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Editorial

Welcome to the second TSE newsletter where we have included articles on activity happening in each of the partner cities. The partnership remains active with local projects being delivered in each of the cities:

In February, the Rotterdam TSE partner hosted a series of workshops and study visits. These events were attended by a wide range of people including managers and those working at a practitioner level from each of the partner cities. The events were an excellent opportunity for the 3 cities to understand at a very practical level, the projects being delivered locally in Rotterdam and also allowed for a peer review of these activities. Included in these visits were workshops attended by representatives from the partner cities to understand and compare the different strategies and policy frameworks that support service delivery in each partner city.



<http://tse.two-seas.eu>

The TSE Partnership consists of the following public authorities:

Stad Gent (BE)
www.gent.be

Gemeente Rotterdam (NL)
www.rotterdam.nl

Southampton City Council (UK)
www.southampton.gov.uk



The TSE project is part funded by; The EU's Interreg 4A 2 Seas Programme.

Project Events

A key aim of the TSE project is to make effective links with other professionals in each of the cities at local regional and national level. The project partners are holding regular cross border events and encourage participation from different sections and organisations in the local government structures.

17-20th May 2011 Gent - mid-term study visit and workshops

15-17th November 2011 Southampton - TSE final conference

Local Activity

Ghent - activity on the issues and challenges facing those people with physical disabilities – the identification and exchange of best practices among stakeholders and services:

- Formulation of the critical success factors.
- Inventory, study and analysis of employment issues.
- Formulation of policy proposals.
- Enhance knowledge and accessibility of administrative and social services.

Rotterdam - developed projects focussed on particular target groups that are most often exclude from the labour market:

- The aim is to provide young people without qualifications the means to compete for positions in the port of Rotterdam.
- Offer young people at a certain distance of the labour market opportunities on training and a chance on employment in the security branch.
- Training to build a career in homecare or the care sector.

Southampton - focussed on the following groups who are often socially excluded in our cities:

- Working with the residents in a local community, identifying issues and concerns that may be acting as a barrier to re entering the job market e.g. fuel poverty, debt and health issues and deliver innovative confidence building or personal development activities that will build residents' self esteem and encourage them to take the first steps back to the labour market.
- Providing high quality, sustainable employment and skills related service which offers value for money for people with severe and profound learning disabilities and to measure progression matching their abilities to realistic opportunities.
- To support young people who are about to leave care or have recently left the care of the local authority to gain employment for at least 12 months

Ghent

Taking the initiative and writing history

Following on from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the amended Flemish Accessibility Regulations, Ghent has set its sights on achieving full accessibility. The city is consciously taking a leading role in the area of accessibility and in this way hopes to help develop a continuum. The Full Accessibility study day, held on 29 March, brought together 47 participants, all of whom work on accessibility in various Flemish cities, municipalities and provinces. It was the first time that such a meeting of accessibility officers had taken place. Guy Reynebeau, Alderman for Welfare and Health of the City of Ghent: "We are aware that we are writing history here today."

Taking action together

By striving for full accessibility we are working on the creation of an inclusive society that offers the best possible opportunities for all residents, including, therefore, people suffering from a temporary impairment or a permanent disability. Cities and municipalities generally work on this issue together with external partners, such as consultancies and municipal advisory councils. Local authorities involve citizens and enter into dialogue with them. To this end Ghent is working together with the Municipal Advisory Council for Persons with a Disability (SAPH Gent). The participants were in unanimous agreement about the need for networking, collaboration and awareness campaigns. Syvrine Boddin from the City of Bruges Welfare Department: "It was a memorable day! Seeing and hearing about how other people work on accessibility gives a real boost to our policy."

The tactile model as an accessibility tool

Ghent has already been developing tactile models of city sites for some time. Initially these were just intended to give partially sighted and blind people an overview of and insight into existing city sites. Based on ideas of inclusiveness, they are now also being used to consult with people with visual impairments right from the design phase, before the building phase begins. Experience has shown that tactile models also offer clear added value to all the people of Ghent and to tourists. The models are the result of collaboration between people with visual impairments and architecture students. Marie-Andrée Avraam, accessibility officer for the City of Ghent: "The advantage of working with students is that the future professional will have an even greater focus on improving accessibility."



Further information about the study day can be found at; <http://tse.two-seas.eu/en-GB/gent/35/seminar-full-accessibility.html>

Rotterdam

Video CV's

DAAD on film enables Rotterdam's jobseekers to present themselves to potential employers in the Rotterdam region using a video CV. Unemployment statistics show that, compared to the rest of the Netherlands, Rotterdam's jobseekers are low skilled and therefore have less work experience. Consequently, they depend for longer on benefits to support themselves. This means that, when assessing a written CV, this group is initially less attractive to an employer than candidates whose written CVs show no shortage of (relevant) work experience.

Research by Erasmus University shows that job applicants with little or no work experience can positively distinguish themselves from other candidates. Employers indicated that after watching a video CV they would invite the applicant for an interview, whereas if reading a written CV they would have rejected the applicant because of the CV. Candidates are supplied from the files of the City of Rotterdam's Department of Social Affairs and Employment and from the caseloads of coaches working for reintegration companies contracted by the City, which support jobseekers in their reintegration in the regular jobs market. A training programme has been created for making video CVs. A whole day is spent on training in preparation for a video recording. During that day, you are taught to look at yourself and how others see you, to determine what you are capable of and to translate that into realistic job aspirations. Video CVs are no more than 1.5 minutes in length. This is because research indicates that the effect of a video CV is lost if an employer has to reach a decision in a time span of 1.5 to 2 minutes. The film is finished in one working week and the client and the referrer are sent the link. Employers registered with DAAD are then able to view this supply of potential employees free of charge. Video CVs have been made since 2009, originally under the name "See me at work" and now under the name "DAAD on Film". Since then, 2,216 video CVs have been produced.

To view examples of the innovative video CV's please click here;

<http://tse.two-seas.eu/en-GB/multimedia/12/seeme-work-trailer.html>

<http://tse.two-seas.eu/en-GB/multimedia/14/seeme-work-candidate-1.html>

<http://tse.two-seas.eu/en-GB/multimedia/15/seeme-work-candidate-2.html>

Southampton

Innovative project nominated for UK award

Southampton City Council and TSE funded 'Beat the Credit Crunch' pilot project made it onto the final shortlist of the UK Housing Awards last autumn for its work towards 'tackling social and economic exclusion'. The pilot project was considered 'innovative' in its use of a community development approach to engage with residents in seeking to support them tackle a variety of poverty and work related issues. It focused on small deprived neighbourhood areas, working alongside residents of a council owned tower block, and then in an area of terraced housing and other council owned property. The pilot projects have helped residents with issues such as accessing assistance with the cost of heating their homes; getting disabled access aids fitted to their home, helping residents to access courses, training and employment opportunities. Building on the lessons learnt, work is currently being undertaken to improve access to services and initiatives so, as much as possible, they are accessible to all residents regardless of their circumstances.

Care leavers into work

Young people who have lived in local authority care for many years often face a number of barriers and disadvantages when they become adults and seek work. The Regeneration

Team in Southampton City Council is working with local third sector organisations (NGO's) to develop a package of support for young people as part of local interventions to identify new employment and training opportunities. A small number of 16 – 18 year olds, who had been looked after by the local authority in children's homes or by foster parents, but have faced problems in accessing employment and training after reaching adulthood and independence, are being supported to find longer term employment. The support and intervention offered is an intensive package which includes advice and guidance, life coaching, skills training, and work experience that will enable them to be more work ready and access jobs. This activity will provide a model for mainstreaming support for this group of city residents.



Rotterdam Study Visit

The partnership met in February for a two day study visit and had a full itinerary including visits to see local projects and catch up for the all important project management meetings.

Here, Jon Brookes, Employment Officer from City Limits Employment, Southampton reflects on his own experiences.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity of travelling to Rotterdam along with other colleagues to see first hand the good work being delivered by the partnership and to meet the people involved. The two projects visited were based around employment initiatives with an interest to challenge social exclusion. The first visit was to the port authority to view 'Influx into the harbour' which is aimed at young people aged 18 to 25 who have poor education or have been long term unemployed. It is a fantastic working model which takes these individuals initially on a four month work trial within the port of Rotterdam and can develop into a two year full time contract including further education in college. We learnt that with a combination of a good work ethic and appropriate academic grades there are opportunities to train for licences to drive the cranes and other machinery within the port. With a success rate of 90% it certainly felt that these once excluded persons were becoming valuable members of their societies. The second project we visited was the Aafje care project. The aim is to provide a housekeeping service for the elderly, socially vulnerable or those with disabilities. These employment opportunities are extremely popular with young/single mothers although it is in no way exclusive to this group. The initiative works to help people become independent of state benefits by enabling them to work whilst still retaining some help with the costs of housing and child care. By providing an in-house training program and by offering a fully supported work environment the employees are helped back into the daily routine of working and it gives them confidence and social skills. Again I found this model works really well and I think that by taking monies that would otherwise be paid in benefits to fund some of the costs of the scheme is inspired. This project has taken people stuck in a circle of poverty, state benefits and exclusion and given them real hope and opportunities for the future.

To conclude, my overall experience of this study visit was extremely positive; the chance to see how others think and work and to have the chance to ask questions along the way has been invaluable. Not only will it influence the work I do at present but also the kind of work I would like to do in the future

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