

THE FORMAL EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE IS NOT SPECIFICALLY DETERMINED BY ECONOMIC FACTORS BUT BY DIRECT TECHNICAL ONES OR ULTIMATELY BY SOCIAL INTERESTS AND VALUES. A SOLUTION, NEUTRAL IN ECONOMIC TERMS AND ACHIEVABLE IN TECHNICAL TERMS, TO THE PROBLEMS HINDERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND HEALTH CONDITIONS WOULD BE A REALISTIC TECHNICAL SOLUTION AND ACTUAL EMPLOYMENT, BUT ONLY IF THE SOCIETY MAKING THE RELEVANT DECISIONS AND AIMING FOR THE INCLUSION OF DISABLED PERSONS. IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC UPTURN WITH A HUGE EXPANSION OF THE LABOUR FORCE, HIGHER EMPLOYMENT RATES APPEAR NOT ONLY AMONG NON-DISABLED PERSONS BUT ALSO AMONG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND HEALTH CONDITIONS. HOWEVER, ONCE AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN OCCURS AND THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR FALLS WE SEE THE APPEARANCE OF GROUPS THAT 'CANNOT BE

EMPLOYED IN A PROFITABLE MANNER'. THESE GROUPS INCLUDE NOT ONLY PEOPLE WITH **DISABILITIES** AND HEALTH CONDITIONS BUT ALSO UNSKILLED WORKERS, LONG-DISTANCE COMMUTERS, WOMEN WITH NO MORE THAN SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATION, IMMIGRANTS, THE ROMA MINORITY AND OTHERS, IN OTHER WORDS, ALL GROUPS IN A WEAK SOCIAL POSITION, TO WHOSE DETRIMENT IT IS EASIER TO IMPLEMENT **DISMISSALS**, OR WHO CAN SAFELY BE BLAMED FOR ANY DECLINING EFFICIENCY OF COMPANY OUTPUT. AS FINDING A JOB IS INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT IN GENERAL SO THOSE LABOUR GROUPS THAT ARE UNABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET WHILE INTENSIVE EFFORTS ARE MADE TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THOSE WHO BENEFIT FROM THIS **EXCLUSION**, WITH THE SUGGESTION OF SOME IDEOLOGY. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE LOSERS IN THIS GAME ARE GIVEN A LABEL TO LEGITIMISE THE SITUATION OR FOR SOME IDEOLOGICAL PURPOSES. LABELS SUCH AS 'LAZY', 'DRIFTER', 'LUMPEN ELEMENTS', OR NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF PEOPLE WITH **DISABILITIES** OR HEALTH CONDITIONS ALSO SERVE TO DISGUISE THE

FACT THAT UNEMPLOYMENT IS ROOTED IN MACROECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES LYING BEHIND THE DIRECT CAUSES. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ONLY THOSE IN A VULNERABLE POSITION ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET OR ALLOCATED TO LESS PROFITABLE JOBS. FOR SOME OF THOSE EXCLUDED, DEVIANCE IS NOT ONLY A REASON FOR, BUT ALSO A CONSEQUENCE OF, THE FAILURE OF BOTH THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE INDIVIDUAL. TO THE SAME EXTENT. WHEN ACCOUNTING FOR LABOUR MARKET SUCCESSES AND FAILURES, PUTTING INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE OR FAULT TO THE FORE SERVES TO FACILITATE THE EXCLUSION OF SOCIAL GROUPS UNABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES WITHIN THE LABOUR ENVIRONMENT. THIS UPSIDE-DOWN LOGIC IS ALL THE MORE DANGEROUS AS MANY DISABLED PEOPLE, AND GENERALLY ALL THOSE IN A MARGINALISED POSITION, BELIEVE THAT THE FAULT LIES WITH THEM. THE RESULTING FRUSTRATION REINFORCES HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR SUCH AS ALCOHOLISM, CRIME AND VOLUNTARY DROPPING OUT FROM THE LABOUR MARKET. FOR DISABLED PERSONS, EMPLOYMENT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO A LOWER PUBLIC BURDEN IN THE SAME WAY AS WOULD THEIR BETTER SOCIAL INCLUSION. ARGUING FOR THE MANY-SIDED NECESSITY OF EMPLOYMENT, TEGYEY SUMMARISED HIS VIEW AS FOLLOWS: 'IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE DISABLED WITH REDUCED WORKING CAPACITY, IT MUST BE ENSURED TO GIVE THEM THE MOST APPROPRIATE JOB OPPORTUNITY DESPITE THEIR HANDICAP, THAT IS, SUCH A JOB WHERE WORKING CAPACITY REQUIREMENT COULD BE PROVIDED TO THE FULL-EST POSSIBLE LEVEL. SUFFICIENT OUTPUT IS ACHIEVED TO ALLOW FOR THEM TO EARN THEIR LIVING ON THE BASIS OF THIS SUBSISTENCE, THAT IS, TO DEVELOP WORKING ABILITIES AND FINE-TUNING THOSE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. ALL THE DISABLED PERSONS' SOCIAL

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How Can a Company Take an Active Part in the Social Integration of People with Disabilities?

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade an important element of employment policy has been to promote the employability of disadvantaged groups of workers and the integration of persons permanently excluded from the labour market, balancing their competitiveness in the market. The current government is also working to improve the employment opportunities of people with disabilities by developing the legal environment. According to the 2011 census, 490,578 people with disabilities live in Hungary – based on self-reports – but the number of people with a reduced capacity for work is much higher, 681,000 according to a survey conducted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH, 2016). The survey reports that almost 11.3% of the Hungarian population aged 19–64 live with some kind of illness or disability that restricts their work. Three quarters of the group receive some form of welfare benefit and one fifth of them work (KSH, 2016). This rate was 66.4% for the total active population and 72.2% for the control group (KSH, 2016).

In the last decade, governments have invested significant energies in reintegrating people with disabilities into the labour market, yet the result achieved is not yet considered to be full social integration, as employment and income are fundamental but not the only aspects of social integration. Many socially disadvantaged people with disabilities are excluded from the labour market due to the difficulty they face in accessing information and developing the skills needed for employment (Boda, Holp & Szabó, 2006). People with disabilities are often unable to take a full-time job due to their health status, and to inadequate employment structures and factors such as low educational attainment, low language skills, long-term unemployment and the uncertainty of job retention. Relatively few of them are employed as part-time teleworkers, with little experience in this area.

The National Lottery Company is engaged in a wide range of activities aimed at fostering the integration of people with disabilities. In the early 2000s, the company faced a new challenge on the competitive market, and it became a matter of urgency to meet the demand of market expansion. The various scratch card products improved rapidly, which required the launch of new sales practices and the involvement of additional workers on a national level. As a responsible employer, the company considers it important to participate in programmes designed to solve social problems. With this in mind, in 2003 a charity scratch card sales network

was established that only employs people with disabilities. The company aims to achieve equal access to employment, following the principle of 'Nothing about us without us' (Szerencsejáték Zrt, 2020). The activities of the company are defined in accordance with the *National Disability Programme for 2015–25*.

This advanced step also corresponds with international trends. Activities aiming at the integration of people with disabilities are also a priority within the Association of European Lotteries (EDF-EL, 2011). The general practice of equal opportunities in the workplace also supported this decision on the part of the Hungarian lottery company. The process has also been supported by the fact that the positions offered were suitable for employing people with disabilities flexibly. As a result, nowadays 11% of the company's employees are people with disabilities.

In Hungary there is a distinction between disabled people and people with reduced working capacities. The second cluster is wider and includes people with chronic health conditions.

About 180 people with disabilities work in the charity sales network, at 120 sales points in accessible working environment, in 70 towns. 18% of the vendors (including both vendors of the lottery shops and charity vendors) are people with disabilities. This ratio of involvement of disabled employees represents an outstanding level among the companies in this market. The company does not receive any state subsidy.

The company has a high level of employment-retention within the employees with disabilities. The average age of employees with disabilities is 58 years. More than two thirds of the employees with disabilities have worked for the company for more than ten years. The majority of the scratch card vendors intend to work for the company until they retire, and many of them plan to stay there and continue working after reaching the pension age.

In the beginning, besides people with chronic health conditions, it was mostly people with physical disabilities who were employed, and later, in 2014, the company also started hiring deaf and hard of hearing people (SINOSZ, 2015). In both cases the company turned to NGOs representing the concerned disability groups for professional guidance in tailoring the recruitment, selection and induction processes, and in creating an accessible workplace. Candidates are involved in the above mentioned processes taking into consideration the principle of independent living. The professional partners in recruiting people with physical disabilities and deaf and hard of hearing people were MEOSZ (the National Federation of Associations of Persons with Physical Disabilities) and SINOSZ (the Hungarian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) respectively (Mecséri & Hangya, 2017). Both partners provided professional counselling during the development process.

With the charity scratch card sales network, the company provides employment opportunities for people who could not find any work for several years due to their health conditions. By earning a regular income, and having professional and commercial success, they may consider themselves valuable members of the labour market. The company provides them with working opportunities and positions that they are able to manage. Despite the low level entrance requirements – the applicant is required to have completed primary education – clearly defined competences are expected from the employees. General competences are appraised in a personal

interview. The necessary skills include confident calculation, communication skills and commercial talent.

The charity scratch card vendors are not semi-skilled workers, as general and product-specific commercial knowledge is required. The employees develop their knowledge continuously, attending professional training sessions provided by the company. Besides these training sessions, the employees additionally receive financial, health and digital training (Polyacskó, 2015).

1. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

More than two thirds of the charity vendors have been working for the company for more than ten years. Regional meetings and training sessions are organised for them on a regular basis. The vendors also attend other company events (sports days, Christmas parties) where they can meet each other as well as other employees in an informal setting. They enjoy these events; the Christmas party being the highlight of the year, when 'Vendor of the Year' is awarded with other winners.

The charity managers, operating the charity sales network and handling the cases of the scratch card vendors, experience increasing cooperation with the vendors due to the annual training sessions and social events. There is an improvement in the personal and social competencies of vendors as their sales performance increases. Besides their commercial performance, the vendor's personal and social competences have improved. In this study, the authors shall describe the areas of development experienced by the managers by using Goleman's competence model (Goleman, 2008). According to Goleman's model, emotional competences can be grouped into the following five main classes: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, motivation and relationship management.

During the past decade financial, health and digital training sessions were provided for employees with disabilities, as well as training in sales techniques. These sessions affected their self-awareness indirectly. The vendors became more confident in many areas of their lives. They became more aware of their needs, and their self-assessment improved. The increase in their revenues has increased their self-confidence, of which they are proud, and as they can be described as successful tradespersons so their self-assessment is affected positively.

Self-regulation is also a developing area. Thanks to personal visits, progress has been made with regard to cooperation with, and adjustment to, the partner vendor working at the same sales point (one of them works in the morning and the other in the afternoon). Partnership is required from the vendors in setting the optimal opening hours and finding the best places for sales.

According to surveys (Boyce, Wood, Daly & Sedikides, 2015), long-term unemployment has an adverse effect on a person's work ethic. Ten years ago, delays and absence from the sales points, or even working outside working hours, were common. As a result of regular and thematic internal communication (meetings held twice a year, circulars sent every two weeks and personal conversations), vendors became more reliable in complying with working hours. To date, the numbers of unreported absences or instances of failure to respect working time are negligible.

Empathy is essential for a successful vendor in assessing customer needs. Developing this competency is, however, more difficult. It is common among people with disabilities not to experience empathy themselves, themselves, nor to see a positive attitude towards others, either within their families or in the surrounding environment. Total rejection also occurs at times. For these people, being sensitive to the needs of others is almost unknown, based on their own experience, and they may have difficulties paying attention to others, recognising customer needs, or making personalised offers. In this, they need higher degrees of support than the average from their managers.

The motivation of the employees is adequate. The performance incentive system is based on several benefits. On the one hand, they receive a commission based on their turnover results. In addition, the titles 'Worker of the Month' and 'Charity Vendor of the Year' motivate them to exceed their own performance from time to time. They receive a quarterly personal written evaluation of their turnover performance. They can follow the average of the network and the evolution of their own performance, which provides important feedback that they take into account. The company also conducts 'phantom shopping', after which the vendors receive individual feedback. Their suggestions for changing the sales and opening hours demonstrate their abilities to initiate actions. They are committed employees of the company. As indicated earlier, two thirds of them have worked there for a long time. An internal survey revealed that they are unquestionably proud of working for Szerencsejáték Zrt. Employees with disabilities do not plan to change, and many of them still work after reaching pension age.

Their social skills have also developed positively. Employees with disabilities meet dozens of customers every day. As a vendor, they need effective communication. They can conduct conversations, and use their scratch card knowledge effectively in sales processes. Sometimes they also have to manage conflicts in which they are able to maintain the company's reputation as the 'face of the company' and with their skill in fostering new contacts, they are able to attract new customers and turn them into regular ones.

Teamwork and collaboration skills are strengthened. Several people are in contact with each other outside working hours. The employees with disabilities have a closed Facebook group in which they share their sales experiences, sharing advice with each other. They are happy to attend corporate events. On the last sports day, one of the employees with a wheelchair joined the pétanque championship as a member of the charity team, which proved to be a common success. At the Christmas party one of the deaf employees was also present with a sign language interpreter.

The roles and responsibilities of the company are to provide the necessary conditions for independent participation in these events. The large number of employees with disabilities attending these events indicates that they enjoy the events, and that the organisers are acting prudently.

2. EUROPEAN PRACTICE AND NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

The lottery industry is engaged in the social integration of people with disabilities. The European Lotteries (EL) and the European Disability Forum (EDF) declared their aims in 2011 in a cooperation agreement, stating that they would take part actively in the social integration of 80 million European people with disabilities in four areas: contribution to the employment of persons with disabilities, awareness-raising within society, contribution to the full integration of people with disabilities in society beyond employment, and dissemination of best practices (EDF-EL, 2011).

At the end of 2015, a trilateral cooperation agreement was signed between the Council for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (Fogyatékos Emberek Szervezeteinek Tanácsa, FESZT – the Hungarian umbrella organisation for people with disabilities), one of the Spanish lottery companies, the National Organisation of Spanish Blind People (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles, ONCE), and Szerencsejáték Zrt. The agreement was designed to foster the employment of people with disabilities, to promote raising awareness of disability, and to share best practices. ONCE is the professional leader of the implementation of the EL-EDF programme.

The Hungarian programme set its objectives to cooperate with the cooperation agreement made between the European Lotteries (EL) and European Disability Forum (EDF). Under the trilateral agreement, the company undertakes to launch new projects in all four areas, focusing on a general increase of awareness in society and promoting the social integration of children with disabilities. This demonstrates that the European industrial ambition represents a strong motivating factor for the company. The company has set several goals in the field of awareness-raising in society.

The above mentioned employment programme has created a need to launch an attitude-forming training course in which front-office workers become familiar with the specifics of all disability groups, practise and learn specific aspects of communication with people with disabilities. To date, more than 440 employees have participated in the training, including members of back-office departments who volunteered for it.

In 2017, with the financial support of the National Lottery Company of Hungary, and with the professional help of FESZT and the ELTE Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education, the Salva Vita Foundation announced the 'High 5!' programme (Adj Egy Ötöst!, 2019) for primary and secondary school students. In Spain a similar programme named 'Concurso ONCE' (ONCE, 2019) has run successfully for 36 years.

The aim of the proposal is to meet children with disabilities at an early age, and to form their attitude to learning how to become open-minded, accepting, responsibly thinking and well-prepared members of a diverse society. Additionally, the programme contributes to forming the attitudes of adults (parents and teachers) who are indirectly also a part of this awareness raising programme.

'According to the practice of ONCE, 10–18 year-old students in school groups may participate in this programme managed by a mentoring teacher. In groups, applicants prepare a preliminary plan for a low-budget, short-term programme with disabled people. The ideal programme plan is a pleasant activity for both parties. One of the main points of the proposal is to share the personal experience of the applicant groups with others as a good example and as good practice. Applicants

prepare documentation with photographs, videos and written materials about the awareness programme, which can help the professional jury decide who will be among the winners. The applications are evaluated by the following criteria: how creative the idea of the awareness programme is; how fun and interactive it is for both parties; whether the provided information is accessible; whether the method of documentation reflects the mood of the programme; and the message of the programme. The best ten school groups win 1,300' (Dukic & Mecséri, 2019).

In the first edition in 2017 fifty disability awareness programmes were initiated. A wide range of programmes were implemented, such as: a one-week camping trip with disabled children, a presentation of various professions in practice (decorator, carpenter, mason), dance performances, the preparation of a home page for blind people, wheelchair basketball championships etc.

In the second edition, in 2018–19, 89 programmes were implemented, thus reaching more than 11,000 people (including parents, teachers and participants with disabilities) (AEÖ, 2019).

The survey is conducted with the participants under the leadership of the ELTE Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education to measure the change in their attitudes towards disability. Students and mentor teachers are required to fill an input and output questionnaire before and after the implementation of their programmes. The results indicate a positive change in the emotional aspects of attitudes within the questionnaire (Dukic & Mecséri, 2019).

The company also contributes to awareness-raising within society by the production and promotion of specific scratch cards with descriptions of disabilities printed on the back, intended to inform consumers.

In 2018 the company spent part of its income from the previous year's Christmas scratch cards, called 'Nagykarácsony', on building inclusive playgrounds in a programme called 'Playing builds connections' (FESZT, 2018). In these inclusive playgrounds children with disabilities can play together with typically developed children. Playing together helps children gain common experience and brings them together imperceptibly. Thanks to these more intense personal contacts, they can become more cooperative, tolerant and more open-minded adults with regard to the problems faced by people with disabilities. In the inclusive playgrounds, all children with disabilities can find a toy suitable for them.

In the first year of the programme three inclusive playgrounds were built (in Budapest's Third District, in Veszprém and in Miskolc). In 2019 five new playgrounds were inaugurated (in Pécs, in Sopron and in Budapest's Fourth, Eighth and Eighteenth Districts), and the programme will be expanded in 2020 with five more playgrounds.

The consultants of the programme are FESZT, the Universal Design Information and Research Centre (ETIKK), and the Association of Physically Disabled People of Budapest (MBE). They have expertise and significant professional experience in the field of universal design. Before the start of the investments, a methodological guide on the programme was prepared and is available on the ETIKK website: the Handbook of Universally Designed Playgrounds (ETIKK, 2019). The handbook is a great platform for disseminating the programme's results.

As a direct action for the full integration of people with disabilities outside the workplace, the company sponsors the Paralympics Team of Hungary (Szerencsejáték

Zrt, 2020). Szerencsejáték Zrt. also considers the maintenance and development of the charity sales network to be a social mission. In order to set an example to other enterprises the company's best practices are shared at conferences and workshops, and are also regularly described in the national media.

3. IMPACT ON CORPORATE OPERATION

The employment of people with disabilities has also brought positive changes in the daily operations of the company, enhancing its working culture.

Disability awareness is visible in several areas within the company. It plays a role in product development and advertising campaigns (e.g. the Christmas scratch card). Often, the special guest in the lottery show on television is also a person with disabilities (SINOSZ, 2015).

The company's external relations include a number of non-governmental organisations representing the people with disabilities (National Council of Associations of Persons with Disabilities – FESZT, Hungarian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing – SINOSZ, the National Association of Hungarian Blind and Visually Impaired People – MVGYOSZ, MBE) and institutions (Universal Design Information and Research Center of Hungary – ETIKK, the Eötvös Loránd University Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education, the Ministry of Human Resources).

Accessibility is clearly practiced in the company. Whenever its lottery shops and office buildings are renovated, the company seeks the opinion of a professional partner regarding reasonable conditions for disabled people. Besides physical accessibility, information communication accessibility is also in focus. Providing a KONTAKT sign language interpreter service for deaf and hard of hearing players is currently being tested in 27 lottery shops, in a pilot programme.

Through the activities undertaken in the interests of people with disabilities, Szerencsejáték Zrt. has gained a favourable reputation, which is confirmed by internal and external surveys.

As a result of the company's employing people with disabilities, other employees have become more open and tolerant towards people with disabilities. Based on a survey conducted in 2018, the employees agree with the above mentioned activities of Szerencsejáték Zrt. and agree with the programmes supporting people with disabilities, especially the maintenance of the charity sales network. These activities bring benefits for the Company.

Employees with disabilities are considered to be successful in onboarding, and their acceptance is favourable for both their customers and their colleagues. Their trading data also shows that their commercial presence is welcomed by the costumers.

The company's activities as a responsible employer are also awarded from year to year. Most recently, in 2019, based on the performance of the last nine years, the Disability-Friendly Workplace Champion Award was given to Szerencsejáték Zrt. by a professional jury. It is particularly noteworthy that two of the company's employees with disabilities have already received the *'Example Award'* in recognition of their work.

The company intends to continuously develop its practice of employing people with disabilities. A milestone in the company's life is to change the current offline sales system of employees with disabilities in the near future by switching to an online sales

system. The changes, named 'the IT development of the decade', are expected to affect several areas, for example, it will be possible to employ members of another disability group, that of blind and visually impaired people, to use specific software, similar to the practice of ONCE. As a result of this development, employees with disabilities will be able to work with up-to-date digital equipment. Furthermore, there will be an opportunity to expand the sales portfolio, and other products may become available at charity sales points.

The company later aims to provide all the conditions necessary for maintaining stable, inclusive workplaces, becoming an inclusive workplace by opening new positions, in which all players with disabilities will find the most accessible service platform that supports their fulfilment, and the attitudes of all employees will continue to become increasingly inclusive.

CONCLUSION

The company is undergoing development. As a first step, people with disabilities were seen as potential employees, with a focus on creating and maintaining employment conditions. This was followed by the awareness-raising of non-disabled employees, and currently, the company is in the process of increasing the comfort of players with disabilities in information accessibility by introducing the KONTAKT sign language interpreter service. Besides, the 'High 5!' and playground programmes address the interests of society at large. The target group of the programmes has gradually expanded. The fact that the event for the company's partners held in the Pesti Vigadó in 2018 was dedicated to disability also shows the level of the company's commitment. Disability-related activity, which initially started as an employment programme, has now become an integral part of the company's wide-ranging social responsibility (CSR) activity.

There are allocated elements of the programme but steps have also been taken due to unexpected decisions. It was a conscious decision that in the beginning, in addition to the employees with a chronic health condition, the group of people with physical disabilities was considered as a target group, and all necessary measures were taken to make it accessible. Vendors were involved in the design of the sales table, as part of a workshop. As a result, the tables are height-adjustable and easy to use for a person with a wheelchair. In all cases, the sales points are accessible and the lottery shops serving the vendors have also been selected so as to be accessible. Introducing the employment of deaf and hard of hearing people in 2014 was also a conscious step, taken with the involvement of a professional partner, SINOSZ, who was also involved in preparing the integration of the employees. For employees who come into contact with deaf vendors, a deaf trainer held an awareness raising training session. This was based on an idea occurring to one of the senior executives involved in the training, so an internal awareness raising training course was developed. In addition to disseminating knowledge and understanding of disabilities, this training helps all employees become aware of the company's commitment to disability.

The most important experience of the company's more than 15-year programme is that for an organisation planning the employment of people with disabilities, the following aspects are considered worth pursuing.

- Accurate and detailed business planning.
- An inclusive approach, ensured in the relevant organisational system of the company.
- Organisational and human openness in both technical and HR innovations.
- Knowledge-based acquisition of information about disability, which may also include the involvement of NGOs.
- Transparent representation of the main principle of disability within the company, the 'Nothing about us without us' principle.
- All people involved in the employment programme being equal partners.
- The order and content of the company's internal and external communication being formed precisely.

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As SEAMUS HEGARTY ELABORATED: 'IN AN IDEAL WORLD THERE WOULD BE NO SPECIAL SCHOOLS SINCE EVERY CHILD WOULD RECEIVE AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION IN A LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL. NO COUNTRY IS NEAR ACHIEVING THAT GOAL, APART PERHAPS FROM ITALY, AND IT HAS TO BE ASSUMED THAT SPECIAL SCHOOLS WILL FEATURE ON THE MAP OF SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR SOME TIME TO COME. BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEY CAN CONTINUE UNCHANGED. SPECIAL SCHOOLS HAVE MANY ADVANTAGES — CONCENTRATION OF EXPERTISE IN TEACHING PUPILS WITH VARIOUS DISABILITIES, MODIFIED CURRICULA AND PROGRAMMES OF WORK, ADAPTED BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF, AND LINKS WITH LOCAL EMPLOYERS AND POST-SCHOOL TRAINING AGENCIES. THESE ARE THE VERY THINGS WHOSE ABSENCE FROM ORDINARY SCHOOLS MAKES THEM INEFFECTUAL IN EDUCATING PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES. THE CHALLENGE TO SPECIAL SCHOOLS THEN IS TO FIND WAYS OF SHARING THEIR EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES, AND OF EMBEDDING THEM IN A WIDER EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT. SOME SPECIAL SCHOOLS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO DEVELOP OUTREACH PROGRAMMES. THIS CAN ENTAIL SETTING UP WORKING LINKS WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD ORDINARY SCHOOLS WHERE STAFF AND PUPILS ARE SHARED.'

'SOME SPECIAL SCHOOLS ACT AS RESOURCE CENTRES, PROVIDING INFORMATION AND CONSULTANCY TO LOCAL SCHOOLS, ORGANIZING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FAMILIES AND CONTRIBUTING TO IN-SERVICE TRAINING ACTIVITIES. DISCHARGING THESE FUNCTIONS SUCCESSFULLY REQUIRES CONSIDERABLE CHANGES WITHIN SPECIAL SCHOOL STAFF. NEW SKILLS MUST BE DEVELOPED AND NEW ATTITUDES FOSTERED. TRANSMITTING A SKILL TO OTHERS IS NOT THE SAME AS EXERCISING IT ONESELF, AND OPERATING ACROSS SEVERAL SCHOOLS OR IN THE COMMUNITY IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM WORKING IN THE CLOSED CONFINES OF A SINGLE SPECIAL SCHOOL.'

'THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGES REQUIRED ARE ATTITUDINAL: STAFF WHO ARE JEALOUS OF THEIR AUTONOMY AND INTENT ON MAINTAINING LINES OF PROFESSIONAL DEMARCATION WILL NOT SET UP EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION. THERE MUST BE A WILLINGNESS TO MOVE BEYOND EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL BASES AND ANY STATUS THAT MAY GO WITH THEM, AND

TO WORK CO-OPERATIVELY IN WHATEVER NEW STRUCTURES MAY BE ADVISED. THE UPSHOT OF ALL THIS IS THAT SPECIAL SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE COULD BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM NOW. EMPHASIS WOULD MOVE AWAY FROM EDUCATING LIMITED NUMBERS OF PUPILS IN RELATIVE ISOLATION TOWARDS ACTING AS RESOURCE CENTRES. THE LATTER COULD ENCOMPASS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, IN-SERVICE TRAINING, THE COLLECTION AND EVALUATION OF EQUIPMENT AND COMPUTER SOFTWARE, AND SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT, AS WELL AS ADVICE AND CONSULTATION ON ALL MATTERS RELATING TO THE EDUCATION OF PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES. THESE RESOURCE-CENTRE FUNCTIONS ARE IMPORTANT IN IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION REGARDLESS OF WHERE IT IS PROVIDED. BY CAPITALIZING ON AVAILABLE EXPERIENCE AND ESTABLISHING A BANK OF INFORMATION, MATERIALS AND EXPERTISE, THIS OFFERS A POWERFUL MODEL FOR MAKING BEST USE OF FREQUENTLY LIMITED RESOURCES. IF SPECIAL SCHOOLS HAVE TO MAKE CHANGES, ORDINARY SCHOOLS HAVE TO UNDERGO REVOLUTION. ORDINARY SCHOOLS HAVE GENERALLY FAILED PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES AND MAJOR SCHOOL REFORM IS NECESSARY BEFORE THEY CAN MAKE ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR THEM.'

'THIS REFORM MUST OPERATE AT TWO LEVELS: THE ACADEMIC ORGANIZATION AND CURRICULUM PROVISION OF THE SCHOOL AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF. THE FORMER REQUIRES RETHINKING THE WAYS IN WHICH PUPILS ARE GROUPED FOR TEACHING PURPOSES, THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT SCHOOLS CAN MAKE FOR SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING AND THE MODIFICATIONS TO THE MAINSTREAM CURRICULUM THAT TEACHERS CAN MAKE SO AS TO GIVE PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES ACCESS TO IT. ALL OF THIS FORCES MAJOR CHANGES IN TEACHER BEHAVIOUR. ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS MUST ALL BE DEVELOPED TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL WHERE THOSE PREVIOUSLY DISENFRANCHISED ARE GIVEN AN EQUAL SAY AND NARROW CONCEPTS OF NORMALITY ARE DISCARDED.' (HEGARTY, 1994, 16). HEGARTY CONTINUES: 'PREPARING PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES FOR ADULT LIFE IS A PARTICULAR CHALLENGE FOR ORDINARY SCHOOLS THAT RUN INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES. MANY SPECIAL SCHOOLS HAVE DEVOTED GREAT EFFORTS TO THIS AREA AND HAVE WELL-ESTABLISHED LEAVERS' COURSES. THEY ALSO BENEFIT FROM THE GREATER CONTROL THEY CAN EXERCISE OVER PUPILS' ENVIRONMENTS AND EXPOSURE TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. ORDINARY SCHOOL STAFF HAVE TO FIND WAYS OF ENSURING THAT PUPILS DO NOT MISS OUT ON THE SYSTEMATIC PREPARATION THEY WOULD RECEIVE IN A GOOD SPECIAL SCHOOL, AND THEY MUST OFTEN DO SO WITH FEWER RESOURCES AND IN CONTEXTS THAT ALLOW FOR LESS CONTROL.' (HEGARTY, 1994, 45)

THE DEBATE PERSISTS AND HAS GAINED NEW IMPETUS FUELLED BY THE CONTROVERSIAL FINDINGS OF FOLLOW-UP RESEARCH CONDUCTED ON CURRENT EXPERIENCE OF INTEGRATION IN SCHOOLS. A UNICEF INNOCENTI INSIGHT STUDY OF 2005 HIGHLIGHTS THE SITUATION IN CEE/CIS COUNTRIES AND THE BALTIC STATES: 'THE EDUCATION DEBATE IS STILL VERY ACTIVE. THERE ARE ARGUMENTS THAT INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES INTO MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS CAN BE A DRAWBACK FOR SOME STUDENTS, BOTH DISABLED AND NON-DISABLED PERSONS. THAT MAY BE A QUESTION OF ADEQUATE RESOURCES — A PERSISTENT AND IMPORTANT ISSUE. THERE IS A CASE IN THE CEE/CIS REGION FOR LINKING SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS WITH LOCAL MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS TO HELP TO BREAK DOWN THE TRADITION OF SEGREGATION.'

'IN SOME WESTERN COUNTRIES, THERE IS A TREND TO CO-LOCATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS ON THE SAME SITE AS MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS IN THE BELIEF IT PROVIDES THE 'BEST OF BOTH WORLDS'. SERIOUS EFFORTS TOWARDS INTEGRATION ARE BEING MADE IN SOME COUNTRIES, NOTABLY BULGARIA, HUNGARY, ROMANIA AND MACEDONIA.

'WHERE INTEGRATION HAS OCCURRED, IT IS LARGELY ACCOMPLISHED BY BEING AT THE SAME LOCATION AS AND/OR MIXING WITH MAINSTREAM STUDENTS, RATHER THAN INTEGRATED OR INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS. CURRICULAR INTEGRATION, WHERE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES LEARN TOGETHER IN THE SAME CLASSROOMS WITH THE GENERAL STUDENT POPULATION, IS STILL SELDOM SEEN IN THE REGION — AND WHERE IT IS, IT IS OFTEN UNPLANNED AND, THEREFORE, UNSUPPORTED. IN ALBANIA IN 1996, AS THE COUNTRY REPORT NOTES, FOR THE FIRST TIME 'THE INTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH DISABILITY IN REGULAR SCHOOL' BECAME A DECLARED POLICY GOAL — ALTHOUGH THE DETAILS OF HOW TO DO THIS WERE NOT SPECIFIED. A RECENT SURVEY BY THE ALBANIAN DISABILITY RIGHTS FOUNDATION FOUND THAT THE INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WAS QUITE LIMITED AND DONE LARGELY IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURE FROM PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH MODERATE DISABILITIES. IN HUNGARY, WHERE THE SPECIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM WAS RETAINED, ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN WITH

DISABILITIES IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS STARTED SPONTANEOUSLY IN THE MID-1990S. HOWEVER, SCHOOLS 'DID NOT HAVE THE TECHNICAL, PEDAGOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR THE INTEGRATED EDUCATION' OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

'THE RESISTANCE OF ATTITUDES AGAINST THE INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. IN ECHOES OF THE 'CHARITY' TREATMENT OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, PARENTS AND OTHERS MAY SUPPORT INTEGRATION ONLY CONDITIONALLY, E.G., THE PROVISIO THAT INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN A REGULAR CLASSROOM DOES NOT DETRACT RESOURCES FROM NON-DISABLED STUDENTS. ADDITIONALLY, THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL PASSIVE RESISTANCE INCUMBENT IN EXISTING EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES.' (UNICEF, 2005, 20).

IN THE LITERATURE WE CAN FIND SEVERAL EXAMPLES: 'ALTHOUGH PARENTS WERE HAPPY WITH THE PROGRESS OF THEIR CHILD AT THE SCHOOL, THEY WERE DISAPPOINTED ABOUT SOCIAL OUTCOMES. THIS WAS IN PART DUE TO THE FACT THAT MANY CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES CAME BY BUS FROM OUT OF CATCHMENT: THEY HAD TO MAKE A NEW FRIENDSHIP BASE, AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CARRYING IT ON OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS.' (AVRAMIDIS, BAYLISS & BURDEN, 2002, 150)

THE UNICEF STUDY CONTINUES WITH A QUOTE FROM THE LITHUANIA COUNTRY REPORT OF 2002: 'POLICY, LAW AND PRACTICE HAVE BEEN LINKED IN LITHUANIA TO MAKE STRONG PROGRESS IN MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION. THE 1991 LAW ON EDUCATION RECOGNIZED THE RIGHT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TO BE EDUCATED IN SCHOOLS CLOSEST TO HOME. SINCE 1991 SCHOOLS STARTED USING MORE RESTRICTIVE CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTING CHILDREN INTO SPECIAL SCHOOLS — A CRUCIAL GATEKEEPING FUNCTION. AMENDMENTS IN 1998 SET OUT DEFINITIONS OF THE ROLE OF PEDAGOGICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN ASSESSING SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND GAVE PARENTS AND CHILDREN THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE THE FORM AND PLACE OF EDUCATION. THE LAW STRESSES INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND THE RIGHT OF PERSONS, EVEN THOSE WITH COMPLEX OR SEVERE DISABILITIES, TO BE EDUCATED.' THE UNICEF STUDY THEN REFERS TO STAFFING ISSUES: 'THE LACK OF TEACHERS WHO ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED TO WORK WITH CHILDREN WITH LEARNING

