

*Digital social functioning assessment tool for youth in out-of-home care  
transitioning to independent living*

<b><u>Organisation(s):</u></b>	Riga City Council	
<b><u>Country:</u></b>	Latvia	
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<b><u>Theme:</u></b> <i>Choose at least one option</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ageing & Care <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum & Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Young People <input type="checkbox"/> Support for Children & Families <input type="checkbox"/> Community Care <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Care & Support <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Production <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digitalisation <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Labour Market Inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Social Inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce and Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Social Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> EU Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Social Service's Resilience <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Person-Centred Care <input type="checkbox"/> Research & Use of Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<b><u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u></b> <i>Check the 20 principles <a href="#">here</a>.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Education, training, life-long learning <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Gender equality <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Equal opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Active support to employment <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Secure and adaptable employment <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Fair Wages <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Transparent employment conditions <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Social dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Healthy, safe work environment	<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Childcare and child support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12. Social protection <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Unemployment benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Minimum income <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Old age income and pensions <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Health care <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Long-term care <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Housing and assistance to the homeless <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Access to essential services
<b><u>Current status of the practice:</u></b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept and Design Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Execution & Monitoring Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Consolidation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Up and Transformation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
<b><u>Context/ Social</u></b>	The Youth Support Centre was established at the end of 2019 as part of a strategic initiative to reform existing social work practices regarding young people transitioning out of family care.	

<p><b><u>issues addressed</u></b> Please explain the problem you attempt to solve.</p>	<p>Young people in out-of-family care constitute a distinct target group for social work for various reasons, which are determined by multiple factors. These factors include the specific age stage, challenges associated with separation from their biological family, and the transition from childhood to adulthood. Substance abuse, homelessness, domestic violence, emotional disturbance, poverty, and incarceration are common issues faced by children who have been removed from their biological families. These children also experience the consequences of these problems, including attachment, trust, identity, and various other challenges. Many of these children require individual professional assistance to overcome the traumatic effects of neglect and abuse they have experienced.</p> <p>As a target group, they commonly experience worse outcomes, including a lower likelihood of being in education or employment. Additionally, they face higher risks of homelessness and suicide. Likewise, international studies indicate a high risk of social exclusion (material disadvantage and marginalisation) among out-of-home care leavers. All these circumstances contribute to a unique combination of challenges for social workers and social service administrators.</p>
<p><b><u>Objectives:</u></b> Please provide a <b>maximum of three</b> objectives in bullet points.</p>	<p>The project seeks to reform the current system by transitioning from a detached or overly authoritative approach. Instead, it prioritises fostering collaborative relationships and active engagement with young people in meaningful activities, coupled with proactive preventive measures implemented before their legal adulthood.</p>
<p><b><u>Activities:</u></b> Please summarise the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 300 words).</p>	<p>The Centre has developed a digital assessment tool designed to evaluate the social functioning of young individuals. This innovative tool can analyse data at both the individual case and program levels, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of case management.</p> <p>The tool collects comprehensive data on a young person's social functioning, encompassing eight core criteria and nineteen associated sub-criteria. Additionally, it captures qualitative insights social workers provide regarding the individual's social situation. By processing this data, the tool generates a detailed description of the social context, complemented by the professional assessment of a social worker or youth specialist. This analytical process empowers informed decision-making regarding subsequent steps in the case management process.</p> <p>Moreover, the tool facilitates data analysis at the program level, allowing for examining changes in social functioning over time. This capability provides valuable insights for program evaluation and refinement, enabling the identification of areas for improvement and optimising program effectiveness.</p>
<p><b><u>Outcomes:</u></b> Please explain what the results were/are so far and how you evaluated this.</p>	<p>In 2022, a comprehensive assessment was undertaken to analyse the dynamics of social functioning changes at the program level. The examination involved the meticulous analysis of data from 323 cases, enabling conclusions regarding the efficacy of social work with young individuals and identifying areas requiring attention in future endeavors.</p> <p>The assessment explored factors influencing the social functioning of young people. Key findings included the significant positive impact of supportive environments, such as the Youth Support Centre, on their overall well-being. Additionally, the study demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted interventions addressing specific needs, such as addictions and life skills development. The importance of care type was also highlighted, with foster and guardianship care demonstrating superior outcomes compared to institutional care. Furthermore, the</p>

	<p>assessment identified mental health challenges as a correlate of lower social functioning, emphasising the need for specialised support in this area. Educational opportunities and addiction treatment were identified as crucial factors influencing social functioning.</p> <p>Finally, the study revealed the pivotal role of the Youth Support Centre's comprehensive support services in addressing the multifaceted needs of vulnerable youth, including material, emotional, educational, and career-related aspects. These findings underscore the importance of creating supportive environments, addressing specific needs, and providing comprehensive support to enhance young people's social functioning and well-being.</p>
<p><b><u>Links to supporting documents:</u></b> e.g. website or report of the practice</p>	<p><a href="https://ld.riga.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RPBJC-izvertejums_apraksts.pdf">https://ld.riga.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RPBJC-izvertejums_apraksts.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/abs/2024/04/shsconf_shw2023_01004/shsconf_shw2023_01004.html">https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/abs/2024/04/shsconf_shw2023_01004/shsconf_shw2023_01004.html</a></p>
<p><b><u>Comments and tips i.e. for people willing to use your Practice</u></b></p>	<p>Assessing young people's needs requires a delicate balance between focusing on them and considering society's expectations. Therefore, clear objectives must be defined, and comprehensive data must be collected. Before embarking on a data-driven assessment, establish specific goals and research questions. What do you aim to learn about the effectiveness of your programs or interventions? Gather various data points to better understand the individuals or groups you serve.</p>