Workshop 1 – Session 2
Best Practices and Innovations

Tandem in Science – Network
for integration projects

Federal Institute for Vaccines
and Biomedicines
The Paul-Ehrlich-Institut (PEI) – the Federal Institute for Vaccines and Biomedicines – is responsible for the marketing authorisation and batch control of immunobiological medicinal products.
History

1896  Institute for Serum Research and Serum Examination, Berlin-Steglitz

1899  Royal Institute for Experimental Therapy, Frankfurt/Main

1947  Paul-Ehrlich-Institut - State Institute for Experimental Therapy, Frankfurt/Main

1972  Paul-Ehrlich-Institut, Federal Agency for Sera and Vaccines, Frankfurt/Main

1990  Paul-Ehrlich-Institut, Federal Agency for Sera and Vaccines, Langen/Hessen

2005  The Paul-Ehrlich-Institut received its designation as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Quality Assurance of Blood Products and in vitro Diagnostic Devices
Duties of Paul-Ehrlich-Institut

- Official batch release
- Authorisation of medicinal products
- Scientific advice
- Pharmacovigilance
- Expert support for inspections
- Permission of clinical studies
- Experimental research
- Advice to government
Unit Personnel

Federal Institute for Vaccines and Biomedicines

Personnel

0
100
200
300
400
500
600

Others Scientific Staff

476
277

Sum: 753
In March 1996 a model project named “Tandem-Partnerships” (TPs) was started at the PEI to improve the situation of disabled scientists and to (re-) integrate them into the labour market.

Six young disabled scientists from different disciplines of life sciences were employed on the basis of temporary contracts of 3 to 5 years. Their disabilities included various degrees of mobility impairments and different kinds of chronic diseases, ranging from 50 – 100% according to the German classification system for disabilities.
Establishment of “Tandem Partnerships” (TPs)

Three different variations of TPs were established:

- Teams consisting of scientists with physical disabilities being assisted by formerly long-term unemployed persons;
- teams consisting of disabled and non-disabled scientists collaborating and benefiting mutually;
- disabled scientists working independently using the accessible environment which allows them to fulfil their tasks without assistance from others.
EQUAL Development Partnership

- 2005 – 2007 the PEI was the co-ordinator of the EQUAL Development Partnership “Everything is possible – Tandem Partners in Science”.
- The major aims of the project were to mainstream the positive experience from the TPs to generally facilitate better access to higher education for young people with disabilities and to promote equal chances in the job market within the scientific community.
- This project focused on postgraduates, PhD students, technical trainees such as laboratory technicians and even interns.
Key Results and Benefits

- The focus of all integration projects for disabled people in science which the PEI has so far planned and co-ordinated at a national and a European level has been and is the work in networks.
- Synergies resulting from this networking are achieved by taking advantage of contacts, by the reduction of economic risk and the availability of manifold competences as well as a higher degree of becoming known in the case of smaller partners.
- The greatest networking benefit depends on the exchange of experience, the transfer of knowledge and the improved implementation (efficiency) of activities as well as the diversity of ideas.
- The “integration” issue was of primary importance, and all parties involved were able to contribute their individual expertise and experience.
- The innovations serve as a basis for discussion for intended amendments of laws, e.g. in the field of income dependent assistance.
Objectives of the Practice

- The network concept and its goals derive from the awareness that people with – usually very serious – physical impairments are clearly underrepresented in science and research although, if provided with the appropriately adapted supports, they would be able to study and/or work in the profession for which they have been trained.
- On the other hand, this approach can also prevent a threatening loss of skilled staff for public and private employers.
- The aim is therefore to enable disabled employees to achieve a high qualification at their workplace and at university. Unemployed disabled scientists should be able to obtain appropriate further training and attractive specialisation, thus guaranteeing a better transition to the free job market.
Key Implementation Steps

- The project was initiated within the European Community’s initiative “EQUAL”, and the Paul-Ehrlich-Institut co-ordinated the project.
- For this purpose, operative partners were first found from public administration, universities, small companies from the private sector, but also corporations quoted on the stock-exchange, and a self-help organisation, which joined the project.
- Strategic partner could also be won for the project to discuss specific problems and develop joint activities for new approaches.
- The project thus operated on the basis of different issues and partners to address job market policy problems.
Outcome and products

- Working groups were formed appropriately to use the resources and know-how of all participants effectively. Core issues included: for the fields of job market, vocational training, and academic courses.
- In exchange with other European countries such as Slovenia, Poland, and the UK, a very varied complex of issues was thus initiated in a network with a great variety of partners.
- Main streaming activities were introduced only after initiating the network as a whole. Firstly, an integration award was proposed for the area of “Science and Research” throughout Germany, and secondly, in addition to an advertising spot, a film reflecting the goals of integration.
- Furthermore, the partnership’s own website, a professional printed newsletter, raised the awareness of major parts of the public for the problem and encouraged the public to implement steps of its own.
Can the innovation be replicated?

- Favourable effects were seen even beyond the period of the official project.
- Issues elaborated can now be presented and suggestions for solutions made at a national level until they can be used for amendments to laws.
- The subject is no longer ignored and has gained in popularity.
- Persons in charge in personnel departments at various companies and authorities are seeking contact to obtain advice and support from PEI on their integration measures, the implementation of such measures, and financing plans.
- The work achieved up to now, the contacts and the reputation of the PEI project group will also be used in future.
... and is it sustainable?

- New projects are being prepared which would not be possible without the existing networks.
- As from 2010, jointly with partners from the network, we are integrating disabled bachelor graduates into existing research groups to achieve a better qualification for the first job market.
- The background of this project is the existing incompatibility of national academic and social benefit systems. Within the Bologna process, for many disabled bachelor graduates, this will lead to difficulties in obtaining funding for the disability specific extra expenses for the second part of their study, the Master course.
- The reason for this is that a Bachelor’s degree is considered as a vocational qualification, which, in Germany, does not provide the graduate with the entitlement for further funding.
What are the key lessons to be learned on how to promote a culture of innovation in the public sector?

- The success of the work in networks for the integration of disabled people in science can also be seen by the fact that the networks persist beyond their term, and work is being done on new projects.

- New projects are being prepared which would not be possible without the existing networks.
… hopefully, I could convince you to become a new partner in our network!!