

OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, CASE STUDY “PENTRU VOI” NGO, TIMISOARA

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Abstract

Our paper is based on an empirical sociological research on the analysis of the effects of successful interventions included in the process of occupational integration of people from vulnerable groups, the target group being represented by people with intellectual disabilities in Timișoara. Methodologically, the theoretical apparatus operationalises concepts such as success model, beneficiaries, main organization, partner organizations, intervention, intervention implementation, intervention results and sustainability, good practice models. The methodology used was qualitative, with emphasis on case studies. The methods used were sociological observation (direct nonparticipation, document analysis) and semi-structured individual interview. The applicative contribution of this diagnosis is reflected in the analysis of opportunities for replicating successful models by integrating policies and practices in the field, factors that generate successful interventions in the process of occupational integration of vulnerable groups. The overall hypothesis, which guides the whole exploratory approach, states that there is a stock of successful models resulting from social interventions used by actors directly involved in the occupational integration of vulnerable groups with potential for inter-institutional replication at national level. Key results include the impact of interventions on beneficiaries, the sustainability of interventions, the main challenges of sustainability, future plans and legislative proposals to multiply interventions, based on a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with beneficiaries of the services and employees of “Pentru Voi” NGO from Timișoara. This research can be continued by expanding the population's universe, including the families of people with intellectual disabilities in the process of their professional integration.

Keywords: non-governmental organizations Timiș, people with disabilities, models of good practice, integrated interventions, occupational integration of vulnerable groups

Résumé

Notre article est basé sur une recherche sociologique empirique sur l'analyse des effets des interventions réussies incluses dans le processus d'intégration professionnelle des personnes appartenant à des groupes vulnérables, le groupe cible étant représenté par les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle à Timișoara. Méthodologiquement, l'appareil théorique opérationnalise des concepts tels que le modèle de réussite, les bénéficiaires, l'organisation principale, les organisations partenaires, l'intervention, la mise en œuvre des interventions, les résultats des interventions et la durabilité, les modèles de bonnes

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pratiques. La méthodologie utilisée était qualitative, l'accent étant mis sur les études de cas. Les méthodes utilisées étaient l'observation sociologique (non-participation directe, analyse de documents) et l'entretien individuel semi-structuré. La contribution applicative de ce diagnostic se reflète dans l'analyse des possibilités de reproduire les modèles réussis en intégrant les politiques et les pratiques sur le terrain, facteurs qui génèrent des interventions réussies dans le processus d'insertion professionnelle des groupes vulnérables. L'hypothèse globale, qui guide l'ensemble de l'approche exploratoire, indique qu'il existe un stock de modèles performants résultant d'interventions sociales utilisées par des acteurs directement impliqués dans l'insertion professionnelle de groupes vulnérables ayant un potentiel de réplication interinstitutionnelle au niveau national. Les principaux résultats comprennent l'impact des interventions sur les bénéficiaires, la durabilité des interventions, les principaux défis de la durabilité, les plans futurs et les propositions législatives pour multiplier les interventions, sur la base d'une série d'entretiens semi-structurés menés avec les bénéficiaires des services ONG de Timisoara. Cette recherche peut être poursuivie en élargissant l'univers de la population, y compris les familles des personnes handicapées mentales dans le processus de leur insertion professionnelle.

Mots-clés: organisations non gouvernementales Timiș, personnes handicapées, modèles de bonnes pratiques, interventions intégrées, intégration professionnelle des groupes vulnérables

Rezumat

Lucrarea noastră se fundamentează pe o cercetare sociologică empirică privind analiza efectelor intervențiilor de succes cuprinse în procesul de integrare ocupațională a persoanelor din grupuri vulnerabile, grupul țintă fiind reprezentat de persoanele cu dizabilități intelectuale din Timișoara. Metodologic, aparatul teoretic operaționalizează concepte precum model de succes, beneficiari, organizație principală, organizații partenere, intervenție, implementare intervenție, rezultate și sustenabilitate intervenție, modele de bună practică. Metodologia utilizată a fost calitativă, cu accent pe studiile de caz. Metodele utilizate au fost observația sociologică (directă neparticipativă, analiza documentelor) și interviul individual direct semi-structurat. Aportul aplicativ al acestei cercetări se reflectă în analiza oportunităților privind replicarea modelelor de succes prin integrarea la nivelul politicilor și practicilor din domeniu, a factorilor care generează intervențiile de succes în procesul de integrare ocupațională a grupurilor vulnerabile. Ipoteza generală, care ghidează întreg demersul explorator, susține că există un stoc al modelelor de succes rezultate ca urmare a intervențiilor sociale utilizate de către actorii direct implicați în procesul de integrare ocupațională a grupurilor vulnerabile, cu potențial de replicare interinstituțională în domeniu la nivel național. Principalele rezultate surprind impactul intervențiilor la nivelul beneficiarilor, sustenabilitatea intervențiilor, principalele provocări privind sustenabilitatea, planuri de viitor și propuneri legislative pentru multiplicarea intervențiilor, plecând de la o serie de interviuri semistructurate realizate cu beneficiari ai serviciilor și angajați ai organizației neguvernamentale “Pentru Voi” din Timișoara. Prezenta cercetare poate fi continuată prin extinderea universului populației, incluzând familiile persoanelor cu dizabilități intelectuale în procesul de integrare profesională a acestora.

Cuvinte cheie: organizații neguvernamentale Timiș, persoane cu dizabilități, modele de bună practică, intervenții integrate, integrarea ocupațională a grupurilor vulnerabile

1. Introduction

Established in 1996, “Pentru Voi” Foundation is a non-governmental organization providing community services in partnership with the Local Council and Timisoara City Hall and advocates for the rights of people with development disabilities.

The need to have a job is essential for people with disabilities. Their motivations start from the ability to provide basic needs to the needs of self-reliance and self-esteem. Beneficiaries are aware of the need to self-support or the maintenance of a family, if they want to start a family. The needs of persons with disabilities include, as in the case of any person: social contact, security, adequate housing, education, work, cultural and recreational activities, the need to be respected, the need to choose, the need for independence and depend on the gravity and the type of disability. The need and importance of a job for a person with disabilities highlights the role that work has in our development as individuals and the impact in terms of well-being and mental health (Winn and Hay 2009).

An important component when it comes to supporting persons with disabilities for labour market integration is social economy. Thus, professionals can be involved in various activities that can facilitate employment: training, school completion or obtaining social support. (Goian and Vasiluță-Ștefănescu 2013).

Also, organizations that provide services for people with disabilities can benefit from the support of students (for example, social work students) undergoing field placement or volunteering, field training being actual professional experience that can offer students the motivation for future work with this vulnerable group. (Bălăuță and Vlaicu 2017)

Unfortunately, “Pentru Voi” Foundation can not provide community services for the entire population of people with intellectual disabilities, and beneficiaries have to enroll on a waiting list in order to get a seat in the Foundation's day centers, this waiting time being even several years. Also, due to the fact that the services provided by the Foundation are rarely offered nationwide, there are families who moved their residence to Timișoara so that their children can access these services.

2. Research Methodology

This case study is part of a broader national research with a fundamentally qualitative unitary methodology including sociological observation (direct and non-participating, document analysis), the semi-structured direct individual interview and a series of semi-structured interviews with beneficia-

ries of public and private organizations engaged in implementing social policies targeting vulnerable groups, but also with their employees and their partner organizations. This methodology is common to all case studies documented at national level, as is the case with our current empirical research.

2.1. General objective

The overall objective of our research is represented by replication of successful models and integrating them at the level of policies and practices in the field, including the factors that generate successful interventions in the process of occupational integration of vulnerable groups.

2.2. Specific objectives

This general objective has been operationalized into working objectives as follows:

1. Specific objective I (OB1) – Identifying successful models in the practice of institutions with area of responsibility assumed in the field of occupational integration of vulnerable groups.
2. Specific objective II (OB2) – Description of the context, relationships, mechanisms and institutional activities involved in implementing successful models.
3. Specific objective III (OB3) – Identifying and defining the objective factors that contributed to the success of the analyzed interventions.
4. Specific objective IV (OB4) – Identifying appropriate mechanisms for replicating successful models by integrating policies and practices in the field and / or developing successful interventions.

2.3. The general hypothesis

As a qualitative study, the overall research hypothesis is rather an assumption that has guided the entire investigative process at the level of the case study, which we express in the following: there is a stock of successful models resulting from social interventions used by actors directly involved in the occupational integration of vulnerable groups with potential for inter-institutional replication at national level.

2.4. Universe of population

Universe of population is represented by the subjects of the research: beneficiaries, representatives of local authorities, public institutions at the county and central level, representatives of NGOs, employers, decision-makers in the elaboration and implementation of social policies. In our case

study we selected “Pentru Voi” NGO from Timișoara as a representative one for the declared objectives of the survey.

2.5. Sample

As a qualitative study, we can not speak *stricto sensu* of sampling (Zamfir and Vlăsceanu 1993), but we can mention that the selection technique of the interviewed persons was that of the “snowball”, which is a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Thus the sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball. As the sample builds up, enough data are gathered to be useful for research. This sampling technique is often used in hidden populations (wikipedia 2018), a feature that is similar to the nature of our target group represented by people with intellectual disabilities.

2.6. Method

The method that we have appropriated to this approach is represented by the observation and interview method (Pășcuță 2001; Rotariu and Iluț 1997); we chose this method because it allows the collection of large amounts of information in a relatively short time and allows their rapid processing, with a large area of application from a population non-representative statistically.

2.7. Technics

We used direct, face to face, interviewing technics for collecting information about the investigated involved subjects.

2.8. Tools, types of questions

We conducted 10 interviews, using as instrument the semi-structured interview guide (Chelcea Marginean and Cauc 1998), including open questions. Interview guides were administered by interviewers. We used mostly open questions regarding motivation opinions because we did not want to limit the possibilities of expression in responses nor the possible options for response. Interviews were transcribed and processed following the main discursive core.

3. Data analysis and interpretation

Thematic areas included in the interview guide, to which the analysis of interviews refers, are the following: History of the person on the labor market, History and context of the intervention, Description of activities,

Relations between partners, Professionalism and the human resource that implements the intervention, Budget intervention, Lessons learned from the intervention implementation, Results, impact and sustainability of the intervention, Future plans. These thematic areas targeted both the beneficiaries and the representatives of the main and partner organizations. In the following we synthesize the main results.

3.1. *Intervention*

“Pentru Voi” Foundation is an organization that has launched several first-ever initiatives at national level, among which we mention in the field of intellectual disability: the first day center for adults with intellectual disabilities, the first supported employment service, the first shelter, the first crisis center, the first group of self-deputies – people with intellectual disabilities. These pioneering activities in support of people with intellectual disabilities are based on the experience gained by the organization in the field in more than 20 years of activity since 1996. At the time the organization started its activities there were no services for people with disabilities in the country, and we must make it clear that there are also few actors in the area offering these services in the West Region. The need for these services lies in the need for people with disabilities, especially those in day care centers for children, to benefit from these services when entering adulthood, as disability does not disappear when the age of 18 is reached.

The starting point of the intervention is to highlight disabled people by the Complex Assessment Service of Adult Disabled People from the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Timiș, when they reach the age of 18, when they are assigned an intellectual disability code, being informed that there is a center for adults with intellectual disabilities. The Organization “Pentru Voi” provides a viable alternative for the active life of persons with disabilities, if they are accepted by one of the centers, given that their educational and professional course is problematic. Thus, many people with intellectual disabilities face the increased risk of dropping out of school (not completing compulsory education, regardless of the course followed) and non-integration into the labor market and unemployment. According to the Foundation's data, in Timișoara the number of potential beneficiaries is significant (about 1000 persons), the absorption capacity of the organization covering only one fifth of this population. Other relevant actors providing support measures for people with intellectual disabilities in Timis County are the Colfasa Association and the Bethany Foundation.

In this context, there is the initiative to set up a protected unit (DPPD Strategy 2018) within the “Pentru Voi” Foundation, the legal framework being provided by Law 448/2006, republished and updated in 2008, on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. This law provides for the obligation of each employer to hire disabled people when the number of employees in the organization is more than 50. Thus, the employer has to employ people with disabilities, the number of them having to represent at least 4% of the total number of employees. If he can not meet this obligation, the employer will pay 50% of the country's gross minimum wage for each non-employed disabled person. Among the rights provided by this law (social benefits, facilities, social services), we mention as a point of interest that resulted from interviewing employees and beneficiaries of the “Pentru Voi” Foundation, the possibility of a person with intellectual disabilities to work less than 8 hours a day, if there is a recommendation from the evaluation committee. Supporting an 8-hour work program is difficult for most beneficiaries, while being a disadvantage in terms of job creation in the open market.

Until 2006 there were organized profit-making activities with the beneficiaries, the products being put on sale by participating in the fairs. Since 2006, with the publication of the legal framework, the foundation started the procedure for obtaining the authorization of a protected unit from the National Authority for People with Disabilities (NAPD). Being one of the first organizations in the country that obtained the authorization for a protected unit in 2007 with a number of two people with intellectual disabilities initially employed, “Pentru Voi” Foundation currently has two protected units with about 60 beneficiaries, people with intellectual disabilities. The second protected unit operates in Scălaz from 2015, being established through the project “Different but Valuable Professionals”. There is a direct relationship between the organization and the beneficiaries, who become active in the labor market, with all the rights and obligations associated with it, but the most important benefits are employment, earning a salary and the possibility of obtaining a new pension. The workplace and income earned essentially contributes to the integration of people with intellectual disabilities into society by increasing their autonomy, ensuring the necessary conditions and resources for equality and non-discrimination. The existence of these two protected units is also important due to the fact that the access of the persons with intellectual disabilities is difficult on the free job market, both due to the competitive conditions and the social conditions (the attitude of the family towards the employment, paradoxically, is not always a posi-

tive one) or individual (the impression that a legal employment means the termination of the disability allowance). The interaction of beneficiaries with institutions that can contribute to the increase of employability and professional integration refers to the provision of informational support (information, vocational counseling, mediation on the labor market, etc.) to persons with disabilities and their families.

3.2. Description of activities

The Foundation has developed an integrated intervention in support of people with intellectual disabilities, which has been reflected in several successful sustainable projects and at present: the two protected units in Timisoara and Săcălaz, Day Center “Together”, Day Center “Ladislau Tácsi”, “Horizonte Noi” Day Center, protected dwellings: Dina, Dinu, Dora, Laura, Cristian, Respiro Center, social services at home, community support services (counseling, supported employment, post-employment monitoring). Day Centers support the integration of people with intellectual disabilities (Buys and Tilbury et al. 2011) in Timisoara, the “New Horizons” Day Center, for example, ensuring a copy-center works (where materials, prints, prints, business cards, brochures, maps, posters).

The Center was inaugurated on October 24, 2012, at the inauguration attended by the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Romania, the sub-prefect of Timis County, the Mayor of Timisoara, as well as other representatives of the local authorities, the business environment, volunteers, beneficiaries of the center and their parents. This participation fully reflects the support of local government institutions as well as the local community for the initiative that provides specialized counseling and job integration for 30 beneficiaries. There are also outsourced activities by some companies to the protected unit (and its workshops), such as sorting ice cream sticks, other packing and recycling activities, including through mobile teams at the trading partners' points of business. Also, here are activities for making decorations for various events (“mărțișoare”, congratulations, arrangements for Easter and Christmas celebrations, etc.). Beneficiaries of this center have a low level of intellectual disability.

“Ladislau Tácsi” Day Center was inaugurated in 2007, providing services for 48 beneficiaries. The center has four rooms with terrace and garden, for the beneficiaries, a dining room, a medical cabinet, a psychological cabinet, a relaxation room, hygienic and sanitary spaces, being served by 8 recovery specialists. The activities include measures that focus on increasing the autonomy of beneficiaries and their integration into the community, combin-

ing personal and lucrative development activities. Thus, the activities of the center include the development of personal and social autonomy (household activities, social skills, personal hygiene), the formation of verbal and non-verbal communication skills, the formation and development of messages reception and expression skills, knowledge of the meaning of some symbols (pictograms, photograms, signs, etc.), performing artistic activities (dance, theater, painting), cognitive education, for the acquisition of some notions of temporal and spatial orientation; knowledge of the environment; increasing personal autonomy, psychomotricity activities that stimulate the development of general motricity, sports activities, games and competitions with the aim of developing physical abilities, cooperation, competitive spirit, sensory stimulation and relaxation. There are also lucrative activities (gardening, housekeeping, learning of operations from different production processes, giving the beneficiaries the opportunity to be useful.) These activities increase their self-esteem, reducing negative manifestations such as anxiety, frustration, the aggressiveness, the panic, the depression, the recipients are encouraged and guided to carry out useful activities. Other activities in the center are recreational activities (excursions, parties for the beneficiaries and their families) as well as individual counseling, psychological intervention and creation of support groups. Beneficiaries of this center have high intellectual disabilities.

“Together” day center has a capacity of 90 beneficiaries. Several centers belonging to the protected facility operate within the center. As a result, the Copy Center workshop offers workplace integration for 18 beneficiaries, coordinated by two educators. Workshop activities: xerox, scanning, black and white and color printing, folders, bindings, business cards, badges, badges, labels, diplomas, posters, catalogs, flyers, flyers, folders, personalized calendars. Beneficiaries of this workshop have skills and skills to work with the computer.

Yes, down, the copy center is working with the computer, of course it does. Work is done, some orders are made, it's a protected drive, and part of them works on the computer. And they learn to work, they know how to make a Word document, a table, write a text, they are working in CorelDraw and Photoshop. They were at one point at the foundation foundation and learned this thing. (A.N., Foundation Employee)

The decoration workshop has 20 beneficiaries, who are guided by two educators specializing in product development. Employees' involvement implies passing through some stages, only some of them succeeding in

completing all the stages of achieving a product. The activities performed include but are not limited to: tailoring (aprons and kitchen gloves, chair and ornamental pillows), decorations, necklaces, bracelets, congratulations, floral arrangements, seasonal products, personalized products) on various occasions and holidays (St. Valentine, March 1, March 8, St. Nicholas, Christmas and Easter).

We have four groups of activities that take place in each group, for example, let me give you these groups. So it's a workshop upstairs, the decoration workshop. In the decoration workshop we carry out activities: we make marches, congratulations, all sorts of holiday decorations. Now I'm talking about lucrative activities. I'll tell you about the non-lucrative ones. So lucrative, what's going on. Downstairs are the workshops where the bags are sorted. We have contracts with KROMBERG and OBRIST. Sort bags and assemble deodorant caps. These are lucrative activities. Besides these, we make candles at order. So a range of lucrative activities that we do. Beneficiaries in these groups are selected somewhat depending on their abilities. For example, upstairs are girls who have talent or abilities to sew or meticulous activities to make a floral decoration, to sew a greeting card. In the other groups are the beneficiaries who do not need skills or a very fine psychomotricity as required above. Assemble caps, sort bags. These are lucrative activities. In addition to these lucrative activities, we also have day center activities that consist of different therapies, such as music, plastic activities, modeling, even we had doll therapy, art therapy. So these ones somehow complement one another. That would be the range of activities. Apart from these, we also have gardening activities on the range of lucrative activities. (R.A., employee)

Some of the beneficiaries of this group are in charge of maintaining the therapeutic garden of the Foundation. Beneficiaries of this center have medium and strong intellectual disabilities.

Respiro Center was set up in 2007 as a result of the public-private partnership between The For You Foundation (Day Care Center) and Timisoara City Hall. The center services can benefit from the whole day, every day of the week, hosting up to three people at a time for up to three weeks. The daily cost borne by the beneficiary is 8.5 leva, covering food and administrative expenses. Only people with intellectual disabilities in Timisoara can benefit from this service. The activities carried out in this center are: supervision and guidance for self-management, personal hygiene and housing, housekeeping, food preparation, shopping, etc., food security, educational programs, social activities, psychological counseling, medication management, provided by the actual legislation.

In the field of assisted employment and post-employment monitoring, For Voi Foundation provides permanent support for at least 20 beneficiaries hired on the free labor market and for at least 40 beneficiaries employed in the protected unit in Timisoara. The post-employment assistance and post-employment monitoring services of the foundation are also offered to people with intellectual disabilities on the free labor market, given that getting a job is difficult but not impossible, with the main problem being to keep the job. Keeping the job for less than a month by the beneficiary is considered a failure within counseling, energy, time and money invested. Among the positive active employment practices that the foundation has in the field of labor market integration, we mention the individual placement model and the mobile work team model. The Foundation provides support for the preparation of the necessary documents for work placement, job coaching at the workplace (training, assistance in acquiring the necessary skills at the workplace, support in keeping the workplace), respectively monitoring the beneficiary at the workplace by visiting the counselor in assistance assisted by monthly visits, discussions with the beneficiary, supervisors, colleagues, monitoring the degree of accomplishment of the job, if there were absences from the workplace, consents, possible health problems, behavioral problems.

At least when you say the word job coaching and when you think that someone has stayed with them for a few days there until they have learned the activities they have to do, it is simply important that someone has gone with them on the means of transport up there. (A.P., employee)

The supported employment service identifies the beneficiaries of the sheltered units for outdoor employment. Also, if the employers of the foundation are required to indicate potential employees, employment counselors identify the person with the skills needed for the job.

Generally we see those who have the skills, they are more communicative, they are quicker in the activities they carry out, they understand the stages faster, they run the activities correctly, they have the ability to correct themselves when they are wrong ... You know, much in the opposite direction, that is, someone asks us the next person with disabilities to have the following studies and skills for a particular job. So, again, it goes in the opposite direction, a potential employer goes with the request to them, probably with the desire to receive subsidies. (A.P., employee)

Posts for which the foundation has managed to do outsourcing are those that involve simple repetitive tasks.

So it went, I repeat, on simple activities, cleaning, packaging, labeling; in the ready-to-wear garments, simple garments, meaning the preparation of the respective garment, hence the cleaning of packing and packing. (A.P., employee)

An important point in the beneficiaries' occupational integration is the professional training courses carried out within the Foundation, given the current shortage, the courses for people with intellectual disabilities are almost non-existent.

3.3. *Relations between partners*

The Foundation is a non-governmental organization that provides community services in partnership with the Local Council and the Town Hall of Timisoara. The Foundation has developed as a sustainable organization, based on community support, long-term partnership with the Timisoara Local Council, on governmental and international cooperation. The partnerships of the organizations with the local councils and the mayoralties are mainly aimed at financing their activity in the framework of public-private partnerships (development projects, support of day-center activities, sheltered housing, payment of financial allowances for people with disabilities etc.). The Timișoara City Hall and the Local Council contributed to this partnership mainly through material and financial support, participation with land, buildings and funding for various actions and projects. Funding for beneficiaries in day care centers is also done by awarding a grant per beneficiary to local authorities.

Yes, there is a framework, a public-private partnership with the mayorality, between the Foundation and the Timisoara City Hall, which functioned until this year. Now, in the coming months, the way of financing from the mayorality will be changed in the form of a subsidy, but we will still receive support from the local authorities. (A.P., employee)

The General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Timiș is one of the Foundation's partner institutions in identifying beneficiaries for day centers. The starting point of the intervention is the emphasis of the persons with disabilities on the complex assessment of disabled adults within the organization.

An example of good practice for involving public institutions in integrating people with disabilities into the labor market is the Partnership for You with the County Employment Agency of Timis (currently known as AJOFM). This partnership takes place in the field of informing and mediation of the available jobs at the county level, made public by the employers.

This collaboration involves the identification of locally available work places where the person with disabilities lives, the individual assessment of the person with disabilities, made by specialized personnel from the professional organizations in relation to the job requirements offered by the employers, the selection from the list of places work and the required professions of those whose requirements can be met by persons with disabilities. Job opportunities are reduced for people with disabilities. Let us understand, do not accuse the AJOFM of anything, so the County Employment Agency also offers counseling to people with disabilities. I know the gentleman who is in charge of this matter, we meet all the time when I go to the job market and I find myself looking for jobs for them, and it always tells me the same thing:

We do not have places work “or” jobs are 8 hours and we can not automatically take someone who is in the third degree of disability and who has a reduced work capacity. (AP, employee)

Another example of good practice is the partnership with Kromberg and Schubert, which has outsourced operations such as assembling plastic parts that serve the airbag system of cars, sorting bags, which the beneficiaries of the foundation can do. The green space belonging to the “New Horizons” Day Center was arranged with the help of collaborators and in partnership with the companies Continental Automotive Timișoara and Best Instal. We also mention partnerships in funding projects with various organizations, eg ONPHR (National Organization of People with Disabilities in Romania).

The Foundation has qualified staff with various specializations, including psychologists, social workers, economists, administrative staff in coordinating day centers, protected units and various projects and activities (Respiro Center, assisted employment and post-employment monitoring).

Activities are planned and controlled so that the services offered maintain a high degree of professionalism. “Of course, we plan the activities in a team, starting with the psychologist, the social assistant, the head of service, the medical staff, so we work in a team to get results.” (R.A., employee) Teachers working in the centers have undergone specialist training in the field and are encouraged to follow a relevant educational path.

So I told you the whole team is trained, they have a teacher. Some of them have, if you've heard of the Hilfe School, which prepares teachers to work with people with disabilities. The Hilfe School was at the beginning for 2 years, even 3 years have begun. After that, they probably did not, and it's been reduced to 2 years, and now I understand it's 7 months or so. But enough to have even ABC

work with people with disabilities. And then we continued with all sorts of courses. We called foreign specialists who came and attended, we trained and the teachers attended these courses, at all the training courses I have held. It was somehow planned the training plan according to possibilities. Even renowned specialists came to us. Yes, the social worker has the Social Work Faculty, the Psychologist has the Psychology Faculty. (R.A., employee)

There is a fluctuation of staff, but also a core of employees with great experience and dedication since the establishment of the organization. Thus, at the “Together” Day Care Center, out of the 9 teachers who coordinate the activity at present, 5 are relevant (15 years), the situation being similar in other centers and the protected unit in Timisoara.

So the beneficiary has an intervention plan called P.I. which is now under the 2015 standards for a 3-month period. So the beneficiary will, in one year, have 4 intervention plans. The intervention class plan, that is, what I will work with the beneficiary is based on an evaluation that will be also 4. So the beneficiary is evaluated quarterly. What is being evaluated? Beneficiary's needs. So the team, we call it a pluridisciplinary one, that is, the physician, the social worker, the psychologist, the recovery physician, assesses the needs of the beneficiary and then puts them in an intervention plan that will work with the beneficiary as a result of the evaluation. So that's what we do for the beneficiaries. And our work, for example, I say to you as a head of service, so my team, I have some evaluation items, a grid they make annually. (R.A. employee)

The interaction of the staff with the beneficiaries is an extremely positive one at the level of perception, from the interviews resulting in an appreciation that comes from both categories equally. The mutual feeling is given by the idea of belonging to the same family, in many cases the register used by the beneficiaries is a positive affection for the staff in the day care centers and the protected units:

My life has changed only for good when I am at the foundation and I can really thank my soul for everything they did for me. That in fact my parents could not do this for me and I am very grateful to the foundation. (C.L, beneficiary)

This positive interaction reflects the way employees refer to the beneficiaries, their professionalism being doubled by a real involvement in solving the beneficiaries' life problems. In this regard, I consider a part of the interview with a beneficiary of the “Together” Day Center:

I: And Mrs. Ana is the closest to you here ... A: Yes, I love her more like my mother. Ana: From the beginning it was with me and she has grown under my eyes. A: Maybe my mother who gave me life has not done so much for me as she did it. Ana: That's not really that important. To get her here she needed ... so

she went through the hands of many pedagogues, instructors.. So you imagine, in order to get along in the way it does now, it's a job in the back for years, a team has worked with her and what she does in the cleaning job. She has a teacher who it's up to her. There is a lady coordinating her, supervising her. (C.L, beneficiary, R.A., employee)

Another aspect that highlights the professionalism of the Foundation's employees is the optimal degree of organization of the current activity, at the level of objectives, mechanisms of quality control and activity results in day centers and protected units but also in the practice of coordination of activities and management:

[...] in order to have such a good organization you have to work a lot. So organization can only do it by analyzing what it was, making a strategy. Today afternoon, at 5, when the program ends, I have to think tomorrow what I'm doing. Of course, we plan the activities in a team, starting with the psychologist, the social assistant, the head of the service, the doctor, so we work in a team to get results. (R.A., employee)

3.4. *Financing the intervention*

The Foundation has funded the interventions from its own sources (resulting from lucrative activities), government contributions and the European Commission (through funding projects), the contribution of local authorities (Timisoara City Hall and Local Council), donations (including the 2% campaign) the contribution of volunteers to work (currently 24 contracts).

The partnerships of the organizations with the local councils and the mayoralties are mainly aimed at financing their activity in the framework of public-private partnerships (development projects, support of day-center activities, sheltered housing, payment of financial allowances for people with disabilities, etc.).

Now the way of financing has changed in the sense that we will receive subsidy financing. That is, per beneficiary a certain amount of money. So he wants to help us from now on the town hall. [...] We will receive this money on a monthly basis according to the number of beneficiaries. I can give you an example, in our unhappiness, the repairs will not be subsidized. So we'll have to cover it too. And people with disabilities, among them, are beneficiaries of behavioral disorders that, in a crisis or in such a particular situation, can break a window or destroy a sink or break a battery. We do not receive subsidy for repairs. [...] Unfortunately, it will be harder for the umpire. For example, administrative activities. We will not be able to pay the chef, the drivers, the administrative party, the administrator. (R.A., Employee)

The Timișoara City Hall and the Local Council contributed to this partnership mainly through material and financial support, participation with land, buildings and funding for various actions and projects. Funding for beneficiaries in day care centers is also done by awarding a grant per beneficiary to local authorities. We will find out if this support from the local authorities will be sustainable or the financial effort will also have to be sustained by the central authorities. “Under the pressure to promptly address acute social problems such as poverty, institutional experiences in the national social assistance system also indicate the reallocation from the local to the central level” (Stănescu, Asiminei and Vîrjan 2013).

3.5. Lessons Learned from Implementing the Intervention

In terms of competencies gained by the beneficiaries and successes of the organization, the main elements that define success refer to the social and professional integration of the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries and their help in order to be able to live as normal as possible, the employees of the Foundation, mentioning first of all the success of the investment in people, followed by the organizational development and building of an infrastructure that serves the intervention today:

As an example we have L., which I took out of the street, was sleeping on a cardboard near the town hall, I took her out of the street and brought it here. She could not do anything because she had stood in the street. He only had few copied or learned skills. I took her to the house, had no place to live. Even homes are on projects. I took her to a house, integrated it into a workshop, into a group, I taught her to work with small steps in the workshop, and then I hired her. I hired her in the foundation, I hired her outside. She is in the foundation for 8 hours now and is now fulfilled. Just what she lacks is a home where she is alone and live independently. I think that will be the culmination of work with her, to live alone, to be independent. And if you see all this, L. evolution, you'll see why our organization is a success. And many destinies, not only of L., and of others. (R.A., employee)

3.6. Future plans

Future plans include maintaining and improving the quality of services provided by the Foundation to intellectual disability beneficiaries. Thus, if the organization now responds to the needs of the beneficiaries, it also aims to meet the needs of their families in the future.

We have families that need support. Unfortunately, we can not answer them to all their needs, their needs, families. So we have responded to the needs of the beneficiaries, we went to families, but not as much as we would have wanted because we had no resources. The parents' school had no resources to do it. That is, to teach parents how to work to continue what we have started, what we do, so go home. That was one of the weaknesses. We could not go that far, we did not have enough resources. (R.A., employee)

Beneficiaries in the future are mainly seeking to improve their professional skills so that they can better integrate into the free labor market and compete. Other beneficiaries, on the contrary, do not want to leave the day centers and protected facilities in the future, providing them with the safety of tomorrow and the family environment they need, trying to best respect the educational, professional and behavioral requirements so that to be appreciated by colleagues and staff of the organization:

Well, first of all, I would like to have my own home, not to depend on the foundation, to be like a normal man on my feet. That's what I want from my whole heart and help people with disabilities. Why would you want to help them? Because I myself was helped and so well: to do good to others. (C.L., beneficiary).

Investing in human resources is another direction for the organization to grow in the future so that the beneficiaries are served by competent and sufficient staff:

Have enough staff, meet needs and reduce risks. That's what we want. Let's reduce the risks. Because the risks in disability work are many. So once in a group two teachers work and if there are 2-3 sick people on that day, there are no 2 teachers working on the group, but one, with 13 or 14 beneficiaries, or 16 or 18, here are 20 and, but I have an experienced teacher who can keep them. (R.A., employee)

4. Conclusions of the research

Through the information gathered during the interviews with the employed staff and the beneficiaries of the foundation, we consider the objectives of our qualitative empirical research formulated at the beginning of this paper to be attained. Here are some considerations regarding the innovative character of the Foundation's intervention and the existence of good practices which can be a benchmark in the activity of the Romanian institutions.

In Romania, persons with disabilities can be employed according to their professional training for the physical and intellectual capacity they have on the basis of an individual labor contract, both by individuals and by legal persons. At the same time, the employment services provided to persons with disabilities are mentioned as a priority in all strategic documents of public institutions at all levels (Government, ministries, national agencies, respectively subordinated structures in the territory) on employment in general and on the integration of persons with disabilities (Teșliuc, Grigoraș and Stănculescu 2015). Public institutions in Timis County have a low degree of involvement in supporting and integrating people with disabilities (in this case intellectual disabilities) into the labor market. The partnerships of the organizations with the local councils and the mayoralities are mainly aimed at financing their activity in the framework of public-private partnerships (development projects, support of day-center activities, sheltered housing, payment of financial allowances for people with disabilities, etc.) (Zamfir, Stoica and Stănculescu 2007). Employers accept the idea of employing people with disabilities, provided they do not lead to disruption of the production process, no additional spending is required, and it is preferable to employ people with minimal disabilities that require no effort from employers (Zamfir 2001). Intellectual disabilities are perceived as problematic by employers to engage people with such disabilities. On the other hand, there is a great deal of concern from people with disabilities in the loss of earned rights after having a job.

Also, persons with disabilities often face discrimination and rejection, the general population and even professionals addressing them in a language that may enhance their social exclusion (Goian 2010) and which is also burdened by a lack of consensus among terms (synonymy), which may affect the quality of specialized services. (Goian, Vintilă, and Bucur 2012). Thus, situations where professionals refer to the same reality by using excessive synonymy may cause professional difficulties (Vlaicu, Fulop, and Bălăuță 2017).

“Pentru Voi” Foundation is the only non-governmental organization in Timisoara that provides community services for adults with intellectual disabilities (serving approximately 175 adults with developmental disabilities and their families). The Foundation has developed as a sustainable organization, based on community support, long-term partnership with the Timisoara Local Council, governmental and international cooperation, as well as its

own income-generating activities. The services were awards to Romania in the field of intellectual disability: the first day center for adults with intellectual disabilities, the first supported employment service, the first shelter, the first crisis center, the first group of self-deputies – people with intellectual disabilities. The “Pentru Voi” Foundation now provides, through its own financial effort and with the help of the partners, the following social services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities: “Together” Day Center, “Ladislau Tácsi” Day Center, Protected Housing: Dina, Dinu, Dora, Laura, Cristian, Respiro Center, Social Services at Home, Community Support Services.

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