



# BITSE

## BARRIERS WHICH INHIBIT THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO EMPLOYMENT

Newsletter 2

October 2013

The BITSE Partnership has succeeded in continuously raising the 'BITSE Bar' of significant progress towards achieving our overall aim to make a difference in the lives of people who are in transition from school to employment throughout the European Union.

At this halfway stage of our scheduled activities, the 14 partner organisations have developed a range of stakeholder questionnaires which have produced extremely interesting and comprehensive results. These results identify common barriers that either restrict or inhibit the transition process and which are common throughout the partnership countries.

We take this opportunity to thank all those learners, trainers, service providers, employers and personal networks for their groundbreaking insight which informs the partnership results and outcomes. It is a mark of the quality and expertise within the partnership that has seen approximately upwards to three hundred persons of all abilities and professions either directly or indirectly contributing to achieving our highly ambitious and progressive goals.

It is also appropriate and timely that that we acknowledge all of the project's 'Silent Partners' in each member country, who provide the background help, support, advice and expertise through which we disseminate our results and products.

Building on the success of these initial results, the partnership now turns it's focus on developing 'TOOL KITS' for examining and overcoming these common barriers and compiling a set of '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.



Michael Barrett, Cope Foundation

# Meetings & Focus Groups



Since our last newsletter, two important events have been held contributing greatly to the progress of the project. The fourth meeting of the project took place in Zagreb in Croatia end of April; and the fifth one was held in Varna, Bulgaria in June. During the meeting in Zagreb, the partners had the possibility to discuss in depth the project objectives and review the results made so far. The event in Varna was directed at employers and service providers in Bulgaria through a focus group of 150 participants. The participants engaged in active discussions on the problems young people with disabilities encounter when leaving school and trying to find an employment. They were joined by the representatives of the BITSE partnership.

Some aspects discussed during the focus group work are worth being emphasized: I

- Persons with disabilities should choose the type of employment they prefer: sheltered or supported employment in a more sheltered or open labour market.
- Motivated employers are necessary to guarantee a positive working environment for the disabled staff member.
- Collaboration between the different stakeholders, policy makers, employers, services and the disabled persons are key. We should not wait for the government to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities, rather we should execute it ourselves.

*"It's important that employers are willing to make adjustments"*

Quote from focus group participant



*"We are all part of the problem therefore we must also be part of the solution. We need programs for raising awareness, we need to work in cooperation with governments and the institutions, but we should not only wait for them to do all the work. Lets all take one small step in changing our approach to disability, this I am confident will be one giant leap for the improvement of the lives of persons with disabilities!"*

*Michael Barrett – conclusive words*

## Quotes from focus group participants

*“Don’t treat me as a handicapped person, but as the whole person I am”*

*“Support after leaving school will prevent a possible relapse”*

*“I manage a Home for children and Protected home for children and youngsters with disabilities. Workshops for persons with intellectual disabilities have to be created. I support the protected employment for persons with intellectual disabilities.”*

*“It’s important that employers are willing to make adjustments”*

*“Besides classifying on IQ score, do also keep in mind the emotional level of functioning!”*

*Diyana Marinova, Targovishte, Bulgaria*

## Upcoming: BITSE Stakeholders Meeting

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the 6<sup>th</sup> BITSE Partner Meeting will take place in The Hague (NL) alongside a forum for representatives of Dutch policy makers and interest groups. The event, hosted by the Mid-din organisation, will present the state of play of the BITSE project as well as the recent changes in the Dutch legislation in regards of employment for persons with disabilities.

Following a presentation by

the CG-Raad, the largest Dutch umbrella organization for persons with disabilities,



The Hague (NL)  
Sixth Action Meeting  
October 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> 2013

the meeting will also be an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss dissemination and raising the awareness for BITSE themes in times of crisis and cutbacks, supported by a panel of experts.

### Thank You

*Special thanks go out to all the participants of the focus groups in Varna (employers and service providers), as well as to all the stakeholders coming to the meeting in The Hague!*

**For further information, please contact Michael Barrett [barrettm@cope-foundation.ie]**