Migration and Disability – Opportunities for Participation in Working Life

Research project „Network Participation of Multiple Discriminated People“ starts

Hamburg's first network- and research centre for vocational participation of disabled and chronically ill persons with immigration background is being established at the University of Hamburg. Starting on 1st of July 2011 the European Social Fund as well as the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg will promote this practice-oriented science project for a period of two years with a total of 250,000 Euro.

The aim of the project is to fight the discrimination of people, who face multiple exclusion in work life. „Especially when it comes to people with migration experiences and stories, who are in addition disabled or suffer from chronic illness, only short and middle term actions and projects are implemented“ says Project Director Marianne Pieper, Professor of Sociology with major focus on „Cultures, Gender and Difference“. In contrast the starting project is designed to support the persons affected on a long-term basis.

Research and Contacts
At the beginning research works and the establishment of a network on a local, national and international scale will be at the forefront. First of all we are going to scientifically record and evaluate data on nature and scope of obstacles in the working and living environment. By means of questioning we are going to examine, inter alia, the effects of anonymous application processes and the chances of participation in the 1. Labour market for people affected. Further we want to enter into dialog with companies in order to find out what kind of support measures they need for employing persons, who have been excluded hitherto.
To build up a research network with local, national and international cooperation partners we will work together with sociological research centres for disability, migration, gender and queer studies as well as companies, authorities and departments in Hamburg. This network is supposed to serve as an interface between companies and research institutions.

Central Network Office
Based on the research results a central network office for multiple excluded people will be established. It will provide long-term support for entering the labour market and persuade companies to include people in a non-discriminatory way, who have been excluded up to now. Besides it will give fresh impetus for the further implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the EU anti-discrimination law. The network office will hopefully continue its work beyond the two years' funding and turn into a long-term institution.
Within the framework of the project the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences wants to introduce the academic discipline „Participation Research/(Dis)Ability Research“. „Until now such a discipline does not exist in any of Hamburg’s universities“, Pieper stresses. „By changing this fact we will meet the social and academic challenges of enabling all people to participate in science, education and profession."

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