

Catalogue of best practices of the project PLAS



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Partners: FM Consulting s.r.o. (lead), University of Wolverhampton, PISCESwM c.i.c, Institute for Human Resources Development, Municipality of Villa Castelli, Ujszilvas Onkormanyzata, Thüringer Institut für Akademische Weiterbildung e. V/Europa Programm Center

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PLAS – Promotion
of Life Long Learning
as an Active Ageing Strategy –
sharing experiences
for European solutions

Catalogue of best practices

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An Ageing EU Population

The EU's population is ageing and low birth rates and underemployment are undermining the sustainability of programmes on which the elderly depend. The EU, therefore, is facing a demographic challenge that could threaten the ability of national governments to adequately care for this large segment of the population. The EU must adapt to these realities and address the economic and social problem of its ageing population before it becomes too late. To illustrate the demographic trend, the EU's population is projected to be 517 million in 2020, up from 502 million in 2010. However, the number of people aged 15 to 64 is projected to decline from 67% to 56% by 2060, while the number of those 65 and over is projected to rise 17%. In other words, the number of people of working age for every person over 65 will go from its current level of 4 to 1 to 2 to 1.¹

Economic Consequences

In economic terms, the future looks fairly bleak. The number of workers is expected to decline by 15.7 million to 195.6 million in 2060. This could lead to substantial consequences for the public finances of EU. For example, pensions, health care, and long-term care are expected to increase by 4.11 percentage points to around 29% of GDP between 2010 and 2060. Public pension expenditure alone is projected to rise by 1.5 percentage points to nearly 13% of GDP by 2060, although it must be noted that there is diversity among EU member states according to their progress with pension reform.

In summary, further progress towards sustainable public finances remains a major challenge. The results of the Report prepared by the European Commission Services Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs and the Ageing Working Group (AWG) of the EU Economic Policy Committee reveal that in some countries there is a need to take due account of future increases in government expenditure systems. In other countries, measures have been taken that significantly limit the future increase in government expenditure.²

To further highlight the pressing concerns of this demographic challenge facing EU member states, life expectancy at birth is expected to rise from 76.7 years in 2010 to

¹ European Commission- Economic and Financial Affairs; Ageing Report: "Europe Needs to Prepare for Growing Older", 2012.

² Ibid.

84.6 in 2060 for males and from 82.5 to 89.1 for females. The fertility rate for the EU is projected to climb modestly from 1.59 births per women in 2010 to 1.71 in 2060.³ In many countries, the reaction to this demographic situation is to increase the retirement age, which leads to greater ageing of the workforce. The current economic crisis has shown that the age groups most threatened by unemployment as a result are those under 25 and over 55 with the difference that, in the latter category, unemployment is long-term. For the age group 50 and over, the threat of unemployment is grave. The reasons for dissatisfaction of employers with employees from this age group include: lower level of education, unwillingness to participate in further education, and lack of IT and language skills. All these apparent disadvantages could be solved through retraining and updating skills. The main goal is to raise the availability, quality, effectiveness and, most importantly, attractiveness of further professional education and training among the age group of 50 and older.

A Sensible Response

One solution is the social innovation concept of Active Ageing. Making an ageing population still feel that they belong is an integral part of a healthy society and economy. By transferring good practice the project Promotion of Life Long Learning as an Active Ageing Strategy—sharing experiences for European solutions (PLAS) has helped to expand this concept in order to meet the demands of business, governments and society. The goal of the project is to develop a series of suggestions for raising the quality, popularity and awareness of re-training, lifelong learning and further professional education among the target group of employees aged over 50, based on the interchange of experience.

This objective has been achieved through the interchange of experience and expertise among the project partners by means of mutual visits and web-based meetings. These new solutions are ways in which companies and institutions can help alleviate the impending ageing problem facing the EU. To demonstrate the efficacy of this approach we will examine a range of case studies from six different countries which have demonstrated success using different methods of reintegrating older people into the labour force or of including them as participating members of society.

The EU has also laid out a growth strategy in the initiative Europe 2020, which seeks to address the numerous challenges it faces in the coming years. The European Union has

³ Ibid.

set five ambitious objectives—on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy—to be reached by 2020; each member state has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Active Ageing is a critical feature of EU's goals of improving social inclusion and addressing the looming demographic problem.

Partners Involved

FM Consulting, PLAS' leading partner in this project, is a very active consultancy in regional development, innovation, education and evaluation based in Prague, Czech Republic; it is comprised of specialists in providing state of the art international expertise for public, private, non-profit and academic sectors. The Lifelong Learning initiative is aimed at contributing, by emphasising the need for lifelong learning, to the development of the EU as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. It also aims to foster interaction, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community, so that they become a world quality reference. Other partners participating in PLAS helped implement the programme in the U.K. (PiscesWM and University of Wolverhampton), Poland (Institute for Human Resources Development), Italy (Municipality of Villa Castelli), Hungary (Municipality of Ujszilvas), and Germany (Thüringer Institut für Akad. Weiterbildung). These partners witnessed very successful results for those more elderly workers and for the participating companies, themselves. As the following case studies will show, these innovations are simple yet creative ways in which to better incorporate an ageing population into the labour force and society with positive outcomes for societies, individuals, governments and businesses.

The image features a scenic landscape of a cliffside overlooking a beach. A white, two-story house with a dark roof is situated on the top of the cliff. The foreground shows a steep, grassy slope. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The entire scene is overlaid with a warm, orange-to-red color gradient, creating a dramatic and atmospheric effect. The text 'THE UNITED KINGDOM' is centered in the middle of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Partner: University of Wolverhampton

The University of Wolverhampton prides itself on the three tenets of knowledge, innovation and enterprise which underpin their strategies in learning and teaching, in research, and help them to engage with the business world. The University has come to play a vital role in the region's economic and cultural development with a vision for higher education which goes beyond opening minds and widening individual horizons. The University of Wolverhampton places an emphasis on graduates becoming valuable assets to the global economy. The University's research focuses on aspects of life that affect us all.

1. Department for Work and Pensions

Introduction

The first case study involves the Department for Work and Pensions which is responsible for welfare and pension policy. It is the biggest public service delivery department in the UK and serves over 20 million customers.

Implementation

The DWP has published a guidance document which outlines the rights of workers, addressing misconceptions about employing older workers concerning productivity. This guide is drawn from employers who report clear business benefits from effectively managing an ageing multi-generational workforce. This document is crucial and especially relevant now that many employees are looking to work up to age 65 or beyond and where employers can no longer compulsorily retire their employees unless objectively justified. The guidance provides answers to employer questions and offers non-bureaucratic solutions tried and tested by employers of various sectors and sizes.

Rationale

The DWP notes that currently 27% of the workforce is composed of those over the age of 50 and by 2020 one third of the workforce will be over 50. Therefore, the DWP urges employers to make the most of this resource by maximizing the skills and productive contribution of all staff, particularly those in the over 50 demographic.

Results and Impacts

Many successful employers report the benefits of employing older workers as part of a multi-generational workforce.

Their reasons include the following:

- A broader range of skills and experience
- Opportunities for mentoring new recruits
- Transfer of skills across the workforce
- Reduced staff turnover
- Improved staff morale

McDonald's has reported a 20% higher performance in their outlets where workers aged 60 or above are employed as part of a multi-generational workforce. Similar benefits are reported by employers from all sectors and sizes.

Personal Accounts



David Fairhurst, of McDonald's UK & Northern Europe, said:

“Changing demographics in the workplace mean that later life workers are now the fastest growing age group in the labour market. Yet despite the growing numbers of mature workers, their contribution to business and the wider economy often goes unsung. It

might surprise people to learn that at McDonald's we employ over 1,000 people aged 60 and above. These employees play an important role in our business and, as the research shows, they make a huge impact on customer satisfaction.”

A guide to this approach of creating a multi-generational workforce was released by the Department for Work and Pensions in February 2013 (www.dwp.gov.uk, Doc. no: v1.0). It is entitled, “Employing older workers—An employer’s guide to today’s multi-generational workforce”.

Link can be found at:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/employing-older-workers.pdf>

2. University of the Third Age (U3A)

Introduction

The University of the Third Age (U3A) consists of a number of local groups (currently over 800) set up within the UK wherever needs arise. Each local group comes under the central management of the Third Age Trust, located in Bromley. This is a limited company and a registered charity which is the national representative body for U3As in the UK. The Third Age Trust is funded mainly by annual subscriptions paid by member U3As on a per capita basis, with the occasional grant for specific projects.

Implementation

U3A encourages older learners to remain active later in life. Local U3A groups are set up whenever there is a requirement and courses are run not only in academic subjects such as foreign languages and science, but also in creative topics such as art and singing, games that include chess and bridge, and physical activities such as walking groups. All of the learning is non-formal and no qualifications are awarded; their aim is to appeal to older learners to learn for its own sake, as well as provide them with access to a support network of like-minded friends.

A key element of U3A is its “reaching” policies“. In addition to promoting learning, U3A offers voluntary learning assistance to local educational and cultural bodies, such as museums, galleries, libraries etc. They engage with local and national government departments and other agencies to influence lifelong learning policies. They also collaborate with research projects concerning ageing and the position of older people in

society. U3A also remains in contact with former members who are no longer able to participate and offers them support.

Rationale

- To encourage and enable older people, no longer in full-time paid employment, to help each other in sharing their knowledge, skills, interests, and experience
- To demonstrate the benefits and enjoyment to be gained as well as the new horizons to be discovered in learning throughout life
- To celebrate the capabilities, potential and value of older people to society
- To make Universities of the Third Age (U3As) accessible to all older people
- To encourage the establishment of U3As in every part of the country where conditions are suitable and to support and collaborate with them

Results and Impact

There are almost 275,000 members of U3A. They benefit from flexible learning in a variety of topics, a more active lifestyle and companionship.

Personal Anecdotes—(from the “This is U3A” handbook)

Sylvia:

“In U3A I have learnt how rewarding doing things together can be. Sharing skills for leisurely learning retains a feeling of purposeful existence as well as an endless social calendar.”

Pauline:

“The U3A has changed my life—friendship, companionship, improving one’s skills, and one’s mind, learning to play bridge and singing in a choir. There aren’t enough days in the week!”

References—<http://www.u3a.org.uk/home.html> (accessed 5 March 2013)

3. JD Wetherspoon

Introduction

Pub and restaurant chain JD Wetherspoon is a company with more than 750 outlets throughout the UK. Wetherspoon removed its retirement age in 2006—a move which ensures that it can retain valuable skilled and experienced staff and give them the choice of working for longer if they want to do so. In 2009, the company announced plans to hire an extra 10,000 people over five years, emphasising the benefits of an age-diverse workforce.

Rationale

In 2010, Head of Personnel and Training, Mandy Ferries, said that the motivation for a more age-positive outlook was a desire to reflect the customer base and to enlarge the pool that the chain recruits from. Like most organisations in its sector, the majority of JD Wetherspoon's 21,000 employees are aged 18–24, but it does have workers in their sixties, seventies and eighties.

Implementation

Wetherspoon has embraced the idea of offering its employees flexible working hours and this has assisted in the recruitment of an age-diverse workforce. Flexible working hours enable the employees to strike a balance between work and family whilst also allowing the business to cover its core hours. For example, lunchtime is a particularly busy period for both the food and drink sectors of the industry yet Wetherspoon has found that some older workers are happy to work at this time and for just a few hours each week.

A key part of the success of this initiative is that Wetherspoon ensures that older staff members are welcomed at all levels of the business. The company also makes training available at all levels and it has a number of older employees who have progressed to the managerial level. This positive recruitment includes the revision of all job specifications so that they are in line with good practice on age diversity and the re-writing of the company's interviewing skills course. In addition, Wetherspoon's job application forms do not ask for date of birth.

Results and Impact

The business benefits of Wetherspoon's age diverse approach:

- Enables the company to reflect its broad customer base
- Helps to keep up with demographic change
- Flexible hours help to attract staff to cover busy periods
- Staff retention levels are well above the industry norms
- Lower absence levels in pubs that employ older workers
- Strong work ethic and commitment shown by older workers
- More life experience particularly beneficial to pub manager role
- Staff turnover (at pub manager level) is half that of the industry average

Personal Accounts

Anne, 52 and Paul, 54, pub managers at JD Wetherspoon:

“As pub managers in a very busy trade, we also have the time and flexibility to spend with our family. Being more experienced in life certainly helps with this job and gives you the confidence to tackle all problems.”

Mandy Ferries, Head of Personnel and Training at JD Wetherspoon:

“Some people's perception of our industry is that it's a youth-oriented one, so while we were very good at employing students, we'd always struggled to attract applications from the older age bracket. Although we had a retirement age, in practice we never used it, so early in 2006 we made the decision to scrap it and have never looked back. We now receive job applications each month, from people of all different ages and often recruit trainee managers in their 50s or 60s.”

Reference—Department for Work and Pensions, February 2013. www.dwp.gov.uk

Doc. no: v1.0. Agediscrimination.info, January 2010. Link can be found at:

<http://www.agediscrimination.info/News/Pages/ItemPage.aspx?Item=151>

II) Partner: PISCESwm c.i.c

PISCESwm stands for Partnerships In Social and Community Enterprise in School: Skills for Life and Social Care within the West Midlands. It is a unique Community Interest Company in the way that it brokers partnerships and offers opportunities to individuals, groups and organisations from all sectors to challenge and address issues around poverty, social exclusion and isolation.

4. PISCESwm – Unlocking the Potential of People over 50

Introduction

Between 2009 and 2011 PISCESwm coordinated an URBACT programme on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton as part of a 9 European City Consortium which looked at the impact of demographic ageing on inner city life. It was within this process that issues around employment and skill levels of older people became a major issue and one which required immediate attention.

Rationale

As with every other European country, without exception, there has been a major focus on the education, training and employment of younger people. This, however, has masked a growing challenge for older people, many of whom were becoming unemployed after several years following the demise of traditional and manufacturing industries. This was particularly marked within the West Midlands where coal mining and heavy engineering and, in rural areas, farming were declining or completely dying out as major areas of employment.

Key areas of deficiency were identified:

- Lack of suitable jobs
- Low self esteem and confidence
- Poor I.T. skills
- No modern day experience in relation to demands of the job market

Key areas of advantage were similarly identified:

- Life skills and general experience
- Reliability
- Motivation and single-mindedness
- Flexibility and adaptability

Implementation

Against this background, European funds were secured to establish two pilot programmes within the West Midlands, one in the urbanized Black Country incorporating Wolverhampton, the other in Kington, Herefordshire, a remote rural town on the border of Wales. In Kington, which has a population of around 4000 people, is 30 kilometers away from any major commercial settlement and has poor transport arrangements, the focus was primarily on opportunities of advancement through self-employment rather than acquiring jobs, which were very limited by the location.



In each case, a cohort of up to 12 people was selected. The sole criterion of engagement was either being unemployed or seeking economic independence through self-employment. Time scales for engagement were set at between 6 and 12 months and all participants were over 50 years of age. Every participant

had different expectations and experiences on which to draw. In every case, however, there was evidence of loss of self-esteem and confidence. These deflating sentiments were underlined by their perception that the “system” was loaded against them and managed by and geared towards younger people who had little empathy for their circumstances.

The programme was based at a community building called the Marches Access Point managed by an NGO with a strong emphasis on ICT training and skills development. As a public facility, however, access to resources and internet opportunities was also available for volunteering. Above all, it became a “safe haven” for participants

away from the actual programme of support provided through the PISCES initiative. This meant that people were also able to work and develop at their own speed and pursue their own interests. This was in contrast to other facilities observed during the development of the programme where participation was also dependent upon taking prescribed courses and pursuing qualifications—the College/Back to School model—a deterrent for many older people.

An additional and very important element of this was that the programme was also based on transnational collaboration with colleagues from Prague, Maribor and Edinburgh where similar “experimental” programmes were being run and externally evaluated. This added an entirely different dimension within which the groups were able to organize a 3 day transnational workshop and welcome colleagues from across Europe to the town; without doubt a major highlight and achievement.

ESF Funds were used to manage the Black Country programme with an additional element of roadshows around the sub-region promoting the range of support services and information that was available at the time for people over 50. Nevertheless, the core programme followed a similar pattern to the Kington model with focus on individual mentoring and personalized support.

Results and Impact

A group of 12 people attended a regular series of seminars including a qualification-based course which enabled them to make more effective presentations both at a personal as well as a formal level. The key to both initiatives was that everyone attending was allowed to work at their own pace, within their own competencies, and with mentoring according to their individual needs.

Personal Accounts

Although several individual case studies of achievement arose from this programme, few were more spectacular than Annie, a 56 year old recently widowed wife of a farmer without skills and qualifications who saw little hope for the future and had no self-esteem and confidence. Within 12 months her life was transformed and she is now a qualified ICT tutor with a new partnership and life away from Kington.

5. The Tettenhall Institute Hub Programme

Introduction

The Tettenhall Institute is a community building in a small village just outside the City of Wolverhampton. It is managed by a voluntary committee and generates its income by letting out rooms to other community groups and for special events.



Tettenhall is a relatively affluent area with a high number of older people living in houses that they own. It reflects the truism that social isolation and vulnerability can exist in all communities irrespective of wealth and, indeed, as people become more frail and less mobile, this can lead to loneliness.

Rationale

The Hub was established specifically to address this issue. With the growth in new technologies and an increasing reliance on Internet for applications for services and information, the Institute committee recognized a need to help and support older people to not only overcome resistance to new technologies but also to socialize through sharing communal activities. Many of the older residents have their own P.C.s and Tablets, often provided by children living away from them to aid communication.

Implementation

74 local people use the Hub on a regular weekly basis and each person has their own specific reasons for attending. The operation is managed by a skilled and experienced I.T. specialist tutor who, with some other technically competent volunteer helpers, provides individually tailored support and help to individuals. A major role of the tutor/mentor is to educate older people about the benefits of I.T. and to reassure the

attendees about the safety and security of information accessed and used within the process. This includes on-line shopping, banking, applications for benefits, etc.

Results and Impact

The introduction of the value of Skype to enable people to communicate worldwide with children, grandchildren and friends has arguably been the most transformational element of the programme. It breaks down the “fear factor” and emphasizes the real benefits which can be derived from I.T. Within the Hub there is also a significant cohort of people who use P.C.s for leisure and recreation including genealogy, photography, games playing and even internet dating!! As with the previous case study, key elements of the initiative are its inclusiveness and the informal ability of members to come and go at their own pace and leisure.

6. The Age UK Dudley Springboard Programme

Introduction

Dudley is a metropolitan Borough within the Black Country sub region of the West Midlands. For many years it hosted one of Europe’s largest out of town shopping developments called the Merryhill Centre.

Rationale

In order to attract staff to the hundreds of Retail Units on the site, one shop was set aside as a day care centre for older dependents. The idea was that shop staff would leave their mothers and fathers at the centre whilst they worked, then collecting them when work was finished for the day. The project, whilst achieving maximum publicity for its innovation, never really worked and in 2005, the Retail Trust who administered the Centre approached the executive Director of PISCESwm—then working in another capacity within the area—for ideas to prevent its closure. A concept of H.A.L.O was later developed. H.A.L.O stands for Health, Activity, Leisure and Opportunity and was designed to provide a positive slant on ageing and became a Service Model for the exclusive use of PISCESwm.



Age Concern, Dudley—the National Charity merged with Help the Aged to form Age UK in 2009—was already managing a successful Drop In centre with internet facilities, called The Junction, in the nearby town of Netherton—and a deal was brokered for the Charity to assume responsibility for the Centre in

Merryhill, to become known as the Spring Board centre.

Implementation

With the assistance of National Lottery and other funds, three staff members are now employed, together with the assistance of a number of visiting tutors and mentors, to provide a range of services and activities at both their Centres in Dudley. The Junction still remains a Centre for I.T. support with a regular programme of activities running on a daily basis including specific courses around different aspects of ICT technology.

Results and Impact

The Springboard Centre, which remains easily accessible to people using the Merryhill Centre, has become a major provider of a vast range of services and leisure activity for older people from Dudley and surrounding areas. It operates on a five day a week basis, but also arranges a wide programme of activities away from the centre including, Walking, Visits to places of interest, and regular Lunches.

As with the other two initiatives described it is completely “inclusive” and has provided significant evidence of the benefits it has provided for those who use the services on a regular basis.



POLAND

Partner: Institute for Human Resources Development

The Institute of Human Resources Development (IHRD) is a foundation, an educational community-based organization that collaborates with renowned international partners—universities, training centres to conduct training and language learning aimed at cultural integration and improving the skills and qualifications of participants through training theory, practice and work. One of the Institute’s projects, “Telestrada to the Future” was awarded by the Ministry of Regional Development in “the Best ESF Practices Award” and earned the title “the best investment in the human in 2007”. Its training centre has been placed in Newsweek rankings—The best Language Schools 2003 and 2006.

1. “Benefits of Maturity” in Poland

Introduction

The objective of the project “Benefits of Maturity” was to improve the labour market situation for people over 50 years of age by combating discrimination and negative stereotypes regarding professional activity of members of this age group. The project primarily targeted employers and other relevant institutions whose decisions and actions may play an essential role in this area. This included strategies related to investing in the development and education of employees aged 50 years or more, promoting health and health prophylaxis, as well as developing ergonomic and safe workplaces. These three main activities were launched between February 2008 and January 2010.

Rationale

The aim of “Benefits of Maturity” is two-fold:

- 1) Foster active ageing through the promotion and facilitation of the implementation of programmes which promote the reinsertion of older people into the labour market. As part of the programme, the concept of the “Benefits of

Maturity” Project is to aid those over 50 to remain in the labour market as long as possible, with the specific objective of updating their abilities and rewarding their existing knowledge.

- 2) Promote and test generational transfer of skills and competences between older people approaching the end of their working career and younger less experienced workers entering the labour market. “Generations” has the aim to replace competition between young and senior workers by an efficient process of cooperation with advantages for both sides, as well as regional economic development.

Implementation

Project implementation consisted of a number of initiatives, including:

a) **awareness-raising campaigns:**

To improve public awareness of older persons’ capacities, an interactive web portal was launched, including good practices in terms of age management and age-friendly strategies. The project also entailed a national mass media campaign, which drew employers’ attention to the issues of employing middle-aged persons and seniors, but also encouraged employers to broaden their knowledge in this area and to implement advanced solutions in their companies.

b) **Seminars concerning age management:**

Furthermore, a series of seminars was organized and devoted to the problems of age management aimed at various employers (public, private, non-governmental organizations), as well as persons in charge of human resources departments in companies and organizations. Nine one-day seminars were organized in Poland’s biggest cities.

The seminars were amongst the few initiatives in Poland providing employers with comprehensive operational knowledge on the subject of solutions towards the employment of the elderly and anti-discriminatory regulations.

c) **Competition for the most age-friendly form of employment and professional development for the workforce aged 50 years and above:**

The last stage of the project was a nationwide competition for solutions and strategies to promote employment and professional development of those aged over 50. The Beth Johnson Foundation from the United Kingdom was a foreign partner in this project. The most important project outcome was

better awareness of age management issues, promotion of good practice in employing, training and developing older people as well as understanding of the potential benefits to the company. The project also contributed to supporting people 50 and above in accessing and keeping employment through maximization of their skills, qualities and experience, thereby increasing their employability. Last, but not least, the project helped produce a network of practitioners to recommend policy, strategies and effective practices in employing older workers across Poland.

2. “E-Competence” Project

Introduction



Co-financed by the European Social Fund and IRZL, this project provided support for 60 jobless adults aged 50 and over to assist them in finding work. Delivered on an individual basis, “Experience Works” provides a package of advice, guidance, training and support designed for the older worker to help them overcome barriers to employment. Where needed, partici-

pants receive retraining, along a different career path, to lead to sustainable employment. Special emphasis is put on modern ICT technologies in the workplace that make a potential employee more competitive and effective. This best practice shows a practical approach to increasing employability skills of those 50 and over in order to reintegrate them into the labour market. The project has proven to increase those 50 and over’s employability by improving ICT competence and promoting telework and flexible working times.

Rationale

Technology has changed and is constantly changing today’s workplace providing instant access to information and communication. With the expansion of high-speed



broadband technologies in recent years it is estimated that 80% of newly created workplaces in Europe are ICT-connected. On the other hand, ICT tools give employees the possibility to work away from the traditional office setting in the form of telework. As this trend continues, telework could provide an extremely viable opportunity for those aged 50 or

older to work. Research has demonstrated a positive indication of employer receptivity to hiring mature teleworkers. Despite these positive perceptions, there is a surprising lack of any national research on flexible working forms which seem an ideal method to introduce or reintroduce those 50 or over into the labour market.

The project's main objectives are to provide opportunities for people in the 50 plus age category to improve their employment prospects through engagement in training and career counseling. Additionally, the project aims to consolidate their existing skills, knowledge and experience and create personal learning pathways to support career aspirations and develop choices and alternatives.

Implementation

The project reflects the ethos of lead partner, IRZL, that everyone is an individual and should be supported in developing their skills, capabilities and self-confidence in a way that is appropriate to them. For this reason, the project programme was implemented in two ways: the e-competence group training and the career counselling service were delivered solely on a one-to-one basis by professionally qualified advisors who use their experience, skills and knowledge to design a joint individual support plan with each participant. The programme provided each participant with 60 hours of group training and two one-hour support sessions per week over a period of 20 weeks. As the project progressed, however, advisors found that a single two-hour session was more beneficial after participants had attended for more than a month. This allowed for a more intensive and productive period for job search and applications. The programme was publicised in local media, and at local networking events.

Many participants believe that their age is preventing them from securing employment. However, programme advisors often identify other, sometimes multiple barriers more likely to be the reasons behind their inability to secure employment; for example, an inadequate CV, lack of basic information technology (IT) skills, or poor interview techniques. IT skills are often weak or non-existent in the older age group as computers have only become a mainstay to our lives in recent years and people within this age group are unlikely to have been taught IT. Project advisors helped participants with basic activities such as setting up email accounts, while developing their skills and confidence as they practice using IT to access information about jobs and progress to submitting applications. These skills may be useful or necessary in helping them secure employment.

A unique feature of the programme was that there was no standard or pre-planned path for participants. Advisors had a portfolio of activities and resources at their disposal from which they created a support plan for each participant. The support plan was a document folder containing a record of all activity, giving participants the evidence that they are moving closer to the job market. Engendering a sense of ownership and pride is a simple but effective tool to help retention, and strengthening their sense of commitment and belonging, as well as their self-esteem and motivation by demonstrating how far they have come.

Results and Impact

This project had a direct impact in four main areas:

- Individuals were supported to develop a personal development plan based on their needs, capabilities and aspirations
- Employers were encouraged to see the potential to recruit valuable members of their workforce from the 50 and over target group
- Employers were encouraged to provide work placements, employment and volunteering opportunities
- As a result of participation in the programme, 38 people were able to find their place in the labour market.

3. Active Women Club in Stezyca

Introduction

This example provides an idea of how education and training in later periods of life can contribute to active ageing, better civic and participatory skills, and, effectively, improve employability chances, especially in rural areas. The Active Women Club University presented is located in a western part of Lubelskie region, in Ryki district. This organization was founded in 2002, from the will of a group of women with different professional backgrounds, some of them already retired. During the path of consolidation and creation of the organization, the contact with another similar institution in Liblin was an important milestone in providing information and advice as well as support in the planning and organisation of a project of this nature.

Rationale

Participation in any type of learning in maturity is not a standard phenomenon in Poland. Analysis shows that 35% of economically active persons aged 25–64 (5.1 million) participated in adult education, that is significantly less than the EU average. Education activity is the most intense among persons aged 25–29. Women



take part in education more often than men, particularly in the age group 40–49. The level of education is an important factor affecting the educational activity of adults. Individuals with higher education levels participate more frequently in adult learning. Among persons with a university degree, the rate of educationally active persons was 77%, and of those with primary education it was only 9%. It is therefore of significant importance to promote and enable adult education, especially in later life periods and in the areas where access to education has been restricted.

The goals of AWC are outlined in paragraph 3 of its statutory declaration, stating that people are to be socially integrated and have access to culture through educational activities and social support. At the very start, the implementation of the previous goals was not a peaceful process, especially regarding who should be deciding on such activities. The original working group members were predominantly retired teachers and that led to an inception of this educational/cultural project very close to a formal educational context. During the development of the institution the consensus was reached on what type of activities it should offer.

Why do you do it?

- To support senior citizens
- Work towards better inter-generational understanding
- To offer free/affordable education opportunities

The project aimed to improve conditions for the target group and benefit the company and society in the following areas:

- Education
- Life long learning
- Employability prospects
- Effective use of human capital of seniors
- Sustainable development and social integration
- Contribution to local health and safety

Implementation

The organization offers education, social and civic activities to local community members in a non-formal environment. People participate on a voluntary basis in free or low-cost activities that are run by members of local community. This is a very important aspect as they try to use as much of their local assets as possible. Organization is a centre of social life and informal centre of information.

Specific conditions to consider

- Local considerations—premises, financing, target groups
- Leadership
- Support of local authorities

Results and impact

- Better local integration
- New initiatives (activity days, Harvest festival, Carp festival, dumpling days)
- Engagement of all age groups

Personal Accounts

The participation in the project is reflected in a personal statement of one of the participants:

“When Grazyna first heard of the initiative from her neighbor, she made a deliberate decision to engage in the activity that would contribute to the self-development she had craved. After 25 years of running a cultural centre, dealing with management and financing she wanted the opportunity to engage in activity that allowed her to fully utilize her professional skills, whilst also having the flexibility to be fully involved in family and community life. Grazyna decided to be active in AWC as it would help her to stay active and enterprising. Additionally, it gave her energy for new undertakings and enabled her to use and enlarge her experiences even in later life. She now knows this for sure: You’re never too old to learn something new!”

Looking back, she says that all her expectations were fulfilled in the AWC engagement, as

- She made new experiences and learned new things
- She became more socially active
- She has become a happier and more satisfied person



An aerial photograph of a terraced vineyard in Italy, showing rows of grapevines on a hillside. The image is overlaid with a warm, orange-red color gradient. The word "ITALY" is centered in the middle of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font. In the background, there are rolling hills, a small village with white buildings, and a cloudy sky. The foreground shows a metal fence and a dirt path winding through the vineyard.

ITALY

Partner: Municipality of Villa Castelli

Villa Castelli is a small rural village, located in the Ionian – Salentine plain, in the middle of the Puglia Region, southern Italy. The territory is characterised by cultivated flat areas and some low hills, almost totally covered by ancient olive trees, almond trees and vineyards, with a widespread presence of stonewalls that outline the routes and divide the different land properties. There are also large natural areas with Mediterranean wild plants and trees. About 9.200 live in the town, mainly occupied in agriculture and handicrafts.

The Municipality of Villa Castelli has about 30 employees. It gives public services, in the field of education, social, urban planning and territorial management. The Municipality is also very active in EU programmes; it promotes projects and relationships with other countries, in cooperation with international, national and local organizations and public authorities.

1. Extraordinary Programme for Jobs in Apulia Region, 2011

Introduction

The Extraordinary Programme for Jobs in Region of Puglia 2011 has been proposed to the social, economical and institutional partnership in order to find methods of cooperation and integration of programmers and projects in the field of job investments and opportunities. The program takes into consideration the effects of the recent educational and job policies, together with the necessity to increase the innovation and competitiveness of regional enterprises; it also respects the principles of the Europe 2020 Lisbon Strategy, and other European policies on the topic.

Rationale

Motivation, purpose of the activity

- Economic development based on innovation, life-long learning, and information technologies
- Sustainable economy in terms of resources, environment, and competitiveness
- Social and territorial cohesion through employment and competencies

The global economic crisis has had a negative impact on the national and southern territory and on the positive results obtained in the Region of Puglia in the last programme period of 2006/08. The visible effects are the increasing number of unemployed people, especially among youth and women.

Aims

- Increasing job opportunities for youth, women, and people out of the job market
- Protection of employment
- Enhancement of human capabilities to increase the competitiveness of the enterprises
- Reducing new poverty

Implementation

- Incentives for employment
- Services to council family life and job (flexibility, part-time)
- Grants for immigrants, small enterprises, adult learners

Specific Conditions to Consider

- Professional courses to support self-entrepreneurship and start-up in the innovative and traditional productive sectors of the region
- Work experience and multicultural learning for immigrants
- Learning and services to conciliate family life and job
- Work for an equal and sustainable development

Results and impact

The municipality of Villa Castelli, within the implementation of a programme financed by European Union funds, has planned actions for immigrants inside a specific and renovated structure. There will be courses to learn the Italian language, to know the European and Italian laws, to integrate immigrants in the local community, and for vocational training. There are also local groups of social workers who are very active in this field.

Link can be found at:

<http://www.sistema.puglia.it/portal/page/portal/PianoLavoro/Home>

2. Made in Carcere (Lecce)

Introduction

In 2007 Luciana Delle Donne set up a social company to produce handicrafts with a “different” use: original and colored bags and accessories. They are made by adult women that live in the female jail of Lecce,

where they attend professional training classes and then can work together, within a programme able to reintegrate them into society and the job market, after detention.



Rationale

- Giving a “second chance” to women. It provides a hopeful message, full of solidarity, freedom, and respect for people and the environment.
- Combining, to put good use in the world, innovation and common sense

Aims

- Increasing job opportunities for women
- Promoting social reintegration
- Using sustainable resources

Luciana Delle Donne with some women in the working room of the jail in Lecce—
Image from: <http://www.madeincarcere.it>

Implementation

Humour, simplicity, and creativity are the main characteristics of the products made in the detention center. They come from regenerated materials given freely by Italian manufacturers that support the company and believe in its project.



Specific conditions to consider

Designing an action strategy on the basis of available resources that aims at the development of social cooperation and at the acquisition of skills and professionalism in order to ensure the reintegration of women into the job market.

Results and impact

In Beirut, Lebanon, another woman has created an experience similar to that of MADE IN CARCERE: SARAH'S BAG. Sarah Beydoun works with women from prison and the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, and teaches them sewing and embroidering according to market trends and the requests of her clients. In this way, they are able to have success



themselves, especially if they are of an older age and with fewer family responsibilities; this, in turn, has a strong impact on Lebanese society and culture. Her products are sold all over the world, because of their special design and high quality. Beydoun was one of the first

designers in Lebanon to bring Middle Eastern pop culture into the mainstream, and to revive and reinvent the region’s rich traditions of craftsmanship, embroidery, crocheting and textile making. Today over 150 artisans form the backbone of Sarah’s Bag, making it one of the most successful social entrepreneurship brands in the region. Also, stylish women from Tokyo to Caracas via Beirut and Paris are sitting up and taking notice.



Link can be found at:

<http://www.madeincarcere.it>

<http://www.sarahsbag.com>

3. G.A.L. Alto Salento – L.E.A.D.E.R. + Programme, 2000–06

Introduction

The fight against unemployment and the integration of young people and women in the job market are important aims of the EU. But particular attention is offered to retrain the target group of employees aged over 50, which is the aim of this case study. In the framework of the Local Development Plan “Leader +”, the GAL (Group of Local Action), in the period 2000/2006, has realized six training courses.



Rationale

- To improve information and communication skills, entertainment, networking and distribution of services in the territory involved in the Project (Alto Salento) for people engaged in the GAL
- To provide information for workers and technicians in the agricultural sector to enhance the environment and landscape
- To provide information for qualified workers in traditional rural building and bio-architecture
- To provide knowledge about natural and cultural heritage of the territory, useful to create job opportunities (as tour-guides, for example)
- To provide information about standards on quality agricultural systems, traceability and environmental management
- To provide information about innovative distribution and marketing (e-distribution and e-marketing) of agricultural and food products

And, to increase innovative strategy about multi-functional agriculture. It could be a good way to improve the competitiveness in this sector and to enhance all the existing resources. It could increase the quality of life in the local rural areas, promoting the diversification of economic activities

Aims

Updating and developing skills about the management of economical activities in marginal areas and the knowing of the historical, cultural and natural resources of the territory.

Implementation

The participants studied the basic principles of sales techniques, in order to encourage the ability “to do business”. They have examined concepts such as the marketing of products, costs, accounts, revenue, computerization and innovative methods, like e-commerce and e-business. Most of them did not have any previous knowledge about these disciplines.



Specific conditions to consider

During the course the participants have learned:

- To use marketing research and activities, through the product—price—communication—distribution process
- To define the structure of distributive system in the agro-industrial sector and to identify the connections between agricultural business and market
- To define forms of treatment, preservation and presentation of the products in order to improve the typical and the commercial aspect of each product
- To apply the legislation about marketing to the products' quality and to the trademarks' protection
- To analyze and to perform the market, noticing trends, with particular attention in the promotion of the agro-industrial products, founding the best distributive channels.

Results and impact/ Personal Accounts

One of the trainees of the course was the owner of Masseria Seppunisi in Ceglie Messapica (BR).

Link can be found at:

<http://www.galaltosalento.it>

Typology: Family and Zoo technical Farm; Marketing of Dairy Products and Sale of Oil and Wine of Local Producers.

Commercial sector: Production of milk and cheese with short chain. The Modern Zoo Technical joins Handicraft Techniques to offer Traditional Cheese of Territory.

Other related activities: Events that promote the territory.

An aerial photograph of a Hungarian landscape, featuring a large body of water in the background, a town with houses and trees in the middle ground, and vineyards in the foreground. The image is overlaid with a vertical color gradient from light purple on the left to dark orange on the right. The word "HUNGARY" is written in large, bold, black capital letters across the center of the image.

HUNGARY

Partner: Újszilvás Önkormányzata

Újszilvás is located in the south part of the County Pest, the village is surrounded by forests. According to the present data its administration territory size takes 3896 hectares; the size of the inner urban area is 233 hectares, and the population is 2773 inhabitants. It is the geographical location and the availability of land which determines its agricultural nature. The livelihood for the majority of people living here is agriculture and related processing and food industries. In the underground thermal water and thermal springs can be found.

1. Start Working Sample Programme: organization of agricultural production within the framework of local non-profit work programme

Introduction

Újszilvás village exists as an independent municipality since 1950. Up until 1990, the population was decreasing but after 1990 the trend was reversed despite slow growth rates. This is attributed to increased immigration in the hopes of easier and cheaper living conditions, which is partly due to low real estate prices. More and more people moved from larger cities to the countryside. The number of people aged over 60 is 568, or 20.48% of the local population. In order to rejuvenate the town, the local government tries to keep local, young people by opening new streets supplied with public utilities, village planning, development projects, and creates new jobs, so as to encourage people to start families. Újszilvás is going to implement the START Work Programme together with two nearby settlements, Abony and Jászkarajenő.

Abony is a typical quiet background in the middle of the Great Plains, located mostly in the area of Tisza River. The town has many historic mansions and is at the forefront of organizing cultural events. However, it has retained its agricultural character of the

settlement. Jászkarajenő is also an agricultural settlement where more than 40% of the employees commute from other municipalities).

Rationale

All three of these settlements are located in the County Pest, in the southernmost tip, where EU and national funds come in a rather short supply, though a wide range of economic analysis confirms that the well-being of Pest is elusive. The prosperity of these communities declined after the change of the political system in 1990. The factories of the surrounding cities closed, the food products produced in backyard farms became unmarketable, and the population became impoverished. Young people left the town, the elderly ratio increased; only the Roma population multiplied, which, in turn, made it more difficult for municipalities to cope.

More and more people have become unemployed and somewhat demoralized in the wake of the recent economic crisis. A larger number of families are in a hopeless situation as it becomes increasingly difficult for those who want to help, to actually be able to. The relative unemployment rate (registered job-seekers in the working-age population) is about 10%. This programme can be a guide for these groups in managing their independent living. The only option for these families is to participate in the programme because owing to their low level of education and intellectual capacity they will never be able to take make a living on their own. If someone does not give them direction, an uncertain livelihood remains and they will continue to rely on the state.



In this programme, we aim to transfer, as much as possible, a part of the long-term unemployed population into the workforce to create value and have the activities become self-sustaining. We hope that the programme, which is implemented by the collaboration of three settlements, close in vicinity, will show an example—as nominated “pilot programme”—to the other communities and demonstrate that one can make a contribution by joining forces toward elevating the impoverished and under-educated strata of society.

Under this programme, we undertake to give employment to 100 people. It is broken down into the following municipalities: Abony, 35; Jászkarajenő, 30; Újszilvás, 35. We ensure in this way the living conditions of 100 families to be enriched; this will mean a reliable livelihood for 300 people at least. However, this programme is showing leadership indirectly toward many more people in representing a way out of poverty because the people involved in the programme can ascertain that the honest, hard-working savvy will benefit.

Further Rationale for the Activity Plan:

- All three municipalities have land available to start the programme
- The availability of persons to be included in the programme
- The local leaders have competence and will to act
- The region's economic backwardness
- An area of high unemployment

Implementation

The legal-organizational-financial background of the programme is the following: The Ministry of the Interior launched the Start-Working Sample Programme in 2011, whereby the settlements can receive support via tenders for various activities to be conducted in form of community service; one type of the thematic works is the agricultural labour made on the municipal land. Over the past two years, some successful pilot projects have been achieved in several settlements. Újszilvás Municipality wishes to avail itself of this option and, together with the two neighbouring settlements, is on the way to gaining support for its proposal for agricultural activities.

Above all, to get the programme off the ground and generate savings, we need an amount which may be awarded in the contest, since the material conditions necessary for farming are available only very incompletely to local governments. In order to prepare participants, for the first time a training programme will



be launched in partnership with the National Centre for Labour or a TÁMOP tender, with a framework of basic crops and animal husbandry courses being planned. For the implementation of the programme, we will use the assistance of elderly people. Their role will be primarily in presenting and teaching the old, traditional farming practices.

Results and Impact

Beyond the general objectives, the most important specific objective of the programme is to give examples how people living in rural areas and being away from active work possibilities—in this project were 100 families—can be brought back into the working world through assistance of the project. When the recent project is ended, we will make sure that the savings are reinvested in order to attract more people, thus expanding the scope for a living and livelihood opportunities are provided. A particular advantage of the programme lies in the fact that it shows the way back to employment for people who have been excluded for many years from the labour market. The beneficiaries will be reactivated and their responsibility towards the work will positively change.

The real significance of the Start Sample Programme—in addition to quantitative outcomes—is that it is a positive impact on beneficiaries' future labour market prospects. First, it encourages participants to carry out regular activity to work; on the other hand, the moral elements “steals back” into their lives. One of the major achievements of the programme for the beneficiary families—if they conscientiously participate in the programme—is that by becoming primary producers they will be able to ensure their livelihood without the assistance of a grant.

The indirect social effect of the Start of Work Model Programmes is accompanied by an immediate impact on local job creation. The data outlined in the planning process clearly show that the programme implemented by the cooperation of three communities is realistic, viable, and sustainable in the long term. The activities planned by the municipalities are the result of a long planning process, as all three municipalities “circled” around their own town's strengths and weaknesses, and each of the three municipalities is waiting for the break by the implementation of the above mentioned programme. Also, this kind of change could not take place without proper financial resources.

The relevance of the work programme related to agricultural activity is based on the fact that healthy, fresh, locally produced food products will be required and can

be sold in any quantity as the local businesses would prefer the site and local labour-generated products. Renewable sources of energy are also in high demand and, in addition to satisfying the local needs, the surplus energy can be sold by being connected to the national grid.

Workforce and organizational interfaces:

Újszilvás: 31 unskilled persons, 3 persons working controller, 1 assistant (35 people involved in the project). A number of local and regional professional organizations and NGOs, trade unions, businesses, universities and research institutes are taken into consideration as potential partners in the programme.

2. Most Beautiful Kitchen Garden

Introduction

Újszilvás is an independent administrative unit since 1950. The number of its inhabitants is 2,773. It is located in a flat area in the central part of the country where the settlement is characterized by a relative territorial closeness, tranquillity and proximity to nature. The Local Government of the Town Újszilvás prepared and adopted its urban development concept in 2003, followed by a resettlement plan in 2004. Our basic aim is to strengthen the local economy, developing local employment, increasing income-generating capacity, thus increase the capability for keeping members of the community and attracting immigrants.

The town could be the attractive home of about 4000–4500 inhabitants, who like to live here and for whom we can guarantee the following conditions:

- Healthy living
- Civilized housing conditions
- Subsistence (work opportunities with real distance availability)
- Integrated care at municipal level
- Proper training conditions with real availability for every citizen, in accordance with the requirements of the local and regional economy—fitting to the labour market needs

Over the past 10 years, the village leadership has consciously started to actively involve the local population in shaping the local community life. Environmental education has become part of the everyday life of community members since the age of pre-school. Our modern kindergarten proudly bears the honorific title of Green Nursery from 2010. An eco-innovation programme has been developed in the Széchenyi István Primary School under which we won the Eco-School status. A school garden, vineyard, orchard and vegetable garden have been designed in a municipal lot of Újszilvás. The products of the kitchen garden as well as of the sample garden are used up by the public kitchen of the settlement and provides for 300 meals.

Our local government has a strong focus on community development. We try to involve the public in the development of settlement, while improving and making the community more liveable. Other examples are the “Clean yard, tidy house” competition, which was promoted also in 2011 with the purpose of creating tradition.

Rationale

In our country many people can remember the kitchen garden of our grandparents, where almost every kind of vegetables was produced. The houses with gardens had a front flower garden and a vegetable garden at the rear.

That traditional image in this region, however, has changed over the years. In recent decades, it has been suggested in various media outlets to the public that it is not worth having a kitchen garden because it is expensive to seed, treat with chemicals, and fertilize. A significant part of the population—and this is also true for the smallest village having only a pair of streets—used to cover the gardens with grass, and they only care for the flowers and cut the grass. Vegetables are normally obtained from stores, hypermarkets, supermarkets that look good and cheap, but their origin is uncertain and many healthy foods are far away.

This tendency can be changed by our present programme, which tries to revitalize agriculture in household vegetable gardens. As a result of the programme anyone can become self-sufficient, and by a bit of work and careful attention, healthy vegetables can be put down on his family’s table. “The most beautiful kitchen gardens” programme is designed to promote this concept among the residents, by ensuring recognition and attention to active pursuits. As a result, it is hoped that more and more people will follow their examples.

Our goals are as follows:

- To encourage residents to produce the kitchen garden vegetables in their own gardens and courts for their own and their families,
- A change in approach and attitude transfer
- Developing this way of self-care and self-sufficiency
- Reviving the almost forgotten, traditional folk-culture garden
- Returning to some of the old rural landscape
- Changing the approach of the local community which meant using their garden in the courtyard only to grass shear, and buying the necessary vegetables from multinational firms and other uncertain sources.
- To develop a programme of unity and helping each other, i.e. community development

Implementation

Conditions for participation in the programme

- The person seeking to join the programme voluntarily
- Having owned or transferred for cultivation
- Balcony, garden, yard, plot or land, where kitchen garden veggies/fruits are grown

The role of the elderly in the programme relates to restoring the old, traditional vegetable garden culture by demonstrating to the present population how it was made long ago, what a garden looked like, and teaching the new generations how to farm. In addition, seniors will also join the programme, showing that they can work actively and take care of their gardens as well.



Results and Impact

The programme has had an impact in the following areas:

- Showing examples, the transmission of values and lifestyle patterns
- Revival of traditions, passing them on

- Useful leisure time
- Active pensioners, active old age
- Community development
- Self-esteem, self-care
- Building and fostering intergenerational bridges

3. Dementia Supply Centre in Újszilvás

Introduction

The village Újszilvás, whose population is 2,860 people, is located in the middle of Hungary, on the Plain area between the rivers Danube and Tisza, in the South part of the County, Pest. The Town, Újszilvás, and the environment surrounding the settlement provide favorable conditions and opportunities for the rehabilitation purposes. About 21% of the population of Újszilvás is over the age of 60. It became necessary to represent the interests and needs of pensioners, as well as help many older people to overcome the loneliness of isolation, give positive experiences, and convey culture to the community.

The Rosemary Pensioners' Club life was established in 2002 with the purpose of managing the life of the pensioner's community, and it is still carrying out a very active club life (such as cultural festivals, regional senior appointments, trips, spa visits, live music events, meetings, cultural actions, etc.). The club has about 50 active members. The club has an important role in the traditions of the local culture, learning and the transmission of culture between generations. The Village Hall provides a separate room where elderly people can come together.

Újszilvás has also an Elderly Care Home, seating 16 people. The institution is classified as temporary residential institution, which means that it can provide a continuous supply for a temporary period, or overnight stays for the elderly as well as ill patients over the age 18 who are temporarily unable to take care of themselves at their home due to illness or for other reasons.

The Representative Body of the Local Government of Újszilvás established the town village manager and farm care-giving service. The village is giving service to the small

settlements and farms which are in a disadvantaged position, with lack of services to ensure equal opportunities for them, also with the aim of improving the living conditions of the people and providing access to public services. The ration of the population which requires special supplies is near 34%, i.e. 937 persons; 17 people in an elderly day care home, in addition, six people for daycare. With regard to children (kindergarten and primary school together): 280 persons, residents living in periphery (ranch): 514 people; seriously handicapped people in movement: 120 persons.

The signaling home assistance of the village service gives assistance to people who live alone, are old, or have disabilities. The system allows people to ask for help, just by the touch of a button. Following the signal of the person in need via HelpBox a bilateral speech relationship is to be established, which allows instant, free help for 24 hours a day. The number of regular beneficiaries is 30. This project—the establishment of the Dementia Supply Centre in Újszilvás—has the intention to provide care not only for the elderly population of the village, but also become attractive at the regional, national, and even international level too, in the longer term.

Rationale

The project initiator—Local Government of the Town, Újszilvás—tries to create a separate, Dementia Care Centre with a clean profile which is to be operated market-based for Hungarian and foreign residents, with the purpose of developing the dementia supply for elderly people in the small region and to improve geriatric rehabilitation in general.

The “Health Village-Vivatum—Small Regional Dementia Supply Centre” is a residential care institution which is capable of supplying 100-120 people. It is planned for taking care of persons who are not, or are only partly capable of self-supply, who need a daily minimum of 6 hours of care because of their illnesses of senile dementia, Parkinson’s disease, cerebral related attacks (stroke, etc.), as well as locomotor, visual and hearing disabilities, and elderly patients with dementia. Up to 25 people in living care department will be established.

The “Health Village-Vivatum” Institute in Újszilvás is to be used as a reference project for the establishment of four-five supply regimes of similar profile in a later time. The Vivatum Dementia Institutes in no way can be regarded as a kind of “hospital-substitute” private temporary accommodation structure but, on the contrary, the main

focus of the institution, Vivatum is home-making, and preservation of the quality of life and dignity. This mission is served by twenty-four hour nursing staff, care and work organization policies, operated by 100–150 employees, and carrying out person-oriented care.

Implementation

The Local Government of Újszilvás has a final approval for the establishment of a social institution with 150 seats, which investment would result in creation of 79 new work stations.

The centre makes efforts to use individualized development plans for the patients in order to develop their capabilities for independent lifestyles and to integrate them into society. In the course of the development programmes, the primary purpose is the development of the capacity, which is organized in relation to individual needs.

The seniors can get possibilities for doing work activities in the Centre. The regular employment opportunities (i.e. broom-making, basket weaving) also contribute to the development of a more independent lifestyle. Our objective is to ensure a normal life rhythm for the injured residents, taking into account their wishes and decisions, too.

Results and Impacts

An institution which is specialized for the supply and care of elderly and disabled people with dementia, is itself a rare phenomenon among EU member states in geriatric rehabilitation and, or social service market.

In addition, the Vivatum-Health Village concept is peculiar in that the Institute—positioned between the hospitals and social (elderly) homes—carries out the dementia care as a kind of health service and, thereby, simultaneously satisfies the rehabilitation and chronic care desirability, too. With this service profile, the Vivatum-Health Village is able to combine the quality advantage and niche service in the health tourism market of the EU, as a Hungarian player.

An aerial photograph of a German town, likely in the Black Forest region, featuring a prominent church with a dark, onion-shaped dome. The town is situated on a hillside overlooking a large lake. In the foreground, there are rows of vineyards. The background shows a dense forest and distant mountains. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The word "GERMANY" is centered in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

GERMANY

Partner: Thüringer Institut für Akademische Weiterbildung e. V /Europa Programm Center

The Tiaw, Thuringian Institute of Continuing Education eV, is a recognized Institute for Continuing Education, whose projects are in the priority areas of:

- Labour and Economic Development
- Education
- Regional Development

The Institute's purpose is "the interdisciplinary and project-oriented promotion of social, environmental, economic and technical development projects and innovations, and the development of new labour market and educational opportunities in Europe" (excerpt from the Statutes version of 22.06.2006). The institute was founded in 1991. Legally, it is a registered non-profit organization and the Tiaw headquartered in the state capital Erfurt. The activity area includes the Erfurt region, the Free State of Thuringia, central Germany Economic Area, nationwide and trans-regional cooperation and joint projects in Central and Eastern Europe.

1. Benteler Automobiltechnik Eisenach GmbH: one of the first awarded companies

Introduction

The high average age of our employees was the reason for us to take a closer look at the effects that the demographic change causes to our company. Thereby we don't reduce the subject onto the older employees, but take all generations into account. We took part in the auditing for achieving the quality sign "Demography orientated enterprise" because we wanted to face up to an external checking.

What Benteler already realizes within the company

On the one hand, we invest a lot in apprenticeship and strategies for personnel recruitment. As a company that is tied to a labour agreement we have a bonus amongst the applicants. Also we try to give additional incentives to oblige our employees to the company, e.g. with special programmes for the promotion of talents or an apprentice—week which is located at our head office in Paderborn and held, to familiarize our new apprentices intensely with our company guidelines, our company standards, as well as various internal programmes and processes. On the other hand, there are many different activities from which all employees, regardless of age, benefit: internal health promotion, ergonomic workplace design and models of flexible working hours. All of these activities contribute to keep up the workability and the performance of the employees as long as possible. Nevertheless, the most important aspect is the motivation of the staff which is management's responsibility. For this reason our whole middle management attended the qualification "Internal Demography Expert" held by the Bildungswerk der Thüringer Wirtschaft e. V. in 2009. In regular appraisal interviews it is a continuous task of the foremen and department managers to develop prospects with and for every employee, to promote their willingness for further qualification and to strengthen their individual responsibility for their personal health.

The outcome for our company

The auditors of TIBOR EDV Consulting GmbH attested exemplary human resource management—activities to our company, which are aimed to meet the demographic changes and its effects on our company appropriately. Through the award, we see ourselves and our activities as confirmed. However, with this we don't see our job as done, but a continuous further development is required. Therefore we will continue to work intensely on various topics. Thereby amongst others, the focus will be on the further development of our health management, the ergonomic improvement of working conditions and the development of age appropriate working hour-models.

Our recommendation

It is important to not consider the theme "demography" as isolated, but to look at all activities of caring for personnel and human resource development as a whole. Thereby it is necessary to sensitize all managers to this subject, because only if every manager supports the personnel management in his area of responsibility, this issue can be

implemented comprehensively. Also important is the exchange with other companies in the context of different working groups. There you can get relevant details and suggestions for your work.

2. Jena-Optronik: this aerospace company offers training geared to older workers

Introduction

The aerospace engineering company, Jena-Optronik has created a workplace culture where fair treatment is the basis for a positive internal working atmosphere.

Jena-Optronik promotes the employability of its older workers through a comprehensive framework, “55plus”. Features include flex-time accounts available to all workers, training modules specifically designed for older workers and active promotion of mixed-age work teams.

Lifelong Learning and Training

Jena-Optronik has improved the workability of all employees through its “55plus” programme. Staff appraisals are conducted annually to discuss individual career tracks and focus on the employee’s achievements throughout the year. The employee is able to make suggestions as to what kind of trainings they would find useful to further their career. If an employee states that age is preventing them from properly performing their job functions, the company will attempt to create an arrangement that will suit both parties. The company also offers training geared specifically to older workers. These programmes factor in the specific learning styles of older workers, especially in English language or social-media oriented classes. The HR manager and one other employee are also qualified as “Internal Demography Experts” allowing them to evaluate demographic changes and the needs of older workers.

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements are available to all employees to ensure a proper balance between life and work. Flexible work times allow employees to start their work day

between 6:30 and 9:00 AM according to their personal schedules. Work days end between 3:00 and 7:00PM accordingly. Each employee is also given a flex-time account with 30–60 (or more) hours of flex-time. This account offers maximum flexibility to employees with sick children or relatives, or time-consuming medical issues. Overtime hours can be used for taking hours off or full days. Employees are thus able to have free days without using vacation time.

Older workers can decrease their hours as they approach retirement to help ease the transition.

Health Promotion and Protection

Jena-Optronik focuses on preventive measures for staff of all ages. Every two years the company performs an analysis of the physical and mental stress factors in the workplace. Discussions are then held quarterly to identify preventive strategies and plan the implementation.

3. Pro-Seniore-Residenz “Kiebitzhöhe”: strengthens the cohesion of younger and older employees in age-mixed teams

Good Care Needs Communication

Introduction

To provide good care-giving, our employees have to work together with clear procedures and a high level of mutual acceptance. For us, it was important to train the communication between the generations and to promote mutual understanding.

Implementation

In two workshops we conducted with Eichenbaum GmbH, different communication situations from daily work were picked up and viewed from different perspectives.

In the first workshop, “Communication in mixed-age teams” fundamentals of communication were taught. In several practical different exercises, perception and interpretation of verbal and nonverbal messages were shown. The group formulated rules for communication within the team and developed a common understanding on how the team should work. In the second workshop “Intergenerational Conflict Resolution” everyday conflicts were shown and the team worked on possible solutions and strategies to avoid them in advance. Different feedback procedures were presented enabling successful communication and efficient management of conflicts. In addition, a member of the team with leadership function took part in the training “Internal demography expert” of the BWTW e. V. to enhance her knowledge and her ability to act on demography-related issues within the company.

Results and Impact

In a final employee survey participants of the workshops expressed several benefits. Due to the large number of practical examples, the importance of good communication was pointed out during the workshops. The team took great pleasure in the workshops and was highly motivated. Despite some critical and serious situations in the daily work process, the working conditions were described as pleasant and quiet diverse. Participants rated each other as competent and were appreciative of each other.

We recommend:

A positive feedback culture can develop open communication between team members, which promotes the stability of the team. This has positive influence on sharing knowledge, experience and developing skills within the team. Continuous age-mixed trainings are important to consolidate the progress made and to build up new knowledge.



CZECH REPUBLIC

Partner(Lead): FM Consulting s.r.o.

FM Consulting s.r.o. is a consulting company that deals with education, guidance, event management and publishing of publications and periodicals. Its clients include both private and public and non-profit sectors. FM Consulting Ltd. has been involved in the development of human resources, with particular emphasis on the issue of lifelong learning and support education.⁴

1. Community Centre Prádelna

Introduction

Community Centre Prádelna is a functional and literal sense community, educational but also a cultural, social and artistic center reflecting current societal needs. The target group is very broad and extends to all age groups and not simply to the socio-demographic distri-



bution. Inspired by foreign trends, where similar centers focus on community cultural activity, it has existed for many years, but we assume it reflects the characteristics of a particular locality. Our rooms are available for a large variety of applicants: multi-functional communication space for the general public with a variety of community cultural activities, as well as leisure activities for children and youth from Prague 5, facilities and space for club activities sensational senior in KC Prádelna and other groups of seniors. Community Center Prádelna is also open to the public and

⁴ There is a case study of the University of the Third Age in this chapter as already appeared with the UK partners, but its approach is, naturally, different as it based in the Czech Republic. It is interesting to note its success, however, in both distinct countries.

visitors to Prague 5. Moreover, it organizes exhibitions and openings not only of local artists, film and theater Thursdays, but photography and travel evenings and other varied performances.

Rationale



The objective of the development is to promote our functioning community center and spread awareness about our programmes for social groups of all ages. For example, Prádelna is offering activities for seniors in the form of computer courses, trips, cafes, table tennis facilities and the club for seniors, Pegas.

Children and parents will enjoy the support of club activities with their children, such as art activities and workshops. City Hall of Prague 5 also works with children and young people from socio-culturally different environments.

Implementation

All activities of the community center are primarily due to the interconnection and support of the local community, which is invited to participate in order to cultivate, enrich, inspire, and motivate in this way. Specific individuals are encouraged to help expand horizons, cultivate taste,



and inspire further knowledge and creativity, which will ultimately lead to personal development and responsibility. The main supporters of our center are City of Prague 5, Foundation Charter 77, the ČEZ a.s. and ČEZ Foundation within the project “grants wishes”, who have contributed materially, but also financially.

Impact/Results

The most important results and benefits of working and relating with the public include:

- Positive impact on crime prevention
- Support activities for seniors
- The content and activities created by the elderly and children with parents
- Offering various forms of tutoring, music and dance projects, trips, etc.
- Connection of varied generations

Komunitní centrum Prádelna, May 2013.

http://www.csop5.cz/komunitni_centrum/

2. TOTEM – Regionální dobrovolnické centrum

Introduction



Civic Association TOTEM—Regional Volunteer Center was founded by registering with the Ministry of the Interior on July 27, 1999 under No. VS/1-1/40853/99-R, according to the law č.83/1990 Coll. the Association of Citizens. Since the beginning of the Civic Association, TOTEM—RDC has dealt with volunteering. Over the years, the original idea of a volunteer

centre is to develop and acquire new forms. Our mission is to create positive and functional interpersonal relationships, both within the family and in the wider context of civil society. Fulfilling our mission is carried out by providing social services, by activation programs (life enrichment activities) and other activities; especially volunteer projects which correspond with our long-term objectives.

Rationale

Our main objectives are to promote and spread the idea of voluntary aid and develop volunteering in the Pilsen region, to contribute to greater involvement of seniors into society, to develop their mental and physical health/strength, and to promote their self-confidence and interest in continuing learning/education. Other objectives include helping children and their families cope with their difficult life situations and strengthening inter-generational relationships, thus creating an optimal natural environment for the coexistence of all generations.

Implementation

Since 2007, TOTEM has been actively involved in community planning in Pilsen. Targeted and supplemented by a network of social services of the city of Pilsen, TOTEM is in line with medium-term outcomes of the development concept of social services of the city of Pilsen 2008–2015. TOTEM–RDC is also a member of the following organizations: NGOs Association of the Pilsen Region, Social Services Association, Association of Five P, and Volunteer Initiatives Coalition.



A project “TOTEM—House across generations” (multi-generational centre) arose in collaboration with OSS (Department of Social Services), UMO Pilsen 1 (Pilsen District 1) and the City of Pilsen. The project’s aim is to interconnect and develop activities according to TOTEM’s experience gained over the years, and to start new activities which are prepared



on the basis of client needs monitoring in cooperation with the Community Planning of the City of Pilsen. The organization undertakes a diverse range of projects focused on e.g. engagement of unemployed graduates, volunteers in hospitals, Mothers’ Club, etc. The accompanying service is currently implementing large-scale projects such as TOTEM for seniors and volunteering.

Impact/Results

The most important results and benefits of this organization can be considered:

- Active involvement and interconnection of all generations
- Integration of seniors by increased educational opportunities
- Support for the development and maintenance of mental and physical health in both elderly and young people
- Support for club and leisure activities
- Emphasis on motivation and learning while volunteering
- Easier integration of unemployed graduates and other disadvantaged groups into the workforce

TOTEM – Regionální dobrovolnické centrum, June 2013.

Available at:

<http://www.totem-rdc.cz>

3. University of the Third Age – University of Life Sciences, Prague

Introduction

In most developed states, education of older people is considered a highly regarded task of modern universities. Hence the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague provides old people with active and meaningful leisure time activities through its University of the Third Age (U3A). Universities of the Third Age have a strong tradition in the Czech Republic. They usually offer a high-quality education in specific areas without much entry demands. U3A at CULS enables old people to refresh their partially forgotten knowledge, reinforce it with new pieces of knowledge, engage in discussions on various topics with respected experts, and boost their life optimism. Group of like-minded “classmates” in terms of age, opinions or expertise have their experience enriched by the guidance of experienced lecturers who encourage discussion or contemplation of issues of the contemporary world whose consequences, whether we like it or not, deeply affect everyone. An advantage, not to neglect, is also the opportunity to spend some pleasant time in the green premises of the university, far from rush of the city. In addition, old people may also get to know their peers, make new friends and get in close touch with young people in their temporary home. They differ in monetary policies (some are free, some have a small admission fee per course) and they differ in course portfolio, quality, and structure.

Implementation

Creation and supervision of the courses falls into competence of professional administrators. Professional administrators may be Vice-Deans responsible for educational and pedagogic activities or IEC Deputy Directors responsible for educational and pedagogic activities. U3A lecturers are particularly academic lecturers from CULS, alternatively academic lecturers from other universities or experts mastering their respective fields. Education takes place in CULS premises or in regional centers (it may be accompanied by professional training camps and workshops). U3A educational materials and such facilities are provided by the IEC; it cooperates with other faculties and institutes. Each faculty and institute at CULS has an assigned U3A contact. The study programmes are certified, but non-professional and do not lead to increasing professional skills in the

labour market. Listeners have no legal student status. Throughout the study period, they can use the library on campus, and the computer lab (internet). Lecture series are designed generally for 2 years (i.e. 4 semesters), some courses are repeated each term. Each semester includes 10 to 13 lectures and teaching is complemented by excursions. Completed studies will be celebrated at the Closing Ceremony at the auditorium in the university where seniors passed the certificate. In individual programmes, U3A students have the opportunity to acquire new knowledge of economics, agronomics, forestry and landscaping, engineering, agriculture, the economy of the tropics and subtropics, as well as education. After completing the programme, drawn up in writing experimental tests of lectures and the fulfillment of all obligations, students will receive a certificate of completion of the University of the Third Age at Czech University of Agriculture and are officially graduated.

Rationale

The U3A follows a goal to prolong an active life and increase the quality of life for seniors through education at university level. The structure of the courses is based on the long-term strategy of the Association of the Universities of the Third Age. At the local level, it serves to promote active aging (personal recommendation). Students are active pensioners-courses are tailored for their needs and based on their interests. Finances depend on governmental funds (MEYS) based on the principle of student/hour/money. They are adapting the programmes to suit the target group.

Impact and Results

- Member of AU3A (Association of the Universities of the Third Age)
- More than 300 students
- Funded by the government (Ministry of education, youth and sports)
- 6 faculties, 8 regular courses, e-learning course and additional paid courses
- Flexible learning in a variety of topics
- A more active lifestyle and companionship themselves

Universities of the Third Age, May 2013

<http://www.u3v.czu.cz/?r=3115>

Summary

As we have seen, Active Ageing addresses the impending demographic challenge confronting the EU and is seeing very positive results. Through practical and innovative solutions across various industries, we are seeing the tremendous value of accommodating an increasingly ageing workforce as well as integrating retirees back into their communities, giving them a sense of connection with other members of society. While societal concerns of coping with an ageing population are typically focussed on the overstressing of the welfare state and the burdens placed on an already fragile economy, the approach of Active Ageing tries to pre-empt the problem with creative, non-bureaucratic, and effective methods. As companies implement ways in which its ageing workforce can become assets rather than liabilities, they are witnessing the benefits not only for society but for themselves. By incorporating a more accommodating workplace environment, businesses profit from their experienced workers and, by creating a more inter-generational workplace, staff is consequently more cohesive.

In instilling a culture of mutual understanding in the workforce, employers have enabled workers of different generations to gain a greater appreciation for each other. Retraining and updating skills of workers 50 or older make them feel that they are not excluded; and that their assets are not ignored but rather maximized. Flexible working hours and improved ergonomic working conditions also foster an environment conducive to happy workforces of all ages, particularly those whose bodies have become more sensitive over the years. In addition, these innovative solutions do not end with improving efficiency and life in the workforce. After retirement, many elderly feel marginalized from society, losing some sense of purpose and belonging. As demonstrated, adult education is a way to keep this demographic engaged and interested, contributing members of society. Also, Active Ageing promotes involving the elderly in activities which gives them exercise and provides a social outlet for them as well.

If the EU is adequately to confront the crisis of an unevenly ageing population, it must deal with it in innovative and enterprising ways. As these case studies have illustrated, many companies are turning a perceived weakness, an ageing workforce, into a source of strength, simply by adapting creative solutions. Experienced, loyal workers can come to be regarded as assets and as teachers to younger generations, while younger generations can impart their new technological knowledge. Clearly, workers who have

been with the same company and have accumulated years of perfecting a skill are difficult to replace. If those employees would like to continue working and updating their skills, then surely their age should not be regarded as an obstacle to employment or as a detriment to any organization.

The partnership between the private and public sectors and the innovative and practical solutions of Active Ageing illustrate a path for the EU to navigate more smoothly out of the potential demographic crisis. If the elderly are not pushed prematurely into retirement and can instead remain valued contributors to their companies and to society, but feel engaged and connected through lifelong learning opportunities, government expenditure will decrease and the region's economic future will improve.

