



## Services to people with disabilities in the mainstreaming environment in Europe

### EPR survey

The survey items are designed to gather information about services to people with disabilities in the mainstreaming environment offered by members of EPR. In this study we are interested in learning about programmes and good practices that support inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstreamed environment in any of the following areas: early intervention, education, vocational training and employment, housing services and social care. Please note that, for each of these areas, we are only looking for **practices that support inclusion**.

By 'mainstreamed environment' we mean the common society, that is, environments that are not segregated or targeted to special groups. A regular school, the open labour market or a community facility that is opened to the general public are examples of 'mainstreamed environments'.

If your organisation offers several of these programmes or services, please select the one you consider more innovative or most successful and complete the survey. If you would like to provide information about an additional programme/service you can also do it by completing another survey (maximum two programmes/ services).

There may be some items in the survey that are not applicable for the selected programme or service. In these instances, please indicate "not applicable".

Although the term "programme" is used in this survey, it can be replaced with "service" or "practice" in all occurrences.



## Organisational Information

**Name of the Organisation:** Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre

**Country where the organization is located:** Estonia

**Title of the Programme/Service/practice:** Opening Doors and Minds: A mentor programme

**Contact Information (Include the name and relevant contact data for the primary contact person who can provide technical expertise regarding this Programme):** Triin Juss, Head of Employment Unit, [triin.juss@astangu.ee](mailto:triin.juss@astangu.ee)

Study Criteria	Description of the Study Criteria
<b>I. Programme Information</b>	
<b>I (a) Goal of the Programme/service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To bring together IT-students with physical or mental disability as mentees and specialists from IT companies as mentors</li> <li>✓ To support working age (16-63) IT-students with disability (e.g. clients of Astangu VRC) in making career choices and finding both internships and jobs through advice and support given and experience shared by mentors as the representatives of their companies</li> <li>✓ To improve the personal development of mentees' (e.g. social skills and self-esteem)</li> <li>✓ To motivate the mentees to try and experience new challenges</li> <li>✓ Widening the awareness, knowledge and practical experiences of mentors and their companies through communication with people with disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>I (b) Outcome Measures of the Programme</b>	<p><b>State the Outcomes Measures for the adults involved.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ % of mentees who secure an internship or a job after participating in the mentoring program</li> <li>✓ % of mentees and mentors satisfied with the program</li> <li>✓ Experiences of mentors and mentees from the program and likelihood to participate again or recommend the program to a friend</li> </ul>
<b>I (c) Theory used for the Programme</b>	<p><b>State the theoretical principles that underline the programme/service.</b></p> <p>Mentoring is...<i>"To support and encourage people to manage</i></p>



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	<p><i>their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be.</i>" (E. Parsloe, Coaching, Mentoring and Assessing: A Practical Guide to Developing Competence (London, 1995))</p> <p>Mentoring has been found to be effective in reducing barriers to employment for persons with disabilities [ 1) Bruye`re, S. (2000). Disability employment policies and practices in private and federal sector organizations. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Program on Employment and Disability. 2) Schur, L., Kruse, D., Blanck, P. (2005) Corporate Culture and the Employment of Persons with Disabilities. <i>Behavioral Sciences and the Law</i> 23: 3-20.]</p> <p>Mentoring is widely used in different forms and settings for people with disabilities in the USA. (<a href="http://www.washington.edu/doi/resources/popular-resource-collections/mentoring-and-peer-support-people-disabilities">http://www.washington.edu/doi/resources/popular-resource-collections/mentoring-and-peer-support-people-disabilities</a>).</p>
<p><b>I (d) Year Programme was initiated and milestones in development</b></p>	<p>The program was initiated in January 2013.</p> <p>So far, two groups of mentors and mentees have participated: the first group started in January 2013 and second in January 2014.</p> <p>In these two years there have been 11 mentees and 10 mentors in the program (1 mentor participating two years in a row).</p> <p>Results after the two mentor programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 mentees entered the employment market</li> <li>• 1 stayed home due to health reasons</li> <li>• 1 was working as a volunteer</li> <li>• 1 was unemployed actively looking for a job</li> </ul> <p>Currently improvements are made to the program and a new group will most likely start in 2016.</p>
<p><b>I (e) Staffing patterns of the Programme</b></p>	<p><b>Identify the number of staff by titles and responsibilities.</b></p> <p>Arranging the program and the activities has been the responsibility of 1 staff member – the head of Employment Unit. The preparation activities (compiling the program, finding mentors, motivating and informing IT students to take part in the program, organizing a short training about mentoring for both mentors and mentees) took about 7 working days (56 hours in total).</p> <p>During the 12 months of program duration the need for assistance (advice, guidance, support, and practical arrangements) is very variable depending on the participants.</p>
<p><b>I (f) Physical location of the Programme</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the Programme’s location(s).</b></p> <p>The physical meetings take place in accessible environments (Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, offices of the mentors, cafes). Meetings in cafes and offices also contribute to community participation as these are places where there are many non-involved society members.</p> <p>Virtual meetings take place via e-mail, Skype, social media or</p>



	other means of communication.
<b>II. Client Information</b>	
<b>II (a) Targeted clients admitted</b>	<p><b>Identify the admission criteria including age, gender, disability, and any other qualifying characteristics.</b></p> <p>Working age (16-63) people from all over Estonia with physical/mental health disorders who are about to graduate from IT programme (Software and Database Management) in Astangu VRC and who need support to meet the needs of real labour market/ real jobs.</p> <p>Based on experiences from 2013 and 2014, the number of mentees has annually been 5-6.</p>
<b>II (b) Number of clients currently in the Programme</b>	<p><b>Identify the number of current clients in the Programme.</b></p> <p>Not applicable – the program is currently not ongoing, starting again in 2016.</p>
<b>II (d) Involvement of the Family members</b>	<p><b>Describe how the family members are oriented to and involved in the Services provided.</b></p> <p>Not applicable – the family member are not a specific target, as the mentor-mentee relationship is 1 on 1.</p>
<b>III. Programme Activities, Services and Intervention</b>	
<b>III (a) Activities during the Programme targeted to the clients</b>	<p><b>Describe the Programme activities that are targeted to the clients.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Short introduction training in mentoring and being a mentee</li> <li>✓ Introductory meeting between all possible mentors and mentees to make up pairs</li> <li>✓ Frequency of the meetings and individual action plans for the mentees are agreed between mentors and mentees and cover activities for 12 months.</li> <li>✓ Mentoring contract is formed</li> <li>✓ Mentor-mentee meetings face to face and in a virtual setting if necessary (3 hours a month). Mentees are invited to the mentor's office for at least some of the meetings if it is accessible.</li> <li>✓ Mentor is supporting mentee in setting objectives, prioritizing, providing ongoing feedback (and not judgement) towards mentee's actions and developments; in case needed, helping the mentee to implement corrections into the action plan to overcome possible obstacles – all with the aim to finish the studies and enter the open labour market</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Practical help in creating a CV and a motivation letter, analysing various job ads and opportunities, using mentor's network to create professional connections for the mentee, exploring various channels for finding a job</li> <li>✓ Regular support and feedback in preparation of the final thesis, support in preparation for the open labour market (e.g. attending job interviews)</li> <li>✓ Quarterly reports from the mentees about the progress of the program</li> </ul>
<b>III (b) Activities involving the family members</b>	<p><b>Describe the services and involvement of the family members and other close friends and support persons working with the client.</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
<b>III (c) Activities involving community partners</b>	<p><b>Describe services or activities that involve community partners.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mentors are being invited and introduced to the program and its concepts, an overview is given about the mentees and their needs</li> <li>✓ Short introduction training in mentoring and being a mentor</li> <li>✓ Frequency of the meetings and individual action plans for the mentees are agreed between mentors and mentees and cover activities for 12 months.</li> <li>✓ Mentoring contract is formed</li> <li>✓ Mentor-mentee meetings face to face and in a virtual setting if necessary (3 hours a month)</li> <li>✓ Mentor is supporting mentee in setting objectives, prioritizing, providing ongoing feedback (and not judgement) towards mentee's actions and developments; in case needed, helping the mentee to implement corrections into the action plan to overcome possible obstacles – all with the aim to finish the studies and enter the open labour market</li> <li>✓ Regular meetings for the mentors (as a group) to share experiences, ongoing support from the Head of Employment Unit at Astangu VRC</li> <li>✓ Semi-annual reports from the mentors about the progress of the program</li> </ul>
<b>III (d) Activities targeting community partners</b>	<p><b>Describe services or activities targeting community partners.</b></p> <p><i>This information will include descriptions of activities or practices</i></p>



	<p><i>that your organizations sporadically undertakes in order to raise disability awareness or develop linkages with education institutions, vocational and apprentice training, employers or other community service organisations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Some of the mentoring meetings take place at the offices of the mentors (the whole office is included and aware of the program and it's necessity)</li> <li>✓ The employers of the mentors are involved in giving their approval for the program if necessary (meetings at the office during working hours, practice opportunities etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>IV. Public Authority/Legislative Information</b>	
<b>IV (a) Legal Basis for the Programme</b>	<p>Identify the legal framework of the programme.</p> <p><b>Not applicable.</b></p>
<b>IV (b) Funding base</b>	<p><b>Identify the source(s) of the funding for the Programme (i.e., the government agency providing the support), the percentage of expenses it covers, the rate of co-payment per client if existent, and the length of time for the funding.</b></p> <p>The program is done on voluntary basis (for all participants involved) and costs are virtually non-existent, as Astangu Centre provides the rooms and facilities for the programme meetings when necessary.</p>
<b>V. Programme Directions</b>	
<b>V (a) Challenges with the Programme</b>	<p><b>Identify challenges to develop the social participation and inclusion of your clients in mainstream society.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Encouraging and motivating mentees to take part in the program – this aspect is closely connected with the group dynamics and overall attitudes in the vocational education study course</li> <li>✓ Finding mentors who are motivated and have enough resources (time) to participate and overcome obstacles that may occur during the process</li> <li>✓ The course of the mentoring program is unpredictable for the person responsible for the whole organization (Head of the Employment Unit at Astangu VRC) which brings about challenges in schedule planning and saving energy for ongoing guidance and support and being prepared for unexpectedness</li> </ul>
<b>V (b) Opportunities with the Programme</b>	<p><b>Describe the opportunities that are available for the students and the organisation for developing and implementing the Programme.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Two programmes have been completed since January 2013. Most of the mentees have secured an internship or a job to support their education and the achievement of their personal and professional dreams.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The mentees have a portfolio which helps them to present themselves on paper (CV, motivation letter) and in person.</li> <li>✓ Mentoring programme “Opening doors and minds” is a brand new way of approaching employment obstacles of people with disabilities - initiative is coming from employers and respective employees instead of coming from the job coaches who are supporting the clients in entering labour market.</li> <li>✓ By implementing the programme you can help to add value to the usual vocational rehabilitation process with involving untraditional ways of working and different stakeholders in a new role.</li> </ul>
<b>V (c) Suggestions for strengthening the Programme</b>	<p><b>Identify specific recommendations that will benefit other organisations that are replicating the Programme.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Thorough preparation for mentors and mentees is needed to ensure understanding of what the program is about and the motivation to carry this out through co-operation and mutual understanding</li> <li>✓ A good contact person is needed who brings together mentors and mentees and remains to support them through the year, this person needs to have high personal motivation to contribute</li> </ul>
<b>V (d) Additional Programme comments</b>	<p><b>Please give additional information to explain what makes this practice/service/programme particularly interesting or successful.</b></p>

