



SLOVAKIA



WASCO cooperative: ABC of work

Country of origin	Slovakia
Venue of activity	Rural
Implementation level of the good practice	National, regional, local
Typology	Typology 1 Institutional WISE (Rehabilitation Social Enterprise)

HISTORY OF THE WISE

Wasco - Cooperative, established in 2015, is a WISE operating laundry and ironing facilities in the village of Valaská (a region notoriously known for the high unemployment due to the decrease of heavy industry and the structure of population). The goal is to create an environment to improve the lives vulnerable people through work, training and provision of opportunities.

Clients: Ministry of Defence, Presidential palace, retirement and student houses, hotels, restaurants, factories, social service facilities.

STAFF

Wasco provides a work environment for a variety of disadvantaged groups, who face difficulty in integrating the labour market: long-term unemployed, health-disadvantaged, single mothers with children, Roma from marginalised communities, young people but also for those over 50. It is currently providing work for 33 people, most of them are Roma women from surrounding marginalised Roma communities.

Work experience helps them gain self-confidence, skills, habits that they haven't had, or lost long ago. The aim of the laundry is not to keep people working there as long as possible but to help them enter the labour market and then have the opportunity find a permanent job elsewhere.

Employment is not "forever". The intention is to provide people with the necessary time to acquire work experience and work habits, for the time being - to break the unfavourable social situation and the "standing on one's own feet". The management of Wasco is proud to announce that they have managed to maintain all the Wasco employees' jobs secured during the turbulent COVID-impacted period of the last year. They also plan to expand the operation and add 17 more job positions in the fall of 2021.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Website: www.wasco.sk

Short description of the good practice of WASCO

WORK ACTIVITY

WASCO's team is composed of vulnerable people in the following positions:

- Laundry machine assistants
- Laundry shift workers
- Administrators
- Drivers
- Delivery assistants

DEVELOPED COMPETENCIES

The main competence with potential to develop is called: "operational logic" – especially newer employees take unnecessary long time to perform tasks, due to not thinking about the logical sequence of tasks, even after being shown and explained the process. (E.g., Not putting the clothes in the dryer before working on different tasks, so the machine could work.)

EDUCATIONAL PATH FOR PEOPLE IN INTEGRATION

Peer-to-peer mentoring. New employees will get onboarding training, which is followed by the job-shadowing of experienced colleagues. Peer-to-peer mentoring consists of further explanation of different aspects of operation, rules, and behaviour among the team and practical going through the exact tasks to be done during the employment on the given position.

ABC of Work. It is a series of workshops for our employees, providing them know-how, that is important when working in Wasco and trying to acquire a job elsewhere. These workshops are 60-90 minutes long, practical and role-play oriented (non-formal education activities) focusing on the job-search tools, preparation for a job interview, CV writing, moral behaviour, dealing with challenges/crisis scenarios.

SOCIAL, TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES - PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE

The main rules that the employees have to respect are related to the following areas:

- a. How to work safely,
- b. be a good part of the team and
- c. respect each other

Employees themselves have recently re-created the set of behaviour rules they have to comply to during a workshop (mostly paraphrasing the previous rules, but in their own language).

COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES

(Presentation, description, and forms of learning processes)

More senior employees and managers tend to warn the new employees if any rule have been violated. During the employee meetings (either shorter stand-up meetings or all employee assembly), issues are discussed together with other topics. Employees rotate on the positions, but the rotation system is set-up by the manager regarding specific circumstances of each individual and the requirements of the whole system (some people need considerably more time to get acquainted with various tasks).

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY/ FINANCIAL MODEL

Wasco as a registered social enterprise applies for state subsidies to cover some percentages of employees with disability wages. Wasco cooperative is a part of "Opportunity Center Valaska" – being a partner/applicant for various projects supporting its development.

Wasco, as professional laundry service is producing a business surplus, which is invested into the development of the enterprise/covering the salaries.