

Madrid, 12-13th September 2019, hosted by Diaconia Spain

MEETING REPORT

Access to Employment Network Meeting

On 12-13 September, a group of 19 representants from Eurodiaconia member organisations met in Madrid at Diaconia Spain for the annual meeting on Access to Employment.

The access to employment by people with greater support needs is subject to the provision of quality social services and training opportunities that prepare people to perform jobs. However, all efforts to increase the employability of people require a parallel progress on the demand side; that is, the availability of employment opportunities, the establishment of effective partnerships with employers that are committed to inclusive workforces or the promotion of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship, among others. For this reason, the 2019 network meeting focused on how providers of social services can establish stronger links with employers and employment opportunities.



Thursday, 12 September

Joan-David Grimà, President of Diaconia Spain, welcomed participants at Diaconia Spain and invited them to watch a video reflecting the work of its organisation. Diaconia Spain is a network of 1166 churches with 2353 care centers. They provide many social services, such as: support for victims of human trafficking, nursing homes, hospitals and health clinics, schools and academies, work guidance, legal and psychological services.

Kenia Guimaraes, Senior Policy Coordinator at Eurodiaconia conducted a devotion.

Stefan Kitzmann, Policy and Membership Development Officer at Eurodiaconia, took the floor to present the agenda of the day, and gave an introduction on Eurodiaconia's policy work. Then participants introduced themselves.



Graciela Malgesini, Ph.D. in Economic History and Director of EAPN Elearning Platform at EAPN Spain, presented “old and new profiles linked to unemployment and low-quality employment” and policy recommendations against trends of poverty and social exclusion.

She emphasised some of the most pressing challenges regarding employment: Being in employment does not guarantee a decent living. The unemployment rate is nearly the same than before the crisis. The EU 2020-target of 75% employment-rate has not been reached yet, and many differences persist between countries. Moreover, 70% of platform workers have no access to social protection. Digitalisation could be a chance if it works together with precariousness.

Then Graciela Malgesini shared EAPN Spain's recommendation to the Spanish government. The key proposals were (1) to guarantee a Basic Income scheme, (2) to have active employment policies, and (3) that social services should be a pillar of the welfare state.

Other ideas were raised in the discussion, in particular in terms of social protection and of jobs, such as: (a) to develop personalized itinerary for labour insertion, managed both by the social services and the NGOs. (b) To support flexible and adapted professional training, specifically tailor-made for the most vulnerable. (c) To create more jobs for disadvantaged groups. (d) To support entrepreneurship within disadvantaged people. (e) To promote quality jobs.



Ignacio Velo, working at the Direction of the Corporate and Social Responsibility of the ILUNION group, took the floor as ‘social employer’ to provide a model of integration of people into jobs and the role employers can play.

ILUNION, ONCE and its Foundation belong to the same Business group. Their ambition is to become a leading group that pursues business excellence to show that economic and social returns can go hand in hand. ILUNION is staffed by 40,000 professionals, 40% of whom are people with disabilities. Moreover, 55% of their staff are women.

Ignacio Velo presented the 5 different business areas of ILUNION: going from business & facility services, health and social care, hotel, catering and leisure, to consultancy and business solutions. One example was that ILUNION manages 25 hotels in Spain, which comprises 1400 workers, among which about 50% with disabilities. All the hotels are 100% accessible.

Ignacio Velo further presented positive legislation and measures to fight against discrimination (i.e. Quota; Economic benefits; Inclusive Employment centres vs. Sheltered Employment centres).

ILUNION provides inclusive employment centres with many services and opportunities for workers, such as: cultural/sport/leisure events, trainings, day-care centres benefits, telework, flexible working hours/ work-life balance, career plan, therapeutic workshops, psychotherapy services.



Iva Zelic, working at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, took the floor to present the latest Policy update and state of play of policies against long-term unemployment (LTU) at EU-level. She presented key initiatives to support the long-term unemployed back into the labour market.

Addressing long-term unemployment is a key employment challenge of the Commission's employment strategy. After showing unemployment statistics reflecting national disparities and EU trends, Iva Zelic gave a detailed overview on the EU policy framework, including the 2016 Council recommendation on integration of long-term unemployed into the labour market. Many measures were put into practice at national level to better support long-term unemployed, such as (1) encouraging registration, (2) putting the focus on the individual, (3) breaking down silos to increase coordination, (4) intensifying employer's involvement. The strongest policy changes have been observed in countries with previously less developed support systems. These changes were illustrated through examples of good practice at national level. For instance, Croatia developed a statistical profiling tool to help the PES clients to estimate their probability of employment within 12 months following registration. Then Iva Zelic provided ways forwards to achieve policy objectives. She strengthened the need to engage civil society, local actors and the unemployed in the policy-making process. To increase preventive measures, including trainings and reskilling. To provide individualised support and increase the capacities of Public Employment Services (PES). More coordination and data sharing is also needed between organisations. Data should be qualitative.

Measures towards more social enterprises should be supported, as well as 'job carving' approaches. As a next step, social services and tools should be promoted towards better integration of unemployed and long-term unemployed people: LTU contact points, PES networks, EMCO (quantitative monitoring; bi-annual multi-lateral surveillance of all Member States – European Semester): European Social Fund (ESF).

Study Visit 1: Tomillo Foundation

In the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to meet the Tomillo Foundation, which was created in 1983 to give support to entrepreneurial initiatives and direct job creation in deprived districts of Madrid. Today, Tomillo's foundation is active in different social areas, to respond to the social, educational and labour market's needs detected through their daily practice, such as: childhood, adolescence and family, research and innovation centre, education and training, career guidance and employment/entrepreneurship services.

They were finalist of the Award for Good Practice by the European Network of Innovation for inclusion.

This last service offers a personalized itinerary towards employment, with a follow-up service.

The foundation provides Vocational Education and Training (VET) in 4 areas: computing, administration, electricity and hostelry. Through cooperation with companies, they offer different kinds of trainings in both technical and soft skills, from computing, to beauty adviser, hostelry or recycling.

We had a more detailed presentation the beauty advisors' training, which aims at promoting the social and labour insertion of young unemployed women a risk of social exclusion, developing their basic and professional skills to find a job and remain in employment. It is also a way of building confidence. L'Oréal is a partner of this project. The project shows satisfying results: 94% of the participants are qualified after the training. And 78% of participants are hired. The satisfaction rate is of 95%.



Tomillo Fundación Study visit, 12th September

Friday, 13 September

Stefan Kitzmann opened up to present the agenda of the day.

Jonathan Navarro, member of Eurodiaconia and Pastor from Iglesia Evangélica Española (IEE), conducted the devotion.

Alix de Noircarme, Policy Assistant at Eurodiaconia, introduced the project fair session, aimed at sharing experiences and good practice, identify common challenges faced by Eurodiaconia's members, and focusing on Access to Employment initiatives.



Borja Revuelta from **Association Evangelica Nueva Vida**, member of Eurodiaconia, presented his current projects as Director of the Penitentiary Employment Service and of the Residential Sheltering. They developed partnerships, including on employment services. Their main employment service is called '**INCORPORA**' and was developed by Fundacion Bancaria La Caixa for socially excluded communities or population groups in risk of social exclusion. It helped to create 30.000 work opportunities for social excluded people last year in Spain. ILUNION is also a partner of this project.

Our member Nueva Vida is a regional leader in its group of 6 NGOs, managing 103 out of the total 385 job opportunities in Cantabria in 2018.

Another service promoting Access to Employment is named '**REINCORPORA**'. This project is oriented to prison inmates in the last period of their internment. 75% of the participants found work opportunities in 771 different companies. Nueva Viva stands, here again, as national leader, with a success rate of 87% in 2018.

Another example is the project '**Puntos de Formacion**' providing work training for people in social exclusion.

In sum, Nueva Vida promotes employment, but their services look beyond the mere integration of unemployed people into the labour market. They also provide social and political inclusion.

Finally, our member shared best practices towards successful employment projects, making the focus on human relationships as key priority.



Several representants from **our member and host Diaconia Spain** then presented their work towards access to employment and other social services.

The **ASYLUM** and refugee welcome programme, funded by the Ministry of Labour and Migration in Spain and EU funds. This 18-months project takes place in 8 towns of 7 regions in Spain. The aim of this programme is to improve the level of employability of asylum-seekers and refugees to increase their chance of insertion in the labour market. People receive educational, social, legal and psychological support.

Another programme, **SAUSD**, provides social emergency. Attention is given to cover most basic needs: Food, hygiene articles, clothes, glasses, school supplies. They can also provide food scholarships.

Our member also fights against promote schooling and attendance among people with a Roma background, and Spanish socially disadvantaged students through its programme '**APOYO Y COMENSACION**'. This initiative takes action to control absenteeism, to provide school support to minors, to share values of education in solidarity, to promote men-women equality, to be a mediator between families and centres, to target marginalised neighbourhoods.

Diaconia Spain also encourages autonomous learning and training courses with its project '**Escuela de Diaconia**'.

Last, but not least, Diaconia Spain is active in anti- trafficking through its project "**ROMPE LA CANEDA**", which started in 2015. It centralises specialised resources to ensure protection and assistance for victims of trafficking.



My Samuelsson, from the **Stockholm City Mission** went on presenting their work on access to employment. Stockholm City Mission is active in many social areas, enabling social services for vulnerable people, and providing non-profit alternatives to public services. They promote social enterprises and education. **Social enterprises** focus on integrating (long-term) unemployed people into the labour market, especially people with mental and/or physical health issues and/or victims of structural discrimination. In 2018, social enterprises supported more than 650 individuals in various forms of work integration activities, such as: second hand shops, 'Remake' (re-purposing textiles), restaurant, food distribution, social supermarkets, logistics. Mentors help them to strengthen their professional skills and personal development.

However, the cooperation with large companies is almost always one-way. Our member defends that work integration needs to be put on the agenda as a sustainability issue.

Stockholm City Mission offers an '**education service**', which consists in a one-year subsidised employment in their social enterprises. A future development could be to offer their participants to apply to their own education service. They are also working on closer cooperation with Social Enterprises.

Moreover, the Stockholm City Mission uses the **OCN-method** (Open College Network), which allows quality insurance and acknowledgement for knowledge, skills and qualifications. A future development would be to offer validation through the OCN method. However, harmonisation in Europe could be challenging. But it could also be an opportunity for employers to integrate unemployed people in the process of validating and certifying programs.



Morgana Cartarasa, office manager at **Diaconia Valdese** presented the initiative “**Casa del lavoro**”, a job placement services that was created in 2016 to help unemployed people to access the labour market. The two main activities are (1) human resources and (2) internships. Users get professional orientation, they can participate to workshops to improve their professional skills, and a tutor follows them during the internship. They are also incentives for firms to employ these persons,

such as bonuses when employing NEET, young people, people over 50 years old, women, disables and NASPI. Furthermore, enterprises get many advantages: for instance, half of the intern salary is refunded. Moreover, the region Piemonte also provides public policies, encouraging specific programmes for disabled and vulnerable people, for long-term unemployed people over 30 and under 30 years old. Our member maintains also a good relationship with Public Employment Services (PES) and Social Services. Our member recommends that firms invest more on staff. Better integration between active labour market policies and social policies is needed. More efforts and investment from private and public institutions on the labour-market’s integration of people.



Nicola Salusso, Migrant office manager at **Diaconia Valdese** presented their work on the integration of people with a migrant background into the labour market. In 2018 there were about 200 jobseekers, among whom 92 persons completed an internship, and 30 persons did a temporary contract. Both public (national reception programme, active labour market policies, AMIF) and private funds support this initiative. To help people integrate the labour market, the initiative covers several activities: training opportunities, job and legal assistance. The strategy recently changed to maintain quality standards,

which relies on increasing the network and the skills provided through the network.

Policy workshop

Network meetings allow a permanent channel of communication with and between Eurodiaconia and its members to discuss potential opportunities for policy development. Such an input helps Eurodiaconia to step up its role as a key civil society organization on employment issues.

Four questions were discussed within two groups. Results were presented by **My Samuelsson** and **Vassi Leontari (Apostoli)** in a group discussion. The ideas raised during the discussion are collected together.

1. What are the conditions needed to establish effective partnerships with (Public) Employment Services?
 - Effective partnership should result from a two-sides interest. PES should be more involved.
 - Public employer and social NGOs should work more closely to enable people’s integration into the labour market through adequate services.

- The Legislative framework should promote PES close collaboration at international level. It is important to keep EU citizens aware of the initiatives taken.
 - PES counselors should have adequate skills and not only be result-oriented but more people-oriented. Participants should be known by the administration by their name.
 - Staff shortage in PES should be addressed, as they are not able to take full action to help people. PES are often very busy, and sometimes they don't have time to meet the participants or to have a conversation with them. Face to face communication is very important.
 - NGOs should keep presenting successful stories of people finding jobs.
 - Social workers have to be realistic and pragmatic: business should meet the employment skills needed.
2. How should the effectiveness of interventions be evaluated?
- Access to employment should always go beyond "access". There should be a follow-up method to see what happens after, and if further support is needed. It is not only about quantity, but mostly about quality of jobs.
 - Too many different tools are used currently to assess the effectiveness of interventions. It would be good to create a common tool together with the PES.
 - The outcome should be clear and provided in reports with concrete numbers.
3. Where would you like to see the focus of Eurodiaconia's policy work on access to employment/ LTU in the future?
- Work more on specific population groups to better identify the solutions.
 - Create a platform for members to share their models, experience, initiatives, successful stories and best practices. A permanent forum should help to find solutions on specific topics and have a direct contact with other members. Networking is really important to bring forward further collaboration.
 - Continue providing reports based on the members feedbacks, including best practices and tools.
 - Continue alerting on founding opportunities from the European Commission to meet the needs of the members activities.
4. Do you have any projects/events planned for 2020?
- **Gabriela Lhotska** from **Slezska Diakonie** created projects in cities where there are low or no social services, and where people don't vote. They aim at increasing participation and work for persons with (mental) disabilities and vulnerable people. They provide trainings on soft skills that fit the labour market needs. They also provide motivation money for the training and give them work opportunities.
 - **Borja Revuelta** from **Nueva Vida** presented a new project to support people's social reintegration. This does not focus merely on employment, but also on practical issues: get a doctor appointment, use the internet, etc.

- **Amisadday Ramirez** from **Diaconia Spain** explained that they have currently 11 projects related to employment that they want to implement next year, including a project with asylum seekers. They are learning to manage a hotel, and the other half of the hotel is aimed to host them.
- **Nicola Salusso** from **Diaconia Valdese** presented a pipeline project of coaching for the integration of asylum seekers in the labour market, to achieve both autonomy and social integration. ILO is a partner of this project that could operate in 2020.
- **Anastasia Lazaridis** from **Perichoresis NGO (Evangelical Church of Greece)** presented the social cooperative enterprise, which is part of the Perichoresis program. It helps vulnerable people to be integrated. Concretely, trainings are provided to support people skills to produce goods. Products are sold to other organisations.



Policy workshop, 13th September

Study Visit 2: Down Madrid

We met with **Ignacio Egea** from Down Madrid who told us about the work and activities of Down Madrid, especially as regard to integration of vulnerable people into the labour market. Down Madrid was created in 1989. In general, they offer a set of activities aimed at achieving full family, social, educational and employment inclusion of people with Down syndrome or other intellectual disability throughout its life course. The purpose of Down Madrid is the defense of the right to life and the dignity of people with Down syndrome or other intellectual disability, as well as the promotion and implementation of all activities aimed at achieving their full family, school, work integration and social in order to improve their quality of life, always counting on their active participation and that of their families.

We visited the **Occupational Center** aimed at people with Down syndrome or other intellectual disability over 18 years who are not able to join an ordinary company. This center provides practical and theoretical training to optimise their professional skills and make them autonomous in a job daily routine. In total, the center has four areas of professional development in order to satisfy the vocation and interests of each person: Design and artisanal production; Gardening and nursery; Hospitality, Catering and Catering; Merchandising and personalized product.



Down Madrid Study visit, 13th September