

## Persons with disabilities employing their assistants

Germany - VbA – Independent Living e.V.

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The association's work is focused on counselling persons with disabilities in planning and leading an independent life and supporting them in self-employment. It offers a payroll accounting service for employers with disabilities, an internet-based platform for assistance, and a travelling service for wheelchair users.

“‘Nothing about us without us’ is the ultimate goal of our work.”

—Andreas VEGA, Project Coordinator

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Approximately 750 consultations have taken place over the last 3 years.
- Over 140 new entries are added to the assistant database each month.
- 65 percent of entries are successful matches between the employer and assistant.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

Living an independent life is based on, among other things, self-representation towards government and social security authorities as well as service providers and/or providers of health insurance. It includes paying taxes and getting tax benefits, applying for subsidies, gaining employment, etc. People with disabilities are often afraid of managing an independent life because they do not know how to begin and where to get support to manage complex tasks.

### SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The VbA's methodology is based on peer support, whereby councillors who are themselves persons with disabilities accompany and support their peers. The councillors' skills include psychology, empathy, patience, and expertise in diverse fields of work. In the employer model, all decisions are made by the persons with disabilities. They look by themselves for people who want to assist in their households and

they conduct the job interviews. Assistants work under the instructions of the employer. VbA provides the employer with payroll services and/or a job exchange internet platform listing vacant posts.

### **OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY**

Already several independent living centres exist in Germany, which are primarily funded by the government and donations. The counselling is free of charge. The organization is continuing to grow due to the many requests and needs of people with disabilities.

### **CONTACT**

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