



Basic document¹

1. Introduction

- The objective of this basic document is to define what Experts by Experience (EE's) means and outline the training and employment of EE's against the social exclusion of people with mental health problems, people who are living in poverty and people with migration background. The Missing Link, which aims to increase social inclusion by engaging EE's, is a project that is funded with the support of the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Leonardo da Vinci programme and Transfer of Innovation, in the period between September 2009 and August 2011.
- This project is the result of cooperation between four European partners with backgrounds in psychiatry and three European partners with poverty and migration backgrounds. NFP (not-for-profit) De Link is the general coordinator of the project.

Mental health

- FOKUS, Bremen – Germany
- IGPB, Amsterdam – The Netherlands
- Fontys Hogeschool, Sociale Studies, Eindhoven – The Netherlands
- GIP, Sofia – Bulgaria

Poverty and migration background

- De Link, Flanders – Belgium
- Moinho, Lisbon – Portugal
- BSZF, Budapest- Hungary

¹ Com a colaboração do Centro Português de Investigação em História e Trabalho Social (CPIHTS). www.cpihts.com



- The aim of this project is to examine how engaging EE's can improve the social inclusion of the socially excluded. We will therefore develop tools to improve EE training and employment. For more information and to follow the progress of the project and its outcomes, please visit our website: www.themissinglinkeurope.eu.

This basic document is also an invitation to other organizations that also have training programmes for EE's and experience with the employment of EE's in the fight against social exclusion. We invite them to communicate and dialogue with us about their experiences and knowledge.

2. Short description of the partners

2.1. De Link Flanders

NFP De Link (Belgium, Flanders) was founded on 26 March, 1999. This organisation is responsible for the co-ordination of the training and the employment of the EE's in Flanders.

Since the start, the main objectives of De Link have been:

- To provide and safeguard permanent educational possibilities for 'experience experts' living in poverty/social exclusion;
- To achieve the employment of 'experience experts' within all sectors in society. Provide support for 'experience experts' and their employers;
- To motivate citizens, services and policy to take responsibility in the fight against poverty;
- To uphold the 'experience experts' methodology.

Since March 2003 the methodology of the EE has been recognised by the Flemish government in a decree regarding the struggle against poverty.

The decree defines an 'experience expert in poverty' as a 'person who has experienced poverty, has coped with it and can share the knowledge of the experience by adopting attitudes, skills and methods through training in order to apply the extended poverty experience professionally in one or more areas of the struggle against poverty'.

The implementing decisions (October 2003) with regard to this decree states that every Flemish Minister must take initiatives concerning the employment of experience experts within their area of policy making.

Furthermore, the decree states that "the Flemish government is authorised to recognise and allocate grants to organisations for co-ordinating and preparing the training for experience experts in poverty. [...] The co-ordination consists of creating the required

conditions for organising and sensitising training, safe-guarding its quality and employing experience experts”.

On May 2004 De Link was recognised as the co-coordinating organization in Flanders.

Since 2000, training and employment of the EE’s has been part of all the NAP inclusion and VAP inclusion programs.

De Link operates in the 5 provinces of Flanders. It has a staff of 25 people who are contracted by De Link and 13 people in detachment.

For more information: www.de-link.net

2.2. FOKUS Bremen

This initiative for social rehabilitation is the biggest provider of rehabilitation services for people with mental handicaps and mental health problems in Bremen. The initiative for social rehabilitation employs 80 staff working in different areas, such as supported living, counselling, group activities, among others.

In addition, the initiative for social rehabilitation publishes a journal where people with experience in mental distress write about their experiences and issues.

F.O.K.U.S. is the training institute of this initiative for social rehabilitation. F.O.K.U.S. has been organizing and coordinating European projects since 2000. F.O.K.U.S. started the EXPert-Partnership (an association of experts by experience and experts by education) in 2002. The EXPA provides a wide range of training activities for mental health professionals and students.

F.O.K.U.S. has been the coordinator of the LdV Pilot-Project EX-IN (Experienced Involvement), where a training programme for people with experience in mental distress has been developed, which qualifies it as a recovery guide and trainer. Since 2005, F.O.K.U.S. has provided EX-IN training in Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin.

The initiative for social rehabilitation employs experts by experience in different departments (F.O.K.U.S, public relations and supported living).

F.O.K.U.S. became a national counsellor and coordinator for EE training and employment.

For more information: www.fokus-fortbildung.de

2.3. IGPB Amsterdam

The Institute for User Participation and Policymaking (IGPB) is an institute for research into and the training and development of user participation in healthcare. The institute is a private enterprise and was founded in 1996. All researchers and trainers working in IGPB are, or have been, users themselves of psychiatric and other

healthcare services. IGPB only engages in projects from the user's perspective. We are almost exclusively commissioned by user organizations. In all these projects, whether in the field of research or development and training, IGPB always involves other users, supports and trains them to be effective, and takes care that it is by way of user participation that projects become successful and accurately fulfil needs.

In the last 10 years, the IGPB has carried out numerous projects in support of user movements in a variety of goals they strive to achieve. In the research programme we have investigated user practises, and started examining user knowhow and testing the quality of user expertise. We have developed training and educational programs to disseminate the expertise and knowledge among users. We have also approached professionals, such as nurses, therapists and psychiatrists, so that they recognise this knowledge as complementary to their own.

The focuses of our projects are:

- Producing knowledge about self-help, self-management and self-control that deals with survival strategies
- Evaluating institutions from the user's perspective
- Supporting experts by experience with knowledge and tools that help them to improve in their work they do
- Performing trainings programme's such as the TOED (Traject Opleiding Ervaringsdeskundigen) and GEO (GGz Ervaringsagogische Opleiding).

For more information: www.igpb.nl

2.4. Moinho Lisbon

The Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude is a non-profit organisation located in the Cova da Moura neighbourhood of the municipality of Amadora, a Lisbon suburb. It was officially registered in 1987 and was founded and is guided by the inhabitants of the community. It all began with a small library, started up in the early 80's by the inhabitants, who worked at the same time on social, cultural and economic matters of the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood was constructed illegally in the late 1970s in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. The houses were built by the people who live there. It is a place where a sense of a "proper way of life" is growing stronger and with it, a desire to combat poverty, crime and social exclusion that have been closely linked with the area. Cova da Moura is one of the 3 "critical neighbourhoods" who have a special intervention from the government, declared by the RCM 143/2005.

The inhabitants created "Moinho da Juventude" and started providing neighbourhood services, training youngsters and adults to run and

develop these services. The association runs a nursery for 60 children. 20 nannies that work in their own houses are responsible for the care of 80 children. A kindergarten for another 84 and a youth centre for 205 children and youngsters working in areas such as school support, sports, camping, philosophy, cultural dances and manual skills and activities. It is also a centre where youngsters come to receive advice and guidance. Social, cultural and economical aspects are always linked in the objectives and activities of the association. There are 84 collaborators working full time at the association.

The Portuguese Parliament awarded the association in December 2007 with the Human Rights Prize for the work developed in the neighbourhood, respecting the principles of communication, empowerment, solidarity and respect for differences in politics, sexual orientation, religion, gender and culture.

For more information: www.moinhodajuventude.pt

2.5. BSZF Budapest

- RC was founded in 1995 for helping the professional social workers by helping to reach the following main goals:
 - Harmonization of personal social services and social administration
 - Decentralization of social services
 - Creation of inter-sector coalitions
 - Development of social welfare roundtables; and by offering services like.

Targeted research:

- Social planning (map of social problems, strategic planning)
- Contracting between NGOs and local governments,
- Preparing local legislation,
- Conflict management (minorities)
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Evaluation

Group and individual training: organizing seminars, workshops, meetings, conferences, supervision, case-conferences, contacting foreign professionals.

Counseling in grant proposal writing

Social welfare Data Base

Intensive publication.

- There is a staff with 5 full time and 2 part time experts, and a proximally 25 volunteers in a year. We are also a partner in 5 EU-funded programs in 2009.

For more information: www.bszf.hu

2.6. GIP Sofia

Global Initiative on Psychiatry (GIP) is an international not-for-profit organisation for the promotion of humane, ethical and effective mental health care worldwide.

Employing the 28-year experience of GIP-Hilversum, GIP-Sofia has been working since 2002 in the South East European (SEE) region in support of mental health reforms.

The vision is that every person should have the opportunity to realise his or her full potential as a human being, notwithstanding personal vulnerabilities or life circumstances.

GIP-Sofia undertakes projects and activities that advance all dimensions of mental health systems and care, including:

- deinstitutionalisation and transforming institutional care
- empowering users, carers & professionals
- engaging in policy development & advocacy
- anti-stigma and public awareness campaigns for people with mental illness and others.

For more information: www.gip-global.org

2.7. Fontys Eindhoven

Fontys Hogeschool Sociale Studies (Social Studies) is a recently-formed institute that offers the internationally recognized title of Bachelor of Social Work. This can be earned by doing a first year of broad major social studies complemented by two minors (three years). Within the major programme, we offer three nationally recognized study programmes: cultural and social development (CMV), social work and social services (MWD) and social educational care (SPH). Number of students in the 2008-9 academic year: 1940 students. Members of staff: 170 (equivalent to 120 full-time)

For almost twenty years now, Fontys Hogeschool Sociale Studies has had experience in the support and education of experts by experience. The most important educational programme for experts by experience, which FHSS is involved in as a partner in its development and execution, is TOED (Traject Opleiding Ervarings Deskundigheid).

Fontys Actief is an independent entity of Fontys University of Professional Education and works in the field of effective and sustainable work mediation and reintegration into society.

For more information: www.fontys.nl

3. Defining EE's - basic keywords and values involved.

People who are socially excluded have experience in social exclusion. Everybody with this experience can improve their knowledge and capabilities to cope with social exclusion. Improving your knowledge and capabilities can be achieved through training. Trained experts by experience in social exclusion are people who have experienced exclusion at a personal level and have coped with it and, by sharing this experience, they bring a broader perspective to social exclusion. They have acquired attitudes, skills and knowledge through training in order to apply their extended exclusion experience professionally in different contexts.

3.1. Basic statements

- There is a missing link between the excluded and the non-excluded
- The link is missing at both ends
- EE knowledge is complementary to professional knowledge

3.2. Values and principles

- Dignity instead of shame
- Growth and empowerment
- Increasing self-esteem
- Proud and not ashamed
- Participation and inclusion
- The right to choose and act up choice
- Shared responsibility
- Acknowledgement
- WE-knowledge/WE-experience
- Equality and humanity
- Cooperation and solidarity
- The right to make mistakes
- We can all learn
- The strength of socially excluded people
- Getting involved and participating
- Finding a direction to one's life

3.3. Values underlying the EE concept

The values supporting the expert by experience approach represent the most essential values for a fundamental struggle against exclusion:

- A conviction in the strength of those involved;
- Acknowledgment of the need for a question-oriented, internal and integral approach to the situation.
- A conviction that everybody can learn and grow.

Furthermore, the approach is upheld by a number of values that can also be very meaningful to a society that is really geared towards living together without exclusion, such as:

- Acknowledging the fundamental need for respectful and equal interpersonal relationships, enabling each individual to be regarded as a whole with his/her responsibilities;
- The importance of a direct and open style of communication and, if necessary, a confrontational approach that still respects the equality of all partners;
- Respect the autonomy of the people involved as well as their shared responsibilities, even in difficult situations;
- The strength of solidarity;
- The importance of experience as a source of knowledge and learning;
- The value of a committed, intuitive and reflective approach;
- Respect for diversity.

4. Training

4.1. Common characteristics of the partners' training programmes for

- Working in tandem: they complete the other at the same level
- Training is a process
- Discussing experience
- Empowerment
- Personal growth
- Continuous self-reflection
- Handling all aspects of social exclusion
- Learning through one's own history with broadened historical and theoretical frameworks
- From I-knowledge to WE-knowledge
- Acquiring the necessary capabilities, skills and attitudes for EE jobs
- A comprehensive approach
- Awareness of the fact that everybody (user and not-user) have to un-learn: prejudices, evidences, personal solutions and that personal views of the world are not the only ones
- When we speak about experience, we mean lived experience
- Education on how society and institutions work

4.2. The length of the existing training programs

The purpose and the key topics of the training are the same for each partner, but the length of the training programs is very different. This is related to the policy of the country, its historically

inherited attitude to the problem, economic situation, education landscape and the vision of the society about social exclusion. All those elements reflect on the financial grants that the training institutions get for the training too.

De Link	FOKUS	IGPB	Moinho	BSZF	GIP	Fontys
2340 hours of training (including 720 hours of training period) in 4 years and a half time	300 hrs training 80 hrs internship	TOED: 84 hours, 1 day a week for 5 months GEO: idem	Full-time 6-month training period (ca 960 hours). Weekend training period of 6 months (ca 96 hours)	2 days a week for 3 months (ca 192 hours)	Not applicable because currently there are no available programmes for Experts by Experience in Bulgaria	TOED 14 weeks of classes to earn bachelor's degree in SPH and EE: 800 hours a year for 4 years. Total 3,200 hours.

4.3. Process, methods and contents

Training is a process. We distinguish 3 levels:

- **Level 1: Reflecting on and working with individual experiences and life stories**

Participants' experiences are the starting point in training. All experiences are genuine and valuable. By reflecting on your experiences, you acquire I-knowledge.

Something insignificant in the eyes of society can be very important in the life of social excluded persons. Giving attention to such small details is necessary to start the process of self-knowledge for people who live in social exclusion.

Training groups should feel sufficiently secure to talk about their experiences in order to be able to learn from them and experiment new experiences in a positive way.

By reflecting on their experiences in this way, participants should:

- Discover that they have nothing to be ashamed of with regard to their negative experiences and feelings of permanent failure.
- Become proud of the "diamond in their pocket".
- Become owners of the knowledge they have discovered.
- Accept their own limitations and restrictions, but at the same time, learn to step over and cross their internalized

borders, which in most cases have been imposed from the outside.

- Become capable of ending overwhelming negative feelings.
- Become capable of discovering their own strengths and perspectives, so they can find a direction to their own lives. This gives them the freedom of choice with all related responsibilities.

The trainers have to:

- Facilitate the learning process of the trainees.
- Accompany the learning process to the point at which people discover that they don't have to be ashamed about their negative experiences and the feeling of permanent failure. This is a slow, long and painful process.
- Protect the personal borders of the trainees and create a safe learning environment.
- Help the participants keep a respectful attitude towards each other.
- Promote the process whereby the feeling of being a victim becomes one of pride.

- **Level 2: From individual knowledge to collective “peer knowledge”**

- Participants should not only learn from their own experiences but also from others. This is done by sharing experiences, listening to others and cooperating with them. In this way one can take the step from I-knowledge to WE-knowledge. We-knowledge can show common experiences and shared knowledge about what different persons share in common. It is also possible that people don't have the same experiences, but share in the understanding. One can feel what somebody else has experienced although it is different from your own experience. We-knowledge is about understanding differences. We-knowledge is about being part of groups, about interaction and coordinating your actions with those of others. It leads to strong or weak connections of your own way of doing things to the way others do it. It increases self-trust and also the feeling of being included and taking part in society.
- In the training it's important that participants:
 - Discover they have skills, knowledge and aptitudes that they may have forgotten or have not have used for a long time.

- Discover their own strengths and perspectives in order to develop their hidden capacities.
 - Acknowledge not only what they have done wrong, what professionals have done wrong, but also how they can cooperate and coordinate their actions and use all experiences in that.
 - Become aware that they can improve their life and learn, and that they also need training to be able to broaden their experiences and put them into practice. They therefore need:
 - Reflection on life stories
 - Shared experiences
 - General analyses
 - Support to explore their own experiences
- **Level 3: Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in various practice contexts in which Experts by Experience can find jobs.**
 - Working on personal and shared experiences is embedded in training programs, which have to prepare students for jobs. Job related curricula are part of the training programs.
 - The pedagogical frame of the training programs is connected to working with one's own experiences. The courses are given by an experienced and a professional trainer. Both trainers and participants have active roles:
 - Active listening
 - Counselling
 - Empowerment
 - Asking questions
 - Training programs in different countries vary in how the principles mentioned are worked out. It depends, among other things, on what actions they want to improve and what jobs they want to qualify for with the grants made available for these training programs.
 - Participants must find a place between the user's partiality and their loyalty to professional colleagues:
 - Participants learn to find their position in practice when they do internships in the work field.
 - Participants have to pay constant attention to dialogues between users and professional colleagues.
 - Participants have to learn to find solutions when conflicts arise between their colleagues and themselves.



- The following diagram provides an idea of topics and themes of the training programme



De Link	F.O.K.U.S.	IGPB	Moinho	BSZF	GIP	Fontys
<p>Life-stories: their own stories and how their personal process began, and the widening of their view by other people's stories</p> <p>Communicative skills: active listening, how to ask questions, reflect, check, cope with conflict. Dialogue here is essential.</p> <p>Psychological aspects, based on the system and contextual</p>	<p>Health promoting attitudes</p> <p>Empowerment</p> <p>Recovery</p> <p>Triologue</p> <p>Experience and participation</p> <p>Peer advocacy</p> <p>Counselling and supporting</p> <p>Self-search</p> <p>Learning and teaching</p> <p>Crisis intervention</p>	<p>Definition, theory, jobs and practice of experts by experience</p> <p>Life stories and other narrative methods, such as compiling your own portfolio</p> <p>Social skills related to sharing experiences and peer support</p> <p>Empowerment and participation</p> <p>Self-help</p>	<p>Life-stories: both their own stories in which a personal process began and the widening of their view by other people's stories</p> <p>Communicative skills: active listening, how to ask questions, reflect, check, cope with conflict. Dialogue here is essential.</p> <p>Psychological aspects, based on the system and contextual</p>	<p>Personal skills</p> <p>Financial knowledge</p> <p>Financial skills</p> <p>Co-operation skills</p>	<p>Training of professionals, users and relatives, thus building their skills and improving their capacity to carry out reforms in the field of mental health care.</p>	<p>TOED: see IGPB</p> <p>Bachelor SPH and EE. Students follow the regular part-time SPH course with special attention focussed on knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for EE jobs</p> <p>First year: sharing I-knowledge and individual client participation.</p> <p>Second year: From I</p>



<p>visions.</p> <p>Knowledge of society. Society's view on poverty and its way to combat poverty, the different gaps typical for the poverty-problem, knowledge of the rights of poor people and the skills you need in order to claim these rights, are contents of this part of the training.</p> <p>Knowledge of the content of the task and</p>		<p>groups and peer counselling</p> <p>Working in a mental health service and in user-run projects and services</p> <p>Peer advocacy by user counsels</p>	<p>visions.</p> <p>Knowledge of society. Society's view on poverty and its way to combat poverty, the different gaps typical for the poverty-problem, knowledge of the rights of poor people and the skills you need in order to claim these rights, are contents of this part of the training.</p> <p>Knowledge of the content of the task and function of an</p>			<p>knowledge to We-knowledge. Methods of empowerment, client participation rehabilitation and recovery.</p> <p>Third year: Focus on collective client participation and We-knowledge. Fourth year: Focus on policy-making, and applying we-knowledge in social agencies where EE's may find jobs.</p> <p>Fontys Actief:</p>
---	--	--	--	--	--	---



function of an experience expert. It is very important that experts undergoing training get a proper understanding of this because they often end up in a work setting in which they are not familiar with the methodology.			experience expert. It is very important that experts undergoing training get a proper understanding of this because they often end up in a work setting in which they are not familiar with the methodology.			Mediation between employers and employees through training and consultancy Working on psychological and/or social recovery.
---	--	--	--	--	--	--





4.4. Embedment in the regular educational system

Training at De Link is accredited and embedded in the regular educational system of Flanders. The EX-IN Training is not officially acknowledged, but many public entities do. Moinho is working on the accreditation of the training program. TOED and GEO of IGPB are not an official part of regular education. Both training programmes are done at a postgraduate level. They are carried out in cooperation with social faculties of schools for higher education's (Fontys and Hogeschool van Amsterdam) but they are not officially accredited.

5. Employment

5.1. Basic elements

- The objective of cooperative working between professionals and EE's (in tandem or not) is to discover how the different and complementary knowledge, skills, capacities and skills of both can be used in the field of work and to work towards a more efficient and more human service, care and policy. Each partner has to draw closer to the other in order to meet one another as a real person.
- In the process of working together, professionals have to learn to communicate in a real way with the EE. The keyword is dialogue. The professional and the EE has to unlearn the need to enforce his/her own solutions.
- To work as an EE also means to search for a position in the organization and in a team that is not used to working with EE's. The EE and the organization must both keep an open attitude to the other.
- One of the important roles of the EE is to bridge the gap between the organization, the professional and the policy on the one side and the social excluded person on the other side.

5.2. Description of the role of an EE.

- Through verbal and nonverbal communication between the user and the EE by means of the EE's attitude, the user will feel acknowledged and properly understood. The EE has to build up the same relationship with the client.
- In the process of this work, the EE's learns what it is like to be on the other side and moves from the client's to the colleague's perspective. The effect of this insight is that the EE is able to work on the user's prejudices and ideas about the professionals and the other way around.



- It the EE's task to reveal the hidden, unrecognized knowledge and thoughts of the excluded person and make them visible.
- Another task is to make the organizations more sensitive towards the world of the socially excluded.
- An important function of the EE is to motivate and encourage people to recover by means of empowerment and emancipation. The user will be challenged to think about his/her own situation and to proceed with their own process of recovery.
- They have to work towards an inclusive society. They build bridges between excluded people and society.
- An EE brings in new knowledge, manners of working and new attitudes. That means that professionals are challenged to reflect upon their own thinking, attitudes, knowledge and methods.

5.3. Organisational culture

5.3.1. Employment places

The field of work is in full development. That means that there are organisations that are not used to having EE's as employees. There are sectors which has still to discover the potential of EE's





De Link	F.O.K.U.S.	IGPB	Moinho	BSZF	GIP	Fontys
<p>Employment and vocational training services</p> <p>Shelter and care facilities</p> <p>Schools and CLB</p> <p>Neighbourhood work</p> <p>Federal government agencies</p> <p>EE training groups</p> <p>Research organizations</p> <p>Youth care</p> <p>TAO</p>	<p>All kinds of mental health organisations, such hospitals, day centres, homes, among others.</p>	<p>Users organizations</p> <p>User-run projects</p> <p>Counsels of clients</p> <p>Self-help groups</p> <p>Social services</p> <p>Organizations in mental health: ambulatory, crisis, semi-mural, mural</p> <p>Training groups of the EE</p>	<p>Nursery school</p> <p>Casa Pia (state school for at-risk young)</p> <p>ACMJ – neighbourhood work</p> <p>Associação Guineense – Vale Amoreira neighbourhood work</p>	<p>Ministries of Social Welfare</p>	<p>Training courses for journalists</p> <p>Developing training modules for controlling symptoms, hearing voices, medication & side effects</p> <p>Crisis card project – involvement in the process of preparing the crisis card</p> <p>Patients councils in facilities for providing services for</p>	<p>Organizations in mental health</p>



Child and family care					people with mental health problems	
Social security offices					User organizations	
Organizations for the poor					-	
De Link staff					“Association of national organisation for users of mental health services”	



5.3.2. EE tasks

De Link	F.O.K.U.S.	IGPB	Moinho	BSZF	GIP	Fontys
Family support	Recovery guides	Crisis assistance	Family support	Organizing local consultation	Advisers and assistants	Counselling and support of users
Individual and groups support for users	Peer counsellors	Advocacy of clients	Individual and group support for users	Case-management (household development)	Influence policy makers	Mediation
Accompaniment to employment	Trainers in mental health services	Advising policy makers and organizations	Accompaniment to employment	Organizing the self-help community of the target group	Influence of media	
Training for all kind of organizations	Participate in research	Individual and group support for users	Coaching for trainers	Connecting and co-operating with the local social service providers, municipality		
Coaching for organizations on all the levels		Social activating and rehabilitation of clients				
EE training						
Coaching for trainers						
Influence and		Producing				



advising policy makers – and working on the rules and laws Influence the policy of organizations Research Advising policy makers		and transferring knowledge		and financial actors Consulting policy makers		
---	--	----------------------------	--	--	--	--



5.4. The profile

- **De Link** has a regular vocational competence profile set up by the Social Economic Counsel of Flanders. Since March 2003, the job of the EE's has been embedded in a legal framework in Flanders. It is recognized by the Flemish government in its Decree Law concerning the struggle against poverty.
- **IGPB** and **Fontys** are working on profiles. They work together with all relevant stakeholders in the Netherlands, like user organizations, schools and employers organizations. A research project to define the functions is under discussion.
- **Moinho** is working on a competence profile.
- **GIP** is well known to government authorities (Ministry of Health, Social Affairs Ministry, Employment & Social Assistance agency, the Labour Bureau and Social Assistance Directorates, municipalities, etc.), as well as to non-governmental entities for its work in the field of mental health (MH), which includes: child and adolescent MH, HIV/AIDS and MH, work with children at risk, deinstitutionalisation & community services. GIP is therefore often invited as an expert to advise different government and municipal bodies in training, development and amendment of various mental health policies.

5.5. Salaries

- **De Link:** In Flanders EE's are actually paid on an A2 or A3 level. In the De Link organization they are paid on A1 level.
- In **the Netherlands** EE's who have paid jobs are being paid according to a function differentiation system that is subscribed by both employers and trade unions. Because there is no special position for EE work in this, it is still very uncertain. If EE's work in mental health institutions, they are often paid on 40 and 45 scales, which is lower than social workers or nurses who are on 50 – 60 scales.
- **Moinho:** A3 level
- **GIP:** EE's are not paid, but there is a realistic opportunity to secure payment for the position of an EE by applying for the 6-month, 12-month or 36-month programmes of Labour Bureau Directorates (structures under the jurisdiction of the national employment agency – with the social ministry). Furthermore, opening regular positions for EEs could be negotiated and advocated with some of the government-funded facilities for providing social services.

6. Surplus values

6.1. On a personal level

- Healing the wounds they have within themselves
- Getting an insight into their own problems

- Giving direction to their own lives and that of their children
- Power and self respect
- Making own choices

6.2. On the level of the tandem partner

- New insights and understanding
- New ways of addressing problems and people
- New ways of solving problems and conflicts
- Improving communication with users
- Intense cooperation and fine-tuning between the professional and the EE
- Empowerment of the professional

6.3. On the level of the organisation

- For the target group:
 - o Greater improvement in the quality of contacts
 - o More socially-excluded people reach the organisation
 - o Increased confidence is growing up
 - o A more respectful and equal relationship
 - o A loser client-oriented approach
 - o Interventions get better results
- For the professional workers
 - o Better and more accurate feedback on their actions
 - o Improved means to attain objectives
 - o More effective attitudes and methods
 - o Growing job satisfaction
- For the organisation
 - o A different view about social exclusion is gradually achieved and a change in approach that creates a more dynamic team

6.4. On the level of society

- More integration in society
- Less demand on all kind of services
- Positives effect on all kinds of outside contacts
- Positive results with their own families and children
- When they are employed and paid, they make a financial contribution by social security payments and all kind of taxes.

6.5. Other surplus values

De Link	FOKUS	IGPB	Moinho	BSZF	GIP	Fontys
Realisti c	???	Real perspec	Realisti c	???	Reducin g	???



<p>perspective for fixed employment</p> <p>Perception of a life without poverty for their children</p> <p>A break with the vicious circle of poverty</p>		<p>tive on fixed employment</p> <p>Steps towards recovery</p> <p>Improved social network</p>	<p>perspective on fixed employment</p> <p>A break with the vicious circle of poverty</p>		<p>poverty among people with mental disorders</p> <p>Securing regular paid employment through the programmes of the Labour Bureau Directorates</p> <p>Improving the quality of mental health services by involving EEs</p>	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

7. Challenges

- Social movement

One of the main challenges is to find forms of cooperation as well as embedding the missing link in other social changes and other solutions for social problems. Poverty, like mental health problems or problems of migration or poverty, is closely connected to quality of life in neighbourhoods and suburbs that are in a devastated, deteriorating state. Community buildings,

participation of all inhabitants, support for active involvement in decision-making, participating in cultural events and producing welfare and economic life are important. All this is at the same time in the core of inclusion strategies. Trained EE's can play an important role because they are members of the main.

- All the partners of the Missing Link Project have very rich and complementary experiences in the three areas of social exclusion: poverty, migration and mental health. One of the main challenges of this project is to find a way to capture all this tacit learning of the partners, to explicit it and to transform it in powerful instruments that enhance the training and employment of experts by experience.

The most important challenge is the dialogue, a real and constructive communication, on both sides. The EE has a specific knowledge and insight in her/his situation that is qualitatively different from the knowledge that the professionals have. This knowledge can be complementary to professional knowledge and be tapped in as well operational programmes as policy work - if the resistance of both, EE's and the professionals can be overcome.