

DEAF WORK

CONCEPT OF A COOPERATION NETWORK OF EMPLOYERS



Cooperation Designed to Facilitate the Vocational Activation of the Deaf and the Hearing-impaired and Their Presence on the Job Market



RECIPIENTS OF THE COOPERATION NETWORK

- The core beneficiaries of the cooperation network are institutions that give support to deaf people (e.g. divisions or territorial entities of PZG, other entities that help people with hearing disabilities). It is particularly dedicated for those organizations that already provide the deaf with career counselling or encourage them to enter the job market.

THE KEY GOAL OF IMPLEMENTING THE MODEL is to improve cooperation among employers. What is more, the implementation of the model is aimed at enhancing both the effectiveness and the quality of a vocational activation processes that take place in the area covered by a given institution.

- The innovativeness of a proposed solution relies upon its organizational aspect – so far there has not been any formalized form of cooperation on supporting the deaf that would engage many different stakeholders.
- The innovation at hand takes the form of a process and its main goal is to globally approach the problem of the vocational activation of deaf persons. The formalization of the proposed network is not a must although it may significantly help when it comes to achieving the avowed goals.

TARGET GROUPS OF THE COOPERATION NETWORK

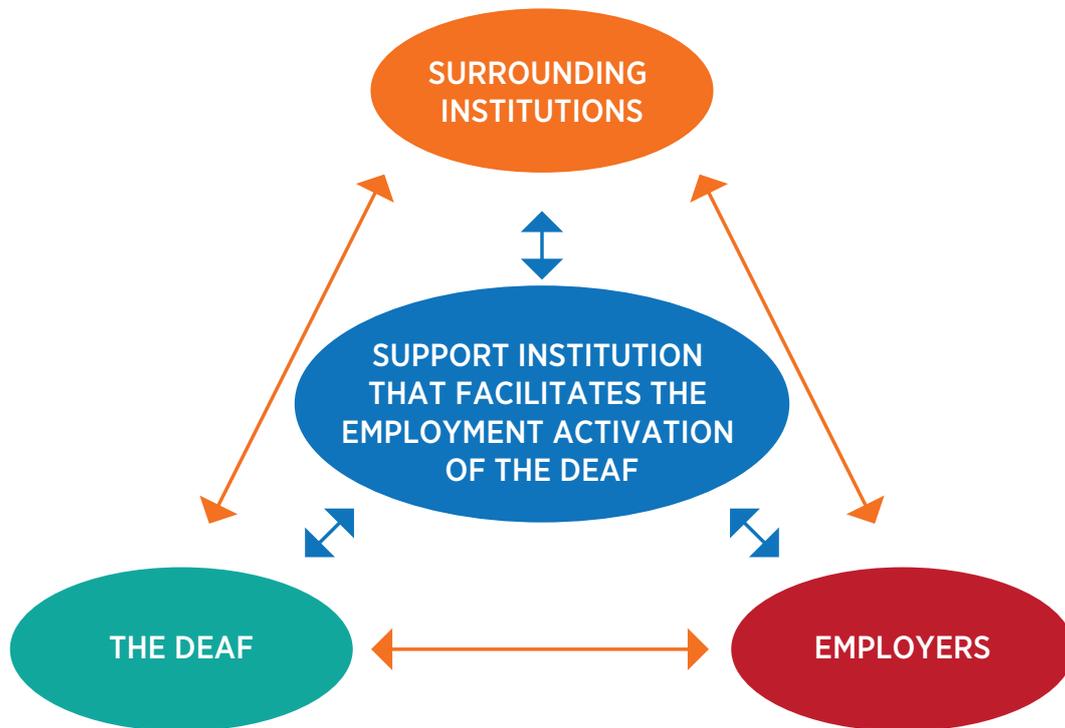
- the deaf / hearing-impaired, prospective or present employers;
- job market institutions;
- educational institutions, e.g. special schools, general education, higher education institutions;
- legislative institutions or support institutions (the Municipal Social Welfare Centres);
- media, understood both as a broadcaster and a communication channel;
- institutions that make independent decisions as for offering financial support, managing expenses and performing actions (e.g. Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych, Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych czy Państwowa Inspekcja Pracy).

The chief beneficiaries of the project – deaf people – have already come of age and belong to the working age population. Their primary language is sign language (mostly the Polish Sign Language – PJM), whereas their command of Polish is often not enough to communicate effectively with the rest of the society they live in.

DEAF WORK – Model Dedicated to Improve Employment Accessibility Among the Deaf People

COOPERATION NETWORK OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

The model of cooperation network assumes that the main roles are defined by a support institution which helps the deaf, intends to build the network and – when it is up and running – encourages teamwork among its members. Apart from the support institution, other crucial groups are employers and the deaf. Each of the groups is related to a support institution by means of mutual relations. The support institution, on the other hand, gets in contact with other members of the network and tries to maintain it by striving for close interactions both with the deaf and with the employers.



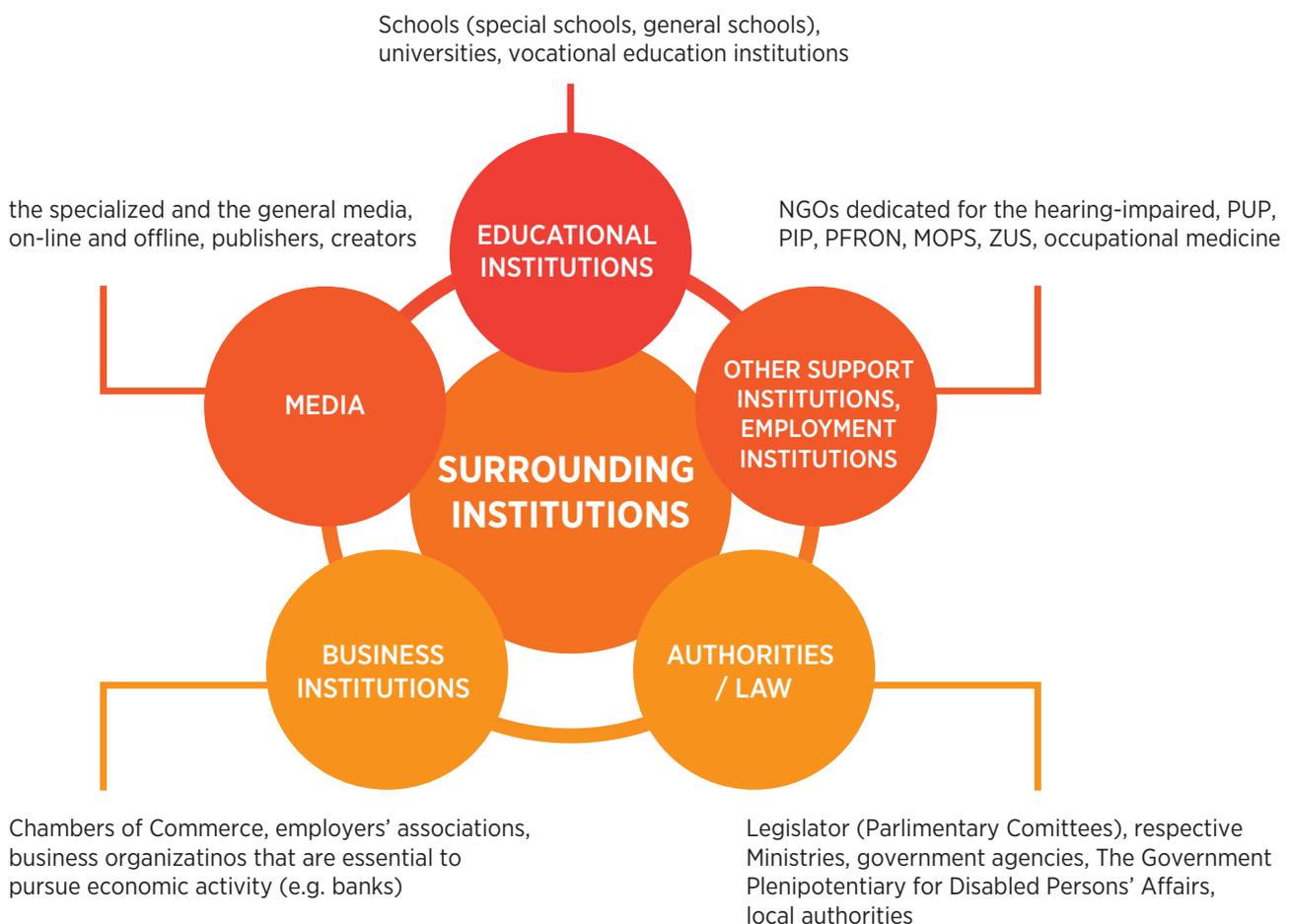
Another part of the model consists of institutions dealing with the employment activation of the deaf. Although they already exist in the institutional environment, they display different level of engagement. They have been labelled as „surrounding institutions”.



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SURROUNDING INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE COOPERATION NETWORK

In the proposed model of collaboration there are five surrounding institutions which form a pool of potential network members. It is worth remembering that a profile of each stakeholder should be adjusted to the area of expertise of a given support institution.



THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE NETWORK'S COOPERATION EFFECTIVENESS

- a formalization of the network, accompanied by a detailed time-framed action plan;
- a collective analysis of the resources and the needs that each institution has;
- maintain the regularity of the stakeholders' meetings;
- carrying out a regular evaluation of the stakeholders' opinions on how the network operates, underlining actual benefits that stem from being a member (including the CSR perspective).

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COLLABORATION WITH EMPLOYERS

- to effectively contact with employers, who are the focus of the model, it is vital to adopt a strategic attitude that is based on sound knowledge and social competences;
- employers form a diverse group – they differ in size, industry and the experience in employing the deaf;
- to ensure that the network operates reliably, it is vital to create a rich and valid database that would serve as a communication platform to inform others about ongoing actions;
- while setting up the database, it is advised to create a category entitled „ambassadors for employing the deaf” – experienced organizations that could share their knowledge with all the stakeholders during special events (conferences, workshops, trainings). These should be organized for employers who are interested in working with deaf people.



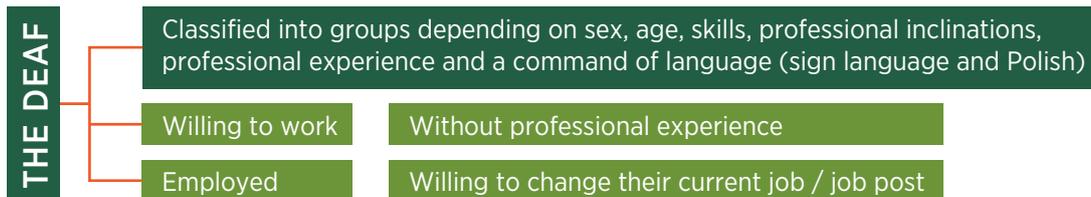
AREAS OF COOPERATION WITH EMPLOYERS

- monitoring and research – a readiness to employ, recruiting new employers, a research to determine the demand for employees (e.g. questionnaires);
- sharing knowledge and teaching skills, e.g. trainings introducing to the culture of the Deaf, communicating with deaf people, language learning (a sign language VS the Polish language);
- employers empowering the deaf: trainings and workshops, coming into contact with schools in order to train potential employees;
- an exchange of experiences: a direct and indirect contact of employers and candidates in the form of meetings and (paid) internship;
- supporting employers: advice on vocational trainings, legal and psychological counselling;
- a sign language interpreter: available for employers and employees during onboarding;
- a financial and technological support: covering the cost of training and onboarding new employees, as well as subsidising companies by public institutions (such as PFRON/ZUS/PUP) to partially cover labour costs;
- best practices exchange.

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THE ROLE OF DEAF PEOPLE IN THE COOPERATION NETWORK

The deaf constitute another group of stakeholders that are included in the cooperation network. When recruiting, it is advised to use the same criteria that are employed in aptitude tests or when assessing professional inclinations and true work motivation. What is also important is to include not only the aspiring candidates but also the workers that are already employed, and who could give others an instructive example („group ambassadors”).



THE CONDITIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE COOPERATION:

- creating a database of prospective employees: especially helpful during the early stage of recruitment which requires assessing employees’ skills and communication barriers,
- ambassadors: deaf people who could set a fine example to others.

COMMUNICATION CHANNLES IN THE COOPERATION NETWORK

The use of effective communication tools is a necessary condition for a close cooperation with employers. Any institution that supports the deaf has three roles to play:

- the Broadcaster: communicating through a dedicated website, social media profiles, a newsletter and cultivating public relations (e.g. with the media);
- the Receiver: sharing personal information, referring to a contact person, using communication channels to pass on information (via telephone, e-mail or a given messenger);
- the Mediator: occasionally improving relations between employers and potential employees.

TOOLS/ACTIVITIES IMPROVING THE MOTIVATION OF EMPLOYERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE NETWORK

In order to build and sustain the cooperation network it is crucial to continually motivate its members. How the members are motivated depends both on their advancement and a support institution’s needs and capabilities which, ultimately, plays the leading role.

EXAMPLES OF THE BENEFITS:

- sign language courses – the basic and the certified ones;
- trainings introducing to the culture of the Deaf;
- trainings/lectures on legal and financial issues regarding employing the deaf;
- direct contacts with deaf and hearing-impaired people;
- direct contacts between employers and the co-workers of people with hearing disabilities;
- presentations on latest technologies that facilitate the communication with deaf people (e.g. Google Glass, speech synthesizers);
- conducting an on-line campaign which may be a source of inspiration to other stakeholders (e.g. short press releases that promote other network members on the Internet).

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THE COMPLETE MODEL OF THE COOPERATION NETWORK

Educational institutions schools (special and general schools); universities, training institutions	Other support institutions, employment institutions / awarding institutions (PUP, PFRON, MOPS, ZUS, occupational medicine)	Authorities/Law (Legislator, proper Ministries, government agencies, The Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons' Affairs)	Business institutions (Chambers of Commerce/ Craft, employers' associations, business organizations crucial to pursuing economic activity, eg. banks)	Media (the special and the general media) On-line, offline, Publishers/creators
Cooperation on educational programmes and profiles in schools Career counselling Graduates tracking Special training programmes	Subsidizing Projects Research Giving opinion	Regular contact Giving opinion Knowledge-sharing	Regular contact Presentations Engagement activities Sponsorship	PR / media presence Permanent contact Database of contact persons Educational activities (fiction, series, reality show)
SUPPORT INSTITUTION FOR EMPLOYMENT ACTIVATION OF THE DEAF				
Labour market monitoring – carrying out research on the employment readiness and the skill potential of prospective employees Regular contact	Action strategy PR and publicity		A systematic monitoring of employment readiness and employers' expectations Carrying out audits to assess workstations available to the deaf	
THE DEAF Classified into groups depending on sex, age, skills, professional inclinations, professional experience and command of language (sign language and Polish)	Representation A deaf person A caretaker / family / an assistant	Database Voluntary membership Availability Updates	Representation A representative of management / human resources Special group taking care of the deaf	EMPLOYERS Large, middle and small enterprises Cross-section of industries with a special emphasis on the industries corresponding to: deaf persons' vocational training, their line of work and the profile of institutions for vocational activation of the deaf (ZAZ and ZPCH)
		Knowledge and communication Cultural trainings Language teaching (the sign language versus the Polish language)		
		Skills dedicated for the deaf Competence trainings and workshops Liaison between educational institutions		
		Experiences / Contact (Paid) internship Meetings / Job Fairs		
		Employers' support Counselling Financing Sign language interpreter Best practices Technological support Forum for Cooperation		
Willing to work	Employment platform Job fairs			Willing to hire
Employed	Affirmation Ambassadors Plebiscites/ awards			Already employing

DEAF ENTREPRENEURS / SOCIAL COOPERATIVES OF THE DEAF

CAPTION:

<i>Surrounding institutions</i>	<i>Activities carried out by a support institution for employment activation that are addressed to the members of the cooperation network (stakeholders)</i>	<i>Key representatives of the deaf</i>	<i>Key representatives of employers</i>
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