

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

1. Title of the practice

- *'ADVICE CENTRES FOR OLDER PEOPLE ("SENIORBÜROS")'* -

2. Organisation responsible for the practice

City of Dortmund, Germany

3. Contact person(s)

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4. Summary of the practice

The initiative takes place in community settings in big cities or in small municipalities and either across organisations or through an individual organisation. Social welfare organisations and citizens are actively involved in it. The aim is to promote volunteer projects with older people who, in turn, give older people and their families lifestyle advice and support for problems, network with actors in the communities and organise help for older people to live in their own homes as long as possible. There are about 355 'Seniorenbüros' in Germany and 90 in North Rhine-Westphalia, all run by professionals and volunteers. The 'Seniorenbüros' in Dortmund provide drop-in advice services from Monday to Friday between 10 am and 12 pm focused on local leisure activities, medical and technical aids, home care services, and support for family carers.

The 'Seniorenbüros' also organise home visits to older people who are vulnerable to isolation and physical handicaps impacting their ability to live independently and those in need of carer support at home.

In addition, the 'Seniorenbüros' organise public information events or seminars on specific themes such as dementia, care systems, finance, and public care insurance.

Lessons learned:

- The importance of agreeing at the local council level to support the 'Seniorenbüros' as there is no legal obligation.
- The city council needs social workers who are engaged and who have a lot of enthusiasm.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

Good networking is vital. There is no particular government policy driving this initiative forward within communities. Whether or not such initiatives develop depends on how local social policy is interpreted, created and activated. In terms of financing, some councils allocate money for the 'Seniorenbüros' from their budgets, others get support through other funding sources such as specific project funding. The Federal Ministry of Health supports active ageing and, in this case, the Ministry in North Rhine-Westphalia supports the initiatives financially, but this is not the case in all of the German states.

6. Staff involved

Welfare organisations, carers, home care services, social services at local hospitals (a hospital discharge service that gives information about care options), volunteers from churches, local police, and local GPs.

7. Target group

Older people and their relatives and neighbourhoods

8. Aims of the practice

- To provide information and advice for older people who are interested in volunteering opportunities
- To promote social and intergenerational interaction
- To advise and support care providers to foster engagement and volunteering
- To support informal and family carers by providing advice on care and opportunities to gain care qualifications
- To support the local network for a better life in old age
- To promote active ageing and autonomous living

9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across Services	x	Service Planning		Contracting	
Technology		Skills development (of the workforce)		Quality of services	
Others: Participation of users, prevention and rehabilitation					

ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE

10. Status

Pilot project (ongoing)		Project (ongoing)	x	Implemented practice (restricted areas)	
Pilot project (terminated)		Project (terminated)		Widely spread practice/rolled out	x

11. Scope of the practice

Describe the setting of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Micro-level practice:* a practice that involves individuals at the local level
- *Meso-level practice:* a practice that involves organisations or communities
- *Macro level practice:* a practice that involves large population groups

A Meso-level initiative involving communities.

12. Leadership and management of the practice

Description of the leadership of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Collaborative management:* shared between large partnerships, often of central, regional and local representation
- *Organisational management:* by one organisation
- *Professional management:* managed by a single person
- *Shared management:* shared with no defined leadership

Organisational management: The Ministry of North Rhine-Westphalia initially led the initiative by deploying a government grant of EUR 50,000 per year for five years to co-fund initiatives within communities with a history of good practice in engaging and involving older people. This grant enabled the establishment of a platform to organise for volunteers to go into communities to improve support for older people and their carers. While the initiative is co-funded by the government, each 'Seniorenbüro' is managed by the individual municipality.

13. Engaging stakeholders in the practice

Description of the engagement of stakeholders, considering the following criteria:

- *Individual practice:* individuals have sought practice change
- *Network approach:* one or more organisations develop a network
- *Collaborative approach:* large collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Network approach: The professional health and social care services are contacted if home care needs are identified for individuals. The police contact the 'Seniorenbüro' when they become aware of older people living alone who may also have care needs. Visits to private homes of older people with dementia and carers with support needs are then organised. The 'Seniorenbüros' also organise public information events or seminars on specific themes such as dementia, care systems, finance and public care insurance.

Volunteers: The service is dependent on older people volunteering to provide support. Volunteers are recruited through local media, the seniors' portal (website) of Dortmund, and information leaflets that are displayed at events and in local administrations. There is a basic training of 30 hours, which covers issues related to older people, especially people with dementia. In addition, the city of Dortmund organises an annual summer festival and a New Year's reception for all volunteers. At these events, representatives of the City of Dortmund (the mayor and political representatives) recognise the contribution of volunteers. Volunteers also have access to a specialist service for seniors for counselling services.

Access to services: After support for an older person has been requested (mostly by family carers), a full-time employed coordinator from the senior citizens' service of the city of Dortmund visits the person. The coordinator assesses if support is needed and what kind of support would be beneficial. Then the coordinator approaches a trained volunteer who should live nearby to see if he or she can support that person. The volunteer and the coordinator visit the person, and if both sides agree, the support can begin immediately.

14. Involvement of service users and their families

Description of the involvement of service users, considering the following criteria:

- *Team involvement: service users and carers were part of the practice team*
- *Consultative: a consultative body of users was set up for ongoing dialogue and feedback*
- *Involvement in care: person-centred approaches to care/support*

Consultative: In every district in Dortmund, service users are invited to join round table events on local policy for older people.

15. Costs and resources needed for implementation

Description of how the practice is financed, considering the following criteria:

- *Within existing resources: staff time and other resources are provided 'in-house'*
- *Staffing costs: costs for staff investment*
- *Joint/Pooled budgets: two or more agencies pool budgets to fund services*
- *Funded project: external investment*

External investment: In Dortmund, about EUR 1.5 million has been spent on this project annually. This is different in other areas of North Rhine-Westphalia and depends on the financial situation of the different councils or associated project funding. With the grant, a central office was financed, which provides expert advice to the local 'Seniorenbüros' in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Other resources: A central office for the whole of North Rhine-Westphalia was established, supporting local organisations in undertaking competency training and exchanging experiences. It also organises an annual conference for all 'Seniorenbüros', which usually has about 150 participants.

16. Evaluation approaches

Description of the evaluation method of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Multi-method: use of both a qualitative and a quantitative approach*
- *Single method: a qualitative or quantitative approach*
- *Audit: looks at data sources such as existing medical records and/or other routinely collected service data.*
- *Informal: refers to in-house service evaluation using locally designed tools and/or collecting opportunistic feedback*
- *No evaluation*
- *An evaluation is planned*

Audit: Every year, the central office for North Rhine-Westphalia has to report on how the grant given by the state ministry was spent. With regard to care for people with dementia, a report is written to the Regional Ministry of Health, Equalities, Care and Ageing. This report is required to get a small compensation for the volunteers who support people with dementia from German care insurance (up to EUR 204 per month.) Whether the compensation is granted depends on whether the person suffering from dementia is eligible for this support. For other older people (not suffering from dementia), the service is free of charge, and volunteers receive a monthly allowance of EUR 25 for travel expenses.

In addition, the central office undertakes online interviews with the 'Seniorenbüros', discussing what 'Seniorenbüros need and how the work can be improved. In Dortmund, we ask our customers for feedback in a simple survey. There are special databases for analysis in some 'Seniorenbüros' (e.g., Dortmund) but not in all of them.

17. <u>Measurable</u> effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...	
Service users	<p>Perceptual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older people in need and those suffering from dementia who use Seniorenbüros with professional social workers have reported an improved experience in their daily life.
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	<p>Measurable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where customer databases are used, as they are in Dortmund, more customers with care needs have been identified. <p>What worked well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking between the different stakeholders worked well, as they have recognised that the initiative is mutually beneficial for responding to the increasing demand for home care. Policymakers realise that investing in early intervention services in the community and working with older people themselves can save public money and, at the same time, create a positive perception in the community.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from volunteers indicates that the importance of social organisations and volunteering has been strengthened.
18. <u>Anticipated or 'aspirational'</u> effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...	
<p><i>This category can include outcomes which are not documented, quantified, or properly evaluated. They can include such elements as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.</i></p>	
Service users	n. a.
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	<p>What didn't work well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging more volunteers. The council is not committed to supporting more sustainable volunteer projects.
Other	n. a.
19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)	
<p>The 'Seniorenbüros' has enabled a mechanism for early intervention and prevention and organising better support for older people living at home.</p>	

20. Sustainability of the practice

Description of whether the practice is sustainable, considering the following criteria:

- *Potential for sustainability:* practice was newly started or is ongoing/not yet mainstreamed. How could the practice be sustained (in terms of resources)?
- *Organic sustainability:* service users have been empowered to take the practice forward •
Established: the project has been operational for several years

Potential for sustainability: 'Seniorenbüros' that have a good financial base and create positive effects can be implemented sustainably.

21. Transferability of the practice

Description of whether the practice has been transferred, considering the following criteria:

- *Transferred:* transfer to other regions, countries, service user groups, etc.
- *Potential for transferability:* there is interest from the outside; elements of the practice have been taken up and used elsewhere; material for transferability (for ex. training material) has been developed

Transferred: The initiative is being implemented in rural areas of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The potential for transferability depends on how local policy would support the activities and the extent to which it is recognised that 'Seniorenbüros' could potentially prevent older people from moving to a nursing home too early. Using special events in the communities of North Rhine Westphalia, we raise awareness by inviting policymakers and managers of social organisations to understand our 'Seniorenbüro' policy.

22. Further information

http://www.dortmund.de/de/leben_in_dortmund/familie_und_soziales/seniorenportal/seniorenbueros_senioren