

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

1. Title of the practice

ESTI@ Project – Employment enhancement and social service integration

2. Organisation responsible for the practice

City of Athens

3. Contact person(s)

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4. Summary of the practice

The project aims to assist beneficiaries to achieve social inclusion through innovation and **integrated social services**.

For beneficiaries that are able to work, the most effective way to achieve social inclusion is to secure employment so that they can gradually sustain their households without the need of social welfare.

However, as there needs to be a gradual transition between receiving benefits and becoming self-reliant, the project **supports people to enter the job market while also providing strong social welfare through direct service provision to vulnerable individuals**. This is achieved through a comprehensive and integrated package of services (eg career counselling, legal advice, psychological support, entrepreneurial counselling) designed to cover the needs of beneficiaries, while at the same time attempting to upgrade their capacities and skills.

Apart from the organisational and the managerial part of the project, **six main activities** are taking place and are provided in an integrated manner:

Set-up of two Single Entry Points: Single Entry Points (SEP), introduce a wide spectrum of psychosocial, legal, medical and career services. They are being set-up by transforming existing support and medical centres. The staff of the two SEPs attend relevant training according to their roles and responsibilities.

Central to the project, a new professional role has been created: case handler. Case handlers are the main point of reference for beneficiaries to navigate all the services provided and for managing their records. The case handlers will also be able to provide access to a wider range of services / benefits to the beneficiaries (in addition to those offered directly at the SEPs) due to an integrated IT system connected to other local services.

Employability Services: A set of services are offered, to improve employability and help in finding job opportunities. This is done through personalised job consultancy sessions, the operation of an internet corner and referrals to other experts when needed.

Furthermore, the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA), one

of the project partners, supports the development of sustainable social enterprises, contributing to more job opportunities that could be relevant for the beneficiaries of the ESTI@ Project.

Legal Aid: The specific objective of the legal aid component is to ensure access for deprived populations to free of charge legal aid services, promoting citizens' rights to decent legal representation.

There are two functions: legal consultation sessions and legal representation in court (in specific cases). Experience in offering legal aid services has shown that several of the legal aid cases were more appropriate for family budget advice services (those often related to banking issues, non-performing-loans etc) or that a significant percentage of legal aid cases may have been avoided if family budget advice services had been provided in time.

Childcare and Family Support: A multifunctional Day Care Centre for Children within each of the two SEPs has been created, for the cognitive, psychosocial, and language development of each child, the prevention and/or tackling of specific risk factors or problems of each child, as well as empowering mothers / primary care takers by giving them the opportunity to access a range of social services and find employment while their children are safely and meaningfully occupied.

Medical Care: The specific objective for the medical service is to improve and increase access to primary health care to vulnerable, marginalised and deprived populations severely affected by the economic crisis. The **Medical Care** activity consists of two sub-components: a medical care centre in each SEP as well as a **perinatal service** for pregnant women and new mothers which will operate in both SEPs in alternate days. Perinatal Services are offered by an expert dedicated partner (Fainareti).

Provision of First Assistance Services: Material support and outreach is offered to the most deprived people. Namely material assistance (food, non-food items and some medication) are offered to a sub-set of total beneficiaries (those that fall below the poverty line). Additionally, a specialized **street workers team** aims to provide the project with outreach specifically to very vulnerable target groups such as homeless people and people suffering from drug addiction with the aim to include them into the social service provision offered by the project.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

The City of Athens under Law. 3852/10 has increased the social responsibilities of the municipality and is responsible for a number of welfare benefits (mainly health and disability related benefits as well as housing benefits). However, the municipality is not responsible for unemployment benefits, which causes some difficulties for the case handlers when it comes to coordinating all the benefits and services available to a service user.

The practice is grounded on different policy strategies such as the City of Athens Social Planning Strategy 2015-2019, the Greek National Reform Programme for 2015 (Greece is not part of the European Semester process as it is in a financial adjustment programme and therefore the NRP applies) and EU level policy recommendations (Social Investment Package and Active Inclusion Recommendations proposals are fully integrated in the project concept). Moreover, the project is also related and connected to the new institution of Community

Centres run by the local authorities and funded by the Greek Ministry of Labour as well as some state initiatives related with primary health service provision (eg local health centres).

6. Staff involved

Since the beginning of the project **84 people have been involved**. The interdisciplinary team is comprised of doctors, social scientists, psychologists, lawyers, business consultants, career counsellors etc. Out of these, 40 members of staff come from implementing partners:

- 1) City of Athens (coordinator)
- 2) Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (semipublic body)
- 3) First Elements Euroconsultants (Private Company, Cyprus)
- 4) Praksis Association (NGO)
- 5) Network for children's rights (NGO)
- 6) Solidarity Now (NGO)
- 7) City of Athens Homeless Centre (Public body)
- 8) Fainareti (NGO)

7. Target group

The target group is the vulnerable population of the City of Athens:

- Families with multiple unemployed members or with other mixed social problems
- single-parent families
- victims of gender based or family violence
- low skilled workers
- unemployed
- older people (60+)
- youth
- drug abusers
- persons with physical disabilities or mental disabilities mental disorders
- refugees, repatriates and migrants

The project also targets the staff involved, in order to improve their skills through relevant training and to improve their knowledge of more integrated approaches in social service provision.

Last but not least, the broader ecosystem of social services providers in Athens will also benefit from the practice, since hands on collaboration and the introduction of case handlers will provide a basis for fruitful discussions on integrated services.

8. Aims of the practice

The ESTI@ project seeks to propose and implement innovative integrated services including both pillars of social welfare (income support and benefits & 'personal' social services) in an organised and structured way where employability will always be the target for beneficiaries that are able to work.

Benefits as well as services will not be offered piecemeal but as part of an integrated personal action plan for each beneficiary designed to cover their needs at the same time as attempting to upgrade their capacities and skills with the aim of finding employment.

9. Issues for social services					
Service Integration/ Cooperation across services	X	Service Planning	X	Contracting	
Technology	X	Skills development (of the workforce)	X	Quality of services	X
Others: _____					
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	
11. Scope of the practice					
<p><i>Describe the setting of the practice, considering the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Micro level practice:</i> practice that involves individuals at local level • <i>Meso level practice:</i> practice that involves organisations or communities • <i>Macro level practice:</i> practice that involves large population groups 					
<p>Meso level: A wide spectrum of organizations (eg NGOs, grassroots initiatives, private donors) have been involved in ESTI@ project development and further collaboration is foreseen.</p>					
12. Leadership and management of the practice					
<p><i>Description of the leadership of the practice, considering the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Collaborative management:</i> shared between large partnerships, often of central, regional and local representation • <i>Organisational management:</i> by one organisation • <i>Professional management:</i> managed by a single person • <i>Shared management:</i> shared with no defined leadership 					
<p>The City of Athens has a leading role in the introduction of integrated services at the local level and has actively supported the collaboration among social stakeholders of different level and expertise.</p> <p>In the ESTI@ project many thematic coordinating committees have provided input in terms of procedures and scientific issues and the project has been developed on the basis of meaningful collaboration.</p>					

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

Collaborative approach: many individuals (eg professionals, volunteers) have been involved within the project, a strong network of local stakeholders has been built.

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

N/A

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

Total budget: 2.491.693,25 Euros - EU funded 80%

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*

The ESTI@ proposed evaluation methodology is 'outcome and performance driven'. The aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact that the new innovation has on the lives of the target population, compared to the existing and in many cases, traditional, structures of service

provision.

The evaluation component of the project has a twofold aim:

1. To measure the change in beneficiaries' quality of life as a result of the social service integration, whilst measuring the same metric for beneficiaries using existing social service structures of the City of Athens. By comparing the target population and the control group, valid conclusions will be drawn for the impact of the project.
2. Apart from measuring the impact on beneficiaries, the change in the social service provision and benefits system of the City of Athens will be assessed with an aim to have an operational social service integration model that can be sustained by the City at the end of the project and transferred to other local, regional or national level authorities with the cooperation of civil society in Greece or in other EU countries.

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

Service users	
Formal care givers	
Informal carers	
Organisations	
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	Easier access to a range of social services, and improved chances to find employment
Formal care givers	Development of new skills & understanding of integrated services.
Informal carers	Better links with official organisations (eg public services, NGOs)
Organisations	Functional referrals, Wider collaboration among social stakeholders
Other	

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

N/A

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

Potential for sustainability: the City of Athens' Social Policy Strategic Plan 2015 - 2019 includes the conversion of the Municipal Medical Centres into a network of integrated one-stop-shop structures, which as well as medical support, will provide psychosocial support and professional reintegration services, and will be financed by the National Strategic Reference Framework (already three additional centres have been scheduled).

Moreover, a series of communication activities have been already implemented at local level to strengthen partnerships and to foster future projects on integrated care which can be collectively designed.

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

There is potential to replicate and upscale the results and methodology in other municipalities in Greece where interest has already been raised. In this line a specific dissemination event has been planned for late 2018 where many Greek municipalities will be fully acquainted with the ESTI@ rationale, procedures, deliverables and results.