

In this issue

- Editorial
- Project Events
- Local Activity
- Gent
- Rotterdam
- Southampton
- Comment
- Contacts

Editorial

Welcome to the June TSE newsletter where we can bring you up to date with activities happening in each of the partner cities. The partnership is now entering the final phase of the project and working towards its conclusions and recommendations to share across the European union.

In May, the Gent partners hosted a 3 day project meeting and study visit. This event was attended by members of the partnership from Rotterdam and Southampton including managers and those working at a practitioner level. As always these events are an excellent opportunity for the 3 cities to absorb each others progress and to disseminate key findings in a practical way.



<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.

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

Accessible festival

The 10-day cultural city festival 'Gentse Feesten' is a highlight for festival lovers. Thanks to the Tackling Social Exclusion project, this year people with a disability will be able to call on the services of a voluntary assistant (free of charge) over the entire duration of the Gentse Feesten. And they will be able to do so at a time that suits them. Other accessibility initiatives will include reserved parking spaces, adapted transport and public sanitary facilities, Flemish Sign Language interpretation for a number of activities, including the fully accessible performance of Raf Walschaerts' play 'Zoon' ['Son'] on 20 July. The list of adaptations grows every year. This service will be provided in collaboration with the non-profit-making association Intro, the specialist in accessible events and festivals. This year's Gentse Feesten will be a test case. The City of Ghent wants to draw lessons from it for future events. As part of the European project with Rotterdam and Southampton, it hopes to inspire other European cities. Find out more at www.gentsefeesten.be/praktisch/toegankelijkheid

Access to employment

Unemployment remains high amongst certain groups of the population, in particular people with a disability, people over the age of 50 and people from ethnic minorities. In spite of their motivation, education and skills, it is difficult for them to find their way in to the labour market. At the same time, a large number of vacancies for both high-skilled and low-skilled jobs remain unfilled. Alongside other employment agencies, Jobkanaal is specifically geared, as an additional channel, towards these target groups and raises the awareness of employers.



And this specific approach is paying off – certainly in Ghent, where a direct collaboration with all players is achieving the highest recruitment figures in Flanders: over 3,700 in 2010. Jobkanaal's objective and approach bear strong similarities to those of Rotterdam. The recent study visit by the project partners to Jobkanaal yielded some interesting comparisons and learning points.

You can find out more about Jobkanaal at <http://www.jobkanaal.be/> and under factsheet 'Jobkanaal' at <http://tse.two-seas.eu/en-GB/gent/>

Rotterdam

Personal care scheme

DAAD is the leading employment service in Rotterdam. DAAD recognized that there was a local need for a personal care service for the ageing population and at the same time there was a shortage of health workers in the city. By offering people without work, employment opportunities as domestic workers, the need for personal care in Rotterdam was answered through the Rijnmond Reintegration scheme.

This has lead to a win-win situation because:

- Candidates are no longer dependant on state benefits
- The future prospects of these people improves
- The shortage of health workers is being filled

A total of 261 women have already taken part, of which 168 have been offered a contract. Of these, 91 moved to long term employment contracts with their personal care clients.



Research and evaluation

The evaluation of the Rotterdam projects has been ongoing since 2009. The evaluation consists of three parts: a theoretical analysis of the projects, a process evaluation and a result evaluation. Interviewing project members and participants is an important research method in this evaluation. The interviews are focused on subjects like the organisational context, selection criteria of participants, quality of participants, the drop-out rate, project goals and points of improvement. The interviews with participants comprehend their experiences with the project so far and the extra value of the project in terms of social inclusion.

We began the research process with the theoretical analysis. The next step was interviews with the project leaders and participants. The aim is to prepare a final report in September 2011.

The purpose of the study is twofold:

- Rotterdam uses the conclusions and lessons to improve the projects;
- Cross border exchange of knowledge with the other TSE-cities.

Some quotes to give you an idea on how these projects can change lives:

Participant of the care project:

"The working world helps me to improve my language skills. Also, my social network is expanding and I learn more of the city I live in. And one of the greatest rewards of this work is the gratitude I receive, especially from older members of society. I've helped people who were socially completely isolated and were even afraid to go to the local store. At the end of the day it makes me feel good that I made a difference."

Southampton

Community recycling

Robert has lived in a residential setting for most of his life. In the past few years, he has moved into the community and now shares a home with two other service users in supported living. He has profound and multiple learning disabilities. When we first met Robert he would not engage with everyday tasks and would present challenging behaviour on a regular basis. We wanted to see him within the community so we went out and saw him at an activity club that he attends once a week. We became aware that Robert was always very eager to help with taking the rubbish and recycling out. He enjoys sorting these items into different bins. We arranged a trial at our recycling group where he became a very active member of the group and would engage extremely well with these tasks. When an opportunity became available for a litter picking job at a local community centre, we put Robert forward for the role. Robert helps with litter picking at the community site on a weekly basis. City Limits identified some specific goals for Robert and job coached him for around 5 months. He has progressed well with this job and he is now in paid employment for his litter picking work. This has made a huge change and impact on his life. His challenging behaviour has decreased and he looks forward to work every week.



Supporting care leavers

Building on the practice showcased in Rotterdam which focussed on supporting excluded young people into the labour market, Southampton is delivering a local intervention with young people who have been in care under the supervision of the local authority. A small group of young people were chosen to receive support from a local third sector organisation, the Wheatsheaf Trust to support them to progress into work and have a more independent life. The service gives advice and guidance, training and employment transition. Of the initial group of 19 young people only 6 were able to progress and sustain work or take up placements. The trust found that those being supported had a range of issues that placed them far from the labour market, including lack of confidence and emotional instability, a demotivated attitude to learning, involved in dysfunctional personal relationships, were homeless, and had poor money management skills. The young people have access to work experience and training to build up their employability skills and CV. Given the findings with the initial group of care leavers, Wheatsheaf Trust has re-profiled the kind of support and intervention available. The project is also enabling the development of partnership links between practitioners and providers; those with employment support experience or social care support and organisations offering work placements.

Comment

Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the framework of the EU 2020 strategy

Extracts from a key note speech

by Archbishop emeritus Jukka Paarma, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland

In today's Europe, poverty and social exclusion affect the lives of millions of people of all ages in all member states in the EU. It is estimated that 16% of the citizens in Europe – around 85 million people – currently live at risk of poverty. During the last years, the gaps between rich and poor have increased, despite an economic growth. Due to the current financial and economic crisis, the situation has become even worse. The enlargement, demographic development, migration, climate change and energy security also bring about additional challenges in this respect.

Poverty deprives people from living a life in dignity, enjoying fundamental social rights and participating in society. Injustice, exclusion and a sense of voice-less-ness keep people in poverty trapped in deprivation. Poverty also tends to inherit, forming vicious circles, depriving generations from hope. This intergenerational transmission of poverty limits opportunities and options from early childhood. This is especially the case for certain ethnic groups, suffering from multiple discriminations. One example is the Roma, who are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion than most Europeans. The Roma suffer from multiple discrimination including high rates of unemployment, lack of education, substandard housing and inadequate access to social and health services. This creates a vicious circle of marginalization and poverty, affecting especially Roma children. The Roma are in all EU member states a visible reminder of poverty and exclusion, that we cannot close our eyes from, but which needs joint action on a European level.

The European union is committed to combating poverty and social exclusion. For example, the EU charter of Fundamental Rights sets out a number of civil, social, economic and political rights that should be available to everyone. It also aims to protect those at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and prohibits discrimination on a range of various grounds. The charter has, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, binding legal force.

But treaties, charters and strategies are – although important – not enough. What is needed is a true will and commitment to combat poverty and social exclusion, including a will to deal with the roots and causes of poverty. The fight against poverty and social exclusion must receive a higher priority on the EU agenda. The social and value dimension must be mainstreamed and enhanced within all policy areas. And our European common values have to be translated more strongly into economic, social and environmental policies. There seems today to be an overemphasis on profit and growth. Consequently we tend to forget that economic growth and competitiveness can never be ends in themselves – only means to improve the well-being of people, which also should and must be the principle aim of the Europe 2020 strategy. Instead of focusing on profit and increased consumption, I think Europe really needs to focus more on responsibility for the common good and on the well-being of all people and of the world we live in.

Partner Cities



GENT

Luc Van Asch
Departement Bevolking en Welzijn
Stad Gent
Botermarkt 1
9000 Gent
Belgium
+32 9 266 7290
luc.vanasch@gent.be



Gemeente Rotterdam
Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid
Sociaal-wetenschappelijke Afdeling

DAAD



ROTTERDAM

Kris Luijsterburg
Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid
Gemeente Rotterdam
P.O. box: 1024
3000 BA Rotterdam
Nederland
+31 10 498 2347
k.luijsterburg@sozawe.rotterdam.nl



SOUTHAMPTON

Kerrie Prowting
City Limits Employment
Southampton City Council
340b Shirley Road
Southampton SO15 3HJ
UK
+44 2380 917880
kerrie.prowting@southampton.gov.uk



TSE PROJECT MANAGER

Kerrie Prowting
Southampton City Council
340b Shirley Road
Southampton SO15 3HJ
UK

+44 2380 917735

Kerrie.Prowting@southampton.gov.uk

The document reflects the author's views. The INTERREG IVA 2Seas Programme Authorities are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.