanta and Targu Mures) are organized as internal sections within the institution, with separate bookkeeping on the economic activity of each unit. A Department of Social Economy has been established within the foundation, which incorporates the activity of all the 11 protected workshops + 3 authorized shelter units. Each workshop is coordinated by a trainer – a specialized pedagogue, and each authorized shelter unit is coordinated by an administrator. The financial activity of the authorized shelter units is ensured by the financial-accounting department of the Close to You Foundation. The sales activity is ensured by the sales department and the marketing activity is ensured by the department of Development & Communication. The units' activities are examined through quarterly supervisory visits in the units and within management sessions. The board meetings are held 2 times a year.
- Workshops.
 - Iasi unit (5 workshops): Manual bookbinding – printing and archiving, IT, Painting, Handicraft and Tailoring.
 - Constanta unit (3 workshops): Manual bookbinding – printing workshop, IT and Tailoring.
 - Mures unit (3 workshops): Manual binding – printing workshop, IT and Manufacturing decorative candles.

Why is it a good practice?

The Close to You Foundation supports, through this authorized shelter unit, young people with disabilities to become independent persons who even pay taxes to the state budget. Also, we could mention the fact that the unit, by continuous vocational training and practical skills development, facilitates the transition of disabled people to the free labour market.



Results

Evaluation

The foundation performs annually a qualitative assessment of all the units by contracting an external service. The financial audit of the organization is carried out annually too.

Incentives for success

- Internal: Continuous internal and external vocational training; Daily work quota adapted to each person with disabilities, based on the certificate issued by the occupational health services; Annual Retreat; Christmas and Easter bonuses; Bonuses for additional activity.
- External: There are subsidies for employers provided by the County Agency for Employment. These subsidies aim at the employment of disabled persons. The subsidy is granted for a period of 18 months, provided that the employer keeps the disabled employee for another three years. The Agency provides about 30% of the national gross minimum wage. There are also subsidies for both the training of the disabled persons and for the adaptation of the workplaces to the needs of the disabled persons.

Barriers for success

- The jobs for the disabled people are not 100% subsidized by the state or differentiated by the degree of disability.
- There are no subsidies for the staff support.
- There is no legislation on social economy; currently one is working on this type of law.
- If there were no structural funds to subsidize some of the operating costs, the Foundation would not be sustainable in the market economy.
- The authorities don't support the social economy structures financially and hardly accept buying products that are made within authorized shelter units.
- There are no financial incentives for the social economy structures.
- The free labour market employers don't want to hire HIV-positive people due to fear of infection.

