


Amendment to the Disability Employment Act:

- the Act covers private and federal public employment;
- the Act protects against discrimination with regard to establishing work relations, pay, training and retraining, career advancement, terminating work relations, membership in work organizations, and access to self-employment.

Most of the rules are similar to the Disability Equality Act:

- Reasonable accommodation or removal of barriers is required from the employer unless

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- A Disability Ombudsman is established within the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs to support persons with disabilities who feel discriminated.

Amendment to the Constitution:

- The Austrian Sign Language is recognized as an own language.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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Gender mainstreaming is still quite a new issue within Lithuanian society as well as amongst the responsible institutions. Some key issues in the theory and practice of gender mainstreaming are discussed in the paper. The paper suggests that gender mainstreaming is underdeveloped as a concept, and identifies a need to elaborate further on some fundamentals. In particular, the conceptualization of mainstreaming needs to be re-thought with special attention devoted to the understanding of problems of gender inequality that underlies it, and the articulation of the relationship between gender mainstreaming and societal change.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES VIA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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Equal opportunities for a person, community or nation can not be ensured without involvement, participation and empowerment. These terms are also closely related to social work and imply basic competences of a social worker. In 2007, a European Leonardo da Vinci project “Community Care Approach: A Strategy for Social Inclusion” lead by Debrecen university (Hungary) has been started. It incorporates 8 countries (Sweden, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Lithuania, Belgium, Romania, and Bulgaria) and is aimed at curriculum development in the field of Community social work for educating field practice teachers of social higher education programs. Community-oriented social work recently has become more popular in many EU countries. Communities in all the countries, while implementing one of their main functions, i.e. rallying and empowering local people, at the same time ensure equal possibilities in all areas of social life: by solving the problems of excluded groups, providing services and activities, which respond to the needs of all diverse groups. These functions correspond to the policy of the European Union: to motivate incorporation of equal opportunities into the Community policies.

The results of the project should provide social work students with such values, knowledge, and skills which would prepare them to work efficiently with situations of exclusion and discrimination by seeking out natural support and using the resources of the local community. It is admitted that community development will become effective when it will be initiated and supported by community people, it will be well planned, long-term, beneficial to the community, not biased, and encouraging the participation of people, tuned with the wider context of a county, region, state, etc. These features of community work imply certain skills of a community worker and an important precondition – practical experience in the field, which has to be guided by a skillful field social work teacher.

The first steps of cooperative work have revealed, that despite similar target groups which may benefit from highly competent community social workers, encouraging community development and individual involvement (of excluded groups), certain differences in community concepts, priorities, and care models are obvious (for instance, Western European partners seek to improve their existing field practice system, while Eastern countries endeavour to encourage the development of field practice teachers' training in the area of community work).

In the current stage of the project implementation partners chose the modules which they are to develop. The body of knowledge will incorporate theoretical aspects of community work and more specific ones: political issues in social work with communities, methodological aspects of community development, organizational aspects (means and finances), issues in community development, and role and identity of community social worker. Those subjects have emerged during the discussion as the most relevant to the community social worker's needs. It is hoped that social workers' knowledge on community development will enhance possibilities of excluded groups and improve their life quality.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND ETHNICITY WITHIN AN EU MULTI-SITE MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

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The Emilia project is an action research aimed at enhancing social inclusion of people experiencing severe mental illness within eight demonstration sites, by focusing on enabling mental health service users to access education and employment opportunities. It is located within the EU Framework 6 research projects.

The sites cover Northern and Southern Europe, Western and Eastern European member states: Bosnia (Sarajevo and Tuzla), Denmark (Storstrom), France (Paris), Greece (Athens), Norway (Bodo), Poland (Warsaw), Spain (Barcelona), and the UK (London). Additional support partners are located in Finland (Tampere), Lithuania (Vilnius), Slovenia (Ljubljana), and the UK (London).

Most partners are providing mental health services, while some come from the university sector.

One of the key objectives of the project is to improve the mainstreaming of gender and ethnicity within the sites, as lack of such mainstreaming adds to the already existing barriers towards