

## Finding employment by profound training

The Living Link – South Africa

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The guiding principle of The Living Link is that intellectually disabled people can be equipped with new skills and can then successfully find employment in the open labour market. The course material was written for and in collaboration with intellectually disabled people to ensure that the material was understandable and could be readily incorporated and made practical in their every-day lives. There are no formal assessments, as many of the young adults are illiterate. However, it is recognized that with proper training intellectually disabled adults are nonetheless able to function in the workplace.

### QUOTE

*"The Living Link is a training centre for intellectually disabled adults where we seek to break down the barriers that exist for people who live with disabilities, and ultimately create hope and opportunity for these people within society."*

- Mr. Stanley Bawden, The Living Link

### FACTS & FIGURES

- To date, 450 people with intellectual disabilities have been trained.
- Over 300 people have been assisted to find some form of work in the open labour market.
- Approximately 35 adults with intellectual disabilities are trained each year.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

There are many barriers for persons with intellectual disabilities when it comes to finding employment, but being employed is a big step towards independent living. Therefore, the programme's aim is to provide sufficient skills and education to allow intellectually disabled adults to have a greater chance to access the regular labour market.

### SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The project was initiated in 1999 and formerly started in 2000. The organization offers a one-year Adult Integration Programme and a six-month Work Readiness Programme. Trainings include theoretical modules and a period of job sampling in the open labour market. The modules consist of courses in lifestyle management, personal empowerment, employment, and financial management.

The job sampling is facilitated by two job coaches who support students in the practical application of skills learned in a real-world working context. Job sampling is carried out in a number of fields or departments within a variety of organizations. Students work and rotate through various departments, such as mailrooms, document control, administration/reception, warehouses, organic gardening, and corporate kitchens. Participants also receive support from the organization once they have graduated and are engaged in employment.

### OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The prospect for future growth is to transfer the programme to other provinces within South Africa. The biggest issue is a lack of finances to take the project further. Currently, there is a plan to expand the programme to Cape Town or Durban at some point in the next five years. Meanwhile, new partnerships within potential employers are constantly being explored.

Photo: Yes

### CONTACT

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