



Integrated approaches to combating poverty and social exclusion

Best practices from EU Member States

Table of contents

Introduction	3
Belgium. Children first: local consultation platforms for the prevention and identification of child poverty	4
Belgium. Methodology: experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion in public services	5
Bulgaria. Social inclusion project – an integrated approach to early childhood development	6
Czech Republic. Rubicon, a project from Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren DECCB	8
Denmark. Implementing Housing First	9
Germany. Federal ESF programme to integrate the long-term unemployed who are entitled to benefit under the second book of the Social Code (SGB II) into the general labour market	10
Germany. Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived, fead	11
Germany. Duisburg integration and advice project	12
Germany. Networks for activation, advice and opportunities	13
Germany. Federal programme: ‘social participation in the labour market’	14
Germany. Agencies for youth employment	15
Germany. Assisted training	16
Estonia. Integrated Services Through Case Management Network For People With Multiple Needs	17
Ireland. Prevention and early intervention approaches	18
Greece. Individuals and families living in extreme poverty	20
Spain. Support house for homeless people in a convalescent situation or with chronic diseases – Carmen Sacristán Centre – Palliative Care	23
Spain. Development of programmes for the improvement of employment opportunities for people subject to or at risk of social exclusion	25
Spain. Healthy education spaces	27
Spain. Implementation of rights and quality of life model and the support methodology in social inclusion services of Gipuzkoa	29
Spain. Food donation: an example of cooperation	31
Spain. Pilot project for the social and occupational activation of young people at high risk of social exclusion	32
Spain. Social housing for social integration	34

Spain. Supportive network of houses for families at risk of social exclusion	37
France. Multiannual plan against poverty and for social inclusion - 2013–2017	39
Croatia. Social cooperative Humana Nova	42
Italy. National guidelines for the fight against adult exclusion – housing first approach	43
Latvia. Intensified action plan for the long-term unemployed	44
Lithuania. Social protection information system	45
Luxembourg. National Service for Social Action (nssa) – implementation of the minimum income scheme	46
Hungary. 'Chance for the children' - integrated regional programmes for the improvement of the opportunities of children and their families for social inclusion	47
Hungary. 'A chance for women'	48
Malta. Leap centres	50
The Netherlands. Social community teams	51
The Netherlands. Child Package	53
Austria. Implementing a means-tested minimum income scheme	54
Poland. Social integration centres, and an initiative of the Barka Foundation for mutual help	55
Portugal. National Social Emergency Helpline - LNES	56
Portugal. Social Network Programme	57
Portugal. Social Integration Income - RSI	59
Romania. Integrated Social Services and Vocational Training for People with Disabilities	61
Romania. SAMUSOCIAL Romania's Integrated Program for Homeless People	63
Romania. Every Child in Kindergarten	65
Slovenia. Project of Informal Learning for Young Adults (pilya): a social integration programme helping young people back into work and education	67
Sweden. Crossroads: information and support for eu migrants, Stockholm	69
United Kingdom. Clyde Gateway (CG) is a scottish urban regeneration company	70
United Kingdom. Lift Programme, Wales	72
United Kingdom. Youth Engagement Fund	73
United Kingdom. Troubled Families Programme, England	75

Introduction

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Secretary of State for Employment and Social Affairs of the Netherlands



I proudly present this booklet, which contains an impressive collection of innovative best practices from all over Europe for integrated approaches to combat poverty and social exclusion.

An integrated approach means looking at the individual (or household) situation from a broad perspective – wrangling from a lack of income to social exclusion. It also implies recognition of the role of, and consequences for, a whole range of life-domains such as employment, health and long-term care, education and housing. And it requires constructive cooperation with all the parties involved, in the public, private and civil society spheres. Finally, an integrated approach is characterised by comprehensive, continuous and coordinated intervention tailored to the respective life-domains – thereby providing a single point of contact. The best practices in this booklet illustrate the value of an integrated approach for different vulnerable groups, such as children, migrants, people with disabilities, elderly people, young people, the unemployed, people with a migrant background and homeless people.

The booklet is the result of a long process. In 2010 we all committed ourselves to the Europe 2020 strategy, which includes the ambitious target to reduce the number of people in or at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 20 million by the year 2020. However, since 2010, this number has increased as a result of the financial and economic crisis and more than 120 million people in Europe are currently at risk of poverty or social exclusion. That is far, far too many. People who live in poverty are not just deprived of money. They are deprived of opportunity, and that is unacceptable.

Now that European economies are showing the first signs of recovery, it is time to turn the tide. I made the fight against poverty one of the priorities of the Dutch EU Presidency, resulting in this booklet, as part of the Council Conclusions on 'Combating poverty and social exclusion: an integrated approach'. The Council Conclusions recognise the multidimensional nature of poverty and advocate combating poverty through an integrated approach as described above. By adopting these conclusions, all Member States have shown a renewed commitment to increasing their efforts to reduce the number of people living in poverty or social exclusion.

The Council Conclusions also encourage Member States to exchange best practices for integrated approaches to fight poverty and social exclusion. I truly believe that we can help each other to implement effective policies to reduce poverty and social exclusion by sharing our experiences, expertise and good practices. I hope the best practices in this booklet will be useful for all relevant stakeholders in the Member States in their fight against poverty and social exclusion. I also hope that this booklet will encourage further exchange of best practices in the field of poverty reduction, both within and between Member States.

Let this booklet be a source of inspiration to you, just as much as it was to me!

Belgium

Children first: local consultation platforms for the prevention and identification of child poverty

Brief summary of the best practice

The National Child Poverty Reduction Plan (2013), as well as the second Federal Poverty Reduction Plan (2012), pointed to the Belgian Public Social Welfare Centres (PSWCs) as playing a key preventative and proactive role in identifying hidden child poverty. However, it has been found that the different parties working with children in the cities and municipalities do not always know each other well, and do not always share their expertise and experiences. Yet structural consultations between these parties would benefit both the children living in poverty and those from families at risk of poverty. Therefore, the Belgian government encourages the PSWCs to fight child poverty proactively and to promote child well-being, in order to ensure that these children and their families can break the cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Funded by the Belgian government, 57 Belgian Public Social Welfare Centres (PSWCs) or associations launched local, innovative pilot projects in 2014 in the form of consultation platforms with local actors (e.g. anti-poverty associations, child day care centres, schools, sports clubs, etc.). The objective of the consultation platforms is to proactively identify and prevent child poverty (e.g. by identifying problem situations in the municipality), thus effectively and preventatively lowering the poverty risk rate among children. Other objectives are raising awareness of child poverty among local partners and providing information about existing aid channels in the municipalities, supporting collaboration and consultation, stimulating local projects and providing specific support at both the individual and the collective level.

The target group of the consultation platforms are children aged 12 and under who are living in poverty or at risk of poverty, with special attention paid to early childhood (0-5 years). It goes without saying that the children cannot be detached from the context of the family in which they grow up, which means that their parents and their family are a part of the consultation platform's target group too.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The local consultative platform 'Children First' strives for a number of mutual objectives, namely:

- *Proactive detection and prevention of childhood poverty:* The exchange of information, whether about individual cases or generalised tendencies in the community, allows for combating poverty at an early stage. The consultation platform designs a working framework in consideration of the privacy of individuals.

- *Sensitising of local partners:* Via the consultation platform, the stakeholders exchange expertise and are educated about poverty. The platform can also undertake actions to sensitise partners in the community or city about childhood poverty.
- *Stimulation of cooperation:* The policy brings to the table partners that have not yet met with regard to childhood poverty, or want to work in a more structured way. The platform unites various partners from communities or cities: partners who see the signs of childhood poverty, but who do not necessarily have the knowledge and/or resources to take decisive action, and organisations which do have knowledge and/or resources, but do not come into sufficient contact with children and their families to detect poverty in order to prevent it.
- *Stimulation of local support and projects:* The platform addresses acute emergency situations based on its findings, on both an individual and a collective basis. Over time, the proactive presence of the platform should lead to acute aid becoming superfluous.

In other words, the consultative platforms initiate cooperation where it does not yet exist, or if it exists, reinforce it according to local needs. Connections must constantly be sought with the existing policy and dynamics in the community or city.

Why is this a best practice?

- The project stimulates structural consultations between the different parties working with children in the cities and municipalities, which benefit the children and their families.
- The project represents a specific response to the European Recommendation 'Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantages' by:
(1) strengthening the coordination between the different parties involved; (2) streamlining their policy in all relevant areas; (3) promoting stakeholder participation; and (4) allowing for the exchange of good practices.
- The policy is both preventative and proactive.

Key message

Focusing on the local level of government in combating child poverty and social exclusion, the project permits flexibility in response to local needs, stimulates a local dynamic and promotes open collaboration for integrated approaches.

Further relevant information

Peer Review in Belgium: Children First – pilot local consultation platforms on child poverty: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=2100&furtherNews=yes>

Belgium

Methodology: experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion in public services

Brief summary of the best practice

In recent decades governments in several European welfare states have faced a growing number of citizens whose access to public services is no longer guaranteed. This (in)voluntary non-take up of social rights is partly attributed to the gap that has emerged between the situation of people living in poverty on the one hand and the focus of federal government services on the so-called 'standard citizen' on the other.

The deployment of Experts by Experience in federal public services is considered to be one of the levers in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and in eliminating barriers to the provision of public services.

An Expert by Experience is 'a person who has experienced poverty and social exclusion for a long time, who has processed and expanded the experience and via training has acquired attitudes, skills and methods in order to make expert use of the extended poverty experience in one or more sectors that deal with people in poverty'.

Experts by Experience have direct experience of the reality of people living in poverty. Due to their first-hand knowledge and because they know what people in poverty need, they can help determine where the possible stumbling blocks in service provision lie. This alternative perspective creates added value in terms of customer focus, with the objective of being accessible to every citizen, and therefore being more efficient and effective as a service.

Enlisting Experts by Experience is a practical and innovative way of opening up customer focus, by focusing on a specific target group, namely people experiencing poverty and social exclusion who, much more than others, need the help that public services can offer.

The methodology is characterized by three levels:

- *Micro level:* direct support for people in a situation of poverty in their dealings with the federal services and other agencies or services;
- *Meso level:* the formulation of concrete proposals to improve the accessibility and quality of services for citizens, in particular as regards citizens in a situation of poverty;
- *Macro level:* the initiation of a critical reflection in the minds of staff members about the objectives, logic, procedures and imaging that is used with regard to citizens who find themselves in a situation of poverty.

There are 23 Experts by Experience working in 12 federal departments: Selor (government selection agency), FPS Economy, the public institution for social security (HZIV), Social Security of Self-employed Entrepreneurs (NISSE), FPS Justice, PPS Social Integration, FPS Social Security,

Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS), FPS Health, FPS Finance, and the National Employment Office (NEO).

From May 2016 fifteen Experts by Experience will be employed in making health care more accessible. This pilot project will run until the end of 2017 and focuses on improving 'health literacy' and reducing 'medical drop out'.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

By contributing a different perspective on the quality and accessibility of public services, the Experts by Experience have 'pulled the genie out of the bottle', as it were, and they invite their colleagues in an open and often informal way to reflect critically on their own value framework. In other words: it is a question of breaking through dominant objectives in shaping the public service that may be present both at the level of the service as a whole and at the level of individual staff members, providing insights into existing exclusion mechanisms.

Why is this a best practice?

- The methodology strengthens the involvement of and cooperation between all relevant public, private and civil society actors, including by making reference to experts' input in the formulation, transposition, implementation and evaluation of policies.
- A key factor in the methodologies is transversal cooperation via the network of Experts by Experience themselves, and other relevant actors in the various government departments and organisations, which means we are able to refer citizens appropriately when other questions are raised that do not fall within the remit of the service (holistic perspective).
- The methodology is both preventative and proactive.

Key message

The added value arises when there is a real collaboration between the actors, in respect for the capabilities of one another. The methodology requires a good framework to ensure a coherent vision and promote cooperation across different sectors/organisations/stakeholders/parties.

Further relevant information

- Publication in French: <http://www.mi-is.be/fr/etudes-publications-statistiques/livre-des-experts-de-vecu-en-pauvrete-et-exclusion-sociale>
- Publication in Dutch: <http://www.mi-is.be/nl/studies-publicaties-statistieken/boek-ervaringsdeskundigen-armoede-en-sociale-uitsluiting>
- Movie in French: <http://www.mi-is.be/fr/presse-multi-media/experts-du-vecu-le-film>
- Movie in Dutch: <http://www.mi-is.be/nl/pers-multimedia/ervaringsdeskundigen-de-armoede-de-film>

Bulgaria

Social inclusion project – an integrated approach to early childhood development

Brief summary of the best practice

The early childhood development (ECD) concept in Bulgaria has a strong focus on the development of innovative integrated ECD services. Bulgaria's efforts to develop and implement integrated ECD policies were supported by the Social Inclusion Project (SIP). The project was implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy from 2010 to 31 December 2015 and funded by a loan from the World Bank. The main objective of the project was to prevent social exclusion and to reduce child poverty by improving children's school readiness and increasing support for vulnerable groups to gain parenting skills.

A network of integrated ECD services in 66 municipalities has been established under the project by applying an innovative and cross-sectoral model to support children in early childhood and their families. The services focus on children up to seven years of age and their families. They integrate health, social and educational measures. Construction work has been carried out as well and the necessary furniture and equipment for the provision of the services has been delivered. New places in kindergartens and nurseries have been created. In total there are more than 30 000 beneficiaries of SIP services, including children and their parents. A total of 1 867 new places in kindergartens and nurseries have been opened up in 31 municipalities (184 places in nursery and 1 683 in kindergarten groups). In the summer of 2015, the beneficiary municipalities tested the school readiness of children from vulnerable groups enrolled in kindergartens as a result of the Social Inclusion Project. The test results showed an 80% success rate.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The project makes a significant contribution to introducing an entirely new, integrated approach aimed at preventing risks in early childhood and at early intervention. The main innovative feature of SIP services is that they are integrated in terms of collaboration between different specialists and in terms of the nature of the services, which cover social, health and educational aspects. In that respect, the project proved that there is a need for an integrated approach and for serious cross-sectoral and interinstitutional cooperation in the ECD area.

The services are divided into two groups based on the age of the target groups of children - services for parents and families of children up to three years of age and services for children aged three to seven years. The services for children up to age three focus mostly on the acquisition and development of parenting skills and supporting parents in raising their children. The main emphasis of the approach towards children between three years of age and

preschool age is their inclusion into larger peer groups to promote socialisation and the development of skills to guarantee an equal start at school.

These are some of the main services financed under the project: acquisition and development of parenting skills, including among future parents; early intervention in the event of disability; integration of children in kindergartens and pre-school groups; family counselling and support; health consultation; additional training for school readiness; individual educational support for children with disabilities, etc.

One of the key objectives of the project as regards the services for children aged three to seven was to improve the school readiness and motivation of children from vulnerable groups for an equal start with their coevals. By attending a summer school within the framework of the service 'Additional training for school readiness' the children have the opportunity to build up or maintain the required cognitive and social skills until they start school. At summer schools educational elements are combined with games and various activities to enrich their knowledge of the world around them.

Why is this a best practice?

The SIP has proven successful for several reasons:

- The successful implementation of the SIP is a step towards popularising and recognising the ECD concept as an integrated policy to promote the welfare of children at an early age;
- It involved an integrated approach to the complex needs of children and their families;
- There was cooperation and coordination between institutions and organisations working in the social, health and educational fields;
- Municipalities demonstrated good partnership and actively participated in the implementation of the project;
- Successful results were achieved under the project: improved school readiness of children under seven from low-income backgrounds or with disabilities; improvements in child welfare (measured by the increased number of children under the age of seven from low-income and vulnerable families enrolled in mainstream kindergartens and preschool preparatory groups and the number of parents having completed parenting skills sessions); expanded coverage of child care services for children below the age of seven from vulnerable groups;

- It is sustainable: in order to continue and build on this successful model the ECD services developed under the SIP will be provided under the scheme 'Services for Early Childhood Development' financed under the 'Human Resources Development Operational Programme' for 2014-2020.

One of the most significant outcomes of the SIP is that while the concept was introduced by the government, the municipalities implemented it and transformed it into local policy based on the results achieved.

Key message

ECD interventions have a higher rate of return per investment than later interventions. In this context development of high-quality early childhood education and care is an essential foundation for all children's successful lifelong learning, social inclusion, personal development and later employability. Another key message is that an integrated approach and interinstitutional cooperation are of key importance for the design and implementation of effective ECD policies.

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Czech Republic

Rubicon, a project from Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren DECCB

Brief summary of the best practice

Project aim: In 2004, the DECCB established a low-threshold centre for children and youth (6-26 years old) from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those with a migration background. Rubikon is intended to provide a 'safe space' where children and youth can come for free, spend their free time and experience an atmosphere of respect, understanding and trust.

Project description: Social workers provide special counselling, emotional support and guidance in order to empower children and young people and prepare them for a brighter future. The main areas of engagement are social relationships (with partners or friends and within the family), education, addiction problems, discrimination, employment and poverty issues. Additionally, the project focuses on the acquisition of soft skills such as consensus-finding, voicing personal opinions, mutual understanding and avoiding aggression. More than 100 young people participate in the project on a yearly basis. The staff consists of three social workers and a teacher coordinating a musical workshop. The project has enabled a lot of children to make the transition from special to regular primary education.

Funding: The project is funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the municipality, the Ministry of Education, funds from regional authorities, the ESF, the Council of the Government for Roma issues, and a Czech-Swiss partnership. The funding available varies every year. That is why the services are not all available every year. In 2012 the organisation had to reduce the number of workers and services.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The project is based on a multi-faceted approach including social relationships (with partners or friends and within the family), education, addiction problems, discrimination, employment and poverty issues, as well as the acquisition of soft skills such as consensus-finding, voicing personal opinions, mutual understanding and avoiding aggression.

Why is this a best practice?

One of the key elements of the fight against poverty and social exclusion is the education provided to the vulnerable groups, especially to children and young people. The added value of this project is based on the fact that it helps and enables children from disadvantaged backgrounds to make the transition from special to regular primary education. Thus it increases their chances of accessing better and higher education and therefore better employment, which is the best way to avoid poverty and social exclusion.

Key message

One aspect of the fight against poverty and social exclusion could be built on the transition from special to regular primary education.

Further relevant information

- Contact person: Ms Marta Doubravova: doubravova.vsetin@diakonie.cz
- Website: www.diakonie.cz/en/

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Denmark

Implementing Housing First

Brief summary of the best practice

In 2009-2013 Denmark implemented a national Homelessness Strategy in 17 of its 98 municipalities in order to reduce the number of homeless people. One of the key elements of the strategy was to test and implement the evidence-based social intervention 'Housing First' in a Danish context.

Housing First is based upon two main components: providing a permanent housing solution while at the same time providing intensive social support in order to support the individual in the rehousing process.

Following a positive evaluation of the strategy, a second phase was adopted in 2013 which extended the strategy to include 24 new municipalities. A key component of the second phase is the incorporation of extensive implementation support to the municipalities provided by a support team from the National Board of Social Services. Due to a rising number of homeless youngsters, a project which focuses specifically on preventing and reducing homelessness among young people aged 17-24 was also adopted as part of the second phase of the strategy.

Lastly, in autumn 2015 Denmark adopted a third phase of the strategy. In this phase the support team from the National Board of Social Services provides additional implementation support to municipalities, which are in the process of implementing Housing First, as well as support to an additional 64 municipalities that are aiming to implement the method. The third phase will be implemented between 2016 and 2019.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The key element of the Homelessness Strategy is the initial provision of permanent housing in combination with simultaneous intensive social support in order to not only address the homelessness but also the – often complex – mental and physical challenges that the individual might face beside homelessness.

This specific combination provides a holistic and integrated approach aimed at supporting the individual in stabilising and improving his or her wellbeing. Social support might for instance be aimed at supporting the individual in handling complicated family relations, financial issues, drug abuse, etc. Three different methods of Supported Housing, namely Critical Time Interventions (CTI), Intensive Care Manager (ICM) and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) have been implemented.

Why is this a best practice?

The evaluation of the Homelessness Strategy showed that Housing First enables nine out of 10 homeless people to keep a home and that the method is economically viable.

Whereas surveys on the level of homelessness in Denmark in general have shown that homelessness has increased during the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy, the increase has been significantly lower in the municipalities participating in the project. At the same time, however, it is important to note that the level of homelessness is dependent on a number of structural and societal factors and cannot be accounted for solely by the quality of social interventions.

Further relevant information

Website (in Danish): http://socialstyrelsen.dk/projekter-og-initiativer/voksne/udbredelses-og-forankrings-projektet-1/copy_of_udbredelse-af-hjemlosestrategien.

Germany

Federal ESF programme to integrate the long-term unemployed who are entitled to benefit under the second book of the Social Code (SGB II) into the general labour market

Brief summary of the best practice

The objective is the integration into the general labour market of long-term unemployed people without vocational qualifications, or without qualifications which will help them to find employment.

The federal ESF programme is part of the Federal Government's 'Opening Opportunities – Safeguarding Social Participation' strategy to reduce long-term unemployment.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The activities centre around targeted outreach and advice to employers, and support for the long-term unemployed after taking up employment, which is delivered by employer outreach staff or coaches. In addition, funding can be provided for job-related training, training to enhance basic skills, and mobility grants for the participants. Employers can receive digressive wage subsidies.

Why is this a best practice?

The employer outreach staff raise employers' awareness of this group and ensure that they are more willing to give the long-term unemployed a chance.

In addition, experience to date has shown that the long-term unemployed may face a large number of problems which also have a negative impact on their integration into the labour market. Individual job coaching after taking up employment allows these problems to be better recognised and resolved.

Key message

The long-term unemployed need individual services and assistance to enable them to be re-integrated into work.

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The long-term unemployed need individual services and assistance to enable them to be re-integrated into work
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Germany

Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived, FEAD

Brief summary of the best practice

Support is provided to people suffering from poverty who have no or inadequate access to the advisory and support services of the regular system of assistance. These people are too distant from the labour market to be reached by active labour market policies and the special programmes relating to the labour market of the European Social Fund (ESF). The people in question are:

- Particularly disadvantaged newly arrived EU migrants
- Children of disadvantaged newly arrived EU migrants
- People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

With a total of around EUR 93 million in EU and federal funding, the Federal Government is supporting municipalities in relation to the social integration of newly arrived EU migrants and their children, and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In the first period, which began at the start of December 2015, around 65% of the funding is being spent and 88 projects are being supported across Germany.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The FEAD serves as a *bridge* between the target groups and the existing advisory and support services of the regular system of assistance. The objective is *social integration*, so that those who receive advice are put in a position which

enables them to integrate. Simply providing benefits without enabling people to help themselves is not regarded as constructive or sustainable. Funding is provided for additional staff, especially advisers engaged in outreach work or in local advice centres. They help members of the target groups to access existing services, e.g. language courses or medical advice. The children of EU migrants are to be introduced to existing early education and social care services, such as child day care centres or other preschool or leisure services. This priority area is being implemented in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

The providers are required to form partnerships with municipalities and the facilities of non-statutory welfare services or other non-profit providers. This heightens the projects' transparency and efficiency.

Why is this a best practice?

The FEAD's objective in Germany is to promote social cohesion and the social inclusion of people who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. It makes an important contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy.

Further relevant information

www.ehap.bmas.de

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Duisburg integration and advice project

Brief summary of the best practice

- Volume of agreed funding: EUR 993 384
- Term: 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018
- Beneficiary: City of Duisburg
- Cooperation partners of the City of Duisburg:
 - Duisburger Werkkiste gGmbH (a Catholic youth welfare institution in Duisburg)
 - GfB (a non-profit association in Duisburg which promotes employment)

Which elements make this an integrated approach? Why is this a best practice?

Project objective 1: Reaching out to particularly disadvantaged newly arrived EU migrants and advising and informing them about the advisory services of the regular system of assistance.

Integration advisers seek out members of the target group at places where they meet, offer to act as a point of contact, and if necessary accompany them to services where they can receive assistance and support. The advisers support people in the process of getting to know their new living environment, provide information about available services, the (social) infrastructure and other stakeholders in the relevant social area, and in this way help people to settle in and get their bearings. They inform people about, put them in touch with and if necessary accompany them to offices and agencies (the residents' registration office, agency for public order, youth welfare office, education office, local public health office, etc.) and other institutions, e.g. the municipal utilities or the police if they have requests/problems. Each integration adviser has a fixed contact person in various institutions for matters concerning the target group. This ensures a continuous dialogue between the integration advisers and the newly arrived migrants. For other network partners, the advisers are the first point of contact at local level. They drive forward the development of networks in the interests of the new residents and participate in working groups and roundtables. The work of the project staff is supported by specially produced leaflets in Bulgarian and Romanian. These guides are written in simple language and include pictograms explaining the content, to ensure that even migrants with rudimentary reading skills can pick up information from them. The leaflets provide information about the migrants' basic needs – food/clothing, housing, finances (child benefit, debt, etc.) and health. The back of the leaflet lists the names and telephone numbers of the integration advisers, who are also the first point of contact for all other questions from members of the target group and who guide them to the regular system of assistance. To ensure they are thoroughly familiar with the details of Duisburg's system of assistance, the project staff receive training from the city's specialist staff and external experts.

Project objective 2: Reaching out to particularly disadvantaged newly arrived EU migrants and their children, and providing advice and information about early education and social care services.

The integration advisers support people in the process of getting to know their new living environment, provide information about available services, the (social) infrastructure, the childcare and education system, standard and school-entrance medical examinations, leisure services for children, and other stakeholders in the relevant social area, and in this way help people to settle in and get their bearings in the local area. They inform people about, put them in touch with and if necessary accompany them to offices and agencies, childcare facilities, schools and school social-work services, child and youth welfare services, and other projects and services aimed at the target group. They put people in contact with services specially designed to teach children German, and with centres which hand out food, toys and children's clothing. Young mothers are introduced to the services of the local public health office, family advice centres and volunteer doctors.

To this end, each integration adviser has a fixed contact person in various institutions for matters concerning the target group. This ensures a continuous dialogue between the advisers and the newly arrived migrants. The work of the project staff is supported by specially produced leaflets in Bulgarian and Romanian (see above).

Project objective 3: Reaching out to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and advising and informing them about the services of the regular system of assistance

Contact points are being created for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These contact points or advisory services are being attached to existing advice centres and projects which are already successfully dealing with other issues. This is intended to facilitate referral to other regular advisory services and the system of assistance. These contact points will also be the starting point for street social work. The target group will be reached by two methods in particular:

- a. Outreach social work will be used to ensure skilled, specialist outreach to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Project staff will seek out, in a targeted manner, places where members of the target group meet, institutions working with young people and young adults, associations and migrants' organisations. This is primarily intended to introduce members of the target groups to the low-threshold advisory service for the wider assistance system. This low threshold advisory service is their first point of contact for information and should also be regarded as a confidence-building measure.
- b. The advisory service also serves as a contact point for stakeholders in the social area.

Germany

Networks for activation, advice and opportunities

Brief summary of the best practice

The aim is to develop a tailored, comprehensive support service through the targeted establishment of networks and the structured involvement of all relevant labour market stakeholders.

Objectives of the Networks for Activation, Advice and Opportunities:

- Bringing together all support services for the long-term unemployed, especially through close cooperation with local authority agencies (addiction and debt advisory services, psychosocial support, child care or mobility using local public transport).
- Integrating the services of other labour market stakeholders, e.g. health insurance funds and rehabilitation providers.
- Intensifying support for the long-term unemployed.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

This approach provides referrals beyond the job centres' structures. Job centres participate on a voluntary basis in this initiative run by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Why is this a best practice?

The experience of an earlier federal programme, 'Perspective 50-plus', showed that tailored, comprehensive support also has a positive impact on the re-employment chances of the long-term unemployed. The Networks for Activation, Advice and Opportunities are therefore intended to continue effective approaches from 'Perspective 50-plus', develop them further, and open them up to all long-term unemployed persons who fall within the scope of the Second Book of the Social Code.

Key message

Close cooperation with various institutions helps both in developing an individual service for the long-term unemployed and in strengthening the organisation concerned.

Further relevant information

<http://www.sgb2.info/>



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Close cooperation with various institutions helps both in developing an individual service for the long-term unemployed and in strengthening the organisation concerned
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Germany

Federal programme: 'social participation in the labour market'

Brief summary of the best practice

The federal programme 'Social Participation in the Labour Market' is aimed at people at the margins of the labour market who have been receiving benefits for at least four years and who either have health impairments or have dependent children in their household.

The programme's objective is to facilitate social participation through subsidised employment and to improve the chances of the long-term unemployed entering unsubsidised employment. To this end, around 10 000 jobs with compulsory social insurance coverage are being subsidised until the end of 2018; these are additional jobs, which do not distort competition and are in the public interest. In addition to the federal support, accompanying measures by job centres, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders are a mandatory element of the programme.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

In addition to subsidised employment, the programme includes a mandatory accompanying support service (e.g. coaching). This is a pilot programme, and it will provide information on how to design approaches to promote social participation and what factors determine social participation.

Why is this a best practice?

The programme aims to gradually bring people closer to the labour market. Integration into the labour market is not the sole focus, however; issues of social participation are also a priority.

Key message

With the 'Social Participation in the Labour Market' programme, the Federal Government is for the first time prioritising the issue of social participation. The accompanying activities implement a comprehensive approach to supporting people at the very margins of the labour market.

Further relevant information

<http://www.bmas.de/DE/Themen/Arbeitsmarkt/Modellprogramme/bundesprogramm-soziale-teilhabe-am-arbeitsmarkt.html>

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With the 'Social Participation in the Labour Market' programme, the Federal Government is for the first time prioritising the issue of social participation”



Germany

Agencies for youth employment

Brief summary of the best practice

The aim is to provide joined-up support for young people, using a one-stop approach where possible.

Responsibility for supporting young people is divided between the public employment service, municipalities (licensed municipal agencies) and the youth welfare offices, for which municipalities are responsible. This is why there is a need for cooperation.

Objectives of the agencies for youth employment:

- 'No one left behind'. Preventing social exclusion and combating poverty.
- Achieving synergies. Young people are to be given more rapid and streamlined assistance, thus improving vocational integration.
- Better integration in relation to the school-to-work transition through a single point of contact for young people

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

It combines and structures the advisory services for various life circumstances, where appropriate with financial assistance or support programmes for young people.

Why is this a best practice?

Young people, especially those facing multiple difficulties, ideally have a single point of contact, or they know that all involved are taking a holistic approach to their concerns through enhanced and integrated cooperation.

Key message

Close cooperation with various institutions helps young people and makes the school-to-work transition easier.

Further relevant information

<http://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2016/jugendberufsagenturen.html>



Germany

Assisted training

Brief summary of the best practice

The introduction of this instrument is intended to ensure that more disadvantaged young people successfully complete in-company training within the dual training system. In assisted training, trainees and companies receive individual, one-stop support from an educational institution before and during in-company vocational training.

The assistance is designed to provide individual, continuous support to the trainees and to stabilise the training relationship. The companies providing the training are kept closely involved by the educational institution and can also receive administrative and organisational support. Optionally, the assisted training can be supplemented by a preparatory phase prior to the training.

Objectives:

- Intensive support for young people facing multiple difficulties
- Long-term integration of young people
- Keeping young people from dropping out of training
- Intended to counteract the skilled labour shortage in Germany
- Reduction of youth unemployment

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

In assisted training, trainees and companies receive individual support before and during in-company vocational training in order to keep various problems from arising before and during training or to resolve them as quickly as possible.

Why is this a best practice?

The fact that the educational institution provides individual support for the young person concerned and at the same time deals with problems in the workplace during in-company training is intended to ensure lasting integration into the training market and thus keep young people from dropping out of training.

Key message

In order to keep young people from dropping out of training or reduce the number who do so, and to counteract the resulting skilled labour shortage, disadvantaged young people receive personal support before and during the training period, and employers receive assistance during the training.

Further relevant information

<https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/web/content/DE/Detail/index.htm?dfContentId=L6019022DSTBAI754963>



Integrated Services Through Case Management Network For People With Multiple Needs

Brief summary of the best practice

Since 2012, the Estonian National Social Insurance Board has been implementing a project to empower people with multiple needs and their families and support their participation in the labour market (including entering the labour market, retaining a job or participating in active labour market measures). The target group includes all working-age people and their family members who face more than one obstacle that hinders their employment and ability to cope independently. Those obstacles could be debts, a care burden, disability, long-term unemployment, missing vocational skills, lack of social skills, low motivation, health problems, alcoholism or drug addiction.

Five regional case coordinators at the Social Insurance Board support local government social workers to organise the case management network, solve complicated cases and direct people with coping difficulties to counselling services at different service providers.

Clients with coping difficulties have the possibility to receive counselling services – psychological counselling, family counselling, debt counselling and legal counselling. The services of a support person, clinical psychologist services, psychiatric aid and social pedagogue services are also provided. All services are free of charge.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The project is implemented in cooperation between the project team on the Social Insurance Board, local government social workers, counselling service providers and other partners (for example the Unemployment Insurance Fund). The main responsibility lies with the local government social worker, who assesses the person's needs, starts case management procedures and in complicated cases turns to the regional case coordinator, who helps to contact service providers and other relevant institutions to build up a support network. Each case is resolved individually.

The project develops cooperation between local governments and increases people's knowledge about their rights and possibilities for assistance. Knowledgeable clients motivate local governments to find solutions to develop missing social services or provide them in cooperation with neighbouring local governments.

Why is this a best practice?

Since 2012, over 4500 people have participated in the project. 91% of all participants have received at least one service. 50% of all service receivers have entered the labour market or retained their employment. By 2015, 85% of Estonian local governments were involved in the project.

Benefits for clients: improved social and coping skills, motivation and self-esteem; improved family relations and parental skills; decrease of debt burden; possibility of entering the labour market, or enrolling in studies or other activities; continuous provision of needed social services and financial support; improved health.

Benefits for social workers: new practical experiences and knowledge to provide long-term in-depth support to people; development of support networks and wider scope of services for clients; decreased number of subsistence benefit receivers; possibility of receiving support, advice and assistance from professional case coordinators in everyday work; improved knowledge about people's needs in local governments.

Benefits for service providers: increase in professionalism and skills in different fields; opportunity and support to develop social services; increased client base; improved knowledge about regional possibilities; strengthened cooperation and new contacts with other service providers.

Key message

Clients with multiple problems mostly need long-term support, including financial support and services that cannot be provided without the active involvement of a local government social worker or a strong support network of experts. For all complicated cases, cooperation with local government social workers and continuous case management is indispensable.

Further relevant information

<http://www.sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/projektid> (only in Estonian)

Prevention and early intervention approaches

Brief summary of the best practice

The European Commission's Recommendation: Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage stresses that 'early intervention and prevention are essential for developing more effective and efficient policies'. In Ireland, prevention and early intervention has become the focus of considerable innovation in terms of programmes such as the *Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative (PEII) 2007-2013*, the *Area-Based Childhood (ABC) Programme 2013-2017* and the *Prevention Partnership and Family Support Programme*, inter-agency infrastructure such as the *Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs)*, and policy such as *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – National Policy Framework for Children 2014-2020*.

Based on the recognition that prevention and early intervention can halt and reverse poor outcomes amongst children, significant investment has been made by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies in evidence-based and evidence-informed approaches to prevention and early intervention in working with children and young people at disadvantage. The ABC Programme and the PEII have used internationally acclaimed programmes in the areas of child development, child well-being, parenting and educational disadvantage such as the Triple P Parenting Programme, The Incredible Years, Hanen and the PAX Good Behaviour Game, as well as Irish programmes such as Preparing for Life and Community Mothers, with substantial evaluation having been carried out (or in the process of being carried out) to capture learning (e.g. Ten Years of Learning: Prevention and early intervention services in children and young people's services).

As a result of placing prevention and early intervention at the centre of policy frameworks such as *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, where this is a cross-governmental priority, a strategic approach has been taken to embed evidence-based and evidence-informed prevention and early intervention approaches in all sectors. The ultimate goal is to enable all services regardless of geographical areas to reverse and prevent poor outcomes among children. This is helped by the current robust efforts to mainstream existing and emerging learning from initiatives to support prevention and early intervention in policy, provision and practice.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The aforementioned initiatives strongly emphasise the enhancement of inter-agency collaboration through partnerships between service providers spanning such areas as children's physical and mental health, language and literacy development, parenting and family support, prosocial behaviour and regulation, early childhood

education and care and school education. In addition, through the Prevention Partnership and Family Support Programme, the Child and Family Agency has begun to establish child and family support networks with a view to creating a coordinated preventative support service around children and their families. As such, the Programme is able to draw on the experience of local integrated approaches of the area-based initiatives.

Importantly, a Task Group was also set up to mainstream the learning from the ABC programme and Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative. This is to ensure that critical learning (what works and what does not) is shared to inform policy and practice with a view to optimising the range of outcomes for children at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This effort should be seen as part of the broader policy and infrastructural developments that facilitate cross-governmental collaboration on service and policy developments for children and young people.

Why is this a best practice?

Emphasis on evidence: Access to affordable quality services for children and their families is a key driver in the process of lifting children out of poverty, as highlighted by the European Commission. The PEI and ABC initiatives have employed interventions that are based on or informed by evidence and therefore deemed to be suitable to address the particular needs of children at disadvantage. The evaluation has placed emphasis on identifying effective programmes and approaches as well as those which failed to make an impact. Such a shift towards more evidence-based and evidence-informed service provision can significantly improve responses to the needs of children at disadvantage and help them to achieve their potential in adult life.

Cross-sectoral approach: Prevention and early intervention initiatives have facilitated cross-sectoral collaboration that previously was found to be somewhat lacking in respect of children's services. At local level, this is achieved through inter-agency partnerships, which also inform the development of child and family networks. The establishment of Children and Young People's Service Committees at local authority level assists in further embedding a coordinated approach to prevention and early intervention. At national level, such efforts are strengthened by the implementation structures of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* as well as the ABC Mainstreaming the Learning Task Group.

Mainstreaming learning: Major efforts are now being made to develop a coordinated set of activities to transfer learning into mainstream policy and provision through improved access to and use of data, harnessing evidence and learning, coaching and mentoring and implementing a

quality framework. Such a systemic reform will help all services to identify problems early and develop the most effective responses that speak to the full range of policy areas, services and practice fields involved with children and their families. This approach of moving from site- or geographically specific trial initiatives to a more systems change approach is viewed as being more strategic, sustainable and impactful in ensuring established services and support are more evidence-informed and outcomes-focused.

Key message

Prevention and early intervention need to be a strong priority in service provision to tackle poverty and social exclusion among children. However, it is important that a common framework is agreed among all services and policy areas underpinning the implementation of prevention and early intervention approaches.

Further relevant information

- Triple P Parenting Programme: <http://www.tripleparenting.net/glo-en/home/>
- Incredible Years: http://www.archways.ie/our_programmes/incredible_years/
- Hanen: <http://www.hanen.org/Home.aspx>
- PAX Good Behaviour Game: <http://paxireland.ie/>
- Preparing for Life: <http://geary.ucd.ie/preparingforlife/>
- Community Mothers: <http://www.cecde.ie/english/pdf/Vision%20into%20Practice/Molloy.pdf>
- Ten Years of Learning: Prevention and early intervention services in children and young people's services: <http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/research-reports/report-ten-years-learning>

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Individuals and families living in extreme poverty

Brief summary of the best practice

Goal

Protection from extreme poverty through targeted interventions in kind to address: (a) the immediate food problem in a dignified manner; (b) homelessness or risk of homelessness; (c) the supply of electricity.

Parties involved

The implementation process involved ministries, government agencies and the private sector, in an effort to coordinate all areas of society.

The participants are:

- The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity (planning and monitoring of programme implementation);
- The General Secretariat for IT Systems and the General Secretariat for Public Revenues of the Ministry of Finance (control of financial/asset eligibility data);
- IDIKA SA (final application intake, cross-checking of eligibility data from a series of records and public platforms, design and implementation of e-applications and appeals management platform, statistics, preparation of payment files);
- The Ministry of the Interior and Administrative Reconstruction supervising Citizens' Service Centres (CSCs) in Municipalities (coordination of about 1 000 CSCs that received more than half of the applications);
- The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), an entity supervised by the Ministry of Labour, which acted as a help desk during the application period (telephone support for applicants and CSCs);
- The National Bank of Greece, as the competent body for issuing and managing the prepaid cards;
- The food retail shops that accepted the prepaid card;
- The Hellenic Post that distributed the programme communication materials door to door throughout the country;
- The electricity providers;
- Property owners who wished to rent their properties (usually small and medium-sized).

Method applied

Beneficiaries who fulfil the eligibility criteria (income and assets) receive:

- a. A food subsidy in the form of a prepaid (bank) card compatible with card terminals (EFT/POS) in grocery shops (supermarkets, bakeries, grocers', greengrocers', butchers') and all shops included in these Merchant Category Codes (MCCs). The card, called the 'Solidarity Card', is credited on a monthly basis with the amount of the subsidy granted (EUR 70 per month for a single person, plus EUR 30 for each additional family member).

- b. Free provision of 300 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month and use of a special social tariff for vulnerable groups for consumption beyond this limit, through agreements with electricity providers. Beneficiaries whose supply had been cut due to outstanding bills were offered free reconnection and an amicable settlement of their debts with providers.
- c. A rent subsidy (EUR 70 per month for a single person, plus EUR 30 for each additional family member) credited to the property owner's account as an incentive to offer properties for rent with a guarantee that the price will be covered.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

Beneficiaries living in extreme poverty face an increased risk of social exclusion. For the first time a creative collaboration among all stakeholders in the public and private sector was attempted in order to cover a broad spectrum of real and pressing needs and so cut the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

The cooperation and coordination method between public and private stakeholders is described in detail in Joint Ministerial Decision 4904/2015 (Government Gazette 577/vol. B'9.4.2015), which sets out the income and asset criteria for beneficiaries, required documentation, deadlines, operators, services, control and certification procedures, partnerships with public and private sector bodies, and every other detail.

A number of private sector bodies (see below) responded to the initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, and their effective coordination contributed to the success of the programme.

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about the effectiveness?

The programme received applications from about 600 000 people and covered about 405 000 people for primary needs (food, electricity and shelter). It has been proven to be extremely popular.

In particular, the prepaid Solidarity Card delivered to approximately 149 000 households/families, covering about 350 000 people, was the real novelty of this programme for the following reasons:

- It was very well received by the beneficiaries and is widely used, as it allowed people to meet their needs with dignity (no soup kitchens, outdated food-packaging practices or coupons), since the users can select the food store and the food products of their choice;

- Between July 2015 and April 2016 more than EUR 170 million was traded in grocery stores, breathing life into businesses and especially to stores in the Greek region;
- It minimised administrative and human resources costs, bypassing a series of administrative actions for all bodies, since they became unnecessary;
- More generally, a number of other effective advantages were offered to the beneficiaries by third parties, for example:
 - A total of EUR 32 million in arrears on consumer credit products (loans, cards) were written off for 4 650 borrowers by another systemic bank;
 - A total of EUR 17 million in overdue interest on mortgage loans was forgiven for 500 borrowers from the same bank;
 - Arrears on mobile telephone bills were written off by one of the three related companies;
 - Free water was supplied by EYDAP S.A. (Athens Water Supply and Sewage Company);
 - The Solidarity Card was associated with free admission to archaeological sites and public museums, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

- The beneficiaries themselves, many of whom were socially excluded and marginalised, regained dignity and hence the courage to continue their lives with hope for support from the rest of society. In particular, those who did not have access to banking or municipal services (CSCs) had the chance to restore their confidence in both public intervention and the minimum necessary banking relations.
- The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity had the opportunity to try to succeed in designing and coordinating a programme involving multiple parties.
- Services from other ministries had the opportunity to try out new methods of cooperating with each other.
- Participating public and private sector companies had the opportunity to present effectively their corporate social responsibility initiatives. In particular, the actions of the bank and mobile operator (debt write-off for financially and socially vulnerable people) contributed to the reinstatement of trust among Greek society.
- The National Bank of Greece, apart from adding to its prestige by issuing and administrating the Solidarity Card, had the opportunity to ‘talk’ with many people who were outside the banking system. Additionally, the programme’s speedy implementation created stress-test conditions for a number of the bank’s units.
- IDIKA SA managed a public programme in a different way for the first time, surpassing the simple IT support routine (design, file sharing, etc.) and proceeding to content maintenance for the programme’s website, remote technical support for CSC officers, direct application management via web for home-based applicants, etc.

- The CSCs confirmed their critical role as a civil point of contact with public services and programs, particularly in their role as an assistant to the less-favoured and most marginalised citizens who hesitate to turn to other public services, including municipal social services.

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

The data available from the implementation of the programme were used and served as a guide, allowing the Ministry of Labour to prepare the first map of poverty, which in the near future will be a valuable planning tool for targeted actions in accordance with the real needs of the population. The findings continue to be evaluated and taken into account for the design of other programmes (e.g. the Social Solidarity Income, a.k.a. guaranteed minimum income).

Key message

The aim of the Greek government’s policy is to address the immediate consequences of the austerity policies, put the brakes on poverty, reintegrate the victims of the crisis actively in society and the labour market, depending on their situation, and restore their dignity.

The inspiration for establishing the programme was the experience, know-how and hope brought by informal solidarity structures that had been formed all over the country under the slogan ‘Nobody alone in the crisis!’

Thus the government, using less than EUR 200 million, created a safety net with targeted and sustained benefits in kind, stronger local markets (via the Solidarity Card) and social cohesion (by means of the rent subsidy).

The government believes that this is a truly holistic social welfare policy with a sound and efficient management of public (and private) resources. At the level of implementation it:

- is fully transparent regarding the selection criteria for beneficiaries;
- is characterised by extremely rapid actions;
- allows synergies with any entity wishing to collaborate;
- demonstrates the strength of the coordinating role of the State.

The enormous popularity of the Solidarity Card is proof of all of the above.

The ‘Programme for tackling the humanitarian crisis 2015-2016’, and especially the Solidarity Card is presented as a best practice, as the government considers that food and material assistance programs (such as the FEAD) could be provided through a card and not using the outdated practice of a ‘food bag’ or vouchers. The goals are:

- Resource savings;
- Reduction of administrative costs;

- Return of vulnerable groups to ‘normal’, everyday social and financial practices and hence their reintegration into society.

Further relevant information

All the necessary information for beneficiaries is available on the IDIKA website - Electronic Governance for Social Insurance SA (idika.gr).



“The programme received applications from about 600 000 people and covered about 405 000 people for primary needs (food, electricity and shelter)”

Support house for homeless people in a convalescent situation or with chronic diseases – Carmen Sacristán Centre – Palliative Care

Brief summary of the best practice

The complexity of the situation of homeless people requires dignified, innovative, specialist, flexible and efficient responses. However, the resources offered to the homeless to help them overcome adversity often lack these qualities and are merely designed to cover their basic needs. They are not specialised, they are often institutionalised, they are expensive to run and maintain, and the neighbouring community often rejects them.

The Carmen Sacristán Centre, in operation since October 2011, is an avant-garde project that has been designed with a view to blazing a trail in terms of the future management of resources for the homeless. It was conceived as a real home for the homeless, both in terms of the image it projects and its purpose. Maximum flexibility has been applied in the shaping of residential units and the number of places available; it can be adapted to provide specialist care where needed; it focuses on optimising resources and keeping operational and maintenance costs to a minimum; it is efficient and has been designed to merge with its surroundings. The combination of these qualities has resulted in a resource that is unique in Spain and doubtless internationally.

In summary, the main distinguishing elements of this centre are: the architectural concept; flexible specialisation (effective and efficient service) and meeting hitherto undetected needs (a new approach to problems that require new solutions, such as the concept of social incapacity or social dependence, problems and pathologies that go hand-in-hand with situations of social exclusion and that require specific treatment).

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The Project addresses different life-domains. Among the most important are the following:

Housing: The Project is based on the idea of ‘the new neighbours’. It actively addresses neighbourhoods’ usual rejection of centres that deal with social problems by replacing this negative outlook with a new relational concept. The 40 homeless people residing in the centre purchase from neighbourhood stores and use neighbourhood services. Moreover, the project incorporates the family of the homeless people (if they have a relationship with them) and stimulates the participation of social volunteers in the activities of the centre. Activities can be proposed by both the homeless people and the neighbours.

Health Development: The Project provides a house to homeless people where they can rest in a stable environment, recover and follow the medical treatment they need. In addition, when they suffer from a serious illness which prevents them from undertaking their normal daily activities, the project provides a team of assistants. The project also teaches homeless people how and where they can apply for adequate medical assistance.

Social Development: During the period of recovery, the project’s social assistants define a social itinerary, that prevents the homeless from returning to live on the streets after their time in the centre. It focuses on the improvement of social skills and access to the social and medical rights necessary to live an independent life.

The coordination between parties is established in two phases:

1. The first step is to create the required cooperation between social and health services and establish a social and a health report for the person. This means that social and health services have to look at the homeless people from a holistic perspective.
2. Secondly, once the homeless people enter the centre, the focus is on stimulating awareness of the social and health services they can use. The goal is not to replace social and health resources, but to ensure equal access of homeless people to social and health resources and services they are entitled to.

In summary, the centre works on health education and promoting collaboration between public networks in order to ensure equal access to social and healthcare services for homeless people.

Why is this a best practice?

In addition to covering special situations and undetected necessities, this new approach has demonstrated that at the end of their stay, the majority of people have improved their health situation, are better informed about their illness, have better access to medical services and have a housing alternative. Furthermore, it is the only project in the region of Madrid that offers a specialised response to homeless people who are in a period of recovery, or suffering from a chronic illness.

Social and health services, in general, must be used when necessary and for their specific aim. In this sense, the project ensures that homeless people are not in an emergency shelter longer than necessary. Also, it reduces the use of emergency medical services (which are more expensive) and increases the use of ambulatory services (which are cheaper).

Improving social skills is one of the best ways to combat poverty and social exclusion. For this reason the project is focused on strengthening the social skills of the homeless people, which helps them to improve their social situation (better housing situation, access to the Basic Guaranteed Income (RMI), etc.). The objective of this approach is to prevent homeless people from returning to the streets.

Key message

It is essential to create and develop programs that offer adequate assistance and consider the specific needs of homeless people who suffer from illnesses. This contributes to solving the situation instead of only managing it.

Further relevant information

https://www.raisfundacion.org/es/informate/noticias_y_eventos/el-centro-carmen-sacrist%C3%A1n-seleccionado-como-buena-pr%C3%A1ctica-europea

“
It is essential to create and develop programs that offer adequate assistance and consider the specific needs of homeless people who suffer from illnesses
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Development of programmes for the improvement of employment opportunities for people subject to or at risk of social exclusion

Brief summary of the best practice

Since 2008 and in the context of the employment service's (SEF) operative programmes for 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, Murcia's autonomous government, through Murcia's Institute of Social Action, has been calling for grants aimed at the development of social and labour market integration programs and the improvement of employment opportunities for people subject to or at risk of social exclusion.

Their goal is to promote an integrated method that takes into consideration all the disadvantages that hamper the labour market integration of those vulnerable people, while promoting individual itineraries to enhance their employment opportunities.

IMAS has been trying to implement a working methodology that integrates all the social agents concerned in this process at the territorial, institutional and structural level by enabling communication, coordination and referral channels, as well as guaranteeing preferential treatment in those areas through the agreed protocols and agreements between the different agents.

Target group:

People subject to or at risk of social exclusion between 16 and 64 years of age living in the autonomous community of Murcia and belonging to one of the following groups:

- Teenagers;
- People with Roma origins;
- Convicted inmates and people with previous convictions;
- People with addiction problems;
- Victims of domestic violence or gender violence;
- People with a low basic income;
- Homeless people;
- People who practise or have practised prostitution;
- People in a vulnerable social situation.

Goal:

To promote, through the regional administration, a methodology that allows for the integration of programs to improve the employment opportunities of people subject to or at risk of social exclusion carried out by non-governmental organisations (within the framework of the Operative SEF programme of Murcia's regional community) and public social services at the regional, territorial, local or institutional level. This should lead to the establishment of networks and cooperation among all relevant agents in order to achieve the final goal of job placement for programme participants and more effective public services.

Parties involved:

- Specialised regional social services: IMAS
- Local/regional employment services: SEF
- Regional health services: regional health department
- Local social services: local social services centres
- Penitentiary administration
- Regional victims of violence services: CAVI
- Local victims of violence services: EMAVI
- Local development agencies
- Local emergency social services: SEMAS
- Non-governmental organisations

Method applied:

For the implementation of this methodology of comprehensive care, action is being taken simultaneously at two levels:

1. At the local, territorial or institutional level, through the creation of Coordination Commissions and Monitoring Programmes, in which all entities with responsibility for territorial issues, institutional issues or the performance of programmes are represented. Through them, the following has been encouraged: the participation of the municipal social services and/or public entities with responsibility for both the planning and the design of the programmes' actions and activities, the joint selection of participants, the flow of information between these parties, the necessary professional coordination, and the establishment of the tools needed to ensure the coordination functions properly.
2. At the regional level, by establishing protocols between public services, to ensure preferential treatment of the participants in the programmes so that they can access programmes and standard resources, especially with regard to public employment services.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

- The establishment of social care as the backbone of the programme, integrating social care carried out under the programme itself with that carried out by other public services.
- The incorporation of companies in the process (signing of practice agreements, etc.).

How are the various life-domains being addressed?

Actions orientated towards the different life-domains of the participants (education, health, justice, etc.) are included in the individual itineraries.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

Through the establishment of coordination and referral protocols between the different agents involved, the carrying out of coordination, and the setting up of Coordination and Programme Monitoring Commissions.

Why is this a best practice?

- It promotes looking at an individual situations from a comprehensive, effective and pre-established viewpoint.
- It guarantees the effectiveness of the public resources by avoiding duplication.
- It promotes preferential attention for the participants (vulnerable people) in the use of public resources.
- It raises the awareness of the different public agents about the needs of people who suffer from social exclusion and promotes using appropriate resources to help them.
- It promotes joint social responsibility.

What is known about the effectiveness?

- The programs are a specialised resource for people with specific needs characteristic of a situation of social exclusion. This targeted approach leads to more effective policies and better results.
- Specific needs have been accommodated in territorial areas without the use of public resources.
- 19% of all participants of the programme have been integrated into the labour market, are more actively seeking employment and have improved employment conditions.
- Inclusion into the education system (5%) is another of the targets accomplished.

Key message

Structural social disadvantages generated by society also require structural and comprehensive action to address them.



“ Structural social disadvantages generated by society also require structural and comprehensive action to address them **”**

Spain

Healthy education spaces

Brief summary of the best practice

Healthy Educational Spaces have been developed since 2013 and are aimed at the social inclusion of children between six and 14 who reside in the Extremadura region and live in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion. They offer a stable space during free time and summer holidays. Activities are carried out with a strong integrated character: attention to basic needs is combined with personal, social and skills development in the areas of health, social, education, leisure and family/community.

Target group

Children aged between six and 14. Participants are selected and referred by basic social services.

Goal

The social inclusion of children in the Extremadura region living in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Parties involved

Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, Regional Department of Health and Social Policy, Regional Department of Education and Employment, Spanish Red Cross, basic social services, and families of children

Method applied

Healthy Educational Spaces are developed during the summer holidays. They involve daily sessions from 9.30 to 15.00 in villages and towns with more than 5 000 inhabitants and in groups of 20 children living in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

What kind of activities have been developed?

- In the field of health: one-hour sessions about food, personal hygiene and healthy habits.
- In the social sphere: one-hour sessions focused on the development of personal and social skills.
- In the field of education: one-hour sessions with a focus on educational support and assistance in the process of acquiring educational skills.
- In the field of leisure and free time: activities focused on children's self-awareness and participation.
- At family and community level: through lectures and workshops focused on the children's environment.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

Healthy Educational Spaces respond to personal, family and community needs of children in the various areas of life, in a coordinated and synergistic manner.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

First of all, through monitoring and coordination between the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality and the Regional Department of Health and Social Policy.

Secondly, through monitoring and coordination during periodic meetings at technical level between the Regional Department of Health and Social Policy and those responsible for the entity that runs the programme (Spanish Red Cross).

Thirdly, monitoring and coordination takes place between the Spanish Red Cross workers responsible for each of the Healthy Educational Spaces in the territory.

This coordination and monitoring is reinforced by cooperation and collaboration with the Regional Department of Education and Employment and basic social services.

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about the effectiveness?

1 000 children participate every summer in Healthy Educational Spaces.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

- Integral development in different life-domains, through leisure activities and social skills development.
- The adoption of healthy habits and behaviour, through the empowerment of these children and the development of social skills.

Evaluations showed that:

- Families are either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall care received during the programme.
- Most are very satisfied with the quality of activities, the involvement of children, the quality of the lunch service and the quality of care for relatives.

Key message

The fight against poverty and social exclusion among children today is very important for the social inclusion and welfare of the society of tomorrow.

Further relevant information

News in pictures and video:

- <https://www.extremadura.com/noticias/2015/09/01/vergeles-clausura-los-32-espacios-saludables-de-la-region-donde-han-participado-mas-de-mil-ninos-en-riesgo-de-exclusion>
- <http://www.hoy.es/badajoz/201509/01/ninos-participado-espacios-educativos-20150901002124-v.html>
- <http://www.canalextrmadura.es/portada/actualidad/concluyen-los-espacios-educativos-saludables-con-la-atencion-1100-menores-en>

- <http://www.cruzrojaextremadura.org/noticias-extremadura/952-comienzan-los-espacios-deocio-saludables.html>

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The fight against poverty and social
exclusion among children today is
very important for the social
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of tomorrow”



Implementation of rights and quality of life model and the support methodology in social inclusion services of Gipuzkoa

Brief summary of the best practice

Since 2013, the regional network of secondary assistance for inclusion in Gipuzkoa (13,012 people assisted in 2015) has introduced the quality of life model (principal domains: physical, emotional and material well-being; interpersonal relationships; personal development; rights and self-determination) (Schallock & Verdugo, 2003) and the rights model, and the methodology of support-planning (Luckasson et al, 1992) and person-centred planning. A new service for the assessment of exclusion situations and a re-organisation of services that prioritise medium- and high-intensity support is going to be introduced.

Target group

People subject to or at risk of social exclusion.

Goal

Ensure the rights of, personalise assistance for, and improve the quality of life and social inclusion of these people and their families.

Parties involved

- Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa (Gipuzkoa County Council)
- Municipal social services
- 21 social non-profit associations

Method applied

Improvement of the needs analysis. Presentation to the 'Juntas Generales' (parliament) of Gipuzkoa.

Improved planning with the Social Services Map. Adjustment to the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, interinstitutional coordination, public-private collaboration with the non-profit social initiative, involvement of professionals and users. Public inspection to improve services.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

It is aimed at the formalisation and establishment of unique access to basic municipal social services (Decree 5/2014, under review), the creation of a new service to evaluate exclusion (according to Decree 185/2015 on the portfolio of services, and Decree 385/2013 on a technical evaluation instrument), the planning of assistance, the establishment of a professional reference, the provision of services and inclusion.

How are various life-domains being addressed?

The coherence between the above instruments has been analysed, and an Individual Assistance Plan is defined

based on the model and methodology to cover health, physical and social well-being, interpersonal relationships, personal development, rights and self-determination aspects. Based on the supporting methodology, it also covers the following areas: life in the community, human development, life at home, health and security, behaviour, social activities, training, employment and the protection and defence of rights.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

We have 33 cooperation agreements with non-profit associations worth EUR 20 million and contracts worth EUR 1.8 million. The information system is based on a unique personal history shared on our institution's extranet, which is used by our basic social services and partners. In 2015 the SIIS - Documentation and Studies Centre - carried out an analysis and an open seminar was held at Deusto University on the reorganisation of the network in cooperation with the different agents and partners. Funding has also been provided for an investigation by the EMAUS Foundation into the rights of people subject to exclusion.

Why is this a best practice?

It is a good practice because it will permit us to apply what is currently the most systematised model to social services, formalise it, and establish norms, guarantee equal access, personalise and improve assistance, and evaluate the outcomes both at individual level and at programme management level.

What is known about the effectiveness?

Currently the level of success and accomplishment of objectives is high (50% accomplishment and 20% partial accomplishment, approximately) but still highly affected by the previous model, which focused on job placement.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

1. The rights enshrined in the current legislation and equal access will be guaranteed.
2. Users and institutions will benefit from the continuity of the process.
3. It will allow for better evaluation of outcomes.
4. Interinstitutional and public-private collaborations will improve.

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

Alongside financial aid and the Basque System of Guaranteed Income this network will provide personalised social services with the aim of improving people's personal resources (social skills, abilities for managing their own lives and relational resources (emotional bonds, support,

social relationships and social involvement), as well as their basic autonomy in terms of training, employment, housing, etc.

Key message

It is essential to re-orientate the inclusion model to an approach which focuses on quality of life, support, personalisation and rights, rather than focusing on job placement only. This new approach guarantees the continuity of the process and personalised attention. To make this approach work, cooperation between institutions and with social agents is indispensable.

Further relevant information

- Second poverty and social exclusion survey:
<http://www.behagi.eus/files/informes/ii.epesg.2014.pdf>
- <http://www.behagi.eus>
- <http://www.gizartepolitika.eus>

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Food donation: an example of cooperation

Brief summary of the best practice

Leioia Catering and Hospitality College, a public vocational training centre under the Basque Government, delivers 32 complete meals every day to Lagun Artean, a social entity that distributes them among homeless people or anyone at great risk of social exclusion.

Target group

Homeless people using the Lagun Artean night shelter.

Goal

On the one hand to ensure good management of surplus food by reusing food leftovers, and on the other hand to bring homeless people daily meals.

Parties involved

Leioia Catering and Hospitality College, located at the campus of the Public University of the Basque Country, and Lagun Artean, a social entity working with homeless people.

Method applied

An agreement has been signed between the catering centre and the entity to establish a methodology for food processing, temperature control, transport conditions, delivery days and hours, etc.

Why is this a best practice?

The most interesting aspect of this experience is that over the last year or so the rest of the municipal hostels in Bilbao have established the same model and begun to serve dinner, using two employment enterprises: Peñaskal Foundation and Lapiko.

This initiative has also had a positive impact in the city of Bilbao. Since it became aware of this good practice, Bilbao City Council and the Hontza Cáritas Centre have incorporated dinner services into their homeless projects.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders? How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

32 homeless people have dinner every night, the main meal of the day for many of them, and food is no longer wasted.

Key message

Small-scale, local initiatives help to avoid food waste and food poverty.

Further relevant information

<http://www.lagun-artean.org/>



Pilot project for the social and occupational activation of young people at high risk of social exclusion

Brief summary of the best practice

The project is characterised by an integral approach aimed at achieving the social and occupational activation of young people, between 18 and 23 years of age, who are at high risk of social exclusion. These young people are out of education and outside the labour market and social system and ineligible for social assistance or in a situation of reduced assistance. Most of them are immigrants and many of them were under the care of the authorities while they were minors.

The project involves a holistic intervention that includes the following aspects:

- *Individual action plan.* Each participant drafts a training or vocational pathway and signs an individual action plan. During the whole activation process, the participants are provided with personal accompaniment and tailored guidance and support.
- *Job training process.* Professional training process and educational activities focused on core and essential skills, cultural aspects, practical work, real projects and job training experiences. The goal is to put in place mechanisms and crucial resources that may help them to develop effectively the necessary social and technical skills so as to become independent, responsible and self-reliant youngsters who participate in society and are able to access the labour market.
- *Economic Support.* The training process cannot be carried out without minimal financial support. Many of the young people involved in the project are living in provisional shelters or supervised temporary living arrangements. They need financial support for transport expenses, food baskets and access to stable accommodation or clothes.
- *Networking and cooperation.* Active collaboration and real networking between the different agencies and organisations (State Employment Agency, municipal services, civil society organisations and other agents) in order to guarantee the success of the social interventions and integration into the labour market.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The complex context and the different nature of the problems that the participants face require a whole range of personalised actions to be carried out within the diverse life-domains, as well as the implementation of a participatory and inclusive process that includes social and political actors.

The project looks at the individual's situation from a holistic perspective. The interventions are regular, flexible and continuous. The individual action plan includes assessments and activities relating to employment,

education, self-care and health, housing and administrative processes.

The project is based on constructive cooperation between different agents such as the Regional Employment Agency, municipal services, the State Employment Agency, civil society organisations, private companies, social services and other agents. The pathways and the action plan signed by the participants include access to the different services provided by all the social agents working in the area.

Why is this a best practice?

The project encompasses the following key aspects that ensure the effectiveness of the interventions and make it an example of good practice:

- The project puts into practice an integrated approach to fight poverty and social exclusion, considering the individual's situation from a holistic perspective. This approach entails the application of cross-cutting actions within the different life-domains and requires the participation of expert counsellors, and social and political actors.
- The proposed interventions incorporate the necessary support during all the stages of the process. Every participant works on the establishment of an individual action plan. This plan can be reviewed and any necessary adjustments can be made in the light of new situations, problems or circumstances. The intervention provides tailored guidance, permanent counselling during all stages of the process and a global and comprehensive approach to the personal situation.
- The essence of the project lies in active collaboration and cooperation between different agencies and organisations (the State Employment Agency, municipal services, civil society organisations and other agents) in order to guarantee the success of the social interventions, the participation of the youngsters as active citizens and their integration into the labour market.
- The intervention stimulates the empowerment of the participants and aims to help them become independent, responsible and self-reliant. The different training and counselling activities in each individual action plan encourage the youngsters' participation in society, access to the labour market and self-sufficiency so as to minimise dependence on institutional support once the process is concluded.

Key message

The effects of the global economic and financial crisis have had serious consequences for young people in general and even more severe consequences for youngsters who are at risk of social exclusion. Some young people are left out of the education system, the labour market and the social

system. Furthermore, they are ineligible for social assistance or the amount of assistance they receive is reduced. The interventions have to be accomplished in an integrated way, providing constant support, considering the individual's situation from a holistic perspective and implementing cross-cutting actions within the different life-domains. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the interventions, active collaboration and real networking between the different agencies and organisations is carried out.

Further relevant information

www.grupopenascal.com

“*The individual action plan includes assessments and activities relating to employment, education, self-care and health, housing and administrative processes*”

| 33 |



Brief summary of the best practice

Programme aimed at facilitating access to social housing for people in a situation of social exclusion.

The Housing Programme for Social Inclusion was implemented in Navarre (VI Programme) in 1999. It was promoted by the Housing Department and Social Affairs Department, with the aim of facilitating access to decent housing for groups excluded from standard access systems. The programme relied on the collaboration of a number of Social Initiative Entities responsible for providing support for social inclusion to the target group. The initial aim of the programme was for its beneficiaries to purchase second-hand housing. More than 800 houses had been purchased by 2008, allowing 3 500 people to benefit from the programme.

From 2008 onwards, Navarre suffered social changes as a result of the economic crisis, housing prices became excessive and access to bank credit became difficult for bank account holders. Therefore, the programme was re-orientated towards rental housing access.

| 34 |

Therefore, the VAIS Programme (Rental Housing for Social Incorporation) was implemented in 2009, operated by a public department (the Social Rights Department) in collaboration with the Housing Service of Navarre. Five social entities were authorised to implement social accompaniment actions in coordination with the basic social services.

The rental houses available through the programme are provided by the public company NASUVINSA, as well as other private real estate developers who hand over a share of their houses to the programme. Other units come from a 'rental housing market', a tool created by the Navarre Government that allows owners of empty houses to rent their house through NASUVINSA.

VAIS Programme houses are distributed throughout Pamplona city and province, and from 2001 onwards in Tudela (Navarre).

Target group

The beneficiaries receive the following:

- A subsidy for rent payments amounting to 90% of the total rental sum in the first year, 75% in the second and on a means-tested basis (family income) in the last three years.
- Integrated social assistance from the collaborating social entities for five years in coordination with the Primary Assistance Social Services.
- Programme users may also receive exceptional support from the Income Guarantee and Economic Subsidies Section for housing upgrades, basic equipment and supply provision such as water, gas and electricity.

The programme is targeted at family units in a situation of social exclusion who lack decent housing, face excessive housing costs, and are unable to access housing through the standard public social protection programmes or are in urgent need of a house.

A significant share of the people included in this group are affected by serious social exclusion (as well as a lack of sufficient economic resources), which prevents their participation in the free housing market and prevents them from purchasing a house through the different systems of protected access to housing. Likewise, general programmes developed to facilitate access to rented social housing have not been effective for those people, because they do not meet the basic requirements for inclusion in these programmes.

Goal

- To promote access to rental houses for disadvantaged population groups.
- To promote personal autonomy and social inclusion.

Parties involved

- Social Rights Department: Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service and Housing Service.
- Public Company NASUVINSA, under the Housing Service.
- Social Incorporation Team for housing issues (EISOVI), external service contracted by the Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service.
- Social Initiative Entities, subsidised by the Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service, have to register in the relevant register of the Social Rights Department and become acknowledged as a collaborating entity in the Housing Service Programme.
- Basic social services for primary assistance.

Method applied

Intervention is based on models for support and case management, with a focus on social accompaniment. Intervention varies in time and intensity, focuses on possibilities and capacities, and sets individual autonomy as a final goal. A case manager accompanies the beneficiary throughout the whole process and can refer him or her to other services.

A tool used by the Social Services in Navarra is the Agreement for Social and Labour Incorporation. The Agreement for Incorporation includes the following aspects:

- Personalised: personal and familial situations are not equal (intervention type, intensity, coordination, etc.) and intervention must be adapted to individual situations.

- Temporary: an intervention and accompaniment programme is established for five years.
- Work at and from home in coordination with other resources that involve: accompaniment at home, the design and development of educational programmes, household organisation, schooling follow-up, social abilities, housekeeping issues, conflict mediation, etc.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

It is an integrated programme aimed at social inclusion and normalisation in all intervention fields: finances, employment, education, healthcare and relationships. Therefore intervention plans are established in agreement with the families.

The goal of the housing programme is social inclusion. Since social exclusion is usually a result of different factors, intervention is not limited to ensuring housing access. The beneficiaries' participation in the programme involves signing a Social and Labour Intervention Agreement, which includes interventions in the fields of employment, education, social relations, training, childcare, etc. as parts of a social accompaniment process.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

The programme is promoted by the Housing Service and the Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service (both currently part of the Social Rights Department).

The programme management is a collaboration between five entities. The basic social services are involved in the whole process because all participants are facing social exclusion and thus are eligible for primary assistance from the basic social services. The process starts at the request of a user of the basic social services or one of the other social entities collaborating in the programme.

The social entity evaluates the exclusion situation and transfers the file, including all relevant documents and social information, to the Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service in order to confirm the social situation and the fulfilment of the requirements. If all requirements are fulfilled, the case is sent to the Housing Department. Here the requirements for access to the programme are checked and the case is transferred to the public company NASUVINSA .

Under the mediation of the Social Labour Incorporation Team of the Navarre Government, and jointly with the Public Housing Company NASUVINSA and the relevant collaborating entity that is responsible for follow-up, the most adequate housing for the person is sought, keeping in mind his/her family and social circumstances.

As soon as the rental contract is signed, the Social Initiative Entities start their social accompaniment work to help with settling in and environmental adaptation, as well as to ensure follow-up over the course of the contract,

which lasts for up to five years. Entities provide users of the VAIS Programme with at least the staff subsidised by the Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service, submitting periodic reports on adaptation and progress, and the development of the Social Incorporation Agreement signed by the user and the social entity. Coordination is key to the VAIS Programme because a number of different parties are involved, and to ensure effective interventions it is essential that they all play their assigned role. Periodic general coordination meetings are held. All entities collaborating on the programme attend the meetings in order to evaluate the programme implementation and make annual forecasts.

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about the effectiveness?

The success of VAIS Programme is the result of the coordination among the parties involved. The Housing Service and the Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service interacted successfully (they were different departments until 2015). However, both Services have maintained their specific competences, carrying out coordinated action rather than joint action. The Primary Assistance and Social Inclusion Service assesses social adequacy, grants subsidies and monitors social accompaniment and follow-up, and the Housing Service assesses housing adequacy and the fulfilment of economic requirements and is responsible for providing the necessary housing unit and economic benefits to the user. Since the start of the programme at least 800 families have purchased a house and 236 families have signed a rental contract.

Housing access and social accompaniment must be offered together, because social inclusion can be achieved by combining the two.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

- Improved housing conditions for families.
- Facilitation of better environmental conditions for children. The social inclusion of children as well as the improvement in their school performance is remarkable.
- Close monitoring of rent payments and housing costs is carried out.
- The employability of the active members of the family is improved and the labour market integration of adults is facilitated.
- Both physical and psychological healthcare is promoted.
- Better relationships at home and school are fostered.

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

Decent housing conditions are very important to promote community integration. A number of groups have special difficulties with access to housing. Having a house is a necessary prerequisite to work on other difficulties such as labour market integration, education of children, etc.

Key message

The programme makes access to decent housing possible for people and/or families in a situation of social and housing exclusion.

The social profitability of the whole programme is undeniable, increased impoverishment of families is avoided and social and housing exclusion situations are solved.

The integrated and participative character of the programme, which involves different government services, builds up coordination between those services and connects the various social agents dealing with social exclusion by addressing housing exclusion among different groups. Likewise, it provides integrated assistance through diverse services for programme participants. Thanks to this kind of programme, housing exclusion situations such as shanty houses, house trucks, etc., have disappeared.



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The integrated and participative character of the programme, which involves different government services, builds up coordination between those services and connects the various social agents dealing with social exclusion by addressing housing exclusion among different groups
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Supportive network of houses for families at risk of social exclusion

Brief summary of the best practice

The main objective of the programme is to promote the social inclusion of lonely individuals and families at risk of social exclusion who have problems related to residential exclusion due to insufficient income.

In the initial stage (2008-2009) Cajamurcia Foundation provided a park of 38 furnished and equipped houses to the Cepaim Foundation for the implementation of the programme. In the second stage (2010-2013) the programme started to develop in coordination with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality and with the social services of the 20 city councils where the houses are located. Furthermore, from this period on, many third sector organisations in villages where the houses are located, such as the Red Cross, Caritas or the RAIS Foundation, joined the programme.

The houses are spread over 20 villages: 10 in the region of Murcia and 10 in Valencia. Individuals or families who are participating in the programme receive a house whose rent does not exceed 30% of their net income. However, the intervention is not limited to only meeting people's housing needs. The programme uses a methodology based on three basic pillars:

1. Comprehensive intervention: from the time of diagnosis until the end of the intervention.
2. Networking with a territorial base: the intervention is carried out in coordination with all agents and social support resources in the territory where the houses are located. Civil society organisations such as neighbourhood associations, religious and cultural organisations, etc. are also included.
3. Permanent support for inclusion: people involved in the programme require the accompaniment of a professional for the development of certain procedures and activities agreed in their itinerary, which is reflected in an integration contract.

By 'integral social support' we refer to a methodology and social intervention strategy characterised by focusing on the structural factors that are at the root of situations of poverty and social exclusion. Important in this respect are proximity to the needs and demands of vulnerable people and families, the establishment of a relationship between individuals and professionals whereby professionals recognise the intrinsic capabilities of each individual, and a focus on activating people and putting them in charge of their own process of social inclusion.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

Individuals and families are put forward as beneficiaries by the Social Support Agents operating in the territories where the houses are located. In that first moment, and

after an initial interview, a 'social diagnosis' is made, identifying the accumulated problems related to social exclusion in the different vital life-domains of the person or family concerned: housing, income, employment, education, health, social and family relationships, community relations and social participation. At this stage, the candidate is actively involved in identifying his/her own problem. The next step is to determine the goals to be achieved, the resources to be used and the responsibilities assigned to each of the parties involved. From that moment, all the professionals involved in the intervention act as matchmakers facilitating access to the resources the candidate may need (job counselling centres, training and employment, family mediation services, health services, and so on). Periodically, we keep track by visiting homes in order to review compliance with the agreements and the achievement of goals. In addition, this monitoring is carried out in coordination between professionals from the Cepaim Foundation and other agents involved in the intervention.

Professionals from the Cepaim Foundation work in coordination with families and other professionals from different public and private resources in the territory where the houses are located, signing a cooperation agreement with the city council and other entities, and an integration contract with the families.

By working with families at risk of social exclusion and not only with migrant families, it is an innovative model of territorial (rather than sectorial) intervention. It is based on a community-centric approach and on the participation and empowerment of families.

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about the effectiveness? How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

One hundred percent of the people who have received one of the network's houses (195 since the launch of the programme) have solved their problems related to housing exclusion by substantially improving their material living conditions.

In addition, the adjustment of housing prices, plus the support offered to reduce the costs of power, gas and water by means of social bonds and special prices, have allowed the families an available net income to maintain an adequate standard of living.

One hundred percent of heads of households and people of working age who live alone have developed an itinerary for social and labour integration and have substantially improved their employability through training.

All children are attending school, and are closely monitored in coordination with education centres.

In all cases where problems related to mental health have been identified, monitoring has been carried out in coordination with the staff of social health centres. In addiction cases, work has also been done in coordination with the specialised social services .

The availability of social houses has allowed families to have an appropriate space for the maintenance of family ties and community relations (schools, health centres, associations, etc.). Furthermore, where necessary, intervention is carried out in coordination with specialised social services, the most common family mediation services, and care services for victims of gender-based violence.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

Financial institutions that offer housing obtain direct benefits by providing property through third-sector social work, as the Cajamurcia Foundation did with this programme, and indirect benefits through communication campaigns to make their social responsibility policy visible. Families get access to housing adjusted to their available income levels and benefit from the support and accompanying social measures offered by the Cepaim Foundation in coordination with other stakeholders, such as social services, primary care health centres and schools.

Families are active participants in the process, promoting self-esteem, motivation, recognition of abilities, and a sense of belonging to the area as basic conditions for the process of social and labour inclusion in the community.

Society obtains global benefits by reducing the proportion of people at risk of social exclusion, giving a community dimension to the intervention.

Public authorities and the third sector optimise the use of resources through proper coordination mechanisms, establishing synergies and working in regional and non-sectoral intervention networks.

Finally, the solidarity network of housing is a benchmark of sustainability since most of the economic resources used to develop the programme have come from the rent contributions paid by the people residing in the homes (besides the public authorities' contributions to the intervention model).

Key message

Supportive housing network, integral intervention, support, networking, homelessness.

Further relevant information

- <http://cepaim.org/que-hacemos-convivencia-social/vivienda/red-solidaria-de-viviendas-familias/>
- <http://www.laverdad.es/murcia/sociedad/201412/30/solidaria-viviendas-proporciona-hogar-20141230004930-v.html>

Multiannual plan against poverty and for social inclusion - 2013–2017

Brief summary of the best practice

The Multiannual Plan Against Poverty and for Social Inclusion was launched in 2013 and is now entering its final year. Its ambitious goals were all translated into practical measures supported by the whole government. All policies related to access to employment, health care, education, housing and family support now fully incorporate the need to address the needs of the most vulnerable. This plan targets the root causes of poverty: the non-use of rights, the lack of support or training, and seclusion when facing personal misfortune. It strengthens the public policies' role as a social shield, and it also offers renewed opportunities to those facing difficulties, providing them with second chances.

The increase in the poverty rate recorded between 2008 and 2012 has been stopped: the policies put in place have made it possible to limit the effects of the economic crisis for the most vulnerable households and avoid devastating situations for many of them. Worth noting is the progress made in emergency accommodation (more than 30 000 places since 2012) to provide a shelter to those who live on the street, together with aided labour contract measures that resulted in 450 000 people accessing employment in 2015. Since the plan entered its full-speed phase, approximately 2.6 billion additional euros are being spent every year to the benefit of 2.7 million of the most precarious households (about EUR 1 000 on average per year and per household by the end of 2017).

The level of poverty in our country has stabilised since 2012, but that should not hide that there is still a long way to go in the coming months. Poverty and inequality are still present in France. They particularly hit single-parent families, children, and long-term unemployed people, as well as a number of employees with limited incomes.

All the plan's measures have now been enforced or launched. In the coming year, they will be consolidated and their results will reach their full potential. Measures to support and train many long-term unemployed will be strengthened. The 'Activity Premium', which entered into force on 1 January 2016, will increase the purchasing power of millions of households, including young workers, whose wages are close to the legal minimum wage (SMIC). The effort to promote the access of all categories of the public to IT communication will be amplified so that new technologies are also a possibility for the most vulnerable – and not an additional barrier to accessing their rights and social inclusion. Social and family benefits will be reevaluated, consistently with previous commitments.

The plan will also benefit from territorial steering, based on the implementation of specific schemes for services to families at local level (at the scale of the 'département'

constituencies), as well as resident registration schemes and local plans improving the accessibility of services to the public.

Target group

In the framework of the EU 2020 strategy, the French poverty and exclusion reduction target is a 1.9 million decrease in the number of poor or excluded people between 2007 and 2020.

Goal

France's action in terms of poverty reduction was defined in the Multiannual Plan Against Poverty and for Social Inclusion adopted in 2013. The plan was updated by a Roadmap 2015-2017. The measures proposed in the plan aim to respond to social emergencies and to structure solidarity policy in the long term.

Involved parties

A lead ministerial department has been identified for each measure included in the plan, and a timeline has been defined. The strength of this plan is that it is devised and operated by all stakeholders: the national government, local authorities, CSOs, public social security services, business and labour organisations.

Method applied

Five major principles are embedded in the Multiannual Plan. They structure the new French approach to the fight against poverty and for social inclusion.

- The principle of objectivity: given the scale and diversity of poverty situations, we cannot continue to consider the poorer and vulnerable as a marginal minority, more or less responsible for their own situation.
- The principle of non-stigmatisation: there must be an end to the stigmatisation of modest households as lazy or dishonest. People living in poverty or precariousness want to find a way out; the purpose of social policies is to help them.
- The principle of participation by people experiencing poverty in the development and monitoring of public policies: people directly affected by social difficulties must have their say. This reinforces policy proposals thanks to their expertise.
- The principle of 'fair right': while acknowledging that welfare fraud is an issue, it is urgent to tackle the widespread phenomenon of non-recourse to social rights. The Government intends, through the notion of 'fair right', to ensure that all citizens receive what they are entitled to, no more, no less.
- The principle of de-compartmentalisation of social policies: solidarity is now mainstreamed in each segment of public action. The design and interdepartmental implementation of this plan illustrates this principle. On the ground, this goes hand

in hand with a change of practices, in the sense of better coordination between all stakeholders (public, voluntary and private) focusing on social support.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

The Multiannual Plan and the Roadmap 2015-2017 are designed around three areas of intervention that have been core to the objective of this plan since its inception:

- Preventing personal misfortune and disruptions;
- Supporting people facing difficulties;
- Bringing partnership action closer to territories and to people.

To extend and maintain the momentum of the plan's first two years, the Roadmap 2015-2017 embeds social action in a *consultation process* with government partners. This consultation mechanism has been implemented by means of *targeted thematic workshops*: the fight against child poverty/support to single-parent families, the prevention of disruptions in business for the working poor, the enhancement of the accessibility and coordination of food aid, the connection between registered residence and accommodation, the improvement of the plan's territorial monitoring (including in rural and overseas areas), and an exchange with the *National Council of Policies against Poverty and Social Exclusion (CNLE)*¹ which allowed for the full involvement of people living in poverty and insecurity.

How is the cooperation and coordination between the parties organised?

As regards the Multiannual Plan's steering, evaluation and regionalisation, the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Fight against Exclusion (CILE) meets once a year, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, to take stock of the scalability and impact of the plan's measures and to decide on possible shifts. There is constant consultation with all stakeholders affected by the plan, in particular with the National Council of Policies Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (CNLE) and the Inter-ministerial Delegate for Accommodation and Access to Housing.

At the same time, the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs (IGAS) has been tasked with a twofold mission:

- The definition of a strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of adopted measures and ministerial roadmaps, based on a set of balanced indicators.

- The development of a methodology for the territorial implementation of the plan, so that it becomes a subject of debate across the country.

This mission involves monitoring the plan throughout its duration, and its outputs will be presented to the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Fight against Exclusion (CILE).

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about the effectiveness?

The share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (ARPE indicator) decreased in France between 2011 and 2013. Although it increased by 0.4 percentage points in 2014 to return to the 2008-2009 level, it remains nevertheless 0.5 points under its 2007 level. Based on 2014 figures, it is also well below the European average (18.5% against 24.5%).

In 2013, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), the number of people with very low resources (below the threshold of 50% of the median standard of living) decreased by 3%. The number of workers aged over 18 under the 60% poverty threshold fell by almost 5%. The number of children and youth under 18 whose standard of living is below the 60% poverty threshold fell by around 3%. The median standard of living of unemployed persons increased by 2.3%, and their poverty rate decreased by 1.4 points.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

As stressed by the Multiannual Plan's evaluation report, the French social protection system has played a 'social buffer' role since 2008. The Government has notably made several significant re-evaluations of social minimums and benefits for the households more exposed to poverty in order to preserve their position, and to combat inequalities. This effort to help the most vulnerable families will be continued until 2017.

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

France's social culture has resulted in the development of many instruments to fight all kinds of poverty, in particular by using social benefits in different areas such as access to housing or health. The Multiannual Plan is the result of a unique joint effort bringing together all the stakeholders in solidarity policies: State services, local authorities, CSOs, social partners, researchers and experts, as well as the people living in poverty themselves. It has made a number of advances possible and created a series of new actions, in particular with regard to supporting people in poverty.

¹ The CNLE is an advisory body responsible for a number of social policy areas. It is formed of representatives of the Government and the Parliament, of local authorities, of the trade unions and of various other agencies and stakeholders specialised in tackling social exclusion.

Key message

Among the poorest are the unemployed, young people and single parents. Poverty's multidimensional characteristics require an intergovernmental approach to public policies for social inclusion through occupational integration and aid compensating for risks and encouraging people to return to autonomy.

This policy goes beyond the fight against poverty and is part of a *general objective of protection of the French social model*, of which wealth redistribution is a component. Despite the dramatic economic environment and the need to control social spending, solidarity remains a powerful resource.

Further relevant information

<http://social-sante.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/lutte-contre-la-pauvrete-et-pour-l-inclusion-sociale/>



“Poverty’s multidimensional characteristics require an intergovernmental approach to public policies for social inclusion through occupational integration and aid compensating for risks and encouraging people to return to autonomy”

Brief summary of the best practice

Social Cooperative Humana Nova Čakovec is one of a series of social enterprises that the Autonomous Centre (ACT) has been running and developing in the county of Međimurje. This enterprise encourages the employment of the disabled and other socially excluded persons through the production and sale of quality and innovative textile products made from ecological and recycled fabrics for the needs of the domestic and the foreign markets.

It is a socially responsible company, which in its operation pays great attention to addressing social, environmental and economic problems. Humana Nova aims to integrate disadvantaged and disabled people into the labour market. A specific focus has also been given to vocational training, social support and mentoring. Its approach aims to create conditions for the social inclusion of people with multiple and complex needs, taking into account the individual differences of every person. Humana Nova collected 600 000 kg of clothing and footwear by the end of June 2015. This has had a direct impact on the reduction of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere but also on the use of fertilizers and pesticides in the production of raw materials for the manufacture of textiles.

Beyond this positive ecological impact, one of the most important goals of the social cooperative Humana Nova is to encourage the employment of people with disabilities and other socially excluded people. Today, they have 14 employees: four persons with disabilities, five long-term unemployed middle-aged women, one highly educated young textile designer in first-time employment, one long-term unemployed middle-aged man, two long-term unemployed young mothers and a manager who is an educated economist. Employees of Humana Nova have experience with long-term social exclusion. This venture enabled their integration into work and so contributed to an increase in their economic activities, a strengthening of their social networks, and an increase in their personal well-being and sense of usefulness to society.

The project also has a positive impact on the overall local community where it is located. Through donations, the cooperative has helped more than 70 families in Međimurje County and its surrounding areas. Of course, the wider community supports the work of the social cooperative Humana Nova through financial and material support – for instance, many people donate their old clothes – and this also has a positive impact on environmental protection.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The work of the cooperative has actively and directly contributed to establishing a tolerant society and helped the socially excluded persons and their families to enhance their self-reliance and quality of life. The values of the cooperative rely, among other things, on togetherness, cooperation, mutuality and sustainability. The specific nature of Humana Nova derives from the fact that its members are associations and individuals that have recognised the value of the incentives and potential of the process of engaging the disabled and other socially excluded persons into the production of the high-quality and widely demanded products.

Why is this a best practice?

The cooperative is focused on the labour market integration of people who have been out of work for a long time. With its activities the cooperative encourages social cohesion, and contributes to the growth and development of social capital. Moreover, the project has been effective in the sense that the cooperative has a great impact on the economic and social problems in the community. It helps vulnerable people to meet their needs and thus contributes to reducing poverty and social exclusion. Besides supporting many families, the cooperative also supports 20 local organisations.

Key message

This is an example of a socially responsible cooperative which pays particular attention to addressing social, environmental and economic problems.

Further relevant information

<http://www.humananova.org/en/news/o/60/the-impact-of-social-cooperative-humana-nova-in-2013th-year/>

National guidelines for the fight against adult exclusion – housing first approach

Brief summary of the best practice

The National Guidelines summarise the knowledge and good practices which are already widespread in many parts of the country and promote a strong commitment by institutions and stakeholders to fight homelessness in a systematic, innovative, strategic and integrated way. The best practice is twofold:

1. The first part is the Guidelines themselves, which contribute to streamlining the different competencies and approaches at national, regional and local level;
2. The second part is the different practices.

Target group:

1. National, regional and local institutions and stakeholders responsible for issues of poverty and social exclusion;
2. Homeless people (asylum seekers, refugees, young people, older people, people affected by health and psychological problems).

Goal:

1. Streamlining and integrating different practices, interventions and approaches, and supporting social innovation and a holistic strategic policy model;
2. Depending upon specific projects, effectively coordinating and activating all the relevant professions, resources and services in order to improve and overcome the state of homelessness.

Parties involved:

1. National, regional and local government;
2. Mainly local stakeholders, i.e. private property owners, real estate agencies, religious organisations, churches, volunteers, lawyers, local health services, and civil society.

Method applied:

1. Discussion, widespread participation, agreement and implementation of National Guidelines;
2. Recommendations in order to make interventions more effective, holistic and socially innovative.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

1. Differentiation of the relevant categories of homeless people and their respective life-domains within the Guidelines, in order to better target the real needs;
2. Cooperation between different parties and stakeholders.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

1. Compliance with the agreed Guidelines and especially the recommendations;
2. Depending upon projects, exchange of information between different stakeholders and creation of different networks. Determination of more effective working methods for PES counsellors (intensified consultations, longer duration of active labour market measures, job search activities such as a job search diary, information exchange by e-mail and SMS) and other service providers; cooperation with the local municipality.

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about the effectiveness?

1. Due to the recent implementation of the Guidelines major effectiveness can only be assumed at this point, but it is expected since the Guidelines themselves, agreed at all institutional levels, will lead to better sustainability and integration.
2. The projects based on the guidelines have proven to be effective, e.g. in the case of Housing First.

In the short term EUR 100 million will be assigned at the local level for the practical implementation the Guidelines, with the aim of making them an essential part of social interventions.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

1+2: Better knowledge thanks to information sharing between all actors involved, better design and focus of interventions, lower costs, overcoming of traditional barriers.

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

1+2: Social measures are targeted more effectively, necessary resources are more widely distributed, traditional barriers are overcome in view of the fact that homelessness is caused by multiple factors.

Key message

Streamlining social innovations by having all parties participate and agree.

Further relevant information

<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/pagine/indagine-sulle-persone-senza-dimora-e-linee-di-indirizzo-per-migliorare-le-politiche-sociali.aspx/>

Intensified action plan for the long-term unemployed

Brief summary of the best practice

The pilot project for the long-term unemployed was carried out in 2013 and 2014, providing more personalised and targeted support to facilitate integration into the labour market. It was implemented in all regions in Latvia. It was a joint initiative of the State Employment Agency (Latvian PES) and local municipalities.

The pilot project introduced an integrated approach to long-term unemployment, with a particular focus on more intensive cooperation with the local government social services.

A key aim was to deal with obstacles (social, knowledge, economic, health, etc.) preventing the long-term unemployed from re-entering and staying in the labour market, given that the long-term unemployed face an increased risk of experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

PES counsellors, assisted by career guidance consultants, worked intensively and individually with at least ten long-term unemployed each, of whom at least 40 % were also clients of the municipal social services.

The pilot project employed an integrated and active inclusion approach, incorporating the following elements:

- an assessment of individual obstacles to employment (low number of vacancies in a region, health status, availability and cost of transport, care responsibilities etc.);
- an in-depth assessment of the unemployment period and previous work experience with a particular focus on those registered since 1993 and the clients of municipal social services;
- an individual action plan, including more individually-tailored activities provided by various service providers and intensified support (more frequent visits to the State Employment Agency, close cooperation between social and State Employment Agency counsellors, involvement of additional experts);
- the development of more effective working methods for PES counsellors (intensified consultations, longer duration of active labour market measures, job search activities such as a job search diary, information exchange – e-mail, SMS) and other service providers, cooperation with the local municipality.

Why is this a best practice?

The pilot project has proved successful for several reasons:

1. *Individual approach:* an assessment of individual obstacles to employment was carried out to identify additional services which should be made available (social services, rehabilitation, health care, availability of transport, care services for children or relatives, active labour market policy measures, etc.).
2. *Sectoral cooperation:* active collaboration between the State Employment Agency and municipal services, involving other service providers and NGOs in different sectors according to the needs of the person (education, health care, social care etc.). Individual action plans were drafted jointly by the State Employment Agency and municipal services, defining the scope of each service provider's intervention for the target groups. Shared responsibility and the diverse character of the measures ensure the sustainability of interventions and impact the person's employability.
3. *Participation:* 36 % of participants of the pilot project found a job, compared to an average of 15 % for the long-term unemployed. Individual and intensified work with the long-term unemployed increased their motivation and improved willingness to socialise.

Individual work is successful if the obstacles preventing integration into the labour market can be addressed by the State Employment Agency or the local social services.

The need for additional motivational support was identified. The integrated approach during the pilot project was later incorporated into the regular working methods of the State Employment Agency and a targeted programme for the long-term unemployed, focusing on motivational support, was launched at the end of 2015.

Key message

The long-term unemployed are not a homogenous group and they require individual assistance. Obstacles to participation in the labour market must be tackled in an integrated way. In some cases, motivational support is crucial.

Further relevant information

- <http://www.lm.gov.lv>
- <http://www.nva.gov.lv>
- A comprehensive study on long-term unemployment was carried out in 2012 and 2015, among other things identifying the groups of people furthest away from the labour market with similar characteristics/obstacles: <http://www.lm.gov.lv/text/2537>

Brief summary of the best practice

The Social Protection Information System (SPIS) operates under the provisions of the 2005 agreement on strategic cooperation between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and municipalities. The goal is to collect, provide and summarise information on social assistance (social services, benefits in cash, compensations and social allowances) provided to the population, supply statistical information about municipalities, and strengthen the cooperation between state authorities and municipalities in providing social assistance.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour summarises the social support data, examines quantitative and qualitative differences between municipalities and ensures that the results of this analysis are available to municipalities on the official website of the Ministry. This enables individual municipalities to propose measures for improving the provision of social support. Moreover, municipalities use the SPIS to organise social support and analyse the results of this support, and compare their results with other municipalities.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

This is an integrated approach because it connects various databases containing information on the provision of social support, making them available from one system, and because the SPIS is used to provide social services to all population groups, social assistance to low-income households, and social support to students and people with disabilities.

The Ministry coordinates and develops the Social Protection Information System. The development of the SPIS was initiated by the Ministry in order to implement the new objectives of social and employment policy (e.g. housing, NEETs), but the system is continually added to and expanded by the municipalities themselves as they register social assistance and social services. The possibility to collect and check data encourages municipality employees to provide comprehensive information on the provision of social support. Various public or private institutions also use the SPIS when their activities are related to information that can be directly obtained from the SPIS. Currently, the SPIS is connected to more than 20 information systems or registries (such as the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, the State Social Insurance Fund, the State Tax Inspectorate, etc.) to collect necessary information about social assistance recipients.

Why is this a best practice?

The effectiveness of the SPIS results from the fact that it allows users to enter, store and analyse/use data from multiple perspectives and at several levels of detail. The possibility of data exchange with other registers significantly simplifies the process of applying for social assistance, enabling a one-stop shop and at the same time improving the targeted nature and effectiveness of the provision of social assistance. The effectiveness of the SPIS can also be attributed to the fact that this system is used by multiple users directly so there is no need for them to collect/prepare information independently.

The increasing number of new SPIS users makes it possible for different users to submit or use information related to the implementation of social policy. The latest information about various cash benefits, social services, support for students, protection of children's rights, identification of special needs for people with disabilities, etc. can be found in this system.

When implementing policies aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion, it is necessary to have detailed information about the recipients of social support, their family composition, and place of residence. The SPIS makes it possible to access the latest information about social changes at the local level. Reliable and dynamically-updated information on social support in 60 municipalities can be used in the preparation of draft legislation and in the monitoring of the provision of social support from multidimensional aspects (by municipalities, family composition, income of recipients, etc.). By using the SPIS, municipalities can speed up the provision of social assistance and social benefits. All documents can be prepared using information from various databases connected to the SPIS, so recipients of social assistance do not have to contact the relevant authorities themselves.

Key message

The effective implementation of social protection policies requires a reliable database on social assistance and social services at the local level.

Further relevant information

<http://www.spis.lt/>

Luxembourg

National Service for Social Action (NSSA) – implementation of the minimum income scheme

Brief summary of the best practice

This best practice is about a national Minimum Income Scheme (MIS) that acknowledges the multidimensional nature of poverty and recognises the need for active inclusion policy responses, and thus implements, under the responsibility of the legally competent NSSA and in cooperation with relevant public and private stakeholders, comprehensive actions addressing problems that range from income poverty to social exclusion.

- Target group: MIS beneficiaries aged 25-64
- Goal: to provide tailored access to all necessary resources and services
- Parties involved: NSSA, regional NSSA antennae, Social Support Services and PES
- Method applied: active inclusion approach

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

- Holistic perspective when tailoring personalised and comprehensive
 - 'paths to employment' by activation
 - 'social paths' for beneficiaries facing complex obstacles to activation
→ MI Act – Article 8
- On-demand right to preventive and curative social service support in all life-domains
→ MI Act – Article 16

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

- Pivotal NSSA function regarding social support: legal mission to coordinate stakeholder action
→ MI Act – Article 16
- Regarding NSSA and PES: the two agencies are no longer operated in silo mode

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about the effectiveness?

- Activation rate: 59.1 % (31.12.2015)
- Social support files closed in 2015 due to the achievement of all objectives: 43 %

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

- Social support level: conditions for transparency of actions met due to the close surveillance that the NSSA is permitted
- NSSA-PES level: connection of expertise
- Beneficiary level: 'For them and with them' (the personalised 'paths' are laid down in integration agreements drawn up jointly by beneficiaries and social workers)

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

- By target group empowerment

Key message

For active inclusion to work as an integrated approach to combating poverty and social exclusion, its three strands have to be balanced.

Further relevant information

<http://www.snas.public.lu>

| 46 |



“ For active inclusion to work as an integrated approach to combating poverty and social exclusion, its three strands have to be balanced ”

'Chance for the children' - integrated regional programmes for the improvement of the opportunities of children and their families for social inclusion

Brief summary of the best practice

The fundamental objective of the programmes is to reduce and eradicate poverty, particularly child poverty, and including the proliferation and intergenerational transmission of poverty. The objective is in line with the objectives laid down in government programmes such as the 'Be Better for the Children' National Strategy, the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy and its Action Plan.

According to the reports issued by the regions, 80 267 people took part in the services provided by the programmes; 54 379 of them were aged 0-17. Based on monitoring data, 63 % of children participating in the programme were disadvantaged (25 %) or multiply disadvantaged (38 %).

The programme called 'Chance for the Children' provided opportunities for participants in 23 of the most disadvantaged micro-regions between 2007-2013, focusing on improving the conditions of disadvantaged families, increasing children's chances and establishing long-term strategic planning methods by developing local service providers and cooperation.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The programmes form a basis for specialised services in different life-domains, such as health care or education, in disadvantaged communities and groups of communities in micro-regions.

As a result, there are now many professionals in the micro-regions who were not there before or who lacked sufficient resources to do their job, such as speech therapists, physiotherapists and paediatricians able to travel between communities, as well as other professionals such as psychologists, social workers both in schools and in the field, auxiliary staff, supervision staff, etc. With the help of the programmes, children were able to take part in activities such as swimming instruction, camping, day care, therapeutic horse riding, salt therapy, etc.

Providing programmes and services for disadvantaged children is of crucial importance for many reasons. For example, such programmes make it possible for disadvantaged children to take part in extracurricular education processes. Another example is the so-called 'children house', which filled the gap in terms of early development in child care. The houses were refurbished and financed by the European Regional Development Fund. Their maintenance is ensured by Hungarian financial resources. Another example is a new and innovative form

of service focused on accessibility in a geographical sense in the field of paediatrics and remedial teaching, by increasing travel capacity between communities. This service was also established with the help of EU financial support and its maintenance will subsequently be ensured by the Hungarian budget.

Opportunities for community development and social networking are provided in all micro-regions. We have community centres and premises where local professionals progressively create new activities based on current or previous projects (e.g. Nagyecsed). One of the original purposes of the 'Chance for the Children' programme was to create multifunctional premises that are able to strengthen, build on and preserve the local community. It should also be noted that the above-mentioned premises provide basic amenities for washing, laundry, cooking and eating. These amenities should be ensured in all multiply-disadvantaged communities due to the current deprived situation of inhabitants.

Why is this a best practice?

One of the main consequences of the 'Chance for the Children' programme has been a new attitude, namely a deep commitment by local professionals to child and family care.

The programme has also had a positive impact on the attitude of local decision-makers. The programme has drawn their attention to the severe limitations in the field of social services such as social and welfare services for children, health care and education. The programme has used its own tools to search for solutions to these severe limitations.

Further relevant information

<http://www.kormany.hu/hu/emberi-eroforrasok-miniszteriuma/szocialis-ugyekert-es-tarsadalmi-felzarkozasert-felelos-allamtitkarsag>

Brief summary of the best practice

Target group

The target group of the project comprised disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged, primarily Roma women aged between 18 and 55, who, in line with paragraph 13(1) of Act 179 of 2011, had declared their Roma ethnicity.

Goal

The basic aim of the project was to support the social inclusion and employment of Roma people, especially Roma women, facing social prejudice and labour market discrimination, providing them with education in social and child welfare professions and preparing them for employment in relevant institutions. The aim was to promote the entry into the labour market of unemployed and inactive Roma people, especially Roma women, through educational and other support programmes in social and child welfare institutions providing basic and special care. In this framework, it was important to involve target group members in close-the-gap education building on their previous schooling, as well as in training courses listed in the National Training Register which prepared them for employment in social and child welfare institutions providing basic and special care. A further aim was to sensitise social and child welfare institutions and diminish prejudice among those working in institutions providing basic and special care, especially against Roma people benefiting from their services.

Parties involved

Education and training aimed at obtaining relevant educational levels was provided by the István Türr Training and Research Institute, a background institution also implementing social close-the-gap programmes. Social and child welfare institutions and those who maintain them, as well as public educational institutions (kindergartens) and those who maintain them could apply for support for the employment of target group members with relevant educational qualifications.

Method applied

Target group members had to participate in a skills assessment, with the help of mentors and trainers. Based on the results of the assessment, individualised development plans were prepared to enhance their success in education. In the course of the programme, specific services were provided for participants, helping them to remain in the programme and successfully obtain the relevant educational level. As part of the programme, practical training and specific employment facilities were provided. The programme ensured supported employment for a period of 6-12 months, as well as a further employment possibility for a minimum period of 1-3 months.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

For members of the target group, the programme ensured individualised development, the support of a mentor, and at the same time allowed them to acquire the necessary education and skills to enter the labour market. In parallel, it contributed to diminishing prejudice against the Roma women through ensuring practical training facilities and employment. Through providing employment for Roma women in the field of social and child welfare, in basic and specialist care, it contributed to strengthening their role within the family, increasing their self-knowledge and self-confidence, and last but not least helped them to have a secure income.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

The István Türr Training and Research Institute was responsible for the implementation of the programme, and in addition to providing training, mentorship and further professional support, it explored local regional employment possibilities as part of employment promotion, facilitated labour market mediation, and pursued activities aimed at preparing (sensitising) future employers for taking on those finishing their education. Coordination between members of the target group and employers was also provided by the István Türr Training and Research Institute.

Why is this a best practice?

As a result of the education provided, more than 1 000 Roma women obtained a professional qualification in social and child welfare and public education. Altogether approximately 10 000 people (the 1 107 women participating in the programme, plus their families, trainers, and those who were involved in the practical training or had working contacts with these women) experienced changes in their lives and everyday practices contributing to removing prejudices and discrimination.

Positive changes have also come about in the life of the families of women: the division of labour within the family has changed. In the course of the training, the women's personality went through a perceptible transformation: they became more open and self-confident and started taking more initiative. As reflected by the results, it can be stated that improvements in the life circumstances of families can be successfully enhanced by providing employment for women, through the implementation of projects aimed at strengthening social responsibility and ensuring support for the gaining of professional qualifications.

Due to the employment-related component of the project, in addition to those independently finding employment and obtaining a professional qualification, 159 employers

applied to provide supported employment for another 499 persons in the social and child welfare system for 6-12 months. We can say that the social roles of Roma women involved in the programme have become stronger.

Key message

One of the main causes of the vulnerable position of Roma women is their low educational level, which in turn leads to their low status in the labour market. It is of primary importance to improve their educational and labour market chances, beginning at the earliest possible age.

The 'A Chance for Women' programme exceeded its objectives not only with regard to planned indicators; in addition to its professional results, it empowered participants with specific experience and knowledge that can essentially contribute to the success of similar programmes.

“
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Brief summary of the best practice

Following the successful EU-funded LEAP pilot project, locally-based Family Resource Centres and Regional Development Centres were set up with the aim of providing a point of reference within the community through the provision of various forms of social support. These centres also aim to foster more inclusive communities through the empowerment and participation of disadvantaged groups, and collaborative networking among stakeholders with the aim of combating poverty and social exclusion.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

LEAP centres present a community one-stop shop offering multiple services, varying from information, professional advice and support in a number of areas, such as employment, access to training and child day care, to social work and community services with an outreach component for a comprehensive response to the needs of surrounding communities.

Through the LEAP project, a wide participation of local stakeholders was and is continuously promoted in order to ensure that individuals receive the necessary support and guidance to improve their success prospects. Moreover, a multi-disciplinary team consisting of service area leaders, community workers and social workers work together to help alleviate poverty and create an inclusive community.

Why is this a best practice?

Preliminary analysis² of the effectiveness of the social community teams practice suggests that the LEAP centres have led to greater cooperation with civil society and other grassroots organisations; a more outreach-oriented approach within deprived localities; and a more bottom-up approach to service provision, leading to a less bureaucratic and a more accessible structure which humanises and empowers service users. This facilitated access to services is seen to have overall led to greater efficiency and less duplication of work; improved sharing of information; mutual understanding; and a healthy sense of ownership amongst stakeholders and service users in general. It has also led to greater opportunities for cooperation between the government, civil society and private entities as well as across ministries. However, this evaluation has also identified a number of weaknesses and limitations, mainly arising from the lack of sufficient human resources, resulting in limited opportunities for collaborative work; disappointment arising from the heightened expectations; concerns regarding data-

protection issues; and reluctance shown by some professionals and other stakeholders towards the innovative changes. The evaluation also highlighted the need to further facilitate communication between agencies (St Jeanne Antide Foundation - SJAF, 2015).

The LEAP project aimed at facilitating the development of a cluster-based network system at both regional and local levels and fostering social cohesion and mobility in various vulnerable localities while contributing towards: i) increasing the female participation rate; ii) the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market, whilst addressing labour market segmentation; and iii) preserving and strengthening families through social welfare services, particularly the provision of support for the consolidation of families who are undergoing difficult situations.

The LEAP centres specifically aim to combat poverty and social exclusion through a grassroots outreach-oriented and integrated approach. Training and mobility are the main target issues of the LEAP project, which also aims to enhance employability prospects and thus improve the outcomes and quality of life of those who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The LEAP centres also aim to combat poverty and social exclusion through social welfare provision. Whilst the centres generally act as a single first entry point for social welfare service provision, through outreach-oriented work by community workers, contact with the LEAP centres may also take place following referral by other specific professionals.

Further relevant information

- <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1024&langId=en&newsId=2334&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news>
- <http://mfss.gov.mt/leap/Pages/default.aspx>

² Arising from a S.W.O.T. analysis of the LEAP (pilot) project carried out with a number of stakeholders (St Jeanne Antide Foundation - SJAF, 2015).

The Netherlands

Social community teams

Brief summary of the best practice

Fighting poverty, social exclusion and debt is a priority for the Dutch government. The ambition of the Dutch government is to attain a participatory, inclusive and self-sufficient society. It aims to realise this by stimulating as much as possible people's individual and communal responsibility, strength and self-reliance to find and create solutions.

The central government recently implemented a decentralisation process in the social domain, which resulted in the transfer of a large range of social services to municipalities. The rationale behind this is that municipalities are best able to offer tailor-made solutions in each individual case. They stand in direct contact with people, which allows them to understand and analyse someone's situation, needs and capacities and stimulate ownership, responsibility and this person's potential to find a sustainable solution. Besides empowering people and enhancing self-reliance, the goal of the decentralisation process is also to prevent people from 'falling through the cracks' or being missed in the system. As a result of the decentralisation process, tasks that were previously divided between different agencies have now become the (legal) responsibility of municipalities. Examples are youth care, community shelter, labour participation, poverty, social inclusion and debt relief. Municipalities are now predominantly in charge of the assessment procedure and have been granted – to a great extent – discretion over the type, level and duration of services to be provided in a given circumstance.

In response to the decentralisation process, many municipalities have set up 'Social Community Teams' (SCT) – teams consisting of a broad range of people from various disciplines such as social workers, family coaches, people with expertise in health care, education or debt relief. SCTs operate on a community level to provide and coordinate services to people who need help. Parties involved – either in a team or as a network of cooperative partners – are from both the public and private sector (such as civil society organisations).

A SCT functions as a single, central and easily approachable access point for the community regarding all sorts of questions – be it youth care, income, employment or health. There is no single blueprint for a SCT. It can be structured in various ways, and may evolve over time.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

A Social Community Team:

- looks at the situation of an individual or family experiencing poverty from a holistic perspective, from a lack of income to social exclusion;
- looks at the role of and consequences for other life-domains such as employment, (mental) health, housing and education;
- works in collaboration with the person or family concerned, rather than top-down;
- consists of a wide range of relevant public and private actors, who cooperate together to provide services in a coordinated way;
- includes multiple perspectives by making use of the expertise of professional experts, academia, the target group and 'experts by experience'.

Why is this a best practice?

- Poverty and debt-related problems are being signalled earlier as questions arising from different life-domains are discussed by a diverse team of professionals. For instance financial problems can come to light, although the initial contact was the result of a different type of problem;
- SCTs are flexible and rapidly deployable for a wide range of social questions or problems. As a result of this, waiting times can be reduced and an escalation of problems can more often be prevented;
- SCTs function as a central access point, which is coordinated by one case manager. As a result of this, clients do not have to repeat their situation multiple times to various professionals;
- Cooperation with civil society organisations enables broader and faster outreach to the previously 'invisible poor', as these organisations operate close to the people, conduct house visits and/or work at places visited by the target group (such as food banks which hand out food packages to deprived people/families);
- SCTs can contribute to a higher take-up of social benefits due to their large outreach;
- Cooperation with diverse local partners enables a broader and less bureaucratic supply of services and solutions. Retailers are for instance often eager to provide services in kind, sports facilities may offer free participation for poor children or financial institutions may encourage their employees to assist families with debts;
- The target group experiences SCTs as more approachable than official government institutions. As a result of this, they experience less barriers – such as shame or the feeling of being misunderstood – to (rapidly) asking for help;
- The engagement of 'experts by experience' enables SCTs to understand the target group better and reflect on their strategies;
- SCTs are able to stimulate empowerment. Because of their direct, personal and face-to-face contact with people, a stimulating relationship can be established to help someone to take back control and become less dependent on institutional support.

Key message

- SCTs can be an effective and sustainable instrument in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.
- The main advantages are flexibility, accessibility (one-stop shop), a large outreach, the availability of a wide range of expertise and an individual, tailor-made approach.

Further relevant information

- Peer Review on Social Community Teams:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2334&furtherNews=yes>
- English summary of inventory on SCTs:
<https://www.movisie.com/news/social-neighbourhood-teams-must-or-hype>

The Netherlands

Child Package

Brief summary of the best practice

Children who grow up in a household with a low (disposable) income are often at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This, in turn, hampers their opportunities to equally participate in social and cultural activities. Moreover, they are more likely to experience material deprivation. A Child Package is a combination of services that can be provided by municipalities. The package consists of various services, instruments, and goods especially for children such as winter clothes, a bicycle, membership of a sports club or music lessons. Depending on the individual situation of the child, one or more items of this package may be provided. The exact contents of the Child Package may differ depending on the municipality.

The goal of this Child Package is multifaceted:

- First of all it aims to offer children who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion the opportunity to equally participate and develop, by tackling material deprivation.
- A second goal is for municipalities to provide clear information about their child-specific policies by combining their (often) various services in one package.
- A third goal is to facilitate contact with the families involved after the initial application in order for municipalities to assess what the additional needs of the families may be and to jointly invest in sustainable solutions.

Most municipalities work with NGOs through which the application is made. The NGOs are often well known for their activities and projects for children in low-income families or neighbourhoods. These NGOs can tell children and parents about the Child Package and take care of the assessment of needs and arrange for the application at the municipality.

Some municipalities have set up an online tool through which families can apply. In yet other municipalities, the application is taken care of by members of a social community team – for instance a social worker at an elementary school.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

- A Child Package consists of provisions which stimulate the participation and development of children in various domains, such as education by providing vouchers for school material or homework assistance, cultural participation such as music classes or trips to museums, as well as basic needs such as warm winter clothes. The Child Package aims to fill in the gaps where the family – for financial reasons – cannot provide for the essential and equal development of children.

- A further integrated aspect is cooperation with NGOs, which often play a role in the promotion, application or provision of the services. The NGOs are able to assess the situation of the child using an integrated approach. When the child or the family needs more than the Child Package offers, a broader plan can be set up. As such the application can function as a first entry point.
- Many private organisations also play a role in the provision of the Child Package. Sports clubs may for instance co-finance membership, or funds may donate bicycles.

The municipality remains in charge from communication to provision, even though other stakeholders play an important role in the chain.

Why is this a best practice?

- It contributes to clear and concise information about the child-specific services which are offered by municipalities. This facilitates access and hence reaches a larger part of the target group (in a more timely manner).
- It strengthens local public-private cooperation while simultaneously taking care of effective coordination on a municipal level.
- Children are able to equally participate and develop, thereby minimising their risk of falling behind in comparison to their peers and increasing their future potential.
- It is tailor-made. Children are able to express their needs and items are provided depending on their individual situation. At the same time the assessment offers the opportunity to look at the broader picture of the child's life.

Key message

A tailor-made local approach to combating child poverty may also need a practical, hands-on approach – such as a focus on tackling material deprivation. In doing this, the local actors involved are simultaneously able to look at the broader picture of the child's life. Moreover, it is crucial not to underestimate the importance of a child's participation in sports and cultural activities, especially in order to prevent social exclusion.

Further relevant information

http://europa.eu/epic/countries/netherlands/index_en.htm

Brief summary of the best practice

In 2010, social assistance was reformed in Austria and the so-called means-tested minimum income scheme (*Bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung* - BMS) was implemented.

The reform had several objectives:

1. A greater standardisation of social assistance, which, in Austria, is a matter that falls within the competence of the federal states and is regulated by nine different federal state laws;
2. The introduction of minimum standards concerning benefit levels and eligibility criteria;
3. Stronger links between unemployed BMS recipients and the labour market;
4. The removal of access barriers;
5. Health insurance cover for recipients.

The Federation and the nine individual federal states were involved in the decision-making process. An agreement between the Federation and the federal states was negotiated, signed and published in the Austrian Federal Law Gazette. In this agreement, minimum standards were established, which must be maintained and may not be undercut. The federal states are however entitled to grant higher benefits or to provide more generous eligibility criteria.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The BMS combines a benefit that allows a decent living standard with a stronger link to the labour market for unemployed recipients and, for the first time, health insurance cover for those recipients who have not previously had access to health insurance.

Unemployed BMS recipients must register with the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) as seeking employment. Since the implementation of the BMS, the AMS has also opened its labour market policy instruments to BMS recipients who do not receive any unemployment insurance benefits from the AMS. At the same time, the AMS informs its clients about the BMS, which has led to an increase in public awareness and thus more applications for BMS benefits. The Social Welfare Offices in the federal states are entitled to access the updated data of the AMS on a daily basis, which enables them to ascertain whether the recipients are willing to work. In addition, the data of the AMS and the federal states are automatically synchronised each month.

If a BMS recipient is not covered by health insurance, they are registered with the health insurance institution, whereby the insurance contributions are borne by the respective federal state.

Why is this a best practice?

Even if the instrument of an agreement between the Federation and federal states constitutes a weaker legal position regarding enforcement (e.g. lack of compliance), it is nevertheless suitable to achieve a harmonisation of different federal laws.

The BMS established minimum standards, which may not be undercut. This has led to a uniform basic benefit amount in Austria. In principle, the only remaining differences concern the cover for housing costs due to specific regional circumstances.

The implementation of the BMS has, in particular, improved the situation of single parents, who are among those most affected by poverty. The comprehensive health insurance cover is unanimously regarded as a milestone of the BMS.

The automatic data synchronisation makes it easier for the Social Welfare Offices of the federal states to ascertain whether the recipients are willing to work. Even if the increase in applications for BMS benefits due to targeted information by the AMS cannot be quantified, the federal states all agree that this measure has considerably contributed to an increase in public awareness and a reduction in the non-take-up rate.

Studies demonstrate that BMS recipients are activated to a greater extent by the AMS than by the prior social assistance procedure. Furthermore, the implementation of the BMS has stimulated the development of certain labour market policy offers (e.g. the nationwide introduction of consulting and support institutions with integrated case-management).

Further relevant information

https://www.sozialministerium.at/site/Soziales_und_KonsumentInnen/Bedarfsorientierte_Mindestsicherung/Leistungen/

Poland

Social integration centres, and an initiative of the Barka Foundation for mutual help

Brief summary of the best practice

Born of the social upheaval that accompanied Poland's transition from communism to a market-based economy, the Barka Foundation has offered a second chance to many who were left behind in this process, such as the long-term unemployed, the homeless, the poor, addicts, ex-prisoners and the mentally disabled. The aim was to give them the professional and technical training, education levels, and social skills necessary to get a job and become members of mainstream society.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

Barka's activity is based on local initiatives bringing together programme participants and local authorities, civil society organisations, the private sector, housing associations, educational institutions and local labour offices. Through its integrated system of support for education and social entrepreneurship, the foundation has set up 100 partnerships in local communities. They form part of the social integration centre network, and function as vocational training institutions to help the long-term unemployed get back to work.

Why is this a best practice?

This system involves about 5 000 people each year (including people experiencing a personal crisis, informal groups of citizens, non-governmental organisations, and representatives of the government at national and local levels).

Further relevant information

<http://barka.org.pl/node/115>

“
Barka's activity is based on local initiatives bringing together programme participants and local authorities, civil society organisations, the private sector, housing associations, educational institutions and local labour offices
”



Brief summary of the best practice

The National Social Emergency Helpline (L NES), which can be accessed by dialling 144 free of charge, was launched in 2001 with the aim of providing tailored solutions for people in situations of imminent danger, namely victims of violence, children at risk, and the homeless. It is aimed at all residents of Portugal who find themselves in an unprotected or vulnerable situation and in need of social support. Among others, these people may be:

- victims of domestic violence;
- children and youngsters at risk or in danger;
- people in a situation of loss or lack of autonomy;
- older adults in vulnerable situations, such as facing abuse and neglect;
- the homeless.

By May 2016, over 3 million calls had been made to the 144 number and 65 012 people in urgent/emergency situations benefited from the L NES' intervention.

The L NES functions continuously and uninterrupted 24 hours a day. It is able to respond immediately in critical situations, in all districts throughout the country, including the autonomous regions (Azores and Madeira).

Calls are received at a call centre by a specialised team, mainly staffed by professional social workers and psychologists, who can:

- listen to the person with the request and assess the overall situation;
- provide accurate information and spot the significant agents/stakeholders;
- make referrals to social services that may include benefits and facilities such as social care, education, food subsidies, access to meals/products, health care, job training, emergency shelters, subsidised housing and community intervention.

This immediate and integrated response requires an analysis of the needs, resources and context of individuals and families in a vulnerable situation, as well as suggestions for and management of the best solutions available in the field of social protection. L NES' urgent/emergency action also includes a subsequent referral to social support, because continued social intervention is usually crucial to achieve social integration and personal autonomy.

Intervention generally comprises psychosocial support, orientation, mediation and referrals to the appropriate services. The helpline's professionals make sure that the person 'goes to the right place at the right time' through accurate assessment, resource mapping, a personalised report and prompt follow up.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

Due to a focus on the individual who is calling and requesting assistance, and a correct assessment of the emergency level, interventions will often target very different aspects such as material living conditions; profession/employment/income; health and autonomy; education/abilities; physical safety (personal and environmental); basic rights; and inner strengths/opportunities.

Involving and connecting all institutions and social protection services, L NES responds to urgent situations and guarantees an immediate, tailored and integrated intervention to individuals and families whose life situations call for urgent action from the social protection authorities and/or local solidarity resources.

Why is this a best practice?

With this measure, the concept of emergency, previously restricted to health issues, has become applicable to situations considered as an emergency from a 'social needs' point of view.

L NES aims to contribute to a range of quality services by providing individualised support tailored to the needs and resources of the citizen in a vulnerable situation. This also involves assessing and supporting the various needs of the individual and their family and facilitating access to the appropriate services available.

If further intervention is needed, L NES drafts a specific referral to the services appropriate to the updated situation after the emergency social intervention.

This approach ensures integrated and innovative practices and guarantees an immediate response to situations of social emergency, assuming that victims of domestic violence, neglected or mistreated children, elderly persons facing neglect and abuse and the homeless are priority groups.

Key message

People matter, and it's never too late to intervene. L NES' 'house rules' are:

- listen carefully;
- assess as thoroughly as possible;
- interact fast and pragmatically;
- record what is significant.

Further relevant information

- Helpline - <http://www4.seg-social.pt/linhas-de-apoio>
- Practical guide – L NES - <http://www4.seg-social.pt/documents/10152/14961/lnes>

Brief summary of the best practice

The Social Network Programme aims to encourage the emergence of integrated support networks operating locally, with the following objectives:

- To promote coordination and concerted action between public and private entities;
- To search for and promote the referrals which are best suited to individual situations and problems;
- To encourage sensible and fair provision of social facilities and services in municipalities;
- To increase and spread knowledge about real situations in municipalities and to encourage change and innovation in the implementation of policy measures and in local social intervention.

The Social Network is a structural programme and an essential tool in the process of local development, through the implementation of localised (municipality-based) strategic planning processes as a basis for social intervention. This methodology requires the use of reported social diagnostics, the implementation of local information systems and the organisation of social development plans.

The consolidation of these networks, which aim to be effective and dynamic partnerships, is embodied in the Local Social Action Committees (CLAS, on a municipal scale) and in the Parish Social Commissions (CSF), platforms for the planning and coordination of local social intervention, capable of mobilising all citizens.

A CLAS consists of the municipal council (and, in principle, is presided over by the mayor), parish councils, central public administration organisations established in the area and private non-profit entities. The CSF can comprise the parish councils (and, in principle, are presided over by their presidents), central public administration organisations established in the area, other private non-profit entities and representatives from social groups of importance in local intervention.

Although they do not directly intervene to resolve the problems of individuals and groups suffering, or at risk of suffering, poverty and social exclusion, they both boost and benefit from the organisation of local partnerships (among public and private entities) which, through planned actions and the coordination of resources, negotiate and find solutions for existing problems and needs and develop innovative projects.

In short, the basic philosophy of the Social Network Programme is based on the following essential principles: integration, coordination, participation, innovation, subsidiarity and gender equality.

This programme began in 2000 on an experimental basis covering 41 pilot municipalities and is presently (2016) extended to the whole country through:

- 28 Supra-municipal Platforms (PSC);
- 278 Local Councils for Social Action (CLAS);
- at least 45 municipalities with Parish or Inter-Parish Social Commissions (CSF/CSIF);
- 564 social diagnostics;
- 572 social development plans;
- 1 435 action plans;
- approximately 9 887 partner organisations registered in the CLAS database.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The Social Network Programme proposes a planning methodology in which the fundamental instruments are the joint needs analysis and the social development plan. The outcomes to be achieved are varied: the partnerships (and their respective internal rules) are set up as networks and consolidate their efforts through joint, co-ordinated and consensual action based on social needs analyses (and the respective reviews, if necessary), information systems, social development plans and feasible action plans, from a development perspective which includes the resolution of problems and needs, namely poverty and social exclusion.

The main results and the most innovative contributions made by the Social Network Programme are:

- Increased inter-institutional contacts, recognition and interaction in the respective territories where the Social Network already exists. Institutions which previously worked in isolation are now familiar with the work of their partners.
- Streamlining of social work. When institutions are familiar with each other's work, it is easy to route a problem and to achieve a co-ordinated resolution of existing problems and needs.
- Testing of co-ordination models between partners at local levels, encouraging a more transparent and open attitude on the part of institutions.
- Introduction of joint strategic planning processes for specific territories, in the social area.
- Better and more systematic knowledge of the municipalities, through territorially-based social needs analyses and improved circulation of information.
- The gradual introduction of joint strategic planning processes, as a condition for co-ordinating the efforts and resources of different actors, with a view to intervention geared to local development, capable of overcoming the sector-based perspectives of the traditional approach. This process also involves the implementation of effective information systems, permitting the production and updating of local needs analyses, and the dissemination of information to all the

institutions, bodies, individuals and social groups involved.

- Increased participation and mobilisation of the target groups of social intervention programmes and projects.

Why is this a best practice?

This Programme was chosen as an example of a good practice for the following reasons:

1. The Social Network Programme is unique in Portugal because it is strategic and integrating. It seeks to develop effective and dynamic partnerships which combine social intervention provided by different actors (public bodies and private charities), based on equality between these bodies and consensus on objectives, around the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and through a social development perspective which is able to counteract one-off interventions;
2. It promotes integrated, shared and systematic planning, seeking to generate synergies, skills and resources at local level (social needs analyses, information systems and social development plans);
3. It ensures greater effectiveness in the range of responses and social interventions in municipalities and parishes.

| 58 |

All these conditions are essential to the mainstreaming of social inclusion, which can only take place through the mobilisation of bodies/authorities at the different national, regional and local levels, arriving at a consensus in their respective fields of expertise; through appropriate development of co-ordination structures and procedures, requiring administrative (and organisational) adaptation in relation to the provision of services and meeting the needs of disadvantaged persons and social groups.

Further relevant information

- Site: <http://www4.seg-social.pt/rede-social>
- E-mail: redesocial@seg-social.pt



“*The Social Network Programme is unique in Portugal because it is strategic and integrating. It seeks to develop effective and dynamic partnerships which combine social intervention provided by different actors (public bodies and private charities)*”

Brief summary of the best practice

The Social Integration Income (RSI), implemented in 2003, replaces the *Rendimento Mínimo Garantido* (RMG), which was created by the Portuguese government in 1996. The RSI is aimed at individuals and families living in severe economic distress and in a potential or actual social exclusion situation. RSI's goal is to ensure that these people will have sufficient resources to cover their basic needs, while promoting their gradual social and professional integration. To achieve this purpose, RSI has two components: a monetary component (the cash benefit) and a social integration programme (a contract negotiated and agreed with the beneficiaries).

The Social Integration Income (RSI) is:

- A social protection measure created on the basis of a non-contributory system provided by the social security system;
- A means-tested scheme. As a first means-related condition, the monthly income should not exceed 60 times the Social Support Index (IAS). For calculation purposes, this income includes the claimant's/household income from work, other benefits and assets (e.g. bank deposits, income from movable assets or goods subject to registration). The household income and composition is then used to calculate the differential amount to be paid.

To obtain the benefit, the claimant and the household members must also accept the obligations stemming from the integration programme negotiated with the case manager within 60 days of submitting the claim. The requirements focus mainly on job search and training.

Registration with the competent job centre is also required. The obligations contained in the integration contract include accepting proposed jobs and vocational training; attending courses; participating in occupational programmes or other temporary activity programmes stimulating labour market integration or meeting social, community or environmental needs; undertaking professional counselling or training; taking steps regarding the prevention, treatment or rehabilitation of drug addiction; and incentives to take up a self-employed activity. In order to encourage labour market participation, only 80 % of income from work is taken into account during the first 12 months, and for those accepting job offers as part of the integration programme, 50 % of work income is disregarded for the same period.

The following categories of people are exempt from participating in the integration contract (insofar as active availability for professional integration is concerned) and from registering with the job centre: people with long-term or permanent incapacity for work; minors aged 16

and under or persons aged 65 or over; and carers of a family member. Also exempt from registering with the job centre are people who do not fulfil the conditions for working, as certified by the competent employment services.

Beneficiaries with RSI processing since the measure started *	Total	M	F
Beneficiaries (with processing) January 2004 to December 2015	1 034 154	534 032	500 122

* As RSI began in June 2003 and processing began in January 2004 with the beneficiaries of the *Rendimento Mínimo Garantido* (RMG), RSI was introduced in stages between 2004 and 2006.

Beneficiaries and households with RSI processing (Mainland Portugal 2012-2015) *	2012	2013	2014	2015
Beneficiaries	420 506	360 235	320 674	295 668
Households	160 358	148 107	139 557	134 161

* This does not include the Azores or Madeira

Beneficiaries with a social integration contract (Mainland Portugal 2012-2015) *	2012	2013	2014	2015
Beneficiaries with a social integration contract The number of beneficiaries with a social integration contract is greater than the number of beneficiaries with processing, since the integration contract may remain in force even after the allowance has ended.	214 089	220 269	232 135	200 192

* This does not include the Azores or Madeira

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The RSI integrates the principles of guaranteed rights and the promotion of social citizenship. This measure is intended, essentially, to guarantee a minimum income and access to conditions favourable to the integration of all citizens who are in a situation of economic need, based on the principle of national solidarity and regardless of past service contributions; to ensure the right to individuality in the fulfilment of a 'tailor-made' programme of integration, created jointly with the beneficiary and their family if applicable; and with regard to stakeholders and community resources, to guarantee follow-up during the course of the social integration programme; to involve

each individual, contextualised in their family, as an active subject of rights and duties in a direct relationship with the promotion of active solidarity policies.

Various strategies have been defined for the development of this measure:

- The defence of rights and the promotion of personal growth and family cohesion;
- To act on the multiple factors causing a lack of, or difficulty in achieving, social integration for individuals and/or families;
- To positively influence surrounding living conditions (by promoting the social development of the community) as a basic condition to personal socio-economic integration;
- To foster shared responsibility for the management of the measure between the state, civil society and beneficiaries, through a contractual commitment that includes identifying, creating and/or activating resources by all three parties;
- The territorialisation of the measure, enabling not only coordination of individuals' (and families') social integration with social development initiatives, but also creating mutual benefits through the sharing of services and goods, knowledge/wisdom and empowerment/practices between public and private organisations and between specialists and 'non specialist' citizens;
- To promote social cohesion around the shared recognition and acknowledgment of the ability to build on individual contributions to work towards a common purpose.

Why is this a best practice?

The RSI represents a new approach to administering social services, which consolidates the ideas of fundamental and guaranteed rights, negotiated social integration and decentralised, integrated and participative management.

A particularly innovative aspect of the measure is the 'contractualisation' and local co-ordination of integration programmes. This consists of an agreement between the social intervention professional/specialist appointed by the Local Monitoring Committee (CLA), the beneficiary and the respective household. This written and signed commitment comprises various actions of the integration programme, which have been previously discussed and reflect the achieved consensus. The integration agreement must also refer to the support to be granted; entities for monitoring purposes; and obligations accepted by each of the parties involved.

The integration agreement therefore marks the beginning of the negotiated integration programme and it aims to define the obligations and corresponding goals of the beneficiaries (terms of compliance with the integration

contract) and the performance obligations of the professionals/specialists and social services represented (financial support and monitoring of the individual integration). This is, effectively, a methodology that seeks to achieve enhanced responsibility of those involved - the beneficiaries and various social services - and reforms the monitoring approach by reinforcing individuals and families in their competence to take responsibility for their own futures, whereby the 'rules of the game' are predefined by a democratic dialogue.

In the context of the support provided to citizens, new formulae have emerged for social integration policies. The localised and micro-economic nature of the experiments so far undertaken have been expanded and, increasingly, translated into 'social integration agreements or contracts' as an indicator of service quality. This comes from the political choice to provide personalised support to individuals and families, by establishing proximity and ensuring that the citizen is fully committed to their own life project. In effect the 'social integration agreement', whether it is formally presented as a written contract or not, is a social intervention approach. It is not a contract in the strict legal sense, but rather synthesises the ambitions and potentials of the signatories towards personal, familial and social development.

Key message

People matter:

- Dignity is an incontestable human right;
- A minimum income is an important step to leading a normal life;
- Inclusive communities are a basic requirement for individual social integration;
- Acknowledging people's voices, ambitions, and abilities is a milestone of any social protection approach that respects human rights.

Further relevant information

- Social Security – Information Line: 300 502 502
- Social Security – official portal: www.seg-social.pt ; <http://www.seg-social.pt/rendimento-social-de-insercao>

LEGISLATION

- Decree Law No 1/2016, 6th January
- Decree Law No 13/2013, 25th January
- Ordinance No 257/2012, 27th August
- Law No 13/2003, 21th May republished by Statement of Rectification No 7/2003, 29th May, altered by Law No 45/2005, 29th August and Decree Law No 133/2012, 27th June
- Law No 4/2007, 16th January

Romania

Integrated Social Services and Vocational Training for People with Disabilities

Brief summary of the best practice

Target group: people with disabilities.

Goal: increasing the participation of people with disabilities on the labour market and their quality of life.

Parties involved: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly (Romania), ASSOC Baia Mare (Romania), Adapt Ability (The Netherlands), Phoenix Speran a, Mediaş (Romania).

Method applied: The project entitled 'Integrated social services and vocational training for people with disabilities', financed through the 2007-2013 ESF, designed and is implementing a system called CASPER for assessing the potential for employment of people with disabilities. The CASPER evaluation system is a complex tool for the assessment of people with disabilities aged 12-60 years in Romania. It is validated, recognised and approved by the Romanian Psychologists' College.

The tool generates a comprehensive assessment of the person with disabilities and his/her abilities, producing a profile of matches between person's abilities and skills and job requirements, recommending a range of jobs for each person assessed with this tool.

CASPER is built around two components:

1. Individual assessment (allows data to be processed for each participant: education, occupational status etc.), which is made of 24 cognitive ability tests, four personality assessments, one professional interest questionnaire, five emotion and behaviour assessment tests, and one battery of tests to assess manual dexterity (Ruward test battery: 19 tests);
2. Personnel assessment and selection, which consists of tools to describe and change a job's psychological requirements, cognitive ability tests, personality assessments, professional interest questionnaire, assessment of manual dexterity (Ruward test battery), matching/mediation instruments, and a participant's ranking for a job.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

The approach for people with disabilities was an integrated one, covering all domains, such as: educational, social, employment and medical. All the assistance plans drafted and implemented within the project covered all the important life domains.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

Each partner had a very well-defined area of intervention. A comparative study was made between the Romanian and Dutch systems for assisting people with disabilities. The know-how and good practices were developed through the training of specialists in Holland, an experience exchange for Romanian employees regarding social care in Holland, follow-up on using the CASPER assessment kit and also specialist training at national level.

Why is this a best practice?

What is known about its effectiveness?

As a result of this project, 40 people with disabilities have been employed on the open labour market, 100 people have been trained as specialists in vocational assessment for people with disabilities across the country and 140 people are now licensed to use the CASPER evaluation kit. In July 2013 CASPER caravan swept across Romania. The national campaign to raise public awareness on the abilities of people with disabilities 'knocked down walls to build bridges'. Following these actions in 2013 the project was awarded the 'Ability Promotes' prize at the National Gala of People with Disabilities.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

Evaluation, testing and giving advice using the CASPER instrument have made a significant contribution to improving the living conditions of people with disabilities and at the same time helped change the perception of society and employers towards people with disabilities. The project provided the CASPER evaluation kit nationwide, for use in DGASPCs and NGOs, increasing the chances of employment and professional orientation in relation to potential employment of people with disabilities in other counties.

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

As a result of this project, 40 people with disabilities were lifted out of poverty through their employing on the open labour market. Moreover, 100 people were trained as specialists in vocational assessment for people with disabilities across the country and 140 people were licensed to use CASPER evaluation kit to help other people with disabilities harness their skills and potential in order to become active and employed.

Key message (for other Member States)

We believe that by using the CASPER kit platform and continuing the training of professionals in this field, the project is easily replicable and will lead to increased activity and better quality of life for people with disabilities.

Further relevant information

<http://www.diz-abilitate.ro/>



Romania

SAMUSOCIAL Romania's Integrated Program for Homeless People

Brief summary of the best practice

- *Target group:* mainly homeless people, and other vulnerable groups (people at risk of becoming homeless, families with children living in bad conditions, people with disabilities, elderly people, and young people leaving child protection institutions),
- *Goal:* Facilitating the social reinsertion of homeless people and providing access to education for their children
- *Parties involved:* Samusocial Association, other associations working with disadvantaged people and public institutions
- *Method applied:* Samusocial supports the vulnerable groups and people mentioned above, through tailored services delivered by diverse teams of professionals (social counselling, motivation and occupational counselling, psychological and psychiatric counselling), organised as follows:

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

Samusocial is supporting its beneficiaries by helping them to obtain their ID cards, providing accommodation, organising courses for homeless people to gain qualifications, improving the quality of life through better food and living conditions all along with medical services and education for homeless people and their children.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

Cooperation is based on good communication between all parties involved in the process, through media and awareness campaigns dedicated to homelessness and social issues. Coordination starts with Samusocial, which organises meetings, round tables, public awareness campaigns and information distribution.



The Occupational Workshop is one of the main components of Samusocial's integrated programme, aiming to increase the number of employed vulnerable people, by taking them off the streets and including them in the labour market, thus increasing their autonomy, self-esteem, income, living conditions and quality of life. The socio-professional reinsertion process begins with obtaining ID cards for all beneficiaries and continues with obtaining work records, social counselling, complex psychological evaluation, motivational and vocational counselling, CV creation, techniques for actively and efficiently finding a job, training for job interviews, emotional support etc.

The mobile socio-psychiatric team was set up in 2007, as part of a project funded by the Dutch MATRA programme, with the support provided by a Dutch team of experts, in order to provide social and psychiatric services directly on the streets, to homeless people in need of such services (around 42% of homeless people), thus ensuring that the first pre-requisite needed for delivering the rest of the services is met. Moreover, the beneficiaries of these services also receive clothes, sleeping bags, hot and cold meals and food packs etc., and are monitored on a regular basis by the mobile team and the professionals of the medical-psychological-social Unit.

Why is this a good practice?

What is known about its effectiveness?

The effectiveness is proven by project's indicators, such as: the number of homeless people entering the labour market, number of homeless people registered in forms of education and indicators regarding the social, medical and psychological services delivered.

In 2015, Samusocial helped 67 homeless people join the labour market, of which 47 people benefited from apprenticeships and creative activities in the Occupational Workshop. Moreover, 182 homeless people received training and motivational counselling.

The mobile team (consisting of a psychiatrist, a social assistant and a social worker) has delivered social services to 370 beneficiaries and psychiatric services to 430 people in 2015, directly on the streets.

Altogether, in the last 5 years, through the Occupational Workshop, Samusocial has succeeded in fully integrating 325 vulnerable people in the labour market.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

Better understanding of social issues, decreased number of homeless people in Bucharest, lighter burden on state social and medical services.

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

By giving homeless people in Bucharest a chance for a normal life, helping them to get work, medical insurance and access to education.

The main advantage of this integrated programme for homeless people, created and implemented by Samusocial Romania, is that it provides a mix of measures, selected from a wide range of services, tailored to homeless people's particular needs, delivered directly to the beneficiary, with proven results and impact on the beneficiaries' participation in the labour market and their quality of life.

Key message (for other Member States)

Financing social projects will help the real development of the society and improve living conditions for the most disadvantaged groups of people

Further relevant information

www.samusocial.ro

Romania

Every Child in Kindergarten

Brief summary of the best practice

The 'Fiecare Copil în Grădiniță (FCG)' programme was launched in partnership with the Romanian Ministry of Education in 2010.

Target group:

3 to 5-year-old children from disadvantaged families, affected by poverty and social exclusion

Goal:

Helping communities make early education a priority and incentivising the poorest parents to send their 3 to 5-year-old children to kindergarten.

Parties involved:

OvidiuRo, Romanian corporate sector, an American non-profit organisation (the Alex Fund), local public authorities and Romanian Government

Method applied:

FCG helps prevent school abandonment by:

1. helping communities make early education a priority, and
2. incentivising the poorest parents to send their 3 to 5-year-old children to kindergarten.

FCG incentivises poor parents to send their 3-5 year old children to preschool and kindergarten, targeting the very poorest children – those living in overcrowded, inadequate housing in isolated areas without adequate access to drinking water, heating or healthcare.

Through FCG these families receive EUR 11 in food coupons if they take their child to kindergarten every day. This significantly increases the amount a destitute family has for food. Teachers take a daily register at 9:00 and post the attendance chart on the classroom wall. OvidiuRo representatives conduct random spot checks of the attendance reports to ensure they are filled in correctly and on time, so parents develop the habit of bringing their children before 9:00 am.

The development of FCG has been funded by the Romanian corporate sector and an American non-profit organisation, the Alex Fund. From 2016 onwards, the food coupon component of the programme will be funded through the Romanian state budget.

How FCG works:

Each community's role:

- Local government convenes an action group to tailor the implementation plan to local needs;
- Local council allocates EUR 35 a year for clothes and shoes for each child in FCG;

- An implementation team (preschool teachers, social worker, and school mediator) runs the daily FCG programme.

OvidiuRo's role:

- Allocates EUR 11 in food coupons per month to parents who take their children to preschool every day;
- Allocates EUR 15 a year per child so teachers can purchase school materials of their choosing;
- Provides training to the local implementation team;
- Conducts teacher training workshops on modern teaching methods.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

How are various life-domains being addressed?

The strength of FCG is its integrating effect on the community, *increasing communication* by bringing together teachers, parents, and social workers; as well as mayors, school directors, local doctors and business owners in a common cause – the early education of the community's marginalised children, who had previously been seen by many stakeholders as 'difficult to educate'.

How is the cooperation and coordination between parties organised?

Like many of the best programmes, *Fiecare Copil în Grădiniță* originated from the grassroots as a joint venture between an NGO (OvidiuRo), local and county authorities and neighbourhood schools, to address the phenomenon of early school abandonment that was rampant in Romania's poor rural communities.

As local authorities had an important role in the success and impact of the programme, OvidiuRo implemented FCG only there where the mayor and local teams were enthusiastic about 'getting every child into preschool'. This approach generated a strong partnership between the NGO and local teams. The local council agreeing to provide school clothes and shoes for the children in the programme underscored the community's commitment. This investment not only helped the programme, but also generated strong involvement of the local authorities.

Also, the school supplies, teacher training, hygiene products and summer workshops provided annually by OvidiuRo strengthened the collaboration between OvidiuRo, the kindergarten teachers and the school principal and created a sense of team spirit around the project. It wasn't perceived as OvidiuRo's project but as the community's project.

Why is this a good practice?

What is known about its effectiveness?

'The FCG pilot programme created the habit of going to school daily, and also formed certain school-related habits in families. Consequently, Parliament decided the programme needed to be a national one.' Cristian Ghinea, Romanian Minister of European Funds, 5 January 2016

'FCG offers a cost-effective way to incentivise poor parents to send their children to preschool.

This behaviour change seems to translate into an increased willingness to attend school well beyond the end of the programme.' Independent Impact Evaluation Executive Summary

For the 2014-2015 school year, Ficare Copil în Grădini ă pilot programme helped 2 400 poor children in 96 kindergartens, in 43 communities, to go to grădini ă. Without this programme, most at-risk children in these communities would not have had any kind of formal early education before entering primary school at age 6, 7 or 8, or would have attended sporadically and had major learning gaps and behavioural difficulties.

What was the impact of FCG in the short term?

- Increased enrolment and daily grădini ă attendance of the community's most vulnerable children;
- Maximised use of human and material resources (heating and classroom maintenance remain the same if only a fraction of the children attend);
- Parents were given the opportunity to improve their children's nutrition;
- Clothes were provided for the poorest children through the local community budget;
- County Child Protection Services paid more attention to the neediest families through day-to-day involvement of social workers.

After each year of implementation, the impact of the programme became more and more visible, making us confident that all children in Romania should benefit from it.

What are the benefits for the various stakeholders?

Preschool teachers see the children's potential before they have been turned off the system and get to know parents as individuals instead of stereotypes, and get recognition for their important role; social workers get a chance to attend to case management rather than their usual steady diet of managing paperwork, and can discuss cases with the children's teachers. Poor and marginalised parents feel welcome in the school system as never before – and get more respect from other community members when they are seen to be responsible parents, sometimes walking long distances to bring their youngster to preschool. And of course, after 2-3 years, the children are much better prepared to succeed in primary school! (Confirmed by an independent external evaluation in 2015.)

How does it contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion?

FCG programme has a long-term impact, by:

- Increasing genuine inter-agency collaboration;
- Encouraging more inclusive teaching practices;
- Reducing the need for remedial interventions in later school years;
- Encouraging honest and responsible school record-keeping;
- Changing parents' assumptions about the 'right time' to start their child's education;
- Changing teachers' perceptions of Roma children's capacity to learn.

Further relevant information

<http://www.ovid.ro/en/fcg-program-national/>

Slovenia

Project of Informal Learning for Young Adults (PILYA): a social integration programme helping young people back into work and education

Brief summary of the best practice

The PILYA programme is long-standing programme that focuses on vulnerable young adults who have dropped out of school early because of various challenges in their social, cultural and economic environment. As a result of the complex, multifaceted problems faced by this group, alternative educational and counselling methods are employed to re-integrate them into sustainable employment or, if that is not possible, to enable them to participate in further education or training.

The main aim of the programme is to enable young adults to improve on and/or gain the competences and experiences necessary to enter the labour market.

Upon enrolment in the programme, career mapping is used to set individual career goals.

An individualised, supportive learning environment is provided and a flexible approach tailored to fit local circumstances and the needs of each young person. The role of the mentor is vital in supporting the individual through this transition. Equally crucial however, is the involvement of different stakeholders. Only the active participation of different stakeholders can lead to the fulfilment of career goals and the sustainable employment of young adults enrolled within the programmes.

Therefore throughout the programme, the involvement of different stakeholders (i.e. scholarship programmes, housing support) is coordinated by the mentor.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The PILYA programme addresses various challenges that young adults face in their social, cultural and economic environment and uses alternative pedagogical and counselling methods to reintegrate them into education, training or employment.

It goes beyond the social and employment dimension by involving different stakeholders such as scholarship programmes, housing support and possible future employers. Participation in the programmes also boosts solidarity and trust among young adults and gives them self-confidence when dealing with other stakeholders.

Why is this a best practice?

As one of the PEER reviews has already observed, the PILYA programme delivers the following:

Prevention better than cure: Early intervention is critical to avoid the cumulative development of problems that

increase the chance of the young person dropping out. Effective preventative approaches should start at school and address the full set of challenges faced by the young person. However, as intervention at this level may not suit every young person, alternative provision such as that offered by the Slovenian programme is also important to support the young person through the re-integration process into education or employment.

Carrot versus stick: The voluntary aspect of this programme contributes to building self-discipline and motivation but there is also a need for compulsory elements to help maintain the young person's engagement (e.g. individual agreement).

Holistic and person-centred approach: Any successful interventions need to take account of the complex, multi-dimensional issues that result in young people dropping out of school and failing to engage in any type of employment or training. One of the strengths of the PILYA is the comprehensive and person-centred approach that supports young people in all aspects of their reintegration journey and addresses their needs in a holistic manner.

Greater emphasis on soft skills: Improved confidence, self-control, communication skills, etc. benefit people throughout their life, in their relationships and interactions within their communities. The acquisition of soft skills empowers the individual but is also vital for their employability. Employers are increasingly looking for these skills and policy is moving towards the accreditation of such skills, including those acquired informally.

Education versus labour market focus: These programmes need to find a balance between education and labour market orientation in order to maximise the long-term opportunities of the young person on the labour market. Programmes should also take into account the local labour market needs. Moreover, contact with the world of work and learning-by-doing can suit young people who struggled with traditional schooling.

Inclusive partnership approach: All major stakeholders, including the young people, their parents, support services/organisations, social partners, local employers and schools need to be involved in the design and delivery of solutions. It is important for the key stakeholders to have common goals and work together. An integrated and strategic approach will maximise synergies and produce sustainable results.

Central role of well-qualified mentors: Mentors act as role models, demonstrating what individuals can achieve and

supporting them in dealing with the wide range of problems they face. The mutual trust and respect between mentors and young people is an effective way of ensuring the young person's engagement.

Sustainability: Adequate and reliable funding are particularly important for this type of approach to work, and funding mechanisms need to ensure that NGOs and other smaller organisations who often develop innovative approaches to work with these target groups are able to access sustainable support.

Future development: The intersectoral approach adopted by the PILYA programmes forms the basis for developing social activation programmes for long-term unemployed receivers of social assistance enrolled in social activation measures.

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The PILYA programme addresses various challenges that young adults face in their social, cultural and economic environment and uses alternative pedagogical and counselling methods to reintegrate them into education, training or employment.”



Sweden

Crossroads: information and support for eu migrants, Stockholm

Brief summary of the best practice

The Crossroads project was established in 2011, providing assistance to European migrants facing poverty, homelessness and/or unemployment in Stockholm. It is a joint initiative of the Swedish Public Employment Service, the City of Stockholm, the Salvation Army and the Stockholm City Mission, co-financed through the European Social Fund from 2011-2013.

Crossroads' key aim is to support the category of migrants who fall under the scope of the 2004 Movement Directive, and as such has two primary target groups: 1) EU mobile citizens and 2) third-country nationals with the right to reside in another EU country. Both groups are allowed to freely reside and look for employment in Sweden for a period of up to 3 months, during which they cannot access Sweden's welfare and social protection systems. To extend their legal residence beyond this initial period, they need to meet specific requirements, which are often unknown or confusing to them; they face an increased risk of experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

Crossroads operates through an integrated, active inclusion approach: it combines the provision of quality advice with meeting basic needs. On the one hand, it provides information on how the rules of the Movement Directive translate into practice and informs migrants about processing times and other potential obstacles. On the other hand, it provides migrants with shower and laundry facilities, language courses, internet access, free breakfast and lunch, and a job searching service (including the translation of documents and CV-writing support).

However, Crossroads goes beyond service provision; it has become a vibrant meeting place where newcomers have the chance to share tips and experiences on their transitory hometown. Additionally, it carries out advocacy and lobbying work, engaging decision-makers in dialogue on structural barriers and potential solutions for its target group.

Why is this a best practice?

Crossroads has proven successful for several reasons:

1. *'Sectorised' approach:* each staff member specialises in a specific set of core activities (for example: one specific part of the basic needs operations), rather than handling a broad spectrum of varying tasks (which was initially pursued but turned out to be less effective).
2. *Multi-stakeholder cooperation:* Crossroads relies on active collaboration between NGOs and the Swedish authorities, and all partners contribute expertise on specific forms of interventions for the target groups. The various actors are united by the realisation that they alone cannot handle the challenges faced by marginalised EU-citizens and third country nationals. Through the different perspectives contributed by each party, and their shared responsibility, the interventions become more viable and long-term in scope.
3. *User participation:* Central to Crossroads' work is that participants are recognised as people with valuable skills that can be an asset in the implementation of activities, but also in the development of programmes and the shaping of the organisation as a whole. User participation can reduce operational costs, increase service quality, and strengthen legitimacy and mutual solidarity.

Further relevant information

http://www.eurodiaconia.org/files/Events/CROSSROADS_20111209_2__AM_2.pdf

“*Crossroads operates through an integrated, active inclusion approach: it combines the provision of quality advice with meeting basic needs*”



United Kingdom

Clyde Gateway (CG) is a Scottish urban regeneration company

Brief summary of the best practice

Clyde Gateway is a Scottish Urban Regeneration Company established in 2007 as a partnership between two local authorities (Glasgow City Council and South Lanarkshire Council) and Scotland's main economic development agency (Scottish Enterprise) and supported by funding directly from the Scottish Government. Its activities support people and communities over an area of 840 hectares across the East End of Glasgow and the northern part of South Lanarkshire.

In 2006 Glasgow was awarded the 2014 Commonwealth Games, which were to take place in this part of the city, and most of the key new venues were to be located here. Clyde Gateway's role was to use the profile of hosting the Commonwealth Games in their area as a catalyst to attract inward investment and deliver physical, social and economic transformation in one of the most disadvantaged areas of Scotland. The aim was to tackle inequalities, create jobs and opportunities for local people and empower the communities which make up this part of the city to create a place where people want to work and live and thus deliver a lasting Commonwealth Games legacy.

This all-encompassing approach to regeneration means Clyde Gateway not only invests in new and improved infrastructure, creating an environment that offers opportunities for private investment and job creation but also engages directly with individuals and local communities themselves, putting in place practical interventions that address needs that they themselves have identified.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The area covered by Clyde Gateway, comprising two adjoining local authority areas, was significantly affected by the decline of major industries such as shipbuilding and steelmaking, synonymous with Glasgow and the surrounding area, leading to the closure of many businesses and many of its residents losing their jobs. A subsequent lack of investment and coordinated response led to high unemployment and poverty amongst local people with many hectares of land left contaminated, vacant and derelict.

Clyde Gateway developed a plan to regenerate the area by tackling physical, economic and social challenges, cooperating from the very beginning with the key public and private stakeholders and the local community. It aims to create business and industrial space for local and national businesses. It looks to remediate, assemble and decontaminate the land to make it ready for investments, housing or public spaces. Looking for new investors and development opportunities has been equally as important

as engaging with the local employability partners to offer the best support possible for unemployed individuals whilst providing advice to local businesses and maximising community benefits in procurement whenever possible. Working alongside national employment agencies and local employability organisations is helping to address the barriers most affecting local residents, creating improved links to the new job and training opportunities emerging from its regeneration activities.

Clyde Gateway's approach also recognises the need for early intervention to address issues of health inequality, educational attainment and social capital. They have developed a number of initiatives to help local young residents, including delivering engineering and hospitality training programmes for secondary school pupils and working with primary schools to ensure that the youngest children get the best support possible.

Why is this a best practice?

Clyde Gateway's work to tackle inequalities present in the area is based on interventions that Link Opportunity and Need (LOAN). LOAN is the process of connecting local residents to the jobs and opportunities created from investments. It is necessary because these do not automatically trickle down to local residents and even less so to disadvantaged residents. This approach became critical in this particular area to combatting poverty and social exclusion. The regeneration activities delivered over the years and jobs created in the area represent a major opportunity to transform the lives of local residents and the communities. However, to effect this transformation, local residents need the supports in place that will enable them to progress towards, into and to sustain the jobs created.

Clyde Gateway's LOAN activities are delivered in partnership with a range of organisations and consider early years provision, working in schools, working with community groups, local businesses, inward investors etc. The interventions that support this include client engagement, skills and training programmes, job brokerage, and in-work support provision. This is additional and an enhancement to core services provided by statutory organisations. For example, there are a number of early stage confidence building and personal development programmes delivered in the Clyde Gateway area that attract local residents and help progress them towards employment or training.

The importance of appropriately engaging employers is hard to understate: without getting this right, collective ambitions to address employment issues will be reduced. This is not new, but there is an opportunity and necessity to do more: engaging more employers, more imaginatively - and finding ways to ensure they can meaningfully input to the design of interventions focused on their identified

needs. Working with individual employers to customise funding support, taking into consideration and using wherever possible and practical a range of available funds can produce greater outcomes and longer-term gains. Clyde Gateway has managed to do this across a range of sectors and has also effectively demonstrated that jobs, training and other benefits can be realised through effective Community Benefit Clauses in procurement.

In 2009, the proportion of Clyde Gateway residents claiming out-of-work benefits stood at 39 %. In August 2015 the figure had fallen to 28 %. This 11 % drop compares favourably to the 3 % fall (22 %-19 %) in Glasgow and the 3 % decrease in Scotland (14 % - 11 %). Independent research by the University of Glasgow has found that the most likely contributory factor has been the effectiveness of local employability services put in place by Clyde Gateway.

Key message

Clyde Gateway recognised that tackling poverty and social exclusion and regeneration is a long-term process and it has the best chance to succeed if it is delivered in co-operation with public and private stakeholders and the community itself. Working comprehensively and systematically through all the issues that matter to local people has already delivered a tangible change to a disadvantaged area. Clyde Gateway has invested in attractive and meaningful programmes that reach into the heart of the communities, addressing their daily concerns and offering ways to lead people into pathways towards work.

Further relevant information

- <http://www.clydegateway.com/>
- #thisistheplace



“*Clyde Gateway recognised that tackling poverty and social exclusion and regeneration is a long-term process and it has the best chance to succeed if it is delivered in co-operation with public and private stakeholders and the community itself*”

United Kingdom

Lift Programme, Wales

Brief summary of the best practice

The Lift programme reflects the commitment in the Welsh government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan to provide 5 000 training and employment opportunities to people living in workless households by the end of 2017. The programme engages with and supports people living in households where no one has worked for at least six months and focuses on those who face the greatest barriers to becoming employable, such as young single parents, people with few or no qualifications and disabled people.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

In each of the nine Lift delivery areas, small teams (typically two per area) of mentors were appointed to identify potential participants and work intensively with them to help them overcome the barriers preventing them from taking up training or employment. Participants are referred to the programme for support by various organisations, including Job Centre Plus and housing providers.

Why is this a best practice?

The Lift programme is being delivered in nine of Wales' most deprived areas and following its launch in March 2014 had provided around 3 100 training and employment opportunities, including almost 600 people supported into employment, up to the end of February 2016. It is therefore on track to reach its ambitious target by the end of 2017.

Further relevant information

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/lift/?lang=en>

| 72 |



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United Kingdom

Youth Engagement Fund

Brief summary of the best practice

The Youth Engagement Fund (YEF) provides support to disadvantaged young people who are aged 14 to 17 years, and seeks to test a range of delivery and social investment models.

Whilst the primary purpose of the Youth Engagement Fund is to support disadvantaged young people and those at risk of disadvantage to participate and succeed in education or training, in order to achieve better employment outcomes (and ultimately benefits savings), it will also help funders to test the effectiveness of different social investment models as a new way of commissioning services.

Further objectives for the Youth Engagement Fund are to:

- enable schools/academies, colleges, local authorities and others to use resources more effectively to support disadvantaged young people and reduce the number who become not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- test the extent to which a Payment by Results (PbR) approach involving social investors can drive improved outcomes for young people and generate benefits savings as well as other wider fiscal and social benefits;
- support the development of the social investment market, build the capacity of Voluntary Community Sector Enterprises (VSCE) organisations and contribute to the evidence base for social impact bonds.

The funding has been provided through social impact bonds (SIBs) with investors funding innovative initiatives to prevent young people from becoming NEET. The government will only pay if the initiatives are successful and lead to positive outcomes. YEF is jointly funded by the Cabinet Office (CO), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The YEF projects all provide individually-tailored support, with an emphasis on addressing some of the immediate barriers and issues linked to self-confidence and behavioural issues, before moving participants on to education, training or employment-related activity.

The projects utilise a range of innovative delivery models including peer group mentoring, intensive programmes of individualised support, relationship counselling, money management and family support. Recognising and rewarding positive behaviour is widely recognised as important.

Parties cooperate through the introduction of Social Impact Bonds (SIB). SIBs are designed to improve the social outcomes of publicly-funded services by making funding conditional on achieving results. Investors pay for

the project at the start, and then receive payments from the commissioner (in this case the DWP, the CO and the MoJ) based on the results achieved by the project.

The results/outcomes are pre-defined and measurable.

A SIB requires three elements:

- one or more investors or intermediaries, who pay all of the provider's 'up front' costs;
- one or more delivery organisations, who deliver the interventions;
- one or more commissioners, who pay the investor for the outcomes achieved by the provider.

The YEF has been coordinated closely with other interventions targeting young people, including those provided by other government departments and local authorities, to provide a comprehensive programme of support for those who most need help.

The payable outcomes include improved attendance, academic achievement, vocational qualifications, and employment. YEF will be subject to independent evaluation and is expected to provide important data on the effectiveness of Social Impact Bonds.

Why is this a best practice?

SIBs can be a powerful tool to tackle complex and expensive social problems. In particular, they can drive innovation in public services by shifting the focus of commissioning towards outcomes, allowing service providers to focus on what works rather than being constrained by systems and processes imposed by commissioners. By expanding the sources of investment and making finance available to a wider range of organisations, SIBs can also increase the diversity of organisations able to deliver services. This can bring greater levels of innovation, expertise and specialism into the delivery of services, especially in areas where people using those services are marginalised or hard to reach. Because SIBs focus providers on achieving outcomes and only pay for interventions that succeed, they may help improve performance and reduce costs. Finally, the external investment that SIBs generate can also be used to fund preventative services that can reduce demand for more expensive remedial services and generate more sustainable public services in the longer term.

The Innovation Fund (IF) was the first DWP initiative to support young people through SIBs. The IF came to an end in November 2015 and the YEF has been built on its lessons learned. A full evaluation will be published soon. Findings from the evaluation indicate that project deliverers, investors and intermediaries perceived the IF pilots to have been a great success, with targeted numbers of outcomes met or exceeded and investments largely repaid to social investors. The IF has helped 18 300 young people and achieved 23 600 outcomes.

The funding model was seen as being a significant factor in driving up performance and developing expertise. Projects found that the model worked best for early interventions with young people at school and less well for already NEET young people. There was widespread belief that projects had achieved better results than they would have done had the pilot been commissioned using more traditional methods.

Further relevant information

www.gov.uk/guidance/social-impact-bonds

“
The YEF projects all provide individually-tailored support, with an emphasis on addressing some of the immediate barriers and issues linked to self-confidence and behavioural issues, before moving participants on to education, training or employment-related activity.”



United Kingdom

Troubled Families Programme, England

Brief summary of the best practice

The original Troubled Families Programme ran from 2012-2015 and successfully supported over 116 000 families. The new, expanded programme was rolled out nationally across England in April 2015 and aims to support up to an additional 400 000 families with multiple, complex problems by 2020. 150 local authorities are delivering the programme locally.

The new, expanded programme has 3 key strategic objectives:

For families

- To achieve significant and sustained progress with up to an additional 400 000 families with multiple, high-cost problems by 2020.
- To make work an ambition for all troubled families.

For services

- To transform the way that public services work with families with multiple problems to take an integrated, whole-family approach.
- To help reduce demand for reactive services.

For the taxpayer

- To demonstrate that this way of working results in lower costs and savings for the taxpayer.

Local authorities can claim a results payment for families in their local programme when they can demonstrate that significant and sustained progress has been made against every problem a family is facing (for example, mental health or addiction issues, domestic violence, poor school attendance), or that an adult in the family has moved off out-of-work benefits and into continuous employment.

Local authorities also receive an annual Service Transformation Grant to transform their services, including improving their data collection and data sharing processes, which supports the collection of evidence for the programme's national evaluation. Through making support more effective and accessible, the programme also aims to help reduce demand on costly reactive services such as police call-outs and accident and emergency admissions.

The programme is subject to an independent, national evaluation of its impact, delivery approach and cost benefit.

Which elements make this an integrated approach?

The programme incentivises local public services, including police, health partners and Jobcentre Plus, to come together and co-ordinate support, taking a whole-family approach (not just looking at the needs of one individual)

and addressing the overlapping nature of problems a family may be facing (for example, the interaction between unemployment and poor mental health). The programme aims to support families who have at least two of six headline problems, which include employment and financial exclusion, health, crime, education, domestic violence and children in need.

The programme also facilitates the better coordination or integration of local public services through its provision of a Service Transformation Grant to local authorities. For example, Liverpool is using their Service Transformation Grant to drive integration between health and local authority services through a new Family Health and Wellbeing model.

Why is this a best practice?

The original programme successfully supported over 116 000 families with multiple, complex problems. This meant children back in classrooms, reduced youth crime, reduced anti-social behaviour, and for over 18 000 of those families, adults back in work.

150 local authorities across England have signed up to deliver the new, expanded programme and support up to an additional 400 000 families by 2020.

We understand the new programme to be the only one of its kind to incentivise a whole-family approach across a wide range of social problems and services, and to do so at a national scale. The programme breaks down traditional siloed approaches and cultures by addressing the interactions between the whole range of challenges facing families with the most complex problems, leading to services which are more joined-up, accessible and effective.

To facilitate this service transformation, local authorities will receive feedback from the programme's evaluation throughout the lifetime of the programme, allowing them to make evidence-based changes to their services. Interactive dashboards, almost unique in a social policy of this scale, will allow local authorities to look at trends before intervention, track families post-intervention, and compare their performance with statistical neighbours and the national average.

The evaluation also includes a National Impact Study which is based on the largest family matching exercise ever undertaken in England. Combining more than 50 centrally held datasets with local data, the study will identify the impact of the programme on areas such as crime, employment, child safeguarding, domestic abuse, education and health.

Key message

Take a whole-family approach that considers the overlapping nature of problems a family is facing, such as mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse, truancy or financial exclusion – rather than simply responding to each problem in isolation.

By making support more effective and accessible for families with complex, multiple problems demand can be reduced on costly reactive services, such as police call-outs and accident and emergency admissions.

Use a results payment for a whole-family outcome, based on goals shared across local services, to incentivise services to break down silos, work with the needs of the whole family instead of constantly reacting to their individual problems – and co-ordinate support accordingly.

Commission an evaluation that can track outcomes during the lifetime of the programme, to enable local authorities to engage in ongoing evidence-based service transformation.

| 76 |

Further relevant information

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409682/Financial_Framework_for_the_Expanded_Troubled_Families_Programme_april_2015.pdf



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