

All about CODA

Career Opportunities with Disadvantage Awareness

What is the CODA project?

CODA stands for Career Opportunities with Disadvantage Awareness. It is a two-year project with a proactive and life-altering aim: to get more people with learning disabilities trained, qualified and into the workplace. Funded by the European Union, it is a joint initiative led by national disability charity United Response with partners ESTA and IB in Germany, MISCODE in Portugal, ElfEL in France and EUROTraining in Bulgaria.

Why is this so important?

Working can give people with learning disabilities more confidence, increased spending power, and a more valued sense of inclusion both in their community and in wider society.

At the moment, the percentage of people with learning disabilities who have made it into the working world is astoundingly low at 10%. Common factors behind this poor figure are the low expectations placed on this group of people, both by themselves and employers, lack of training and few opportunities being available for people to demonstrate their individual skills. And this is where CODA project steps in.

Evening out the playing field

Traditional employment practices aren't working for people with learning disabilities. The CODA project aims to address this in a practical and uncomplicated way by offering people a set of accessible online tools to make showcasing their skills easier.

As an advance on the traditional concept of a typed CV, the CODA project is developing a Digital Career Portfolio (DCP). Just like a standard CV, it lets people share details about their experience, abilities and strengths. Unlike a standard CV, it is an online resource which uses accessible and multimedia technology. This means people with learning disabilities can bypass the usual hurdles of language, writing ability and recognised lists of formal qualifications, and instead show potential employers what they are capable of in a more versatile and person-centred way.

Hosted on a secure, dedicated web portal, agencies, employers and trainers will be able to access and view people's DCPs and find out more about their key competencies, learning level (including formal and informal learning) and work experience, helping them more accurately assess their potential as successful employees.

Where can I find out more about CODA?

For more information, contact Venetia Simonds, United Response's EU Project Co-ordinator on 020 8246 5205 or venetia.simonds@unitedresponse.org.uk.



- In the UK, only one in ten people with learning disabilities is in employment, compared to eight out of ten able adults.
- Only 3.2% of adults with learning disabilities in Portugal complete secondary school and the unemployment rate for this target group is twice as high as for the rest of the population.
- According to the 2005 Census, approximately 8,600,000 people living in Germany are registered disabled. An earlier census carried out in 2003 recorded the level of unemployment among this group as 6,400,000.