DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE
1. Title of the practice
- 'HOLIDAY PLACEMENTS FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL CARE SECTOR IN RIGA, LATVIA' -
2. Organisation responsible for the practice
City of Riga, Latvia
3. Contact person(s)

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4. Summary of the practice

The initiative started as a programme of work placements at Gaiļezers, which provides residential care for older persons in Riga for 21 pupils (aged 15-18) from secondary schools in Riga. Over three months, the 21 pupils (seven pupils per month) were given an introduction to the work of Gaiļezers, its clients and their needs.

The pupils accompanied and assisted clients in activities such as going for a walk, using technical aids, shopping, library visits, and specialist appointments, as well as leisure activities such as crafts, reading books, newspapers, and journals, singing, playing board games and musical instruments, and physical exercise. The one-month work placement at Gaiļezers was a good opportunity for each pupil to get to know clients, care staff and some of the staff duties, as well as aspects of social service provision and administration. The pupils' support was very helpful for both staff and clients.

The project enables:

- clients to have a greater variety of daily activities, enabling changes in their daily routine, as well as responding to the need for assistance with activities like shopping, attending concerts, excursions etc.

- Gaiļezers to provide additional activities to clients despite staff shortages.

- Secondary school pupils to be introduced to the care profession, informing them on their career decisions and how they can develop skills for the workplace.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

According to the Inclusive Employment Guidelines 2014- 2020 passed by the Latvian Government in May 2015, assistance and guidance in the process of choosing a profession is a preventive measure to avert unemployment that can be supported by the state (p.61).

The State Employment Agency (SEA) is primarily responsible for financing such activities. Gaiļezers applied for project funding from the State Employment Agency and for cofinancing from the City of Riga's Education, Culture and Sports Department to improve the quality and extend the variety of leisure activities provided for the older persons. Pupils and volunteers are important to support to care staff. Projects like this and integrative activities also promote and advertise social care work in society.

6. Staff involved

The managers of Gaiļezers wanted to involve volunteers, students, and others in order to diversify leisure activities and enrich interaction possibilities for clients.

At the beginning of the project, some care workers were sceptical about the idea of involving teenagers in the care process, but the management team communicated the intentions and details of the project well and eventually got the care professionals on board.

It was also necessary for the managers to facilitate good communication and resolve any tensions between the pupils and the care professionals.

7. Target group

Older persons at Gaiļezers who are in need of care and assistance. Secondary

school pupils.

Gaiļezers' staff managers and administrators.

8. Aims of the practice

Enabling Gaiļezers' clients to be more active and offering them greater opportunities to engage in activities they wouldn't normally have access to, plus interaction with a wider range of people.

Introducing secondary school pupils to the care profession, a working environment, and contributing to their employability.

9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across Services		Service Planning		Contracting	
Technology		Skills development (of the workforce)		Quality of services	
Prevention and rehabilitation		Participation of service users		Volunteering	x

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	

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*

Micro

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: Pupils are selected for placement by the SEA, but once selected, the pupils' activities and involvement are decided by Gaiļezers.

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*

n. a.

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*

n. a.

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

Joint budget:

Gaiļezers provided materials for leisure time and creative activities worth about €200.

The secondary pupils received a small payment of €360 for the month of their placement.

The supervisors also received a small remuneration proportionate to the number of pupils they supervised.

The total costs for the project over the three months was €10,997.26, of which the SEA contributed €4,471.20 and Riga City Council's Education, Culture and Sports Department €6,526.06.

Supervisors and social care workers at Gaiļezers also gave their time to provide an introduction to the work duties and gave the advice during activities that the pupils undertook.

Work safety specialists at Gaiļezers also gave inductions into work safety to the pupils.

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*

Single method:

Informal interviews and feedback from clients.

During the project, social workers met once a week to discuss the progress of project activities.

At the end of the one-month work placement, the supervisors asked the pupils for individual feedback.

The data has not been analysed yet.

The project also required the preparation of a number of reports, which were done by the management team.

17. __Measurable__ effects of the practice and what it has achieved for…	
Service users	Bigger variety of leisure activities, the possibility to be more physically active, and a wider net of people to communicate with.
Formal care givers	Additional assistance from pupils who perform duties that are not directly connected to the care of clients.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	The initiative promoted the care profession and increased knowledge about care for older persons among the participating teenagers. Introducing young people to Gailezers also provided an affordable way to support the care of clients.
Other	n. a.

18. __Anticipated or 'aspirational'__ effects of the practice and what it has achieved for… *This category can include outcomes which are not documented, quantified or properly evaluated. They can include such elements as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.*	
Service users	Improved well-being from access to extra activities and interactions with the pupils.
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	Raising awareness of the care for older persons and the profile of the wider care profession may be beneficial in the long term for encouraging young people to become part of the formal care workforce.
Other	The initiative aims to combat youth unemployment by giving secondary school pupils the opportunity to understand working relationships and develop employability skills. The initiative is integrative because it brings together teenagers and older people and facilitates mutual interaction between the two generations.
19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)	

Secondary school pupils showed interest in working with older people, and some said they preferred this placement to other opportunities, such as placements in supermarkets.

Gaiļezers' clients appreciated having new people in the institution and said that it had a positive effect on their mood and engaged them mentally.

The practical experience of seeing and responding to older people's needs, including the need for meaningful leisure activities, raises pupils' awareness of older people's everyday lives and may even help them to think about their parents and their own old age.

Gaiļezers' clients liked interacting with the teenagers. The pupils could pay more attention and devote more time to individual clients than care professionals can due to time and workforce constraints.

Up to now, the SEA has been selecting pupils for the programme without Gaiļezers' involvement. Instead, the selection of pupils could be organised in two steps. The SEA could organise a general reception for applicants, but the selection and interview would be undertaken by Gaiļezers, which would ensure the involvement of more suitable pupils, a better match of expectations and a lower drop-out rate.

Furthermore, the placements were often perceived as too short. It might be advisable to give pupils who show good communication skills and interest the opportunity to extend their placement for up to three months.

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

Established: The initiative has been running for two years and has proven successful. There are now more teenagers wanting to participate in the initiative than there are placements available at Gaiļezers. All stakeholders are satisfied with the project activities, and the goals of the different stakeholders described above have been achieved. Gaiļezers is planning to apply for funding for this project again in the coming year, and this time plans to provide up to 50 places.

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: Two other municipal long-term care institutions in Riga have implemented similar initiatives

22. Further information