



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

COMBALL Newsletter Issue 2 - 2015

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A quick recap of the COMBALL projects' aims and an introduction into what has been happening so far.

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Project staff had the chance to look at innovative initiatives for supported accommodation in different countries.

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Project staff also explored examples of community-based support that helps secure inclusive living.

Introduction

In the COMBALL project, partner organisations from 5 countries have been sharing information about how we help people with a learning disability to live an independent life in the community.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons promises personal freedom to people with a learning disability. Service providing staff from Austria, Finland, Italy, Poland and Wales have been looking at how we make this a reality. It is a challenge. We can help people to live in the community but how do we successfully help them to become active members of their community, to make choices and to enjoy being an individual?

Each partner has been identifying examples of good practice from their own country that will be part of a compendium of good practice. Project members have had opportunities to visit some of these examples and to receive presentations and information about others.

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Where we live

The physical nature of where people live is clearly an important key in helping the individual along a path to independence. At a project meeting in Helsinki hosted by FAIDD, staff looked at an interesting initiative that tries to balance independence with just the right level of support, that provides accommodation in an apartment complex.



Set amongst a number of regular apartment blocks in a new suburb of Helsinki, Kapytikka has been developed and owned by an energetic group of parents. It is very thoughtfully designed with substantial individual bedrooms and living rooms and a communal area for socialising, watching TV with friends or eating together.

It provides accommodation for 20 young people. Kate Toms from the Welsh organisation, Menter Fachwen commented:

I think that the young people involved in the scheme are extremely privileged to have such a dynamic group of parents who were able to plan and see through this amazing project to fruition. It was an incredible achievement.

Jonathan Lee from the Welsh provider, Innovate Trust, felt that

“the building was very impressive, (but) it was more akin to a hotel than true independent living”

From Graz, Austria we learnt about how Jugend am Werk had developed a service model that supports 13 people to either live in their own apartment or to share with one other person. Centrally located in the city, only limited support is given to each individual: some

8 hours per week to help with important aspects of daily life like getting along with people and looking for work. The model has been sufficiently flexible to ensure that one female resident who became pregnant has been successfully supported to have the baby, to move to a larger apartment and to raise the baby.



Staying with the theme of design, staff learnt about how the University of

Technology had encouraged architecture students to compete to design living accommodation that met the needs of people with a range of disabilities. The students had brought a lot of imagination to their task and it stimulated a lot of discussion.

How we spend our time

A second key element that the project has been exploring is what community –based support that helps secure inclusive living can look like.

In a visit to the Caernarfon area, North Wales, project members looked at some services that help individuals play a useful role as a volunteer or in a paid job. Recycling centres selling goods to the public and run by two organisations Antur Waunfawr and Seren attracted particular interest. Marco Locci from Firenze said:

The best activity that we visited is the recycling centre of second hand objects and clothes. I think this best practice in Wales is really important though quite complex to be transferred because there is no distinction between cooperatives of type A or B, like in Italy. But I think it would be good to bring in Italy this good practice because it is cost-free and it would financially help the cooperative. Thanks to this project there is also the opportunity to employ disabled people.

Danile Wallner from Austria commented: “It was wonderful to see people with disabilities providing work that is just as highly qualitative and efficient as people without disabilities.”

Staff from PSOUU, Jaroslaw, Poland were particularly interested in the way that Menter Fachwen uses its cafes and carpentry workshop.



Said Bogna Wandasiewicz

“It’s amazing how they have created such a bond and network with the local community”

PSOUU were also interested in the creation by Seren of a high quality accessible hotel for people with learning disabilities to use as guests and to work in.

Project members saw more examples of services that try to benefit the individual and the community during a visit to Cardiff. They visited a farm, and a bike rental business run by Pedalpower that hires out ordinary bikes and bikes adapted for people with physical disabilities to the general public at a scenic location on the waterfront and gives work to people with a learning disability.

Anna Bronicka from Poland felt that:

“ The bike rental service
is a great idea of
a natural inclusion
possibility. ”

Getting the highest vote for enjoyment was a visit by project members to a water sports centre in Cardiff Bay.

Open to anyone, this is used by Innovate Trust to help the people it supports try out bodyboarding and kayaking. With skilled staff from the centre providing advice and help, Project members put on wetsuits and joined in the fun at the indoor bodyboarding pool, complete with artificial waves and currents!

What was truly remarkable was how some of the individuals that Innovate Trust support grow visibly in self confidence as they try to stay on their bodyboards.



Trying to stay afloat in the water made everyone equal!!

Next Newsletter

Drawing on our shared experiences project members have been developing a 'Criteria catalogue' to assist in planning inclusive services for people living in the community. We will tell you more about these in the next edition of this newsletter!



For more information on COMBALL visit the project website at <https://comball.wordpress.com/> or please contact Gabriele Perissutti on +43 (0) 50/7900 1606 or email gabriele.perissutti@jaw.or.at.

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