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Jump to Job! Project Final Dissemination Event

On 23 June 2022, the [Final Dissemination Event](#) of the [Jump to Job!](#) Project was held by the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) in Brussels (Belgium). This successful project, funded by the [Erasmus Plus Programme](#), started in October 2019 and will end in October 2022. It deals with the training of peer mentors and job coaches for young people with disabilities (YPWD). Coordinated by [EPR](#), the project was realised by a partnership of six organisations from five countries: [GTB](#) (Belgium), [Fundación INTRAS](#) (Spain), [lyk-z](#) (Norway), [Theotokos Foundation](#) (Greece), [University College Leuven-Limburg/UCLL](#) (Belgium) and [University Rehabilitation Institute/URI](#) (Slovenia).

Main activities in the project include a **needs analysis** for peer mentors and job coaches, the delivery of **two training courses** and the elaboration of a **Training Module for Peer Mentors and Job Coaches** to on the one hand enhance the skills of those trained and on the other to arrive at better support arrangements and services for the labour market inclusion of YPWD. **Key deliverables** of the J2J Project are a **Curriculum for Peer Mentor and Job Coaches for YPWD**, a **Protocol on experience expertise and job coaching of YPWD (“Co-Production Protocol”)** – to set out the institutional setup and the support structures to recognise and use experiential knowledge by people who themselves live and work with a disability situation –, an **Environmental Impact Protocol** and a **collection of promising practices**.

The final event, aimed to present the main deliverables, insights from and the already measurable impacts of the project on the peer mentors and job coaches who participated in training activities, brought together all project partners, participants and speakers from partner organisations as well as from EPR members. After the welcome and introductory remarks by **Laura Jones**, General Secretary at EPR, **Mathias Maucher**, Senior Programmes and Project Officer, [presented](#) the strategic objectives, the activities carried out and the main deliverables developed.

Ingeborg Lykseth and **Kristine Øverås**, lyk-z, [introduced](#) the logic, structure and innovative elements of the training programme they have developed, condensed into the Curriculum for Peer Mentor and Job Coaches for Young People with Disabilities¹. The course is designed to support young people of different ages – including those with disabilities (YPWD) and those from socially vulnerable backgrounds – to discover and develop “their inherent qualities and unique individual abilities”. Through a range of different exercises, it helps the trainees to discover their own dreams, strengths, vision and driving forces. It increases self-confidence, fosters empowerment and gives new motivation for YPWD, for the live projects, but also in view of the completion of vocational training and for finding jobs in the mainstream labour market. In Norway the programme has a very high success rate (75%).

Inge Godts, UCLL, [presented](#) the impressive results of the pilot training activities rolled out in two phases in Belgium, Greece, Slovenia and Spain, following the two four-day training sessions. Very positive feedback on the content, methodology and outcomes of the training courses provided by lyk-z was given by the majority of the job coaches and peer mentors, i.e. the YPWD bringing in experiential. This can be well illustrated by some quotes from participants: *“I learned how important is to find the*

¹ Jump To Job Project: [Curriculum for Peer Mentors and Job Coaches](#). See for the other language versions here.



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power of expression of my emotions and dreams”; “I will use all learnings of this training by working a lot of confidence”; “The materials were very practical, the methodology was very well developed, dynamic and interactive”; “Good atmosphere, a lot of humour and great leaders/trainers”.

An **Environmental Impact Protocol**², [presented](#) by **Aleksandra Denša**, URI, was elaborated and applied in different key areas when implementing the project, from the reduction of food and plastic waste to the minimal use of transport. Wherever possible, the project activities were organised by going for the more sustainable option to limit the impacts on the environment itself.

The **Protocol on Co-Production**³, developed by GTB and [presented](#) by **Nele Hulselmans**, GTB, defines the use of experiential knowledge by people who live and work with a disability situation (“experiential expertise”). This perspective is key to complement the professional knowledge when organising the job coaching process by involving the peers themselves in the development of the training.

The final session of the event was dedicated to a round table among the project partners and external stakeholders who contributed to an inspiring discussion about challenges stemming from high inactivity or underemployment rates of YPWD, enriched by experiences from similar projects. The representatives of the **DG EMPL**’s Disability and Inclusion Unit and from the European Disability Forum (**EDF**) unfortunately had to cancel their participation in the panel debate on short notice.

The panel debate was introduced by **three videos messages from peer mentors** from Belgium, Greece and Spain and **experiences with the training shared by job coaches** from Belgium, Greece and Slovenia.

Florian Sanden, Policy Coordinator, European Network for Independent Living ([ENIL](#)), with a solid experience in advocating for the inclusion of people with disabilities, focused his intervention on the multiple barriers that people with disability face both in education and in accessing the labour market. He referred to the relevant EU-level regulatory, policy and funding frameworks related to the employment of persons with disabilities. Florian called upon the European Institutions to improve the legislation and give priority to its implementation. He also highlighted the importance of moving forward a cultural change in the employers’ perspective.

Diana Sutea, Project Assistant, StartNet, a European network for cooperation on collective action and impact on young people’s transition to work, gave an overview of the ongoing initiatives StartNet, currently manages to support the labour market inclusion of YPWD or with other disadvantages. [Skills for Life](#), an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in the field of vocational education was initiated by StartNet Europe, provides orientation for young people aged 13-14.

Laura Jones led the conclusion and outlook session to close the event. Here, again, the paramount importance of involving peer mentors in the design and implementation of training programmes and the need of a close cooperation with the job coaches was highlighted. This is beneficial due to their direct knowledge of specific needs of YPWDs and adapted solutions for them and as they can help reaching out to other YPWD receiving training to prepare them for employment and life mastery.

² Jump To Job Project: [Environmental Impact Protocol](#)

³ Jump To Job Project: Protocol on experience expertise and job coaching of YPWD (“Co-Production Protocol”) N.B.: The final version of the protocol will be ready in September 2022, the link to it then be added here.