

TRAINING PATH DRAFT

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1) Our approach to disability is inclusive (work and social inclusion) and interactive (role of the context and the quality of communication). Therefore we don't follow a medical model: *we work on the reduction of handicap*. Reduction of handicap, for example, means to choose, organize activities, spaces, use ways of communication and interaction which allow persons with disabilities to be as autonomous as possible (autonomy = self ruling). Autonomy means being able to make choices, carry out a decision and take the responsibility of it. This choice excludes for professionals:

a) The role of simple assistance. Assistance implies an unmodifiable nearness between the person who assists and the one who is assisted. Assistance builds up a relation based on substitution ("I do it in your place") and/or a communication process based on an order/execution scheme ("do this", "do that", "I know what's good for you").

b) A predetermined pattern of care/tending for specific pathologies whose steps follow strict, standardized rules, without taking account of individual characteristics.

2) Our aim is to improve the active role of persons with disabilities and the mutual learning between professionals and users (co-evolution). It means working to change roles, self-perception and social perception of persons with disabilities: from people in need of care to people who can take care of (plants, animals, other people).

3) It is the same logic of organic/biodynamic farming. It means the maintenance and implementation of what does exist and functions. Like persons with disabilities, soil, plants, animals are not passive beings to be manipulated and addressed as we like it. They are active beings which act and react in different ways according to contexts and inputs. Both organic/biodynamic farming and an inclusive educational approach to disability follow the logic of the living: *co-evolution and mutual adaptation*. The interrelations person/context and person/person are the "connective tissue" of both. Therefore "we think that both educational and farming training have a common ground" (Polish self-assessment). The

common ground is: daily working actions and interactions.

4) Our common, formal frame (internationally recognized) is ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Health and Disability). We are interested in the bio-psycho-social logic of ICF rather than its items and specific classifications. According to ICF, the quality of an active life, participation and active citizenship depend not only on the functions a person may have or have not (e.g. walk, speak, see...) but on functioning. *Functioning* is made of dynamic interactions between different functions, activities and contexts. Functions are static while Functioning is dynamic. It means it has intrinsic social and interactive aspects. As an example, a person with autism can walk (function) but if his walking has not a goal related to other functions and goals (to go somewhere to do something), this very important function leads him nowhere. He may also be able to speak (function) but if he doesn't use it to communicate, talk, ask, etc, this function remains isolated and doesn't enter into functioning. He may even be able to hammer a nail (an action which requires functions like mobility of the arm and eye-hand coordination) but if it is not connected to other actions and aims, it remains meaningless.

TRAINING NEEDS

The training needs summarized in Krakow are strictly connected to one another and, directly or indirectly, related to professionals' relations with users.. Let's give a few examples:

“ability to communicate at several levels “ , “ability to communicate with users”, “ability to communicate with peers .“

To increase our ability to communicate with others, we need to understand their codes (i.e. the rules and the meanings they apply to verbal and non verbal signs.) Therefore “communicate” doesn't only imply verbal language but also (and with some users like autistics even mostly) body language, gaze, tone/timber of voice, use of interpersonal space, etc.

To understand their “interpretation rules” we need to observe: what they do, how they do, how do they re-act to our actions and words. At the same time, what do their actions tell us about their attention, motivation, feelings, emotions, memory, adaptability, perseverance, understanding of social rules, autonomy, etc.

In the same way, “to be open minded”, “translate the complexity of reality”, “develop

reflexive abilities”, “adapt ourselves to the needs”, “back upon different skills and know how on which the team is built” etc. can mean, as an example:

- a) Which aspects of a given context (spaces, activities, timing, interactions...) are too complex for Pierre? The same aspects are too complex also for Michel? It means to look for an individual not a general adaptation of a context valid for all users;
- b) To develop reflexive abilities we need a good deal of self-observation and readiness to discuss and compare (“ability to communicate ad different levels”) educational/training choices with our colleagues, using concrete, specific words and examples.

All these training needs can be met through

- 1) *Observation*: self-observation, participant observation, detached observation
- 2) *evaluation of competences*: it doesn't need to be formalized always. With the help of some guidelines it aims to bring out and focus past experiences, one's own values, personal characteristics, working motivations, skills and know how.

METHODOLOGY

1) **Experiential learning.** DIANA training path is based on *experiential learning*. It means neither “do as you like it” nor to fetch spot solutions for emergency problems. It means to focus daily tasks and activities with users as *educational and training experiments* about problems and needs directly connected with users. Then compare and exchange points of view, suggestions, ways of doing. Experiential training has little to do with formal training which usually implies a face to face teaching about general subjects (e.g. ASD) or technical matters (e.g. food processing regulations).

Experiential learning and related reflective practice (as opposed to learning through the delivery and comment of presentation materials) is important for learners working with disabilities. This approach is upheld by current adult learning theory which strongly supports the benefits of experiential learning and associated reflection, with opportunities to examine and experiment with ongoing support (1)

(1) Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. and Marshall, S. *Understanding Student Learning*. In Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. and Marshall, S. (eds.) *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 2nd Ed. London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003.

E.g: the experimental task is to collect cauliflowers. Both professionals (social and agricultural) and users collect them. The general aims can be a) to observe how they collect them: if they search random or along the rows, b) if they recognize the ripe ones (closed or open heads), how they cut and clean them (use of the knife); c) timing (rhythm, speed, pauses). Abilities or difficulties to be detect could be:

- a) orienting and organization of his/her own actions in open spaces;
- b) attention, ability to search
- c) discrimination, evaluation, choice
- d) precision, fine motility
- e) continuity /distraction
- f) self-evaluation
- g) search for help

The kind of interactions between professionals and users depend on the professionals' aims:

- a) simple observation: I let them try with no intervention;
- b) training/didactic: various degrees of intervention (little verbal support, showing how to do an action, directions step by step, working at a distance, side by side, etc);
- c) productive

Different aims lead to different types of interactions.

2) **Shared reflection.** After the experiment, round a table professionals compare personal experiences of the working task (difficult, easy, tiring, too long, too short...) different points of views, suggestions, ways of doing with the users. E.g.: “why with you he is concentrated on his task while with me he is often distracted?”. This implies an observation of and reflection on different ways of doing and interacting with the same user and the same task. In this case detached observation (videotaped interaction) is very useful. Perhaps we discover that we have different opinions of that user or implicit different educational aims. In this way each professional can be both trainer and trainee (mutual learning).

3) **Relation of contiguity.** The pivot of the training is what may be called “relation of contiguity”. It means that the attention and actions both of professional and user are aimed

at the working task (shared attention). and its output (e.g. only good vegetables or bread are sold and bought), that is something outside them. On the contrary, often the educational task is aimed at the user (doing something for the sake of doing it, without meaning for the user). It's very important to communicate, make clear, share the meaning and the aim of the task. E.g. "we are collecting cabbages because the cook needs them"..." We have to make 20 moulds of cheese for the market day" or "the bread you are making is very appreciated by our costumers so hurry up because they are asking for it". It can be a strong *motivation* tool for the user and an help for his *cognitive decentralization* because, as we all know, most persons with disabilities, whatever is their pathology, are self-centred and have difficulties to put themselves in others' shoes.

Agricultural professionals are naturally oriented to the working task (planting cabbages, feeding animals, making cheese...) and therefore to the *relation of contiguity*. E.g. in Bellechambre we saw the dairyman (cheese maker) doing his job together with a severely disabled user. But his attention was on the task (e.g. sequence and timing of actions) and not on the user's stereotyped behaviours. So he used basic verbal and non-verbal communication succeeding in making the user doing some actions of the task. This approach has an intrinsic educational value .

Their technical competences allow them to understand at once if the task is on the whole easy, difficult for the user, what skills it requires, which actions are within his/her range, if the task needs to be splitted. So the agricultural training (including stock, dairy, bakery etc.) will be the core both of agricultural and social/educational training.

METHODOLOGY TIMING

- 1) As far as possible, use internal professionals as trainers because "when experience is grown the needs of training should be concentrated on individual problems, needs, interests, motivation of users" (Polish self-assessment report) But, of course, if you think you need an external expert for some topics, you can use him/her.
- 2) As we think it's not possible that all the professionals of a farm can participate to the training (who looks after users?), choose by common agreement a mixed group of professionals according to the size of the farm and total number of professionals.
- 3) Choose a coordinator inside or outside the group. His tasks are: coordinate the discussion inside the group and , organize the activities chosen as experiments on the

field, keep the timing, organize the farm report.

4) Choose some users you think more interesting as examples of general training need topics, comparing their needs, difficulties with others'. Use them as a sort of case studies to re-think professionals' opinions and strategies.

5) Videotape the tasks performed by agricultural, social professionals and users. We wish to make clear that the role of professionals that of instructors or teachers standing outside the task but that of working partners who, of course, can instruct or help during the same task

6) A defined time and space of common reflection (round a table). The discussion should be focalized on concrete and specific working and relational problems with users and their personal characteristics. An informal evaluation of competences of some professionals can also help to bring out and detail different know how and attitudes. Whenever is possible (type and degree of disabilities) we suggest to make an evaluation of competences also to two/three of your users. The results can be useful to compare their self-evaluation, self-awareness with your evaluation of them.

1) Formalize (write down): an agreed list of problems/abilities you would solve/improve concerning some of your users. Be as detailed and practical as possible. Decide some strategies to be tested (e.g. changes in activities, spaces, length, approaches, composition of the work team ...).

2) Experiment these strategies "on the field" to see if they give the expected outputs.

DURATION

We suggest *ten days* distributed from May to October. In the morning, experiential training in the fields (stables, dairy, bakery...). In the afternoon discussion (questions, answers, explanations, comments) about both agricultural and educational training. Plus *five half days* dedicated only to educational training using the problems, skills and needs of two/three users as a kind of case studies to answer the training needs stated in Kracow. In both situations observation (verbal, written, videotaped) and evaluation of competences are the main tools.