

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

1. Title of the practice

- 'VERENIGING "WOK", A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE/ARBEIDSZORG PROJECT' -

2. Organisation responsible for the practice

Bruges Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW Brugge), Belgium

3. Contact person(s)

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4. Summary of the practice

Vereniging 'WOK' is a social enterprise organised by Bruges Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW Brugge). In Belgium, social entrepreneurship projects and their methodology are called *arbeidszorg* projects. Those forms are about employment and care in the working environment. Care in the way that people can work at their own pace, choose their programme (e.g., 2 days a week), etc. A job coach is present in the organisation who takes care of the person's social welfare. Additionally, on the work floor, there are technical assistants who help with organising the different tasks.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

There is policy support for supported forms of employment and the social economy. Since April 2015, the two different legislations covering sheltered economy and social economy (e.g. different target groups, different entry criteria for the target group, funding) have been merged into a single social economy legislation. In particular, entry criteria are now different and rely on a screening of applicants along the ICF (International Classification of Functioning), in order for them to enter a social economic organisation. The new name is *maatwerkbedrijven* or 'customized firms'. People who work in these 'customized firms' are employees. Both social economy organisations and unemployment offices are now implementing the ICF system.

Vereniging 'WOK' is just one step below: *arbeidszorg* works with people who cannot work in these customised firms because people are not ready to be employees, and for whom the pressure of a paid, full time job is still too high.

Around 8,000 people in Belgium (Flanders) participate in such *arbeidszorg* work floors as offered by Vereniging 'WOK'.

The difficulty to find a fitting regulation lies in the fact that it involves two different ministries: Labour and Social welfare (see below on the '*participation ladder*'), while WOK methodology involves both sides.

Such social enterprises (*arbeidszorg* projects) were introduced around the year 2000 in Belgium, because a number of people were left out of new legislations on regular and sheltered economy. These projects did not start with funding or legislation, but because of the big need they experienced. Other, bigger organisations gave funding. At the beginning, Wok got funding as a small NGO from the city of Bruges. Since 2003, the Public Centre of Social Welfare has committed to give regular funding to the Vereniging 'WOK'. Since then, 'WOK' has been an association belonging to the Public Centre of Social Welfare of Bruges. This is not the case for other similar organisations/*arbeidszorg* projects.

6. Staff involved

The organisations that are involved are:

- The Bruges Public Centre for Social Welfare funds the programme.
- Various organisations refer user to 'WOK': employment, social, psychiatric services.
- Organisations guide and assist the clients: social workers from the Public Centre of Social Welfare, job coach from the employment department, psychologist from a psychiatric hospital, social worker from the home for people with disabilities.

7. Target group

'WOK' is targeting adults with a distance to the labour market, and looking for and willing to do an active program (workshops).

Vereniging 'WOK' was started 17 years ago by a group of organisations working with people with mental health and psychiatric problems (social economy firms, psychiatric hospital, counselling for people with psychiatric problems) in Bruges. These organisations noticed the existence of a group that did not belong in a hospital or at home being unemployed, but who were not able to work in a regular or sheltered labour market (because of a lack of skills, illness, the absence of work experiences, education).

Vereniging 'WOK' wanted to create a more customised answer for these groups.

Over the years, the target group has expanded to include other types of disabilities and conditions such as autism.

8. Aims of the practice

The purpose of the Vereniging 'WOK' is:

- Organise customised training/jobs for people who cannot work because of disabilities / capabilities, in the labour and social / sheltered market.
- Create workshops with a diversity of activities: a gardening group maintains the gardens of the Public centre of Welfare, services are put in place for people in Bruges (maintenance of gardens, painting jobs, small house jobs...). Vereniging 'WOK' also has a workshops performing various packaging jobs e.g. chocolate boxes.

Creating customized employment, training, or job solutions for persons with disabilities (and a distance towards labour market). For some clients, a job in the sheltered economy/social enterprise or labour market will be a target. For some people, a regular activity in 'WOK' will be the final goal. 'WOK' offers step 3 and 4 on the formalised scale of the participation ladder (*participatieladder**).

Step 4 (see graph below) means that people have work potential. Job coaches work towards this goal, e.g., by organising internships and apprenticeships.

A **participation ladder defines degrees of citizens' participation within society in a given policy. Concerning activation, the ladder goes from 1 to 6, staying at home to being included in the open labour market. A challenge resides in the fact that steps 1, 2 and 3 depend on the Ministry of Social welfare, while steps 4, 5 and 6 depend on the Ministry of Labour. Moreover, the communication between the two is often poor.*

6. Regular job

5. sheltered employment and incentives

4. intense and temporary counselling towards a job

3. Sheltered workshops with counselling needed

2. Social contacts outside the house

1. Contacts limited to the domestic sphere / Day care

The participation ladder (source: OCMW Brugge/European Social Network)

9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across services		Service Planning		Contracting	
Technology		Skills development (of the workforce)		Quality of services	
Others: employment of persons with disabilities	x	Active inclusion	x		

ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE

10. Status

Pilot project (ongoing)	x	Project (ongoing)		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

'WOK' works at the local level in Bruges. See also section 7.

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

'WOK' performs its activities on behalf of the Bruges Public Centre for Social Welfare. Vereniging 'WOK' has a board of directors and a head/coordinator.

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

5 services in the Bruges region were pooled together to create Vereniging.

Several organisations from Bruges noticed a lack of opportunities facing people with mental health problems. They (social economy firms, psychiatric hospitals, counselling for people with psychiatric problems) then started Vereniging 'WOK'.

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

Vereniging Wok has a board of directors and an executive committee with representatives from the different client groups 'WOK' is working with.

Families and carers are involved in the case of young people living with their families or in a shelter home.

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

Vereniging 'WOK' is funded through a mix of existing and external resources.

- Public Centre for Social Welfare
- Temporary tenders and funding opportunities
- The revenue generated by the workshops' economic activities.

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*

The evaluation is merely quantitative and concerns the number of clients, the number of services offered, and the budget. Despite the absence of an in-depth evaluation so far, there is a clear recognition of the need to study and, eventually, prove the positive effects of such measures. This is crucial in order to obtain support and funding from policymakers (see also section 19).

17. Measurable effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

Service users	Around 100 people previously without a job received customised jobs thanks to 'WOK'.
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.
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 outcomes as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.

Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Realisation and implementation of the right to work of persons with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Customisation of well-adapted employment solutions
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Creation of employment and training solutions for a group for which none was provided before <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable funding was obtained by 'WOK' from the Public Centre for Social Welfare

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The OCMW itself, which created 'WOK', has become a client and beneficiary of the services provided by 'WOK' (gardening, kitchen)
Other	<p>Positive contribution to the evolution of mindsets by increasing the visibility and participation of persons with disabilities in the open labour market and society. They are now seen as regular employees. Moreover, the focus has shifted from disabilities to abilities. For instance, Vereniging 'WOK' has maintained the gardens of the Public Centre for Social Welfare and has raised its prices per working hour because of good quality performance.</p>
<p>19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)</p>	
<p>See section 18.</p> <p>Social enterprises increasingly realise that there is a need to boost the demand side and have a large cooperation with companies, employers, and other partners. This could also help to mitigate the consequences of current budget cuts. Social workers and other staff members at 'WOK' have attended a marketing course, specialised in social and sheltered workshops and how these can better communicate with market actors.</p> <p>'WOK' examples have shown the ability of the target groups to acquire jobs in the for-profit sector.</p>	
<p>20. Sustainability of the practice</p> <p><i>Description of whether the practice is sustainable, considering the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential for sustainability:</i> practice was newly started or is ongoing/not yet mainstreamed. How could the practice be sustained (in terms of resources)? • <i>Organic sustainability:</i> service users have been empowered to take the practice forward • <i>Established:</i> the project has been operational for several years 	
<p>The project has proved to be sustainable over the years. However, budgetary pressure and changing support at the local level are challenging it.</p>	
<p>21. Transferability of the practice</p> <p><i>Description of whether the practice has been transferred, considering the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transferred:</i> transfer to other regions, countries, service user groups, etc. • <i>Potential for transferability:</i> 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 	
<p>This social enterprise model is replicable. However, the local context and policy support are key to its successful implementation.</p>	
<p>22. Further information</p>	
<p>See www.wokbrugge.be for a short movie presenting the different workshops of Vereniging 'WOK'.</p>	