

Transferring persons with intellectual disabilities out of sheltered workshops

ISRAEL / ISRAEL ELWYN – TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMES

In 2015 Israel Elwyn (IE), an Israel-based NGO focusing on persons with intellectual disabilities, initiated a model to close sheltered workshops and to transfer its beneficiaries to the open labour market programme, providing accessible training, job placement, and tailored individual or group support. As of 2022, IE supported some 1,200 individuals to find employment in the open labour market, and 800 students through IE's transitional programmes into employment each year.

Problem targeted

Historically, persons with disabilities in Israel have been referred to sheltered workshops for employment, where they did not receive remuneration, social benefits, or pensions.

Solution, innovation, and impact

In cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, Israel Elwyn has developed a model to close sheltered workshops in Israel and to support people with disabilities to transition into the open labour market. To achieve this, IE has created a variety of employment services such as adapted training, job placement, and emotional support. In particular, training is provided with the cooperation of vocational colleges to teach relevant skills and to provide hands-on experience, thus expanding job opportunities for individuals in the community.

“Thanks to my job I am independent. I help customers at the store. I feel strong.”

Yoshi Yehuda, programme participant

IE's work focuses on high school students with disabilities approaching adult life, as well as persons with disabilities participating in sheltered workshops for many years. Annually, 800 students participate in the IE transitional programme in high schools throughout Israel. Later, these students are referred to follow-up programmes, such as vocational training, employment, and higher education, among others.



Bringing people from sheltered workshops into the regular labour market.

Outlook, transferability, and funding

Other Israeli organizations supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are implementing the model. Several adjustments are necessary to reflect market demand.

IE expects to work with the Ministry of Economy and Industry to provide professional courses and digital skills to support career development for persons with disabilities. IE will continue to recognize businesses employing people with disabilities through its Open-Door Employer Campaign.

FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2015

- Between 2015 and 2022 some 1,200 individuals found employment.
- In 2022, IE collaborated with 2,850 workplaces to hire persons with disabilities
- *A project of Civil Society.*



Ms. Sharon Ehrnwald

sharone@IsraelElwyn.org.il – www.israelelwyn.org.il