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EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS & INCLUSION



E-Newsletter N. 4

This number of the WIT newsletter intends to present some **good practices** identified by the WIT partners in each involved country, revealing emerging European policies in the social services field. The active interaction among the project partners, representing the public sphere, the higher academic educational, the professional training and institutions of the territorial development, led to a significant work of in-depth analysis into the respective complex realities.



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Practices' collection: in a nutshell

The social services' sector with its long-term commitment towards vulnerable people is constantly searching for innovative and effective solutions to provide higher quality and sustainable services.



The identification of the practices has been realized on the basis of a reference **list of criteria**: 1. new emerging societal needs/ new vulnerable groups; 2. experience of the implementing organisation; 3. formal and not formal strengthened skills; 4. innovative aspects (used methodologies and tools); 5. sustainability after its first implementation; 6. transferability (at a transnational and cross-sectoral level) and derived benefits; 7. main results and/or impact of the experimented practise; 8. final users' satisfaction.



Furthermore, the selection of the practices has been driven by a constant focus to **social innovation**, considered as an evidence-based intervention. It may consist in applying existing ideas in new contexts, overcoming sectorial boundaries or combining existing ideas in new ways.



It is a common belief of WIT partners that social innovations must meet emerging social needs more effectively than pre-existing alternatives, providing environmentally, economically and organisationally sustainable solutions.



The Experience of the Social Broker



A promoter of the community integration

The practice, activated in September 2013, by the association “The Circle Project Lab”, (www.thecircleprojectlab.com) aims at the establishment of social cohesion processes through the constitution and organization of “resilient communities” linked through one or more specific needs.



The **Social Broker**, acts as a dynamic operative professional, who supports the community in becoming the key actor of each single phase of a project, by identifying issues and autonomously developing collective strategies and solutions. In this sense, its innovative character lies in creating, directing and empowering networks of people able to support services that answer to the perceived needs of the community. Key aspects of the described practice primarily concern the activation of the community and the promotion of an active citizenship, through a process of decoding, training, planning and effective involvement of the community.



Target groups addressed by the practice are particularly minors, elderly people, disabled, and families, adults in difficulties, as well as foreigners and migrants, who, as individuals, groups, or communities are living in a situation of fragility or vulnerability.

The following **formal skills and competences** have been enabled and strengthened: leadership and problem solving; identification and creation of network committees, active in the analysis of the problems and in the solution strategies; promotion of forms of self-mutual-help; dynamic networking management; promotion of personal and social empowerment; multidisciplinary coordination;



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facilitation and mediation; assessment; structuring and development of projects and work plans; community participatory-based management; monitoring, evaluation and control of critical issues and conflictive dynamics.

As far as **informal abilities**: empathy, listening and hospitality skills, introjection, sharing, neutrality and openness, as essential elements in the process of personal and community resilience.





The social enterprise as a chance for a full life and social inclusion (Varna, Bulgaria)

The initiative, co-funded by the European Social Fund and implemented by the "Business Agency" of Varna, together with the Agency for Social Assistance "Vision" and CVT "Excellia", has the main objective of expanding the innovative model of the **social enterprise** and creating demand in the labour market for skills of so-called "at-risk groups". It also creates long-term social opportunities of inclusion, by attracting public support in order to overcome the brand of "otherness" and "inferiority". Through exploring the best practices of social entrepreneurship, the project has developed procedures, methodologies, manuals and related supporting activities in line with the characteristics of the given areas.



Among the **activities carried out**, the project has further developed and expanded the existing Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration of adults by reinforcing the provided services, training and advising the targeted group (for a total of 60 people and 15 professions) for transition to the real labour market, according to their specific needs and constraints.



A careful promotion of the best practices in favour of professionals wishing to be involved in the social economy sector has been realized as well as the preparation of a regional campaign in order to activate civil society initiatives and raise public support for social entrepreneurship.

Target groups of the project have been people with lower limb disability, those with a need of hearing aid, parents of children with disabilities. The implementation of the project has multiplied the experience and practice of the existing social enterprise; training and advices have successfully improved the management and business skills of the participants.



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Counselling and “in motion” support to the target group



Mobile Supporting Help for traumatized boys - MUT Mobile Unterstützende Traumahilfe (Berlin, Germany)



MUT is part of the project 'Hilfe für Jungs' (Help for boys, <http://www.hilfefuerjungs.de/>), with more than 10 years of know-how in supporting boys and young men who experienced sexual violence. The program has arisen from the need, identified by professionals, of a specific intervention addressing boys and young men (5-27 years old) who faced with stress and problems in the context of sexual violence. MUT gives information about psychic trauma and the effects of it, focusing on the individual needs of each boy/young men and on a different form of support than the typical psychotherapy. Boys get counselling and advices to handle problems like insomnia, aggression or nightmares, without needing to talk about their experiences.



MUT is mobile; social workers involved in the project, as sociologists, pedagogues, therapists work in motion (while walking, exercising, playing) where the boys live. They support the target group to find their own and individual way to handle their problems. Those professionals have special further training and long experience in working with the target group and in fine-tuning different, innovative methods of intervention (i.e. sport activities, interactive methods, games).



MUT is realized with private funding (Childhood foundation, Aktion Mensch).

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Organization and Coordination of integrated support



Provincia di Milano

Organization and coordination of integrated support to a child and his family (Vilnius, Lithuania)

The project aims at developing **team-work skills** of professionals representing various discipline fields to enable them to provide a coordinated support to a child at risk of disability and her/his family, focusing not only on the child's problem but even more on his family strengths and resources. The trainings took part in 10 regions of the country, involving many teams of "Early Intervention" services.



The project was initiated in the framework of the new legislation regulating the integrated services to a family and a child in the most convenient manner: either at home, or in the day care institution. The "Early Intervention" services consist of different professionals who usually work quite independently, therefore problems related to coordination of efforts, common understanding of a goal, etc. used to arise.

Key actors were parents of children with disabilities acting as experts of cases' analysis, intervention plans, etc. They participated to the trainings and presented to the specialists their "case analysis"; their participation has in this way helped professionals to cognize families' situation from parents' perspective.



The project has developed and strengthened the following **main professionals' skills**: capacity to argument and substantiate one's opinion in the group of professionals of different fields; to formulate the common aim and tune actions to reach it; to listen to the other's opinion, to negotiate and to be able to accept what agreed; to demonstrate tolerance and trust; to demonstrate creativity and flexibility in seeking solutions.



A considerable number of skills which participants, described as the ones they focused on during the trainings, are related to personal

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characteristics (informal ones), such as positive attitude towards a common work, organizational skills, self-reflection, learning attitude, humor.



Main Findings: Nuances of Innovation



The collected practises come from initiatives proposed by organisations from the partners countries (Italy, Bulgaria, Germany and Lithuania) that have registered aspects of innovation as far as the applied methodology, new training schemes, new target groups and related implemented measures.

New methodologies

Improvements concerning methodology are strictly related to the fact that not just individuals and their problems are deeply considered, but also the social environment and its surroundings. Moreover, innovation in the applied methodologies respond to the more and more increasing necessity to implement personalised social services in multi-professional teams, able to intervene in complex situations. Finally, a third set of innovations concentrate on the possibilities offered by internet and social media.



New training schemes

Training initiatives can be divided into two main groups, according to the interested addressees. The first group focuses on the **social services professionals**, sensitising them to the use and application of new techniques and methodologies and to dealing with new target groups (i.e. the Social Delegate, in-service training for gaining a new professional profile, assistants for people with disabilities). In some



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other projects, the training focuses more on the education and training of the **target groups** who become real professionals able to intervene (i.e. peer support expert, education of specialists for rural development, supporting vocational education and training of disadvantaged user communities).

New target groups

Many of the reported good practices have to do with new target groups for social services (i.e. help for traumatized boys, elderly homosexuals, women with a violence experience or victims of human trafficking; housing for neo-adult girls, children left behind by migrants).



All the collected practise will be presented, as project output, in a brief collection, available on the project website and accessible to all the experts, professionals and interested audience in the matter.





How to access to the WIT COP

Are you interested to share your expertise and join a thematic workshop? **WIT thematic workshops** are open focus groups of experts, practitioners or simply very interested in the field people (researchers, advisors, people from the worlds of NGOs, public and private social sectors, to mention some) focusing on a specific subject, while sharing knowledge and experience. Each thematic workshop tries to feed practical innovative solutions to problems or opportunities in the field drawing on experience derived from tailored useful projects, initiatives and practices.

You can easily join the on line thematic workshop and download all useful background information, videos and materials via this [link](#).





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