

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF MEDIATORS, PATH-PLANNERS, MENTORS (RYTMUS)

The support that RYTMUS provided increased the self-confidence of individuals and it is worth looking at the situation of one individual and how one EQUAL DP made a great difference to her life.

When Jane came to RYTMUS, she was 23 years old but she had been unemployed for 5 years and had a disability pension. While she wanted to work, she had no work experience and had never used any employment service. She also had learning difficulties and as a result, she had problems with using academic and communication skills and simply in using the transport system to get around.

Jane had access to a job coach and the role of the job coach was to help her but not to take an action without her agreement. Initially, as Jane was not used to solving her own problems she would have preferred them all to have been solved by the job coach. However, there were a number of ways to help with Jane's empowerment and apart from selecting her own job coach, she was involved in:

- Choosing where to meet;
- Formulating her own needs;
- Taking part in the creation of her own plan for individualised support;
- Defining the method of solving her own difficulties;
- Discussing each step needed to find a job.

As a result, Jane started in her first long term job and after just over six months it was agreed that the support of job coach was no longer necessary. In Jane's own words, *"I feel great about my job, even if I have a lot of work to do"*.

RYTMUS was involved in preparing National Quality Standards and together with labour offices and central government it also drafted a National Strategy for Supported Employment. The conclusions from the project's national meeting on empowerment were also forwarded to the Governmental Board for People with Disabilities.

Contact

RYTMUS

equal@rytmus.org

<http://www.equal.rytmus.org>

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