



# **Inclusion: Ways Into Decent Work – A European Conference**

## **Conference Report**

Berlin, 3 September 2018

# Contents

<b>Page 2 – 6</b>	<b>Programme</b>
<b>Page 7 – 8</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
<b>Page 9 – 11</b>	<b>Welcome Address and Introduction</b>
<b>Page 12 – 16</b>	<b>Participation in working life: Diversity of life situations – Diversity of support</b>
<b>Page 17</b>	<b>Rap with Short Interview</b>
<b>Page 18 – 21</b>	<b>Panel I: Ways Into Decent Work – Where Do We Stand Today?</b>
<b>Page 22 – 25</b>	<b>Inclusion in the World of Work – Germany in European Comparison</b>
<b>Page 26 – 29</b>	<b>Workshop 1: The Current Support System – New Impulses of the Federal Participation Act</b>
<b>Page 30 – 32</b>	<b>Workshop 2: Transitioning from School to Work – Setting the Course, Consultation and Support</b>
<b>Page 33 – 35</b>	<b>Workshop 3: Digitalisation – Opportunities and Risks for Participating in Vocational Training and the World of Work</b>
<b>Seite 36 – 38</b>	<b>Workshop 4: Ways Into Work – Career Entry, Detours and Professional Development</b>
<b>Page 39 – 42</b>	<b>Workshop 5: Which Adjustments are Needed to Achieve an Inclusive Environment in the World of Work?</b>
<b>Page 43</b>	<b>A Slightly Different Perspective: Impressions from the Workshops</b>
<b>Page 44</b>	<b>The courage to push back the boundaries – Why some people have a lifelong dream and others live it daily</b>
<b>Page 45 – 50</b>	<b>Panel II: Inclusive Labour Market – Are We On the Right Track? An Outlook</b>
<b>Page 51 – 54</b>	<b>Marketplace</b>
<b>Page 55 – 63</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>Page 64</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>Page 65</b>	<b>Imprint</b>

# Inclusion: Ways Into Decent Work – A European Conference

## Programme

**Date:** 3 September 2018

**Conference venue:** Humboldt Carré, Behrenstraße 42, 10117 Berlin, Germany

**Moderator:** Dr Julia Kropf

Throughout the conference, simultaneous translations were provided in:

English ↔ German

German ↔ German Sign Language

German ↔ Easy to Understand German

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**8:30 am – 9:30 am**    **Arrival and Registration**

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**9:00 am – 9:20 am**    **Yoga accessible and inclusive (optional)**  
*Katja Sandschneider*, Yoga Teacher

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**9:30 am – 9:35 am**    **Conference Welcome**  
*Dr Julia Kropf*, Moderator

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**9:35 am – 9:45 am**    **Welcome Address and Introduction**  
*Alexander Fischer*, State Secretary for  
 Labour and Social Services, Berlin

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**9:45 am – 10:15 am**    **Participation in working life:**  
**Diversity of life situations – Diversity of support**  
*Dr Rolf Schmachtenberg*, Permanent State Secretary,  
 Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

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**10:15 am – 10:30 am**    **Short Introduction of the Projects  
 and Services at the Marketplace**  
*Dr Julia Kropf and Exhibitors*

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**10:30 am – 11:00 am**    **Coffee Break and Marketplace**

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**11:00 am – 11:15 am Rap with Short Interview**

*Graf Fidi*, Rapper and Ambassador for Inclusion

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**11:15 am – 12:00 pm Panel I: Ways Into Decent Work –  
Where Do We Stand Today?**

*Alexander Fischer*, State Secretary for Labour  
and Social Services, Berlin

*Christine Braunert-Rümenapf*, Berlin's State  
Representative for Persons with Disabilities

*Ulrike Pohl*, Specialist Advisor Persons with Disabilities,  
Der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband, Landesverband Berlin  
e.V. (Federation of Welfare Associations in Germany)

*Sabine Pöggel*, Diversity Representative, Berliner  
Stadtreinigungsbetriebe (Berlin City Cleaning Operations)

*Brendan Roach*, Senior Consultant,  
Business Disability Forum

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**12:00 pm – 12:30 pm Inclusion in the World of Work –  
Germany in European Comparison**

*Andrea Seeger*, Managing Director of ACCESS gGmbH  
and Representative at the European Union of Supported  
Employment (EUSE)

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**12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch and Marketplace**

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**1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Parallel Workshops****Workshop ①****The Current Support System –  
New Impulses of the Federal Participation Act**

*Dr Mario Schreiner*, Humboldt University Berlin  
(Moderator)

*Maria Henschel*, Interessenvertretung  
Selbstbestimmt Leben in Deutschland e.V. (Advocacy  
Group for Independent Living)

*Viviane Schachler*, University of Applied Sciences Fulda

*Martin Kisseberth*, Workshop Councils Germany

*Franz Allert*, Regional Office for Health  
and Social Services Berlin

## Workshop 2

### **Transitioning from School to Work – Setting the Course, Consultation and Support**

*Dörte Maack*, Dialogue in the Dark, Dialoghaus Hamburg  
gGmbH (Moderator)

*Manfred Weiser*, Erasmus+ Social Competences for VET,  
Vocational Training Centre Mosbach-Heidelberg

*Ulrich Wiegand*, Berlin Chamber of Handicrafts

*Kerstin Stoye*, Annedore Leber Vocational Training  
Centre Berlin

*Karin Rohde*, Federal Employment Agency,  
Regional Directorate Berlin-Brandenburg

*Burkhard Matthias*, PSW Partner für Schule und  
Wirtschaft (Partner for Schools and the Economy)

## Workshop 3

### **Digitalisation – Opportunities and Risks for Participating in Vocational Training and the World of Work**

*Kirsten Vollmer*, Federal Institute for Vocational  
Education and Training (Moderator)

*Dr Bastian Pelka*, TU Dortmund University

*Majka Lipiak*, I'm in Bed and I Work, Poland

*Robin Spinks*, Royal National Institute of Blind People,  
United Kingdom

*Prof Dr Axel Gräser und Lena Kredel*, University of Bremen

## Workshop ④

**Ways Into Work – Career Entry, Detours and Professional Development**

*Prof Dr Bernd Halfar*, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Moderator)

*Sally Ollech*, Diversicon HR GmbH

*Sergi Morera and Maria Cabré*, Municipality of Barcelona, Spain

*Dirk Gerstle*, Berlin Workshops for Persons with Disabilities GmbH

*Anna Grimm and Andreas Bittner*, Erasmus+ Deaf Employment for Sign Language Users in the EU, Humboldt University Berlin

## Workshop ⑤

**Which Adjustments are Needed to Achieve an Inclusive Environment in the World of Work?**

*Sabine Belter*, UnternehmensForum e.V. / Deutsche Bahn (Moderator)

*Stefanie Trzecinski*, KOPF, HAND + FUSS gGmbH (Head, Hand and Foot gGmbH)

*Claudia Rustige*, National Association of Integration Companies e.V

*Manuela Enslen*, Daimler AG, Mercedes Benz Werk Berlin

*Wolfgang Kowatsch*, myAbility Social Enterprise GmbH, Austria

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**3:00 pm – 3:30 pm    Coffee Break and Marketplace**

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**3:30 pm – 4:00 pm    A Slightly Different Perspective: Impressions from the Workshops**  
*The Gorillas*, Improvisation Theatre

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**4:00 pm – 4:30 pm    The courage to push back the boundaries – Why some people have a lifelong dream and others live it daily**  
*Janis McDavid*, Motivational Speaker

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**4:30 pm – 5:15 pm**

**Panel II: Inclusive Labour Market –  
Are We On the Right Track? An Outlook.**

*Alexander Fischer*, State Secretary for Labour  
and Social Services, Berlin

*Dagmar König*, Member of ver.di's Federal Board  
(Trade Union)

*Johannes Pfeiffer*, Operational Manager of the  
Regional Directorate Berlin-Brandenburg of the Federal  
Employment Agency

*Christine Nothacker*, Spokeswoman of Berlin's State  
Working Group of Inclusion Companies

*Dr Constantin Terton*, Head of Specialists and Innovation,  
Chamber of Commerce and Industry Berlin

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**From 5:15 pm**

**Get-Together with Drinks and Snack**

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# Abstract

Inclusion in working life is still not a matter of course in Germany. At 12.4%<sup>1</sup> in 2016, people with severe disabilities were more than twice as likely to be unemployed as people without disabilities (6.1%)<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, more and more companies are unable to meet their demand for qualified personnel<sup>3</sup>. Intransparent responsibilities, reservations in personnel departments and a lack of knowledge about the possibilities of support and advice, both on the part of those affected and on the part of employers, often stand in the way of a successful (re)entry into work.

This is also reflected in the transition from school to work: In 2015, only 5.8% of people with disabilities in the 18 to under-25 age group had an apprenticeship training position on the mainstream labour market compared to 21% of all 15 to under-25-year-olds. At the same time, never have so many training positions remained unfilled. A large proportion of young people with disabilities continue to receive training from other institutions than companies.

Many young people without recognised severe disabilities, with mental stress or other impairments also require individual assistance at the transition.

In order to facilitate the path to Decent work for all, clear legal regulations and differentiated counselling and support services for people with disabilities are required. The digitalisation of social and working life also opens up new opportunities for improving participation: Digital learning environments are increasing in training and further education and make individual offers possible. In working life, new technical aids and the opportunity for people with disabilities to work anywhere are of particular benefit.

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<sup>1</sup> Aktion Mensch (2017): Inklusionsbarometer 2017

<sup>2</sup> Statista (2018): Arbeitslosenquote in Deutschland im Jahresdurchschnitt von 1996 bis 2018

<sup>3</sup> Aktion Mensch (2017): Inklusionsbarometer 2017, p. 35





However, it is also important to cushion the potential risks of digitalisation and automation. In Berlin, the creation of equal opportunities - also for people with disabilities - is a focal point of the dialogue process “Work 4.0 - made in Berlin” of the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services. The aim is to create new, improved access to work and further training through humanely designed processes of digitalisation in the world of work.

At the international level, participation in working life is a central requirement of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Federal Participation Act (BTHG) is intended to implement the standards in Germany. The BTHG’s first two stages of reform have already come into force. It is now necessary to identify difficulties of implementation and at the same time prepare the relevant actors and structures for the coming stages of reform.

The international conference “Inclusion: Ways Into Decent Work - A European Conference” focused on the topics mentioned above and discussed current developments and approaches to solutions with representatives from politics and administration, interest groups, business, science and society. The aim of the conference was to facilitate a European exchange of experience and knowledge transfer in order to promote a more inclusive world of work, while taking into account current and future digital opportunities for people with disabilities. The conference included lectures, panel discussions, workshops, an interactive marketplace as well as a diverse accompanying programme.

# Welcome Address and Introduction

Alexander Fischer



*Alexander Fischer, State Secretary for Labour and Social Services, Berlin*

Berlin's State Secretary for Labour and Social Services, *Alexander Fischer*, commences his speech by pointing out the good current labour market situation. People with disabilities are benefiting from the positive labour market development. The number of unemployed people with severe disabilities in Berlin is even lower than the number of unemployed people without severe disabilities. But despite the improved employment situation, people with disabilities are still twice as likely to be unemployed and are subject to a higher poverty risk as people without disabilities. The State Secretary stresses that there is still much to be done in this respect.

The Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services is pursuing the central idea of an inclusive society. Therefore, an important concern is the combination of an inclusive labour market and decent work. In concrete terms, this means that the labour market is equally accessible to all, that everyone can choose their work freely and that they are not restricted to specific activities or protected areas.



It also means ensuring fair pay, fair and barrier-free working conditions and a pension with which it is possible to make a living. Despite many encouraging examples and approaches, the road to such an inclusive labour market is still long.

For many people, lived reality is still characterised by structural discrimination. Attitudes, infrastructure and the organisation of our society often discriminate against people with disabilities: It is not people who are disabled, it is their environment that obstructs them. Politicians have a duty to shape the framework conditions. To make a difference, more attention must be paid to the strengths and resources of people with disabilities. This is a challenge for all of us.

With the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Federal Participation Act (BTHG) passed in 2016, important milestones have been reached on the way to an inclusive society. The new system of participation is fundamentally more person-centred and supports a self-determined life. The State Secretary highlights the Budget for Work as a concrete new instrument within the framework of the BTHG, to which Berlin would like to devote special attention.

Young people with disabilities in transition from school to work or vocational training are of particular concern to the Senate Department. It should be a matter of course to have trainees with disabilities in businesses and vocational schools, says State Secretary Alexander Fischer. In 2016, there were only 370 severely disabled trainees in Berlin. The aim must be a corporate culture of inclusion. This can be achieved through exchanges with works councils, trade unions, employers and chambers of commerce.

The digitalisation of the working world is both an opportunity and a risk, the State Secretary continues. But above all he wants to highlight the increased opportunities for participation in working life, for example through digital assistance systems. Digitalisation is therefore also an important topic at this conference.



Finally, the State Secretary focuses on the participants of the conference from Germany and abroad. He calls on them, as important multipliers, to look beyond their own horizons and learn from each other on their way to an inclusive labour market. The aim is to see inclusion not only as an opportunity for people with disabilities, but also as a major benefit for the labour market.

# Participation in working life: Diversity of life situations – Diversity of support

Dr Rolf Schmachtenberg



*Dr Rolf Schmachtenberg, Permanent State Secretary,  
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs*

To begin with, *Dr Rolf Schmachtenberg*, Permanent State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), points out the diverse life situations of people with disabilities and emphasises that a good participation system must guarantee adequate support for all life situations. The human rights approach of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities serves as a good guideline. The consideration of all circumstances in life, however, also leads to complex regulations and funding approaches in the Federal Participation Act (BTHG).

With regard to the participation of people with disabilities in working life, the Permanent State Secretary emphasises that people with disabilities are already making a significant contribution to value creation in the national economy by generating their own income. Nevertheless, employers still have reservations and uncertainties about employing people with disabilities. Severely disabled people usually have above average qualifications but are unemployed for much longer and are generally older than unemployed people without disabilities. In view of the good labour market situation in Germany, however, employers are increasingly willing to hire people with disabilities. This opportunity must be seized.



Dr Schmachtenberg also quotes a study by Aktion Mensch according to which 39% of small companies that already employ severely disabled people are unaware of the possibilities of state support in employing people with disabilities. It is therefore all the more important to specifically address the group of approximately 41,000 companies that do not yet employ severely disabled people despite the obligation to employ them. For this reason, the BMAS is currently working with the Federal Employment Agency (BA) and the Federation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) to prepare an initiative that will include going door-to-door and matching the needs of companies with the profiles of severely disabled people. The initiative is intended to further promote a change in awareness among employers with regard to the training and employment of people with disabilities. All relevant labour market actors, in particular the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), are to be involved.

The BTHG was the central socio-political legislative project of the last legislative period. Some parts of the reform have already been implemented; now the key issue is the reform of the integration assistance until 1 January 2020. Whereas there was previously an offer-based system of participation (outpatient, day-care, inpatient), which was based on the concept of welfare, in future the focus will be on people. The BTHG, for example, pursues a person-centred approach with services that are individually tailored to the needs of the individual. However, the BTHG will not only reform the regulations on integration assistance. Among the multiplicity of changes, Permanent State Secretary Dr Rolf Schmachtenberg highlights five priorities:

When the „participation plans“ are introduced, all rehabilitation institutions must cooperate with each other and name contact points which are published on the Internet. For example, medical and occupational rehabilitation services can be combined with personal assistance in a single application to a single office. For many, this is a new idea.



The federal programme „rehapro“ serves to optimise rehabilitation processes for people with health impairments, e.g. people with mental impairments and chronic illnesses, so that fewer reduced earning capacity pensions and applications for integration assistance have to be submitted. This is particularly about prevention in the sense of the „rehabilitation before retirement“ principle, i.e. recognising emerging impairments so early that they do not lead to incapacity for work. Job centres and pension insurance institutions can test innovative services and innovative organisational measures in pilot projects for a period of up to 5 years.

Budget funds of around 1 billion Euros are available until 2026 for the implementation of the federal programme. With 140 project outlines submitted, the response to the first call for funding has been very encouraging and unexpectedly high. Further calls for funding are planned for 2019 and 2020. Further to this, until 31 December 2022, 58 million Euros will be available annually within the framework of the BTHG (§ 32 SGB IX) for the nationwide promotion of offers of the Supplementary Independent Participation Guidance (EUTB). Funding has been approved for 511 participation guidance services so far. The services follow the peer counselling method, i.e. affected persons provide counselling to affected persons. The services are independent, i.e. only committed to the interests of those seeking advice, and they complement the existing services offered by rehabilitation providers and service providers. Their aim is to strengthen the self-determination of those affected and to be open to all kinds of disabilities or impairments („One for All“).



The guidance services also provide comprehensive planning, orientation and decision-making assistance to those seeking advice before applying for benefits. By signposting, the guidance services contribute to the dissemination of the new benefits under the BTHG and their use.

The Specialist Participation Guidance Unit (FTB) commissioned by the BMAS supports the EUTB in its work.

The Budget for Work, which came into force at the beginning of the year, offers an alternative to the workshops for people with disabilities and opens up an option towards the first labour market.

Finally, the BTHG also contributes to strengthening the rights of representatives for severely disabled people and workshop councils, as well as to the introduction of women's representatives in workshops for people with disabilities. It also seeks to improve the income situation in workshops for people with disabilities and to enshrine assistance services in law. The BTHG takes up many issues that were not previously taken into account. The introduction of „participation in education“ - as a separate category of benefits whether someone starts work or not - makes it possible, for example, to receive integration assistance during further education and training or, for example, during a doctorate. Early intervention is now also enshrined in the law as an interdisciplinary complex service.





Beyond the BTHG, the BMAS undertakes a number of activities, which are summarised in the National Action Plan (NAP). All federal ministries of the federal government are involved in these activities. The Permanent State Secretary also mentions the further development of the Equal Opportunities for Disabled Persons Act: In addition to the Federal Office for Accessibility, there will also be a Federal Monitoring Centre for Accessible Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Authorities in the future. He also mentions the Inclusion Initiative, which provides start-up funding for career guidance for severely disabled schoolgirls, the opening of inclusion enterprises for mentally disabled persons and the annual inclusion days organised by the BMAS.

Dr Schmachtenberg sees the further implementation of the BTHG, the issue of accessibility in the private sphere and the right to vote for people with disabilities as the focal points of the future work of the Federal Ministry.

# Rap with Short Interview

Graf Fidi, Rapper and Ambassador for Inclusion



*Graf Fidi raps his songs “Ackern” [Ploughing away] and „Das Beste was es gibt“ [The best there is].*

**Graf Fidi** is a rapper, social worker and ambassador for inclusion. His credo: More people with disabilities must be visible to the public. For only if diversity is exemplified can a diverse, open society grow. “It is normal to be different,” is one of his central messages. His songs and texts tell of the dismantling of barriers, of strength and courage, of a self-determined life. The song “Ackern” [Ploughing away] emphasises how important it is to have a job that fits your personal strengths. It is only in this way that one has the motivation and the desire to “plough”, to make a contribution to society and to see oneself as part of society. With his song “Das Beste was es gibt” [The best there is], Graf Fidi encourages people to believe more in themselves, to rely on their own strengths and to overcome hurdles.

In a brief interview, the rapper, whose real name is Hans Friedrich Baum, explains that he sees the greatest hurdles not in external barriers, but in people who close themselves off from inclusion. In his opinion, society is on the right track, but much greater efforts are needed. A more risky and more intense path must be taken. In order to achieve changes towards inclusion, people must question themselves and “unlearn” to think in boxes and certain patterns. In addition to this, more opportunities must be created for people with and without disabilities to come into conversation. His final message is not to talk “about” but “with each other”.

# Panel I: Ways Into Decent Work – Where Do We Stand Today?



*Panel 1 on the topic: Ways Into Decent Work – Where Do We Stand Today?*

In the first panel on “Ways Into Decent Work – Where Do We Stand Today?”, representatives from politics, social organisations, business and consulting give an assessment of how they see the current situation in Germany and other European countries.

## **Christine Braunert-Rümenapf, Berlin’s State Representative for Persons with Disabilities**

Berlin is already on its way to becoming an inclusive city, but much more needs to be done in terms of inclusion and work. In order to do justice to the diversity of needs, existing instruments should be meaningfully linked with each other, says Christine Braunert-Rümenapf.

In principle, support for people with disabilities needs to be geared towards a needs-orientation, away from supply-orientation. Inclusion is a dynamic, variable process that has to be renegotiated time and again. In order to enable a variety of paths into the first labour market, changes in the transition from the vocational training sector into work are also necessary.



Berlin's State Representative for Persons with Disabilities suggests, for example, to link specific modules in the curricula of workshops for people with disabilities to technical or full training. Service agreements and procurement regulations could also be adapted in such a way that they are compatible with the inclusive version of the personal budget. In companies, it has also been shown that obstacles remain primarily where there is a lack of experience. In addition, structural barriers still inhibit corporate motivation.

**Alexander Fischer, State Secretary for Labour and Social Services, Berlin**

State Secretary Alexander Fischer confirms the necessity of a culture change in society as a whole, which must be lived by companies and also in education policy. Decent inclusive work should aim to give all people with disabilities the opportunity to participate and develop in the world of work according to their abilities. This includes free career choices and fair remuneration.

Various instruments, such as the Budget for Work, can promote this paradigm shift through dialogue between the various interest groups. At the same time, according to State Secretary Alexander Fischer, exchange and co-operation must be strengthened. Existing instruments should be interlinked, for example the new Social Code (SGB) IX instrument Budget for Work with the Berlin Job Coaching instrument of the Senate. Inclusion means connecting the many existing instruments rather than looking at them individually. The Berlin Senate also serves as a role model and is responsible for finding ways to enable inclusive work in the public sector. A project is currently being developed to enable people from workshops for people with disabilities to enter the public sector.



**Ulrike Pohl, Specialist Advisor  
Persons with Disabilities,  
Der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsver-  
band, Landesverband Berlin e.V.  
(Federation of Welfare Associations  
in Germany)**

Ulrike Pohl takes a critical look at the Federal Participation Act (BTHG). In her opinion, it is not sufficiently geared to the reality of life of people with very different types of disabilities. Through the BTHG, the entire environment of people with disabilities will change. This requires more personnel and more training for personnel, for example for the “participation plan” procedure. In this context, there is a danger that in the social triangle of funding agencies, service providers and service beneficiaries, service providers will be weakened because they are not necessarily included in the “participation plan” procedure. In the past, however, only funding agencies and service providers sat together - the beneficiaries were not included. In this sense, the new system is a step forward.

Ms Pohl also criticises the obligation to disclose objectives: Every person has goals, but only people with disabilities have to disclose their goals within the framework of the “agreement on goals” envisaged in the procedure and defend them before an office. This constitutes discrimination. Overall, people with disabilities and their relatives should receive more education with regard to their own rights. After all, it is a human rights issue and a task for society as a whole not to turn people with disabilities into care cases.

**Sabine Pöggel, Diversity Represent-  
ative, Berliner Stadtreinigungsbe-  
triebe, BSR (Berlin City Cleaning  
Operations)**

Berlin’s City Cleaning Operations (BSR) are among the companies that can look back on a long tradition of inclusion. Due to a high proportion of employees with different disabilities, a diverse workforce is the norm here. Sabine Pöggel’s suggestion to other companies is to look at the strengths and not the weaknesses of potential employees. At the same time, the relevant actors in a company must work together.



This includes a strong representation of severely disabled persons. Too many companies are discouraged by the additional leave and increased protection against dismissal granted to people with disabilities as well as by the discussions around higher sickness rates. In the end, it is all about people and their individual desires for a good future in which valued work is an important building block.

**Brendan Roach, Senior Consultant,  
Business Disability Forum, United  
Kingdom**

The Business Disability Forum supports companies in improving access for employees and customers with disabilities. Brendan Roach's experience shows that it is always necessary to review one's own company practice, for example regarding the hiring or development opportunities of employees, in order to make inclusion an integral part of everyday working life. Companies in which people with disabilities fill managerial positions are particularly exemplary.

According to Brendan Roach, technical innovations in the context of disabilities and impairments can be seen as “enablers” in that they open up new possibilities and cater to individual needs. They help overcome barriers and promote mobility, especially when people with disabilities are involved in the development of these technologies. A holistic approach can help make use of and improve different company measures to create good inclusive work.

# Inclusion in the World of Work – Germany in European Comparison

Andrea Seeger



*Andrea Seeger, Managing Director of ACCESS gGmbH and Representative at the European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE)*

*Andrea Seeger* is managing director of ACCESS gGmbH and a representative in the European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE), the European umbrella organisation for Supported Employment. Within EUSE, Germany is represented by the Federal Association for Supported Employment (BAG UB). The EUSE is committed to advancing the topic of Supported Employment and is aimed at people with special support needs in order to achieve regular employment in the first labour market.

Ms Seeger first explains that when working with people with disabilities and special support needs, conventional instruments such as wage subsidies are generally not sufficient and that creative methods and support from job coaches are of particular importance. First of all, a basis of self-confidence must be created that encourages people to approach new tasks.





EUSE experience has shown that a 5-step process has proven to be worthwhile. It begins with a process of getting to know each other, then works out the abilities and goals of the participants and then seeks out a suitable job, which they can learn through on-the-job training. The aim is a placement and subsequent job security. Job coaches guarantee individual support throughout the entire process.

Comparing Germany with other European countries is difficult, says Ms Seeger, as different states have different approaches. There are also many structural and cultural differences that are difficult to compare. The vocational training system, which is structured in different ways, is a prominent example. Moreover, according to Ms Seeger, there are hardly any comparable figures. Instead of a European comparison, she therefore presents some good practice examples from different countries.

In Sweden, the state programme SIUS<sup>4</sup> was established in 1993. People with mental and cognitive impairments and reduced working capacity are supported through job coaching, job matching, job profiling and personal future planning, allowing them to obtain a regular paid job in the first labour market. Employers receive a wage subsidy for six months. The placement rate of up to 50% is astounding, according to Ms Seeger.

In Austria there is no nationwide, uniform and state-financed supported employment programme, but rather many individual projects. One example is the SPAGAT project in Vorarlberg, which aims at establishing a socio-cultural infrastructure and which, according to Ms Seeger, has achieved notable successes through company mentors and a permanent wage cost subsidy.

In Vorarlberg, school leavers with special educational needs can choose between an in-company qualification with support and a workshop for people with disabilities. About 70% take the company route and only 30% go to a workshop.

<sup>4</sup> SIUS (Swedish: Särskilt introduktions- och uppföljningsstöd) = Special introductory and follow-up support





An example of a goal-oriented approach is the “Integrative Unit Model” of the Shekulo Tov Group in Israel, which is characterised by an empowerment approach. From the first day in the protected facility, people with psychological disabilities are encouraged to enter the first labour market. The process is closely accompanied by job coaches. An immediate return to the protected facility is possible at any time. The placement rate in the first labour market with regular pay is approx. 25%. For comparison in Germany, transfers to the first labour market from workshops lie at 1%.

In Germany, Supported Employment is a nationwide measure for people with disabilities and special support needs. The most important factors for success are the well-qualified job coaches. For every five clients, there is one job coach. The job coaches support their clients during the company qualification phase and ensure that the goal of obtaining a suitable job is pursued.

The placement rates are very high, as is the sustainability, since the employment relationships are accompanied closely. Here, too, the first labour market is the goal. Employers can initially receive wage cost subsidies from rehabilitation providers and later receive benefits from the integration offices.

Finally, Ms Seeger describes what she believes must be done to improve inclusive employment in Germany. Since vocational inclusion already begins in school, reliable and comprehensive structures are needed in the transition from school to work so that the necessary support can be provided and financed accordingly. School leavers should be given the choice between training in a workshop for people with disabilities and a company environment. In addition, far more employees in the workshops must be enabled to enter the first labour market. Initial results from the pilot projects on the Budget for Work give reason for cautious hope.



Ms Seeger believes that the introduction of new service providers is a good idea, but that the hurdles for admission are too high, especially for small service providers. Under the current conditions, it is difficult for new service providers to emerge who can then offer a real choice between workshops for people with disabilities and other options. Furthermore, it remains the task of all those involved to get employers on board and to sensitise people with disabilities to their abilities and potential.

# Workshop 1:

## The Current Support System – New Impulses of the Federal Participation Act



*In Workshop 1, the new impulses of the Federal Participation Act (BTHG), in particular the implementation of the newly introduced Budget for Work, are discussed.*

As moderator of the workshop, Dr *Mario Schreiner from Humboldt University Berlin* starts with a short introduction into the main changes of the Federal Participation Act (BTHG) under the title “Innovation or preservation of the status quo?”. He examines the novelties and additions with regard to the participation benefits in employment and their effects on the world of work. The Budget for Work addresses beneficiaries who are entitled to participate in workshops for people with disabilities. The Budget for Work is intended to become an alternative route to general labour market.

It is also new that workshop services can be obtained both from workshops for people with disabilities and from “other service providers” (§ 60 SGB IX) as well as the possibility to return to the workshop from the general labour market (§ 220 para. 3 SGB IX). In the workshops itself, the Workshop Participation Ordinance (WMVO) was also reformed, which strengthens the rights of workshop councils.



*Franz Allert, President of the Regional Office for Health and Social Services Berlin*, focuses on the Budget for Work. Those employed in workshops for people with disabilities are considered to have a permanent reduced earning capacity and are therefore not included in the official unemployment statistics or the programmes of the social labour market. The Budget for Work, which was introduced on 1 January 2018 and which concentrates precisely on this group of people and supports them in entering the first labour market, is even more important. However, there are problems with the implementation of the Budget for Work. In Berlin, only four working relationships were realised with the instrument, with an estimated 300,000 eligible people throughout Germany. According to Franz Allert, the reasons for the low level of utilisation include inadequate information for employers and that the beneficiaries and their relatives know only insufficiently about their rights. The workshops for people with disabilities also fear losing their most productive employees.

In addition, there is a lack of incentives for the providers of integration assistance to use the measure. What is needed is: specialised information and additional financial incentives for employers, target agreements with the workshops as well as with people with disabilities and, if necessary, a compensation for the economic loss of workshops when the most capable employees transfer to the first labour market, as well as incentives or target agreements for the providers of integration assistance.

*Maria Henschel from Interessenvertretung Selbstbestimmt Leben in Deutschland e.V. (Advocacy Group for Independent Living)* concentrates on the legal foundations of the Budget for Work and associated issues of contention. Persons eligible for the Budget for Work must be able, for example, to “fulfil tasks which are of economic benefit” - an undetermined legal concept. Accompaniment of the Budget for Work may only be provided by specialists with certified training (e.g. social pedagogues, see § 55 SGB IX), not by carers or family members.



Pensions are a major area of conflict: In the case of employment relationships subject to social insurance contributions, the earnings remuneration represents the assessment basis for the later pension; in the case of workshops for people with disabilities (or “other service providers” pursuant to § 60 SGB IX), these generally amount to 80% of the reference value pursuant to § 18 SGB IV. In the event of a change from a workshop to an employment relationship, there may be a reduction in the contribution-labile income in the pension insurance, which may later also affect the amount of the pension.

*Martin Kisseberth from the State Working Group of Workshop Councils Hamburg* points out that the comparatively high number of cases in the Budget for Work in Hamburg (220 budget places since 2012, 20% drop-out rate) must not conceal the various problems of implementation. The working time of the integration assistants in the workshops (also called job coaches) amounting to a 50% post is by far not sufficient enough to find jobs for beneficiaries, check the accessibility of the jobs (e.g. transport services) and to clarify the working times with the employees and the employers. There is also too little time left for accompanying employees to the workplace. In addition to this, there are considerable delays in confirming the coverage of costs. An alternative are so-called “external workplaces”, such as the ones made available by the authorities in Hamburg (e.g. at the tax office, in canteens or in gardening and landscaping). Combining such “external workplaces” with the new Budget for Work could be a solution for permanent integration.



*Viviane Schachler from the University of Fulda* sheds light on the rights of workshop councils (representatives of people with disabilities in workshops), which have been strengthened by the BTHG. The changes include better working conditions and resources. In addition, where in the past there was only talk of involvement, today there is co-determination in parts. However, the level of information, the acceptance and the assertiveness of workshop councils are very different in the different institutions. An improvement in the implementation of the Workshop Participation Ordinance (WMVO) would be to better inform and involve workshop councils. Workshop councils could also serve as multipliers for the Budget for Work. In addition, incentives must be set for work placements outside the workshops.

In the **discussion**, Britta Fischer explains that Berlin's Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services and various Berlin integration services have provided comprehensive information about the Budget for Work through 128 consultations and four events. As far as the acquisition of employers and the placement of people with disabilities is concerned, a pilot project of the Senate Department will probably start soon in Berlin.

## Workshop 2:

# Transitioning from School to Work – Setting the Course, Consultation and Support



*In Workshop 2, good examples and challenges in the transition from school to work are presented and discussed.*

In her introduction to the workshop, moderator *Dörte Maack from Dialoghaus Hamburg* emphasises that despite their diversity, all people with disabilities have something in common: their experiences regarding the transition to the world of work and the necessary support. Five practical examples are presented under this main theme.

*Burkhard Matthias of PSW Partner für Schule und Wirtschaft (Partner for Schools and the Economy)* underlines that the sensitive phase in the transition between school and work must be very well organised, in order to give pupils a vocational perspective. The Inclusive Career and Study Orientation (BSO) is offered to all pupils regardless of the type of school.

Ideally, in this programme, teachers cooperate with parents and the Federal Employment Agency (BA). However, in the case of special educational needs, this is not enough. The number of pupils with special educational needs is rising sharply. There is therefore a need for more comprehensive and long-term support as well as co-operation with school counsellors for the BSO. An individual process consultation for pupils and teachers as well as a support and co-operation network - also in connection with companies - is a fundamental prerequisite for a successful transition, according to Mr Matthias.



*Karin Rohde from the Federal Employment Agency (BA), Regional Directorate Berlin-Brandenburg*, explains that the BA, in co-operation with the Inclusive Career and Study Orientation (BSO), provides orientation, counselling and placement and at the same time acts as a rehabilitation provider. Individual support services include assistance during training, vocational preparation measures, supported employment as well as supported in-company training. For employers, support services such as integration grants and subsidies for training remuneration are available.

*Manfred Weiser from the Vocational Training Centre Mosbach-Heidelberg* introduces the European project SEC-4Vet - Social Emotional Competence for Vocational Education and Training. The aim of the project is to strengthen the social-emotional competences of pupils in vocational training. The offer will be carried out proactively and tailored to the needs of the individual trainers and teachers. Various instruments will be used for this purpose: a diagnostic tool for social-emotional competences, development plans, a handbook for teachers and trainers and accompanying workshops.

*Kerstin Stoye from the Annedore Leber Vocational Training Centre Berlin (ALBBW)* describes the aim of the ALBBW, which is to enable young people with disabilities and special needs to participate independently in the labour market. To this end, vocational orientation, diagnostics, vocational preparation measures, vocational aptitude analyses and work trials are carried out. Young people are accompanied within a protected framework, but can also gain practical experience on the labour market, for example through the instrument of “integrated training”. The trainees complete about half of their training in one company, so that they receive a realistic assessment of their abilities and strengths. However, the matching between trainees and companies is very tedious, says Ms Stoye. Nevertheless, inclusion in the labour market can be accelerated by this and other instruments at ALBBW.





In the **discussion** with the participants, the personal budget is brought up for debate. It is mentioned that the personal budget is also used for access into the labour market, in addition to an affected person's support network (e.g. parents accompany their autistic children to small businesses where they can help out). The gap in the transition from school to work, which often arises after attending regular school, must be closed in a more targeted and individual manner and must not depend solely on the commitment of the family or close friends. Otherwise, the workshops for people with disabilities remain the only standard solution.

There is currently no instrument that overcomes mental barriers and makes new co-operation possible. With regard to employer advice, there must be significantly more information and action to improve the transition from school to work. Finally, it is suggested that pupils should have more opportunities to gain an early insight into the world of work.

## Workshop 3:

# Digitalisation – Opportunities and Risks for Participating in Vocational Training and the World of Work



*Workshop 3 examines the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation for people with disabilities in vocational education and training and in the world of work.*

The workshop moderator, *Kirsten Vollmer from the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)*, introduces the workshop with a brief presentation on digitalisation in the world of work. In her presentation, she refers to a joint forecast by the BIBB and the Institute for Occupational Research (IAB) on the labour market effects of digitalisation up to 2035<sup>5</sup>, thereby putting an end to the “horror scenario” that humans will soon be completely replaced by machines.

However, she also points out to the challenges associated with digitalisation: Some occupational fields are more strongly influenced by digitalisation than others and vocational competences are needed more than ever as a compass for vocational training. Accordingly, key competences are becoming even more important and continuous further and advanced training is becoming indispensable. It is also important to look at the possible effects of digitalised work and business processes on psychological stress, especially since mental impairments and illnesses are on the increase.

<sup>5</sup> Zika, Gerd, Helmrich, Robert, Maier, Tobias, Weber, Enzo und Wolter, Marc I.: Regionale Branchenstruktur spielt eine wichtige Rolle, IAB-Kurzbericht 9/2018.



*Prof Dr Axel Gräser and Lena Kredel from the University of Bremen* present their project “Return to work for tetraplegics with the service robot FRIEND”. Until recently, Lena Kredel worked with a robot developed by Prof Gräser at the Institute of Automation Technology in the University Library. Ms Kredel was able to control the robot with her head in order to take books from shelves and put them back again, but also to digitalise books. Ms Kredel supported the team around Prof Gräser in the further development of the robot through testing and feedback. The robot made her independent of a work assistant, says Ms Kredel. With financial support, the robot could be produced in larger quantities in the future.

*Sociologist Dr Bastian Pelka from the Technical University of Dortmund* investigates how our society is changing as a result of digitalisation. He mentions two perspectives on digital inclusion: participation through digital media and participation in digital society. Dr Pelka is involved in several projects that use digital possibilities to strengthen participation, including a project for the production of assistive devices with 3D printers. He calls for the stronger integration of digital media into social work. 21% of Germans have never been on the Internet before. For people who are unable to use digital media due to a lack of skills, there is a danger of increasing social exclusion - especially for older people.



*Majka Lipiak* from Poland presents her company *I'm In Bed And I Work*. The agency exclusively employs paralysed people who work from home in the fields of graphic design, online marketing and website hosting. Ms Lipiak describes the use of numerous software applications that make teamwork possible. Thanks to these technical possibilities, people with limited mobility can also participate in work - not in isolation, but in contact with colleagues. Through work and social interaction, they are able to strengthen their self-confidence.

*Robin Spinks from the Royal National Institute of Blind People* in the United Kingdom presents his project "Delivering Innovation through Collaboration and Partnership". In this project, he works as a sociologist and career counsellor with various companies to improve product designs in terms of accessibility. This is often a matter of simplification.

For example, he reports that simply reducing the number of buttons on a remote control makes its operation much easier. Smartphones with touch screens can also be operated intuitively. The goal of technology should always be to improve and simplify life. About ten years ago, the Royal National Institute of Blind People asked its members about their attitude towards technology. Most of them were sceptical. A few years later, the survey was repeated: most of them said they were now using technology intensively.

Following the presentations, *participants discuss* the extent to which the risks of digitalisation are taken into account in new inventions or improvements. The speakers mention several risk factors: increased isolation, data protection, the fear of being superfluous, health problems caused by screen usage, an increase in mental illnesses and excessive usage of digital devices, especially among young people. At the same time, they appeal to the personal responsibility of users. Prof Dr Gräser emphasises that it is above all important to be able to act quickly when problems arise because user behaviour is not predictable.

## Workshop 4:

# Ways Into Work – Career Entry, Detours and Professional Development



*In Workshop 4, participants exchange views on different ways of accessing the first labour market.*

*Prof Dr Bernd Halfar from the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt* introduces the topic of the workshop. Decent work is the basis for a satisfactory life. For employees, the meaningfulness of their own work and individual development opportunities are important factors. Equally important, however, is the perspective of companies as potential employers. Only a dialogue between the different stakeholders can lead to successful solutions.

With *Diversicon HR GmbH, Sally Ollech* presents a social enterprise that has specialised in the interests of people with autism in the world of work. The aim of Diversicon is to provide long-term support for people with autism. Where possible, each client is given a single point of contact for all process steps in the work context - from the professional orientation phase through the application phase to permanent employment. Diversicon also advises employers and builds on their knowledge of autism. Working out the strengths of people with autism encourages both employees and employers. At the same time, individual, needs-based solutions create positive experiences for people with autism themselves as well as for companies and thus facilitate inclusion in the world of work.



*Dirk Gerstle from the Berliner Werkstätten für Menschen mit Behinderungen GmbH (Berlin Workshops for People with Disabilities) (BWB)* emphasises the need for a central contact person on both sides of an employment relationship. The BWB supports people with very different types of disabilities. Different approaches to the first labour market and individual support are therefore important. As a good practice example, Mr Gerstle elaborates on “company-integrated groups”. These groups work directly on site with the client. Due to the different strengths of the individual members, the groups can become well-functioning units in companies, reduce fears and uncertainties on both sides and lead to greater acceptance.

*Sergi Morera and Maria Cabré from Barcelona City Council* present their project XIB, a co-operation network for labour market inclusion in the city of Barcelona. The co-operation of individual actors is crucial here: experts must disseminate knowledge and information and act in close co-operation with politicians. XIB works at different levels. At the district level, it supports barrier-free access to work in various districts. In exchange with other European cities, an overall plan for barrier-free access is being developed. A third pillar consists of direct support services for people with disabilities living in Barcelona. This includes coaching for job interviews and support during employment. In implementing these support services, the municipality cooperates with politicians and representatives for people with disabilities. They decide how the funds are managed.



*Andreas Bittner and Anna Grimm* present the first results of the *European project “Designs - Deaf Employment for Sign Language Users”*, which investigates the employment situation of deaf sign language users in Europe. The target groups of this research are job-seekers, deaf people as well as consultants, interpreters and employers. When it comes to inclusion in the labour market, time delays and changing/unclear responsibilities in the support process often lead to stress, anxiety and bad experiences for all involved. The aim of the project is to break down barriers in the placement process and to create equal work and development opportunities as well as career opportunities for deaf people by presenting different experiences as well as best practice examples from working life.

In the **discussion** that follows, participants talk about the difference between “external workplaces” and “company-integrated groups”. Employees with “external workplaces” are left on their own after a certain time. In the case of “company-integrated groups”, there is always a group leader on site. The advantage of larger groups is also that they can contribute different skills. In these cases, the task of integration management is to investigate how people with different needs can be deployed to provide a service. From the further discussion, it becomes clear that a paradigm shift is needed. Access to the first labour market and to career development requires faster decisions at the administrative level and direct, continuous contact throughout the process. The experience of several participants shows that employers are willing to hire people with disabilities if they know how to obtain support. One participant suggests a starter package as a quick alternative to the lengthy application process.



## Workshop 5:

# Which Adjustments are Needed to Achieve an Inclusive Environment in the World of Work?



*In Workshop 5, companies present how they support people with disabilities in the labour market.*

*Sabine Belter from the UnternehmensForum e.V. and Deutsche Bahn (DB)* introduces the workshop with a short presentation. Since the beginning of the 2000s, DB has followed the approach that every workplace is basically a workplace for people with disabilities and that filling a workplace only depends on the prerequisites for being able to carry out the corresponding activities. A total of around 13,000 severely disabled employees work for DB. The shortage of skilled workers is a driving factor here, which will continue to offer good opportunities to employ people with disabilities as lateral entrants at DB. The UnternehmensForum complies with the action plans of the UN Convention on the Rights

of Persons with Disabilities, collects good examples and publishes them. Good practice requires good co-operation between employers and the respective interest groups. In reality, however, there are also negative examples where inclusion in the first labour market does not work. These examples show that all stakeholders need to be involved and, above all, that the qualifications and strengths of applicants need to be carefully checked.





According to managing director *Stefanie Trzecinski, KOPF, HAND + FUSS gGmbH (Head, Hand and Foot gGmbH)* examines the labour market for opportunities for people with disabilities, realises educational projects and offers the first inclusive and barrier-free co-working space in Berlin “Tüchtig - Raum für Inklusion”. In a co-operation project with the Humboldt University of Berlin, the competences of employees without disabilities are examined in order to determine whether these requirements can also be met by people with disabilities. The KOPF, HAND + FUSS team consists of programmers and interpreters for easy-to-understand-German. For example, they develop free literacy apps and e-learning platforms. The barrier-free co-working space is used by people with different disabilities. The rooms and equipment are adapted to the necessary requirements in a variety of ways. Assistance services are also provided. In the future, inclusion consultants will be trained to advise companies as well.

*Claudia Rustige* introduces the *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Inklusionsfirmen e.V. (National Association of Inclusion Companies) (bag if)*, which represents 900 inclusion companies and their employees. The activities of bag if include lobbying, sensitisation, knowledge transfer and political work on the topic of an inclusive labour market. In general, the number of inclusion companies, i.e. companies in which the proportion of severely disabled people is 30-50%, is growing. Remuneration is either locally or collectively agreed. Inclusion companies are beacons for decent work. There are three pillars that lead to success: socially committed entrepreneurs, clear framework conditions and legal regulations. Ms Rustige describes three models of inclusion companies: Workshops for people with disabilities, which found inclusion enterprises; inclusion enterprises in service sectors such as industrial cleaning or innovative products; and co-operations with private companies. With the educational campaign “Inclusion Companies - Added Value inclusive”, bag if supports initiatives for an inclusive labour market.



*Manuela Enslen* (member of the Disabled Persons Representation Group) of the *Mercedes Benz plant in Berlin* reports that 8,700 people with disabilities are employed by Daimler AG throughout Germany. Decent work means equal opportunities, secure jobs, flexible working hours in all stages of life as well as training opportunities. Decent working conditions also include binding declarations for common understandings, barrier-free workplaces and the minimisation of psychological stress. Severely disabled employees can already communicate their needs during the application process in order to be given jobs that cater towards their abilities. In addition, there is an action plan for the recruitment of severely disabled trainees. Regarding accessibility, there is an annual focus topic, such as “roads/curbs”, “entry/accessibility” or currently “digital accessibility”.

*Wolfgang Kowatsch* from the Austrian management consultancy *myAbility Social Enterprise GmbH* believes employers also benefit from an inclusive working environment. In his experience, the productivity of companies can be increased through an open corporate culture. myAbility works to reduce stigmatisation and promote interest in the topic. The approach consists of three stages: In the first stage, “Engage”, companies are addressed and sensitised; in the second stage, “Equip”, companies are equipped with the necessary know-how; in the third stage, “Deliver”, companies implement the proposals. myAbility also offers its own career portal where barrier-free jobs can be advertised. Co-operations with disability organisations complement their work.



In the **discussion**, participants examine the differences between employment in workshops for people with disabilities and working in the first labour market. A job in a workshop, or in an “external workplace”, does not facilitate the way into the first labour market, according to one participant. A lot of courage is needed to step into an occupation subject to social insurance contributions. In a workshop, a different (usually better) claim for pension can be made. In addition, the workshop offers a certain protection. Participants agreed that more good examples should be disseminated in order to highlight the advantages of an inclusive working world and encourage other companies to implement them. However, there must also be a much greater commitment on the part of companies towards accessibility.

# A Slightly Different Perspective: Impressions from the Workshops

The Gorillas



*Michael Wolf and Luise Schnittert (2nd and 3rd from left) from the improvisation theatre “The Gorillas” perform improvised scenarios inspired by the audience.*



*The audience laughs at the dialogues of the improvisation theatre, which sometimes prompts laughter, and sometimes contemplation.*

Actors *Luise Schnittert and Michael Wolf* from the improvisation theatre “The Gorillas” visited various parts of the programme over the course of the day and incorporated their impressions into their performance. They took notes on small pieces of paper. During their performance, they distributed the notes on the stage floor. The audience was asked to suggest different relationship constellations. The protagonists then played different relationship scenarios in which the sentences of the paper notes were spontaneously incorporated. The actors developed creative and original dialogues that sometimes made people laugh, and sometimes made them think.

They concluded their performance with a school scene between pupil and teacher with spontaneous word and sentence creations along the alphabet. The audience cheered with a lot of applause.

# The courage to push back the boundaries – Why some people have a lifelong dream and others live it daily

Janis McDavid, Motivational Speaker



*Janis McDavid encourages the audience to take on new perspectives.*

*Janis McDavid*, born without arms and legs, impresses as a motivational speaker with his own life story. With his abilities and resources, he has seized the opportunity to lead a good and self-determined life. In an encouraging way he invites the audience to a change of perspective: to face life with an optimistic view and not to reduce oneself to one's own otherness and supposed difficulties and hurdles. This offers many opportunities and can enrich one's own life and the lives of others. This approach can also be helpful when it comes to inclusion and decent work.

Janis McDavid pleads for more courage and new perspectives. Positive aspects should also be emphasised more strongly within the dialogue with society as a whole, in order to enable diverse possibilities for all, says Janis McDavid.

## Panel II: Inclusive Labour Market – Are We On the Right Track? An Outlook.



*Panel 2 on the topic: Inclusive Labour Market –  
Are We On the Right Track? An Outlook.*

The participants of the final panel reflect on the topics and discussions of the day and discuss next steps towards a more inclusive labour market in Berlin.

### **Dagmar König, Member of ver.di's Federal Board (Trade Union)**

According to Dagmar König, there are many individual approaches that enable different paths into an inclusive world of work, but there is no link between them. Employers and employees must be connected with the right actors. An important role is played by interest groups within companies, which are already very committed and supportive and can ensure that jobs are properly designed. On the whole, however, severely disabled people are still not well enough represented in companies.

In order to counter this, Ms König believes that the compensation charge for companies that have not employed any people with severe disabilities should be increased. This could increase the funding for conversions to barrier-free workplaces. Many future-oriented companies have already recognised that the employment of people with disabilities is not an obstacle. Such examples should be further spread according to the opinion of ver.di Federal Board member König. Finally, she stresses that the topic of inclusion must be thought of in a more holistic manner. It should not only be discussed as a matter of health and social affairs, but also as part of all other areas such as architecture.



**Johannes Pfeiffer, Operational Manager of the Regional Directorate Berlin-Brandenburg of the Federal Employment Agency**

Johannes Pfeiffer argues for more transparency with regard to support services in companies. There is currently a great deal of confusion, which is becoming an obstacle for many potential employees. Offers should be made more transparent. Good examples should also be more strongly disseminated in order to reduce prejudices and fears among employers. In fact, it has been demonstrated that companies that hire people with disabilities for the first time have good experiences and are much more willing to hire more people with disabilities. The requirement, of the Federal Participation Act, to provide “services in a manner that seems like they come from a single provider” is a challenging task for all rehabilitation providers.

Now, the rehabilitation providers must cooperate more closely, because it was not intended in the legislative process to establish a kind of “Federal Rehabilitation Office”. Above all, it is important to have a positive attitude towards people with disabilities, because what is decisive is not what impedes someone, but what strengths someone has. Inclusion is thus worthwhile both for companies and for society.



**Dr Constantin Terton, Head of Specialists and Innovation, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Berlin**

There is no such thing as “can’t be done”. This is how Dr Constantin Terton sums up his impressions from the workshop he attended on the subject of digitalisation. Technical assistive devices and digitalisation make many things possible, such as greater mobility through mobile working and the provision of technical solutions for very different needs. However, the focus must be on people’s talents and strengths and how best to use them instead of concentrating on their respective limitations. A change in awareness is already taking place in companies. Instead of “streamlining” everything and everyone, diversity is being seen more and more positively, and workforces are increasingly representing the colourful picture of society. In order to achieve an inclusive labour market, however, a lot of educational work still needs to be done. According to Dr Terton, fears of contact must be reduced.

This is one of the tasks of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. He hopes that the advantages of digitalisation will be used in the implementation of the Federal Participation Act (BTHG) and that a stronger co-operation between the various institutions can be promoted through digitalisation. For example, it would be important to establish an eGovernment system for beneficiaries from the outset and not only in the second step.





**Alexander Fischer, State  
Secretary for Labour and Social  
Services, Berlin**

According to State Secretary Alexander Fischer, many of the good practice examples presented at the event have in common that they are based on a change of perspective from deficit-oriented to resource-oriented thinking. They show that diversity in companies is a strength and that innovation comes from the workforce. Inclusion in the world of work is a process that must not end with the employment of a person, but which also requires close support. The criticism of bureaucracy expressed by participants should not lead to unrealistic expectations. Processes and instruments can certainly be optimised, but the financial resources from the compensation charge must be used and spent sensibly by the Senate. The Federal Participation Act (BTHG) already obliges the administration to work more closely together.

For the Senate, this means thinking beyond the boundaries of the Departments and cooperating with each other. For the implementation of the BTHG, the districts play a crucial role, as they bear the main responsibility for the reorganisation and implementation of the integration assistance, according to State Secretary Fischer. In this respect, the aim is to establish rehabilitation providers in the districts or possibly also a joint state rehabilitation provider. He is confident that these tasks can be completed as quickly as the law requires.



**Christine Nothacker, Spokeswoman  
of Berlin's State Working Group of  
Inclusion Companies**

According to Christine Nothacker, the examples from the workshops have shown which adjustments are necessary for an inclusive working environment. In her opinion, two very good examples from large companies were particularly helpful. Decent wages for decent work as well as the organisation of working hours were central elements of success. In another example from Berlin, people with disabilities are being trained as management consultants or also inclusion consultants. Half of the inclusion companies in Berlin employ severely disabled people. The inclusion companies would like to multiply and disseminate their many years of experience, e.g. by sharing them with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Berlin. In addition, Ms Nothacker expresses the need for a central point of contact for employees and employers who provide advice and support beyond the initial stages of employment and help to ensure that employment relationships remain sustainable. She also finds it important to establish places of encounter where people can exchange information and encourage each other.

**Closing Remarks by Alexander  
Fischer, State Secretary for Labour  
and Social Services, Berlin**

According to State Secretary Fischer, the conference was an experiment that succeeded. He emphasises that we are on the right track, but that this does not mean that everything is perfect. The basic aim of the Federal Participation Act (BTHG) is correct. There has been much criticism around what is missing in the BTHG. Nevertheless, it is an opportunity to implement the human rights approach of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to participate in work. It is about rights and not welfare. This signifies a paradigm shift in the system of participation that leads to a completely different situation than 20 years ago. In the new system of participation, the shift to a person-centred system is taking place. At the same time, the change in the skilled workforce is a problem that is likely to intensify in the years to come. This goes hand in hand with a cultural change in companies.



People no longer ask what someone cannot do, but what someone can do. This opens up new possibilities, especially for people with disabilities. Over the next few months, Berlin will be working on the new Berlin framework contract, the reorganisation of the new integration assistance and the new needs assessment instrument for Berlin. The Budget for Work must also be implemented as a new instrument. In this respect, the conference has shown that job coaching and a strong co-operation with the state companies are important. According to State Secretary Fischer, the youth employment agency must also continue to open up to inclusion. He also sees potential in a better co-operation between the rehabilitation teams of the Federal Employment Agency and the job centres with the employees of the districts. Accessibility is also a major challenge. How accessible are places where people live and work? These central questions must also be addressed in the amendment of the Equal Opportunities for Disabled Persons Act.

The greatest task, however, is to create a culture of inclusion. Berlin could play a part in the federal government's campaign to address companies directly, mentioned by Permanent State Secretary Dr Schmachtenberg. It is a matter of approaching companies, social partners, trade unions, works councils and staff councils in order to promote cultural change together. The state of Berlin itself serves as a role model, as do the contracting authorities and the administrations as a whole. To fulfil this responsibility for inclusion is truly worthwhile, concluded State Secretary Fischer.

# Marketplace

## **Foundation for Barrier-Free Communication! Discovery Trail**

Controlling a computer just with your eyes and without touching it? Using a computer to help you speak? Reading without seeing? At the various stations of the discovery trail, participants were able to experience for themselves how technology can assist people with different disabilities in accessing computers and the Internet and thus make it possible for them to use IT workplaces on the first labour market.

## **Integration management from Berlin Workshops for Persons with Disabilities (BWB) – Workshops as a Stepping Stone to Mainstream Employment**

Using the workshop as a career springboard – BWB integration management can open up the mainstream labour market through “company-integrated groups” and individual workstations. BWB accompanies people individually into an inclusive life.

## **Annedore Leber Vocational Training Centre Berlin (ALBBW)**

The Annedore Leber Vocational Training Centre Berlin (ALBBW) has been in existence since 1979. It provides young adults with disabilities or special support needs with the training they need to progress to the mainstream labour market, thereby enabling self-directed participation in working life and society. At the ALBBW stall, the participants were able to find wealth of information on the transition from school to work, on opportunities for training and funding and on an extensive range of support services that can pave the way to successful employment.

## **“Aktiv und selbstbestimmt e.V.” is a support organisation that offers participation guidance**

At this stall, participants could meet a disabled advisor and specialist peer counsellor who provided insight into her personal experiences as well as information material (flyers and brochures) about the work of a Supplementary Independent Participation Guidance Service (EUTB).



### **University of Bremen: Return to work for tetraplegics with the service robot FRIEND**

At the marketplace stall of the University of Bremen, the support robot FRIEND was introduced. FRIEND is able to help persons with tetraplegia (paralysis that results in the partial or total loss of use of all four limbs) by performing necessary manual tasks in occupational situations. The robot was deployed in a library-based workplace, where it allowed its user to return to employment. The user herself, who is a cataloguer at the University of Bremen, was also present and personally reported on her experiences.

### **Pappelhof School**

At this stall, the Pappelhof School presented itself – a school that specialises in “mental development”. It is also Berlin’s first and only eTwinning school. They use digital assistance devices to prepare their pupils for entry into working life.

### **Biesalski School: No Leaving School without Vocational or Training Prospects – Inclusive Transition from School to Work**

The Biesalski school provided insight into the “Occupational Pathways Conference”, a method which involves all participants in the process of the transition from school to work. They also presented their “Market of Occupations” concept, a special vocational orientation trade fair for pupils with a wide range of backgrounds and support needs. Their marketplace stall also aimed to show participants a number of case studies while providing illustration and information material.

### **Travelling Exhibition “Inclusion Wins! On Tour” by LIFE e.V.**

This travelling exhibition showcased companies from the Tempelhof-Schöneberg district of Berlin, which have successfully integrated persons with disabilities as specialist and skilled workers. The examples made clear that the key societal objective of “inclusion” can be effectively reconciled with commercial viability.



### **The “InKraFT” project – Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training via Virtual Reality Technology Focusing on the Specific Example of the Occupation of Vehicle Mechatronics Technician**

At the marketplace stall of the research project “Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training via Virtual Reality Technology Focusing on the Specific Example of the Occupation of Vehicle Mechatronics Technician” (InKraFT), participants had the opportunity to explore the exciting world of work of vehicle mechatronics technicians via the medium of virtual reality. Visitors also experienced how learning contents can be shaped and used in an inclusive and sustainable way within the scope of a design-oriented didactic concept.

### **Inclusive Vocational and Higher Education Study Orientation**

PSW Partner für Schule und Wirtschaft (Partner for Schools and the Economy) offers assistance in the vocational and higher education study orientation process in a way that is aligned with all special educational needs. At their stall, they provided information on the prospects for follow-up provision and details of the basic legal principles governing support measures.

### **Educational and Occupational Guidance at the Neukölln Learning Centre**

The Neukölln Learning Centre forms part of the Berlin Network of Educational and Occupational Guidance Agencies. It provides wide-ranging guidance and counselling on educational and career pathways. The publicly funded counselling services enable persons with disabilities, with health-related restrictions and special educational needs to obtain comprehensive and expert information on the various kinds of education and training provisions that are available and thus to receive support as they pursue their own career pathway.

### **Inclusion Companies – Added Value inclusive**

Inclusion companies offer jobs on the mainstream labour market to persons with and without disabilities. They deliver added value by successfully combining economic efficiency with social responsibility. Participants at this stall were informed about how inclusion companies operate and what the world of work can learn from their inclusive practices.





*Using virtual reality, State Secretary Alexander Fischer immerses himself in the exciting world of work of automotive mechatronics engineers.*



*Participants test various learning materials at the marketplace.*



*PSW Partner für Schule und Wirtschaft (Partner for Schools and the Economy) informs participants about the Inclusive Career and Study Orientation (BSO).*



*The Neukölln Learning Centre offers guidance and counselling on educational pathways and professional development.*



*Participants discover how computers and the internet can support jobs on the first labour market.*



*Participants exchange experiences at the stall of the Supplementary Independent Participation Guidance Service (EUTB).*

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