DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

1. Title of the practice

Grant Programme for Social Enterprises 'Promotion of employment for groups at risk of social exclusion in Riga'

2. Organisation responsible for the practice

Welfare Department, Riga City Council

3. Contact person(s)

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4. Summary of the practice

In 2016, the Welfare Department of the City of Riga decided to promote employment for socially excluded groups by financing social enterprises, NGOs and foundations.

The Welfare Department created grants of €7,000 to finance beneficiaries for 12 months. The overall goal of the project is the creation of new jobs for socially excluded people with complex needs or improvement of skills and training for people who already have a job but need more support.

The Welfare Department launched a call for applications. Successful projects had to meet the following criteria:

1. Promote job creation, the development of existing jobs, and improve the capacities of employees.
2. The employment of socially vulnerable groups should be implemented according to a sustainable social and business model.
3. The employment of socially vulnerable groups should be linked to goods and services that are in demand.
4. The activities should be environmentally friendly.

The beneficiaries of grants oversee the recruitment process. If necessary, public social services provide support for beneficiaries in terms of outreach to service users.

The project proved to be very successful and is now firmly established.

A new call for applications was launched in July 2018 with grants raised to €11,000 each and three projects selected.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

In Riga there is a shortage of labour with unemployment at 3.8%. However, there are some people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have difficulty in accessing the job market and are dependent on social benefits.

A few years ago, the Welfare Department of the City of Riga decided to adopt a different approach to support people furthest from the labour market. Social entrepreneurship was one of the answers to the complex needs of specific vulnerable target groups.

When the pilot project was launched, there was no specific legislation on social entrepreneurship in Latvia. Therefore, the City of Riga created some specific guidelines that included as potential beneficiaries profit and not-for-profit organisations and enterprises.

6. Staff involved

Four experts from the City of Riga's Welfare Department and one expert from the City Development Department

7. Target group

11 target groups (people with disabilities, people with mental health problems, ex-convicts, young mothers, homeless people, refugees, Roma etc.)

8. Aims of the practice

Create jobs for socially excluded people in Riga

9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across services		Service Planning		Contracting	
Technology		Skills development (of the workforce)		Quality of services	
Others: support for people furthest from the labour market via social entrepreneurship	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:* practice that involves individuals at local level
- *Meso level practice:* practice that involves organisations or communities
- *Macro level practice:* practice that involves large population groups

Micro and macro level practice. Public authorities cooperate with organisations and local stakeholders to promote the employment of people furthest from the labour market.

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 Welfare Department of Riga City Council is in charge of managing the project, with the support of the City Development Department.

13. Engaging stakeholders in the practice

European
Social
Network
Social Services
in Europe

The European Social Network is
supported by the European Union

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

Collaborative approach. The programme has been designed with the support of NGOs representing specific target groups, entrepreneurs and the Social Entrepreneurship Association.

During the pilot phase of the project a 'social entrepreneurship accelerator' organisation provided training and mentoring for the grant beneficiaries.

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 an on-going dialogue and feedback*
- *Involvement in care: person-centred approaches to care/support*

Service users, particularly people with disabilities, people with mental illness and ex-convicts were involved via NGOs representing specific target groups who were consulted in the design of the project.

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

The programme is funded by the Riga City Council. In the pilot phase, each grant was €7,000 and the beneficiary co-financed the activities based on 10% of the total grant. From 2018, the allocated grant is €11,000 with the same rate of co-financing.

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:* 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*

Informal. In the pilot phase of the project, beneficiaries were asked to provide reports every second month. For the next period, they will have to provide reports every three months. Reporting involves activities, finances and job contracts for people from vulnerable backgrounds. Representatives from the City of Riga Welfare Department and City Development Department conduct regular visits to enterprises.

17. <u>Measurable</u> effects of the practice and what it has achieved for…

Service users	In 2016, four successful applicants received the grant and 11 new jobs were created.
	Target groups for this first round of applications were people with mental health problems, people with disabilities, ex-convicts and young mothers. After a year of implementation, out of 11 jobs seven are still active.

Formal care givers	
Informal carers	
Organisations	Two of the grant receivers have significantly developed their business and continue to employ people with disabilities, young mothers and ex-convicts.
Other	

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	More opportunities to find employment, contributing to their social inclusion.
Formal care givers	
Informal carers	
Organisations	Development of social enterprises, who have the opportunity to hire people at a time when unemployment levels are very low.
Other	

19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)

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 on-going/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

The practice originally started as a pilot project and is now established.

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

This practice is the first of its kind in Latvia. The Ministry of Welfare consulted the Welfare Department of the City of Riga in order to scale up this model of support at the national level.