



SUSIPE Project Handbook

good and best practice

projects and methods in

supporting single-parents in Europe

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I Introduction

In this handbook, the main result of the EU-funded Grundtvig learning partnership "Supporting single-parents in Europe", you can learn about innovative approaches, projects and methods in the support of learning and development of single-parents. We hope you will get inspired to build on these and maybe get impulses for your own work in the field of Lifelong Learning.

In the first part of the handbook we will give an outline of the project itself with its goals and the partner organisations which have contributed with their expertise in supporting lone parents.

In the second part the partners outline the situation of single-parents in their countries by providing a country report. The situation of single-parents, which are mostly single mothers (91% of the single-parents in the EU are single mothers), is often critical. It is a worldwide fact that they are the population category with the highest risk of poverty and are threatened by social exclusion. In all European countries the number of single mothers in poverty is growing exponentially, currently almost one out of four children is raised in a single-parent household. To meet these challenges and provide lone parents with equal chances in any country opportunities have to be created: structural changes in respect of the flexibility in working time: employers and child care facilities should offer more options for single-parents to allow the compatibility of professional and family life. Also a significant need for recognition appreciation by the society for the role of (single-)mothers and fathers can be identified.

The key finding during the comparison of the initial situation of single-parents was that "many participants stressed the importance of empowerment and that simple cash transfers from the State do not necessarily help". There is a need among single-parents for other support than just getting money. It is of utmost importance to support single-parents in regards of education, training and (re-)integration into the labour market.

The project "supporting single-parents in Europe" wants to contribute to the awareness-building of the problematic situation of lone-parents and to provide impulses on how to make use of the potential single-parents have to offer to the labour market and society in general.

In the third part, the main part of this handbook, we will present you innovative projects and our consortium is involved in. With this part we develop a picture of creating learning and supporting spaces from a macrodidactical level. All these projects have the common basis of providing empowerment for single-parents and to raise their chances and abilities to take part in working-life and society in general. The projects presented cover a wide range of support, from basic needs like housing, developing basic professional skills, dealing with financial issues and getting (back) into work.

Also in the the third part we present you the microdidactical perspective of supporting single-parents in concrete learning, training and counselling situations. The presented methods give ideas e.g. how to find out about job opportunities, working with one's individual history or using creative potentials and art for learning, how to bring learners in contact to each other and facilitating becoming a group of learners. We also provide a method on how to develop a business idea to achieve a successful start-up. Other methods can be used to establish a trustful and positive atmosphere and to provide ways of expression for one's own individual history by using story-telling or mobile ring tones.

In the fifth and final part of the handbook we present a conclusion of the two years we have been working on our project. All partners benefitted of the other's experience, passion and competence in supporting lone parents. To illustrate this complex European added value in its best sense, we show how the Arbetetsmuseum in Norrköping (Sweden) has made use of the SUSIPE-inspiration by establishing cooperations and offers for single-parents during the course of the project.

We invite you to join the SUSIPE experience, choose from the rich menu whatever your nationality or working surrounding may be and hopefully get inspired to enrich your meaningful work in supporting single parents in Lifelong Learning!



II The project SUSIPE – supporting single-parents in Europe

In this part the goals and course of the project gets explained. Also each partner of the consortium is presented shortly to give you an idea who is behind this project and to show the versatility of the organisations involved.

II.1 Project Description

The project “SUSIPE – supporting single-parents in Europe”, funded by the European Union in the Lifelong Learning Programme Grundtvig, was designed to consider constructive and creative approaches, methods and ideas for facilitating learning processes for lone-parents. The goal of the project was to support professionals in adult education working with single-parents by providing impulses and ideas via the exchange with other professionals from Europe. The main focus is to share knowledge and experience on approaches, projects, methods and network structures for an improved support structure for the target group single parents in Europe and to integrate single-parents into the field of further education, training and the labour market.

To serve this aim the project consortium shared their good and best practice and exchanged on the initial situation of single-parents in their countries and their needs. Therefore all partners have created short country-reports to describe the situation on lone-parents in their country.

The desired effect of the SUSIPE project was to improve skills and competences for the development of learning options for lone parents, bringing together a range of institutions working with and in different educational settings. Our consortium consists of specialised organisations working only with and for single-parents, educational providers with offers for different target groups and cultural institutions like the Arbetetsmuseum, a public space where people meet and learn. Therefore a wide range of perspectives were included and ensured a fruitful inspiration for all partners. For all of us it was a great experience not only to talk, discuss and learn about each others’ work – but we also had the chance to actually talk to lone parents from all our countries, see the projects and facilities and therefore get first hand experience of what is really happening. We learned a lot about differences, like the funding for support offers but we also learned a lot about the similarities: leading a life

as a lone parent is never easy, taking part in the labour market is challenging, being a lone parent is still a more or less solely state for women, etc.

This was a powerful experience and made it easy to get in a constructive contact – because we all have ways to deal with these challenges and shared them happily with the other partners, because of our common goal – supporting single parents in Europe, give them access to the system of Lifelong Learning and helping them to lead an autonomous, enriching life without depending on others.

II.2 Description of the partnership consortium

The consortium of the project partners covers a variety of organisations working with the target group single-parents. Members of the partnership are adult education providers, e.g. one of these is implementing art and music as a way to support learning, a museum of labour and single parent associations. Therefore a wide variety of methodological approaches as well as the possibility to create new ways for learning and socialising for single-parents will be represented and shared within the project.

ttg team training GmbH (Tubingen, Germany)



ttg team training GmbH is an informal provider of adult education and vocational education and training (VET). We are located in the south of Germany in Tübingen and we also have branch offices in different cities around.

ttg offers vocational education and training, ICT, job services, intercultural courses, and general continuing education as well as consulting and coaching. Moreover, we also run trainer programmes, team development programmes and programmes for pupils. In our ICT-Centre and Business Centre we have about 150 ICT workplaces for learners, who want to improve their ICT competences.

Participants include men and women, job seekers, immigrants, young and older people. Trainers, consultants and employees of other adult education providers participate in activities and projects. We have been carrying out cooperative projects on a local, national and transnational level: ttg has built a wide regional network by initiating and coordinating projects concerning, for example, marketing strategies and quality management (supported by the ESF).

ttg has memberships in local and regional initiatives and working committees with high dissemination potential and valorisation can be based on work with partners and their networks in 14 EU countries.

By joining in and guiding projects at a European level, ttg team training has developed a European wide profile and improved its intercultural competence. It has taken the challenge of posing questions like "What is Europe for us?" and "What does a European perspective include for our work, our organisation and the people working for us?" ttg has been part of and has been coordinating several Grundtvig LLL projects during the last years dealing with topics such as marketing competences, strategic perspectives, business start-ups and culture traditions and intends to further broaden its transnational activities.

Contact us: www.team-training.de



ACTIVITÉ CONSEIL –

BOUTIQUE DE GESTION (Cayenne, French-Guiana)

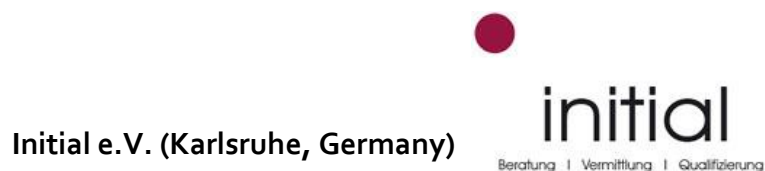
Since 1996, BGE Guyane provides vocational training and courses, coaching and advice, to adult learners throughout French Guiana. 33 staff members are employed in the association, whose scope is regional (210'000+ inhabitants). More than 1500 learners are involved each year in its activities which are divided into 3 intertwined domains: integration, entrepreneurship, and vocational training:

- Integration focuses on the definition of a professional project and provides guidance throughout the completion of it. It aims at empowering unemployed people with the lowest chances, including long-term unemployed people, and helps them finding a job as well as solving other personal issues related to social exclusion.
- Entrepreneurship focuses on the definition of a business project (as a mean to return to the labour market) and provides guidance throughout the completion of it. The target group is vastly composed of unemployed people with low levels of education, few professional achievements and neither background nor experience in business.
- Vocational training's target group is centred on migrants and the local people with no educational background. It mainly aims at strengthening their language skill so that they can better write, speak, and express themselves, with a focus on key technical words required as part as their individual professional project, and the wider process of integration through work.

In this context, we recognize ourselves in GRUNDTVIG's "STRONGMOTHER". We would bring an unusual outlook, from an ultra-peripheral region, using another angle and with a slightly different cultural background, but also offer our practices in supporting single parents (single mothers are even more numerous here in French Guiana) in the sphere of vocational training and even entrepreneurship, for comparison and possible dissemination. We would also be keen on sharing with the partners a broad picture of who are the national and local stakeholders with the matter at hand as well as the available support opportunities for the target group.

Finally, as every opportunity to discover Europe and experience European cooperation, this partnership would be a formidable occasion for French Guiana to strengthen the European identity of this ultra-peripheral region, threatened by the cultural domination of the much closer Americas.

Contact us: http://www.bge.asso.fr/pages_locales/BGE_GUYANE/edito/



Initial e.V. (Karlsruhe, Germany)

Initial e.V. is a non profit organisation and offers adult and vocational education: language courses, education and training of persons with health problems, reintegration trainings for long term unemployed persons, for parents (mostly women) who want to rejoin the labour market.

Initial e.V. has an expertise in working with persons with problems of addiction and persons who have undiagnosed psychological problems.

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We have been doing our work with single parents since 20 years in collaboration with the Agency of work and City Authorities. For this target group we offer courses and counselling respective rejoining the labour market. We work on following topics:

- How to organize the children care for working parents
- Analysis of Competences relevant for work
- Application training
- Organizing internships
- Contacts to employers in the region

- Individual Coaching on personal issues

Contact us: www.initial-karlsruhe.de



Superact (Bristol, United Kingdom)

Superact is a Community Interest Company based in Bristol, United Kingdom. An organisation with 13 core staff it delivers a vast range of activities and projects across a mix of settings from local to international arenas.

Superact has a role-call of 150 artists who deliver participatory arts to a wide range of communities, and experience has shown that this informal, creative approach to adult education is a viable and robust mechanism for engaging and motivating marginalised groups that would otherwise be hard to reach. Superact addresses the needs of a wide range of target groups that typify modern communities including early school-leavers, youth-at-risk, adult learners, immigrants, persons with a disability and senior citizens.

Superact's approach to the use of the creative arts is somewhat unique in that it starts by looking at what needs to be achieved in any particular setting and then work back, assessing how the arts can help meet these objectives. The approach is embodied in the organisation's vision: 'Superact uses the creative process to improve the health and well-being of communities and in doing so maximises the life chances of individuals.'

The work of Superact spans many diverse areas including working in prisons, nursing homes and hospitals. Having recently moved to Somerset College in Taunton, Superact will collaborate closely with the college's departments for lifelong learning. The raison d'être for this new partnership with the College is to increase the accessibility of formal and informal learning agendas for the voluntary sector, marginalised groups, senior citizens and migrant communities.

Currently SUPERACT leads a TOI project www.peetaproject.eu working with Exeter University and Edexcel, Superact developed a Level 1 BTEC award in employability skills (teamwork, communication, task delivery, reflective learning). Many of the skills delivered through the BTEC could apply equally to single-parents wanting to re-enter the world of learning and work.

Other projects currently worked on explore the use of storytelling as tool to facilitate social inclusion of immigrant communities and increased cultural awareness.

More generally, Superact has a vast array of experience of using participatory arts to reach out to, and engage with young marginalized people. This experience will be invaluable in helping the organisation to share and develop innovative approaches and methods to support single-parents through the SUSIPE project.

Arbetetsmuseum (Norrköping, Sweden)



The Museum of Work (Arbetets museum) focus on work and everyday life in the industrial society. The museum is a supreme foundation owned jointly by The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), the Workers Educational Association (ABF), the Swedish Cooperative Union (KF) and the Adult Education Association, Sensus. The Swedish state is also represented in the board.

The Museum of Work has a national commission to preserve industrial cultural heritage, to document and show working life from contemporary and historical perspectives. The museum produces exhibitions, arranges lectures, seminars, conferences and programme activities for the public, schools, universities and organisations. In these ways the museum provides a forum for debate about working life of women and men, especially highlighting how power, different experiences and working conditions relate to aspects like for example gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality and class. The museum also initiates and supports research within its field of interest, and has developed cooperation with universities and other museums active within this area.

One Parent Families Scotland (Glasgow, Scotland)



OPFS delivers:

- A national lone parent helpline, information and support service – including telephone mentoring, a website for lone parents and professionals working with lone parents and 30 factsheets;
- Training for organisations and practitioners working with lone parents (e.g. welfare reform, Tax Credits);
- Flexible childcare services (childcare@home, crèches, stay and play);

- Family support services – targeted work with lone parent families and community based support for families, specific provision for lone and contact dads; pregnant teenagers;
- Early education places for 2 year olds with additional support needs and services for parents/families;
- Employability/training for lone parents (including specific provision for young lone parents);
- Welfare and debt advice services for lone parents.

It is estimated that there are over 163,000 lone parents with 295,000 children in Scotland.

In Scotland 54,780 lone parents were claiming Income Support in May 2010 (Source: Scotland Labour Market Bulletin, Jobentre Plus , Director's office, Office for Scotland January 2011)

Poverty: 66% of lone parent families live on less than £15,000, compared to 11% of couple families

Debt: The average total debt for lone parents in the UK since 2003 has increased by a quarter from £11,469 to £14,963. Lone parents have used credit cards far more frequently than was the case five years ago. This is their most frequent debt.

Internet Access: 54% of lone parent households do not have home internet access, compared to 22% of two parent families (Source: Scottish Household Survey 2005/06)

Workers and carers: Lone parents need to work more hours to get the same income as two working parents and may also need to spend more time with their children where the other parent is absent. In addition they have sole responsibility for running the house. This dual role as workers and carers, combined with domestic work underlies all their other issues.

Personal issues: Many lone parents, especially those who have experienced domestic abuse, are likely to lack self confidence. Parents may also be isolated, especially if they have been re- housed following relationship breakdown, and may lack friends and family locally who can provide practical help and support.

Fundación de Familias Monoparentales Isadora Duncan (Léon, Spain)



Our organisation is a social, apolitical and non-denominational NGO and has a wide experience of 28 years, working with single parent families. We have been accomplishing

social, legal, psychological and work demands, among others, of the collective of single mothers, one-parent families and women in general, creating a network of assistance services for them. Defence of dignity, social and legal equality and educational promotion and incorporation into labour market have constituted and constitute the main core focus of our activity, due to the specific problems of single parent families in Spain and in the world, particularly poverty.

We fight against the discrimination of single parent families in civil society not only at national but also at international level. We are promoting social and fiscal policies in order to obtain equality at fiscal, social and legal levels.

Our activities are an integral program of empowerment of single parent families: new technologies (website, own social network, technological advices), adult training (languages, digital training, financial training, cooking...), migrant women, domestic equality, microcredits for women, equal game room for children...

II.3 Description of the initial situation of single-parents in the partner countries

Country report United Kingdom – provided by Superact

Please note this information is UK wide and not England specific as we do not break down that information on a policy level.

In the UK, just over a quarter (26 per cent) of households with dependant children are single parent families. There are 2 million single parents in Britain today.

92 percent of all single parents are women and 8 per cent are men.

Single parents in the UK have one of the lowest labour market participation rates in Europe. This, in combination with the high rates of child poverty among single parent households, has made this group a main target for recent welfare reforms. The focus in the UK is on getting single parents to take up work, current policies are not necessarily achieving this goal effectively for a range of reasons.

Initial strategies from 1997 started with voluntary programmes such as the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP), introduced in October 1998, added to this training programme were a range of further policies, such as the new tax credits (extra financial help for low income workers) and the National Childcare strategy. This made some progress and by 2006 the single parent employment rate had increased to 57% from 45%.

In 2008 the government shifted the balance from encouraging single parents to move into work, towards requiring single parents with older children to be available for work.

In the last few years the maximum age for those children has dropped to the current situation, from May 2012, single parents whose youngest child was five years or older have to be available to work.

In addition, the welfare reform act (2012) increased the pressure on those looking for work. There is less specialist support available to single parents and research has found that many have no idea what support they might be entitled to.

On financial level, lone parents have to deal with reductions in benefits:

- Cuts to the support that working parents can get for childcare costs through the tax credit system.
- Cuts to housing benefits
- A freeze to the rate of child benefits
- Charges introduced to access support from the child support agency.

One of the biggest criticisms against the new emphasis on work in the UK is that the importance of care is not being considered enough from a practical point of view. Parents in the UK face some of the highest childcare costs in the world and availability of flexible childcare is limited, particularly in poorer areas.

A recent study by the UK charity Daycare Trust showed that a quarter of the parents in severe poverty who responded had given up work, a third had turned down a job, and a quarter had not been able to take up education or training, all because of difficulties in accessing childcare.

Single parents not in work are more likely to:

- Have a child under five
- Have three or more children
- Be single, rather than divorced or separated
- Have a health problem
- Have a child with a health problem/disability
- Have no qualifications
- Have English language barriers
- Have no recent work experience
- Have no intention of looking for work in the near future.

Barriers to entering employment common to single parents are:

- A preference to stay at home with the children
- Childcare issues (either that it is not available, or they have a preference to leave the child with friends or family.
- Lack of confidence
- Personal health problems or children with health problems
- Financial issues (going to work and not being better off)
- Employment conditions (attitude of employers and availability of flexible jobs) and lack of part time jobs that fit within school hours.
- Lack of skills and qualifications.

Scotland - Country Report

One Parent Families Scotland aims to challenge the myths and stereotypes about lone parents and their children. It can be a challenge to bring up children on your own, being solely responsible for their care and the family income. However many lone parents feel happier and more in charge of their own destiny. Lone parents do a great job and are worthy of recognition as well as support and advice to get through hard times. The media's coverage of lone mothers (92% of all lone parents) is often dominated by negative headlines, where they are talked about in a negative or stereotypical light. The facts rather than the myths about one parent families challenge perceptions of lone mums and dads, who deserve to be congratulated and not condemned.

1. Data: population and percentage of single-parents-families, gender balance

- Over 163,000 LPs with 295,000 children (1 in 4 families) in Scotland
- Projected to increase to 238,000 next 20 years
- Average age is 34 years
- Around 92 per cent of lone parents are mothers.
- Less than 2 per cent of lone parents are teenagers
- Around half of lone parents had their children within marriage – 49 per cent are separated from marriage, divorced or widowed
- Across Scotland 200,000 children are living in relative income poverty before housing costs are taken into account, and 250,000 children are living in relative income poverty after housing costs. 90,000 children in Scotland are living in severe poverty.

2. Difference between teenage mothers and 1-parent-families

The UK has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in western Europe. It is widely understood that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood can be associated with poor educational achievement, poor physical and mental health, social isolation, poverty and related factors. There is also a growing recognition that socio-economic disadvantage can be both a cause and a consequence of teenage parenthood. Girls and young women from social class V are at approximately ten times the risk of becoming teenage mothers as girls and young women from social class I. Young people with below

average achievement levels at ages 7 and 16 have also been found to be at significantly higher risk of becoming teenage parents.

There is some evidence that certain groups of young people seem to be particularly vulnerable to becoming teenage parents. They include:

- Young people in or leaving care
- Homeless young people
- School excludees, truants and young people under-performing at school
- Children of teenage mothers
- Members of some ethnic minority groups
- Young people involved in crime

Although parenthood can be a positive and life-enhancing experience for some young people, it may also bring a number of negative consequences for parents and their children.

These factors include:

- Negative short, medium and long-term health and mental health outcomes for young mothers.
- Education and employment – as well as being more likely to have problems at school before they become pregnant, young mothers are less likely to complete their education, have no qualifications by age 33, be in receipt of benefits and if employed be on lower incomes than their peers .
- Housing – 80% of under 18 year old mothers live in someone else's household (eg parents) and teenagers are more likely to have to move house during pregnancy
- Family – teenage mothers are more likely to be lone parents and more likely to find themselves in the middle of family conflict.
- Young fathers – although there is little data on this group, health, economic and employment outcomes for young fathers post-parenthood seem to be similar to those of young mothers.

3. Childcare situation:

Lone parents rely heavily on informal childcare. Of those using childcare, 46 per cent said it was informal. For lone parents working 16 hours a week or more 34 per cent had a childcare

arrangement with the child's grandparents, and 17 per cent had an arrangement with their ex-partner

Working lone parents paying for childcare are much more likely than working couples paying for childcare to find it difficult to meet childcare costs (32% compared to 22% of couples where one partner is in work, and 20% of couples where both work). Parents in Scotland face some of the highest childcare costs in the UK, which are already amongst the highest in the world. This affects their ability to work, train or study as well as forcing families to make difficult financial choices. OPFS believes that affordable, accessible and high-quality childcare has a vital role to play in tackling child poverty.

In spring 2011 Save the Children and Daycare Trust surveyed more than 4,000 parents to explore their views on access to childcare and the impact of childcare costs on family incomes and work prospects. The survey findings suggest that parents living in severe poverty are struggling to access childcare more than other parents, particularly due to the high cost.

This is undermining the Scottish Government's aim to maximise household resources by supporting parents into good quality employment and making work pay, and thus preventing families living on the lowest incomes from escaping poverty.

1. Cost is a major barrier preventing parents on the lowest incomes from accessing childcare. Eight out of ten parents living in severe poverty said that cost was a barrier to accessing childcare.
2. The high cost of childcare has a significant impact on most families, but for families in severe poverty the impact is particularly extreme. Parents in severe poverty have cut back on key essentials, such as food and household bills, simply to pay for childcare. Parents in severe poverty have made very difficult financial choices simply to pay for childcare, such as getting into debt.
3. Difficulties accessing childcare are significantly affecting the ability of parents in severe poverty to work, train or study. A quarter of the parents in severe poverty who responded had given up work, a third had turned down a job, and a quarter had not been able to take up education or training, all because of difficulties in accessing childcare.
4. The high cost of childcare means that work is not paying for the poorest families. The majority of parents in severe poverty (58%) said they were no better off working and paying for childcare, compared with just 19% of those with incomes over £30,000. A significant

number (41%) of parents in severe poverty said they would consider giving up work and 25% said they would consider reducing their hours due to the recent cut in the level of support provided through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

4. Issues and barriers faced by lone parents

Lone parent families and poverty

- Children in lone parent families have a much higher risk of living in poverty than children in couple families. Around four in every 10 (41 per cent) of children in lone parent families are poor, compared to just over two in every 10 of children in couple families.
- Paid work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty for lone parents; the poverty rate for one parent families where the parent works part time is 23 per cent, and 18 per cent where the parent works full time .
- The median weekly income for working lone parent families doing 16 hours a week or more is £337, compared with £491 for couple families with one worker and £700 where both parents work.
- 43 per cent of lone parents are social housing tenants compared to 12 per cent of couples.
- 71 per cent of all lone parent renters receive housing benefit compared to 25 per cent of all couple renters.
- Lone parent households are the most likely to be in arrears on one or more household bills, mortgage or nonmortgage borrowing commitment (31 per cent) .
- 38 per cent of lone parents said that money always runs out before the end of the week/month compared to 19 per cent of couples.
- 63 per cent of lone parents have no savings compared to 34 per cent of couples.

Issues & Barriers

Poverty in One Parent Families in Scotland

What are lone parent's views on poverty? Have things changed? What causes lone parent poverty? Which services/policies work well, where could things be better and where are the gaps? What are the priorities – prevention, reduction or alleviation?

Feedback from lone parents indicates quite clearly that poverty very often has a woman's face. Many of the lone parents consulted talked about the stigma they still feel about living in poverty – particularly how they were treated by key public services

Causes or Symptoms?

Much of the feedback highlighted that many lone parent felt trapped in poverty and that the causes were of a multiple nature. However what is clear, from the parents bringing up children on their own that we consulted, is that **their lone parent status, and the fact that 92% are women, is the key cause of the poverty they face – lone parents need both to work more hours for the same income as two working parents and spend more time with their children where the other parent is absent.** Women's inequality and the disadvantages they face in the workplace were felt to be important in creating **risk factors** which make them vulnerable to poverty **triggered by certain life events or transitions – separation; divorce; pregnancy; ill health; into /out of employment.**

The consultations reinforced the view that there are many complex factors that impinge on an individual Lone Parents situation including:

- The high level of disadvantage amongst those lone parents living on Income Support (debt, low skills, isolation, poor health and low confidence)
- High and increasing housing and childcare costs.
- Low pay-high turnover economy with flexible hours demanded in many jobs
- Work-family balance issues- much family leave is unpaid, so not accessible to lone parents.
- The majority of lone parents live in communities suffering deprivation as defined by the Scottish Government indicators.

Specific Barriers

Lone Parents told us they faced a range of barriers. These tend to have a cumulative impact, with many lone parents facing three or more of these barriers as reasons for not being able to take up paid work. The issues raised could be categorised into three different areas. An individual Lone Parents situation very much depends on issues around: **personal profile; personal circumstances and structural influences.**

Personal Profile:

Essential skills, key skills and vocational skills levels are critical areas for improvement, especially literacy and numeracy. However Lone Parents tend to have fewer skills and educational qualifications. Often parents said it was a challenge to reconcile a caring role in the absence of a partner with paid employment and are reluctant to leave their children.

Some lone parents involved in the consultation had entered lone parenthood after fleeing disruptive or even violent relationships that have had an impact on self-esteem, self-belief and self-worth. Confidence is also affected by lack of up to date work skills or experience and a lack of suitable qualifications.

Working lone parents told us how work was often difficult and stressful, and left them feeling that they had insufficient quality time with their children. And many lone parents who contacted us during the course of this consultation commented that they felt that they were receiving mixed messages about the relative importance of work and parenting and felt caught in the crossfire between Westminster & Holyrood policies:

Personal Circumstances:

In –work Costs. Many lone parents expressed the fear that in-work costs meant they would be financially worse off in work. In order to work, lone parents must balance variable elements of income such as wages, tax credits, in-work benefits, any maintenance received and housing benefit.

Childcare is a one of the largest barriers facing lone parents considering entering the labour market. Many of the lone parents reported not being able to find childcare when they wanted it. Many reported that it was for work-related reasons that they wanted childcare. Shortages are particularly acute in areas with high levels of poverty. Childcare to meet the needs of unsocial hours was scarce if not unobtainable.

Debt is a serious issue for many lone parents. It was felt that it was unfair of lending agencies to target people in poorer areas particularly 'doorstep lenders'. Door-step lenders often charge 85% interest. The aggressive pursuit of historic debts such as Council Tax, & Water Rates arrears, when someone comes off Income Support, increases in-work costs and affect sustainable employment.

Structural Influences:

The Benefits system and its inflexibility is a key barrier for Lone Parents. The “poverty trap” caused by the interaction of the tax and benefit systems affected many Lone Parents involved in the focus groups. Participants expressed the view, with passion, that to tackle poverty, welfare benefits must be adequate for both children and adults.

Employment – where employment is located, in-work costs (housing, childcare, school meals) – are key issues for lone parents. The majority of Lone parents who participated in the consultations lived in areas where there is a shortage of jobs. Navigating transitions from benefit to work can form serious barriers to Lone Parents moving into and staying in employment.

Childcare- the lone parents interviewed faced a range of barriers to getting and staying in work, with many individuals reporting multiple factors that had caused them to fall out of employment. Unsurprisingly childcare was cited as a key issue affecting many of the lone parents’ labour market experiences and opportunities.

Fuel – Many women at the conference organised in partnership with Scottish Women’s Convention were faced with high fuel costs. The infrastructure for the provision of fuel to low income families was felt to be seriously flawed.

Personal Finance -It was clear from the experiences of the lone parents who told us about their personal experience that Financial Institutions are not in tune with the government’s strategy to eradicate child poverty and increase employment for Lone Parents to 70%.

6. Responsible authorities

There are 3 levels of government in Scotland: the UK parliament; the Scottish Parliament & Local Government. Devolution is the transfer of powers from a central body to devolved administrations. **The UK Parliament** at Westminster has devolved different powers to the Scottish Parliament. The UK Parliament remains responsible for 'reserved matters' in Scotland. **The Scottish Parliament** exists to make laws in relation to devolved matters and to scrutinise the policies of the Scottish Government.

The split between reserved and devolved matters has resulted in a number of policy disconnects e.g. childcare supply and subsidy; employment and employability/education

RESERVED POWERS	DEVOLVED POWERS
Tax policy	Education
Social security	Health
Out of work benefits and tax credits	Employability
Cash transfers e.g. child benefit	Skills development
Employment – linked to benefits	Provision and supply of childcare
	Children's services
	Advice services

Scottish Local Government consists of 32 elected councils which provide services to the people of Scotland - services such as education, social care, waste management, cultural services and planning.

Each local authority is governed by a council. The council is made up of councillors directly elected by the residents in the population of the area they represent (referred to as a council ward). Each ward will have three or four councillors. In total, there are 1,222 elected councillors who are normally elected every 4 years (Legislation in 2009 moved local government to two consecutive five-year terms to decouple local government elections from elections to the Scottish Parliament). Councils in Scotland are autonomous bodies, independent of central government and are accountable to their electorates for the delivery of services

Scottish Government Works with local government and provides funding and the framework for accountability and performance

Main Strategies Supporting Lone Parents in Scotland

- **Child Poverty Strategy** – including support for lone parent families and income maximisation
- **National Parenting Strategy** – including employability and family friendly working practices
- **Equally Well** – tackling health inequalities
- **Early Years Framework, Getting it Right for Every Child and the Children and Young People Bill** – including improving outcomes for children and families and flexible early years provision

- Scotland's employability framework '**Workforce Plus**'
- **Achieving our Potential** - the framework to tackle income inequality and disadvantage

As well as the formal strategies, the Scottish Government is developing a programme of support to mitigate against the sweeping welfare reforms being implemented across the UK

7. Welfare Reform - Lone Parents caught in the Cross-fire.

Recent welfare reform in the UK brings the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years.

There are over 163,000 lone parents with 295,000 children in Scotland. All Lone Parents will be affected in some way by the changes to benefits including: universal credit; conditionality; the work programme; disability benefits; changes to child maintenance; and various cuts to benefits. Significantly, the Institute of Fiscal Studies says lone mothers will be hardest hit by the government's programme of benefit cuts and tax rises. It estimates they will lose an average 8.5% of their income by 2015.

Feedback from parents, using OPFS services across Scotland highlight cases of lone parents who are worried about information they report as being given by Jobcentre Plus & Work Programme contractors causing fear & distress. The majority of cases are about lone parents with young children

who say they have been told that they have to work full-time, at weekends and evenings or must take a job even if they don't have suitable childcare or face a cut to their benefit.

The policies around lone parents for decades have been a mishmash of moralising disguised as "incentives", paying little attention to the often first-rate research that government itself commissions again and again about the state of lone parenthood in Britain. It tells us clearly that poverty is the biggest problem affecting lone parents and their children.

One in four families are headed by a lone parent; 39% of lone parent families have a gross weekly income of £200 or less (compared with 7% of married couples). Many have difficulties fitting childcare, concern for their children and paid work together in a pattern that succeeds. Many have poor qualifications so the only part-time work available is often so low paid, it fails to cover costs. What matters is training to improve skills and qualifications but often that comes with too little childcare, and so the merry-go-round of good intentions and too few opportunities continues. Welfare reform should consider the

important caring role that lone parents undertake and the added difficulties that they face in the workplace juggling work and home life singlehandedly.

Moreover the UK welfare reform agenda has paid very little regard to Scotland's differing institutional landscape in areas covering: employability; education; skills; childcare & early years; parenting & family support infrastructures; the unique legal system and health services. Welfare reform is already affecting family wellbeing & will ultimately hinder the Scottish Government in achieving its child poverty reduction & solidarity targets. Although welfare reform is a reserved

matter the Scottish Government has within its powers options to ameliorate some of the impact- particularly around: investing in flexible childcare; increased funding for welfare rights advice, money advice & family support services; and ensuring that any replacement schemes for housing benefit, passported benefits & the social fund does not reduce the level of support on which low income families depend.

In the end, the challenges of lone parenthood is made up of a number of different causes but with common themes: poverty; too little affordable, flexible childcare; lack of confidence; too few skills; and a work culture that believes it's impossible for a woman to have a career as a part-time employee. What is required is a proper set of strategies that help a diversity of individuals to navigate the sometimes treacherous transitions in life – so they emerge in one piece, better equipped and ultimately able to free themselves from poverty.

The risk of poverty faced by lone parent families is dependent on the type of welfare state we have, i.e. on the kind, level and mixes of policies that impact on lone parents, *and* on their objectives. In the UK we have an **"Adult Worker "model**. The main assumption is that all able adults should be in employment independent of the type of family they live in.

The **Parent-Worker model** in Scandinavian countries have assumptions underpinning their policies that families are diverse and that adults should be supported as parents *and* workers. Parents are supported as workers through the provision of good quality childcare, family friendly employment opportunities and generous parental leave.

A welfare system should protect people from poverty. The Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform (supported by over 40 orgs.) promotes 4 key principles that a welfare system should meet. It should be:

- **Dignified:** respect and compassion, valuing unpaid work and caring roles, and recognising the responsibilities of employers and govt. as well as the public benefits of welfare.
- **Supportive:** lifting people out of poverty, so that all citizens are financially protected, whatever their circumstances.
- **Well resourced:** providing adequate financial and human resources to ensure the smooth introduction of any reforms.
- **Suitable:** taking full account of Scotland's differing institutional framework from the outset, so that any proposals enable a joined up approach to tackling poverty.

The Welfare System in the UK as it stands fails to move us towards such a system.

Country report on the situation of single-parents in Germany

- **Data: population and percentage of single-parents-families, gender balance**

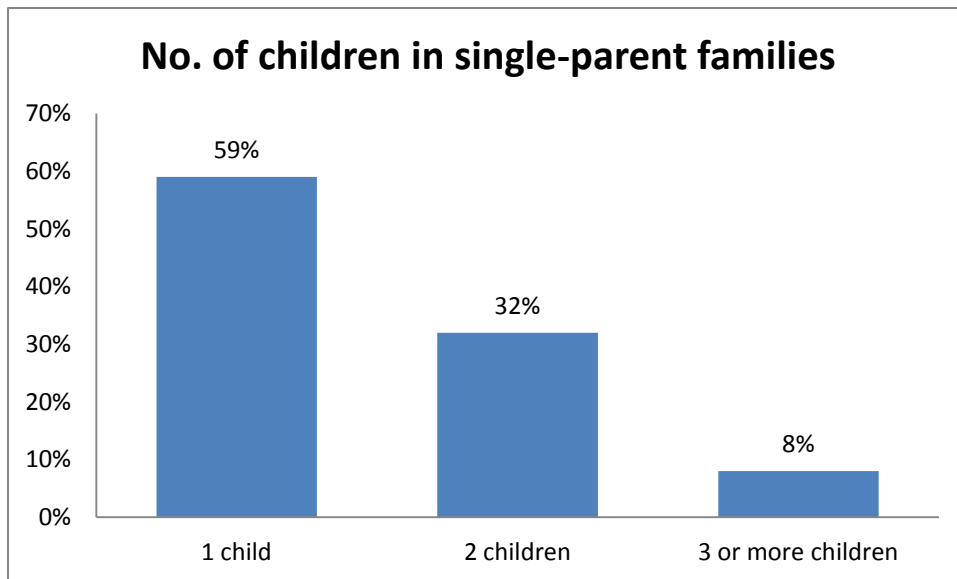
In 2011 81,8 million people were living in Germany, in total 40,2 million households were registered. This equals an average of 2,2 persons living in one household. Since 1996 the number of households with children under the legal age is decreasing. While the number of traditional families (married couples) is decreasing, the number of alternative family forms (single-parents and living communities) is increasing.

Although the decreasing development, married couples with children under the legal age are with 71% the most common family form. Single mothers or fathers represent 20% of the families with children under 18. 9% of the families with children are cohabitation partnerships. In 2011 90% of all single-parents were women.

In terms of geographical segmentation in the eastern part of Germany the number of single-parents is significantly higher than in former West-Germany: in the east 27% percent of the families with children under 18 are single-parent families, in the west there are 17% single-parent-families.

In terms of age 3% of the single-parents are under 25 years. The main reason to become a single-parent is divorce (40% of the single-parents have been married).

In average single-parents have significantly less children compared to mothers and fathers in partnerships:



- **Politically correct terminology in national language and translation in English**

The German national centre for statistics uses the term "alleinerziehend" which can be translated as educating alone/on his/her own. The German national conference on poverty criticizes this term because it is supposed to have negative connotations like bad education or lack of social embedment. (<http://www.spickmich.de/news/201302282200-politisch-korrekt-weg-mit-den-sozialen-unwoertern>)

- **Child care situation:**

- Options for child care
- legal situation and legal entitlement
- Number of available places

Initial situation/legal situation and entitlement

The rights and duties of parents and children are regulated in two law books: the Sozialgesetzbuch XIII (social law book 8) and the Kinderförderungsgesetz (child support law) and provides regulations for the planned extension of child care options.

Since 1996 each child from the age of three is guaranteed for a place in a kindergarten until it goes to school with six years.

Common goal of the German government, its federal states and communes is to guarantee a place in the child-care system for each child in Germany which has completed its first year. This goal of providing a day-care place is due on 01. August 2013.

After this new law had been agreed on in 2007 the predicted number of child-care-places was 750.000, which equals around 35% of all children. Current estimations demand more places (780.000) and the state is providing more money to meet these projections.

The day-care rate for children under 3 years is currently 27,6% in 2012, in 2011 the rate was 25,4%. In total 558.000 children under 3 years are been taken care of in a day care institutions. There is a huge regional difference in using day care options: in Eastern Germany (including Berlin) 49% of the under-3-year children are in day-care, in the western part only 22,3% make use of day-care.

Options for childcare

The communes, churches and free providers offer the following child-care options:

1. Kindertagesstätte (instiutions providing child care)

- 1.1 Kinderkrippe (day nursery) for children under 3 years
- 1.2 Kindergarten for children between 3 and 6 years
- 1.3 Hort (hoard) for children in school

In regard to the care times four forms can be distinguished:

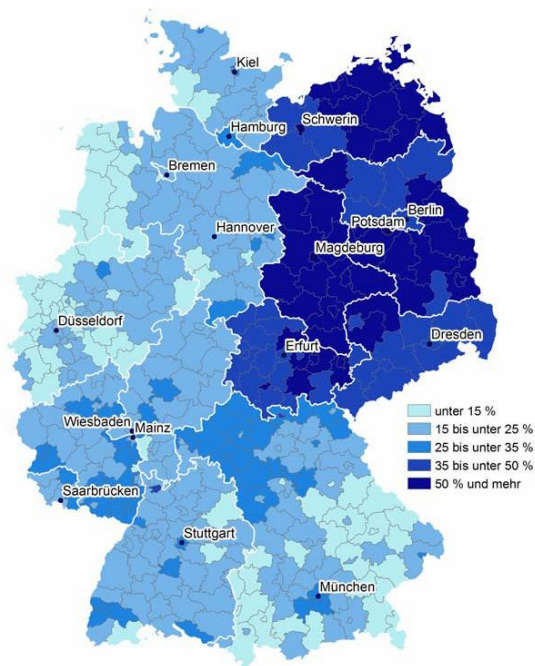
- 1. Part-time care: mostly in the morning, or in the afternoon
- 2. Extended morning offer (until after lunch)
- 3. Full-time care: covers morning until late afternoon
- 4. Extended full-time care: to consider the needs of parents some providers offer child care until late evenings, sometimes even with support on the weekend or overnight stay

In general the possibilities differ strongly in the regions. Also there are many institutions which cover several of the offers mentioned above.

In March 2011 2.4 million children under six years have been taken care of in child-care institutions, 0.5 million children of these were under the age of 3. This equals a rate of 25,2% of all children in this age. There are huge regional differences: in the western part of Germany 19,8% of the children under six years have been taken care of in childcare institutions in the eastern part of Germany the rate is 41,9%.

(source: Kindertagesbetreuung in Deutschland im Überblick Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, Kindertagesbetreuung regional 2011)

Figure 1: rate of children under 3 years in child-care institutions



(Kindertagesbetreuung in Deutschland im Überblick Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, Kindertagesbetreuung regional 2011)

- **Issues and barriers faced by lone parents**

Issue	Single-parents with children of pre-school age	Single parents with older children only
Economic status: I can only afford what is necessary and have a lot of concerns on financial issues.	41%	31%
Currently employed are	43%	78%
Obtaining social benefits for unemployment, housing	61%	28%
Worried about failure in organizing everyday life	29%	17%

Especially single-parents with younger children seem to face more problems.

- Single-parents have to manage more tasks and cannot divide their responsibilities, this means higher requirements in self-organising competencies.
- Separation means economic descend: 35% of the single-parents are facing the risk of poverty, especially younger women are confronted with this.
- 83% of the single-parents would prefer living in a partnership, where both partners are employed.
- The child-care situation in Germany cannot compete with the system in Scandinavia or France: often it is not possible to coordinate working hours with the opening hours of the child-care institutions.
- The housing situation for single-parents is difficult: they do not have enough money to live in neighbourhoods with a good infrastructure, still they have to spend around 30% of their income for paying the rent.
- Professor Kurt Kreppner (developmental psychologist, Berlin)
Often family life seems more peaceful and quiet in single-parents households. Because the children have to be more self-reliant, many common argument issues in regular families do not appear. Problematic is the fact that the inter-generational difference can vanish, so that normal friction between parents and their children arising from differentiation is not that likely to appear.
- missing of subsistence payments: among single-parents 40% of ex-partners do not or only partly pay for their obligations
- Not being employed and no formal qualification (25% of the single-mothers do not have a vocational degree). Only one third of the single-mothers think that training or qualification would improve their situation.
- 52% of the single-parents wish for more childcare options in their region, 21% of them are explicitly not satisfied with the available childcare options.
- 41% of the single-parents desire a more family-friendly working environment with more flexible working times and more part-time jobs.

- **Welfare system (source <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/gesetze,did=3264.html>)**

The federal, regional and local administration spent 760,6 Billion Euros on social benefits in total in 2011. The ratio between gross domestic product and expenditures on social benefits in Germany was 30,4% in 2011. 30,5 billion Euros out of this were used for child- and

youth-support. The expenditures rose for 5,7% compared to 2010. In total 2,6 billion Euros were gained from charges and participant fees, so the public authority has spent 27,9 billion Euros.

Table of expenditures for the welfare system in Germany in 2011

welfare benefit	expenditures
Elderly and bereaved	297,7 Billion Euros
Illness and invalidity	294,7 Billion Euros
Children, spouses and maternity	79,9 Billion Euros
Unemployment	42,3 Billion Euros
Habitation, general support	20,2 Billion Euros

Parents' money

With this benefit public authorities support parents who have been employed before their child was born. In general 65% of the previous income is paid to the parent, for low-income earners it is possible to receive up to 100% of their previous income. The two parents can claim parents' money in total for 12 months and may share the months as they want to. It is possible to work while receiving parents' money, the only limitation is that the working hours per week may not exceed 30 hours.

In 2010 810.000 persons took this benefit, 62% of them have been employed before birth, 38% received only the minimum amount of 300 Euros because they were unemployed or earned too little. 642.547 of the beneficiaries were women (this equals 79,3%). The parents' money is charged on other welfare benefits one may receive.

Maternity protection

Every employed pregnant woman is protected by several regulations which prevent them from dangers, excessive demands, health risks at work, financial penalties and job loss. Becoming mothers are not allowed to work in the period six weeks before birth and 12 weeks after they gave birth to their child.

It is not possible to fire a woman expecting a child nor fire them for four months after they give birth to a child.

Child benefits

Child benefit is paid by the public authorities and does not depend on the income of the beneficiaries. It is graded by the number of children and amounts:

- For the first and second child each 184 Euros per month
- For the third child 190 Euros per month
- For the fourth and each following child 215 Euros per month.

The child benefit is paid for all children up to the age of 18, for children in vocational training up to the age of 25 and for unemployed children up to the age of 21. The child benefit is paid to the person, who is taking care of the child.

Child benefit is credited against unemployed benefit in total, because the children get unemployment benefit also and the state does not have to provide the same amenities for non-tax-payers as are provided to tax-payers.

integration allowances for employers

For parents returning after parental leave the jobcentres can grant an integration allowance for employers during the re-adjustment for their former position.

Vocational training

BAB: vocational education support benefit

For persons in their first vocational training to achieve a formal vocational certificate it is possible to receive welfare support besides the money earned in the training. The trainee has to apply at the job-centre and document their need for the support.

Options for further training or occupational re-training

If needed for finding a job or if it is not possible to continue in the previous occupation, it is possible to get funding for further training or re-training. If the jobcentres agree that there is an adequate need, they will pay for the expenses.

Parental subsistence

The parents of young single-parents (mostly mothers) have the legal obligation to render possible the first vocational training of their children. Because early parenthood often leads

to conflicts in the families, many of the young single-parents waive this support-option, which could be enforced by public authorities.

Study support

The BAföG is a funding program for students at universities. Up to 670 Euros per month can be granted. 50% of the BAföG is donated by the public authorities, 50% have to be repaid after finishing university. If necessary, money out of other funding opportunities like welfare can be received.

Difference between teenage mothers and 1-parent-families

In the last 20 years around 1% of the mothers that gave birth to a child were teenagers. Circa 5-6% of the abortions registered have been conducted with teenage women. For years the rate of how many teenage women get pregnant stays at around 3 out of 1.000. In total the average number of teenage mothers giving birth to a child in Germany per year is 7,000. In a survey by pro familia 1.800 teenagers who were pregnant where interviewed. 92% of them stated that their pregnancy was not planned. 75% of the pregnant teenagers were 16 or 17 years old. Here a summary of factors that make a teenage pregnancy more likely: young women attending the low-level secondary schools are most likely to get pregnant as a teenager (52%). One main observation was that especially teenage women with a precarious background tend to give birth to their children while teenagers from well-protected families and a higher level of education tend to abort. The motive for getting the child by teenager mothers with a precarious background is that they were not provided with a loving and stable surrounding by their parents. The highest demand by teenage mothers seeking support is how to make a living and receiving benefits.

Country Report on the situation of single-parents in Spain

Data: population and percentage of single-parent families. Gender balance

First, we want to highlight the difficulties in determining the actual number of single parent families and gender bias within them. Its reason is that the criteria of INE and other official sources do not take into account simple and complex one-parent households, i.e., situations such as single parents who share a flat because of their inability to keep a home on their own, and especially the coexistence of two or more households in the same home address, or not relative people due to economic reasons.

In some cases they are sharing flats with others, in others they have never been able to be out of the family home or have been forced to return to the nuclear family by the circumstances (economic demands, unemployment and crisis).

According to the latest population data provided by the INE for the year 2012, the total population in Spain is 47 million, of which 20% are one-parent families. Estimates of several reports produced in 2012 reveal something which was already well known: one-parent families are made up mostly of women. 88.6% (486,000) of about 548,000 one-parent families have women as head of family compared to 11.4% (161,000), whose head of household is a man. This means that the head of family of 9 out of 10 single-parent families are single mothers. 60% of this percentage has 1 child and 24, 6% 2 children.

In terms of age, 42% would be in the rank 36-45 years, 27.3% between 26 and 35 years, 16.2% between 17 and 25 years and 14, 1 would be older than 45. The most common level of education among the women heads of family is the medium or higher degree vocational training (29.6%), secondary education (27.6%), elementary education (22.4%), and college (20.4%).

Regarding employment, 26% of single parents are unemployed (compared to 24.6% of overall unemployment women rate). 78.1% of this unemployment is due to dismissal, EREs or end of the contract EREs, 18.8% because of women' incorporation to the labour market due to family needs and 3.1% by resignation. 60.5% has been unemployed for one year, 16.5% for 1-6 months and 12.3% for nearly 1 month. 58% of these one-parent families are working part-time: 33.3% work part-time because they cannot find full-time employment and 25% due to family duties (they have to take care of a family member). Only 7% has a full time job. 50% has a stable job, and has been working in the same company for more than a year.

The jobs being most often held by these single mothers are, in order of frequency, administrative assistant (27%), telephone operator (22%), waitress (9%) and shop assistant (7%). The primary sector is services (45.5%), followed by industry (18.22%) and health (18.2%).

In brief and in conclusion, gender balance data shows that single- parent families are a reality in Spain (and Europe).

2. Politically correct terminology in national language and translated into English

Familia monoparental One-parent family, Single-parent family, Sole-parent family

Madre sola/Padre solo Sole parent Sole parent

Madre soltera Single mother

Prestación Benefit

Prestaciones asistenciales Social security benefits, welfare benefit(EEUU)

Prestaciones sociales (=dinero) Social security benefits (= Money)

Prestaciones sociales (servicios) Social benefits (services)

3. Child care situation:

1. Options for child care

Options are public or private kindergartens 0-3 years and informal networks.

Children start school at the age of 3 years, education is compulsory between 3 and 16, and family is organized by means of reconciliation of work and family life.

2. Legal situation and legal entitlement

We imagine that this question deals with specific legislation for child care services or kindergartens (up to 3 years). It is regulated by autonomous communities.

3. Number of available places

Right now the number of places being available cannot be determined, because most of the public and private kindergartens are closing down due to crisis.

4. Abortion policy and approach on advice

Abortion is a women's right of women, irrespective of their social status or family type to which she belongs.

One-parent families, mainly single-mother families, are being used by the two groups: organizations and institutions in favour of abortion and those against it.

Regarding abortion, single mothers are between the two blocks:

- **In favour:** they believe that the problem of single mothers has already been solved since abortion is free and open: "If you have no money, abort, have no children."

- **Against:** The important thing is that the child is born. Then no matter what happens to the child. She/he has the right to be born, but not the right to have a decent life with, a life with dignity. Therefore, a family policy for single mothers is not necessary.

As for advice, as it happens in Europe, there are organizations that are in favour and others against it. Advice given to women is therefore consistent with the organization's philosophy its denominational or non-denominational status.

The Organic Law 2/2010 about reproductive health and abortion, enacted on March 3, 2010, set out in Articles 13 and 14 of Title II cases for the decriminalization of the practice of abortion during the first fourteen weeks.

5. Issues and barriers faced by lone parents

Issues

1. Lack of public social resources
2. Wage gap
3. Techo de cristal (Promotion and post restriction)
4. Wage differences between women and men
5. Reconciliation of work and family life
6. Lack of family law
7. Not too much family friendly labour policies
8. The primacy of companies' interests over the rights of children to upbringing by their mother
9. Motherhood as an option or as a barrier to career promotion

Barriers

1. Social prejudices
2. Single mother's discrimination at personal and professional levels
3. Working days: timetables, type of contract
4. Stigmatization because of being beneficiaries of social assistance, both in Spain and in Europe (Germany, Norway, Sweden). It is believed that social assistance makes beneficiaries create an accommodating attitude.

5. Social classes among one-parent families themselves

Due to the legal limbo in which one-parent parent families are living in Europe, both European legislators and the Spanish one completely forget these families when making tax and social legislation. Therefore, we do exist neither for education nor housing nor for tax system or other issues. Owing to the disappearance of welfare across Europe have funding cuts begun with aid existing for all the families.

The situation of one-parent families is varied depending on the number of progenitors contained in the family book, the number of sons/daughters, family income, educational level, etc.. In addition, one can notice many social differences between the same loneparent

families, there are classes with different economic and social circumstances.

As a result of all these issues and barriers, there are no lobbies or pressure groups bringing together these families' demands in Europe. Therefore, there is great discrimination against single mothers and one-parent families and single parenthood is treated from the point of view of social exclusion. After so many years of struggle to get some achievements and universal access to social rights, coexistence aimed at equal opportunities regardless of gender, age, social class or education, this welfare system is being reduced and almost destroyed by economic cutbacks being fattened in the most affected and greater demand these social resources.

6. Welfare system

There is really no family policy in Spain. Public policies aimed at families are not aimed at single parents but at every kind of family, being the main beneficiaries traditional families composed by two parents.. Direct and indirect economic benefits, maternity or paternity leave, labour rights relating to conciliation and education services and child care are part of a family policy which has no that no special considerations with these families. When assessing, single parents are discriminated against and disadvantaged with respect to traditional families or the large ones.

Spanish one- parent families do not have substantial public support, so they end up in a complex household. They need their family's logistical support. Furthermore, in spite of their much lower salaries, Spain is the only EU to have net income below gross income. They have to face a heavy penalty tax for being a single mother. The conclusion is that the more you earn better tax treatment you receive in Spain, being the precarious positions the ones supporting the higher tax levy. Investment in social and fiscal policies is by means of tax benefits, which benefit only the upper and middle classes and exclude the most vulnerable families of these aids. Moreover, gender burden is not equitable. Resources are distributed unequally.

7. Responsible authorities

They do not exist in Spain, and we believe that this legal concept does not exist in any European country.

Country report: Sweden

Total population: 9,5 million

The welfare system: Most of it is regulated in law on a state level, but the services are mostly provided by the municipalities.

Single parents

5 % of the Swedish households consists of a single mother with at least one child. 2 % of them of a single father with a child. 14% of the household is in a category named "others". This can mean that a child lives one week with one parent and the next week with the other. The term used is "Alone-standing parents"

Child care

The municipalities are responsible for child care and are obliged to offer this from the age of one. Between the age 2-5, 95% of all children are enrolled in some sort of child care. From the age of three, all children are entitled to 15 hours free child care every week. A few years ago, some municipalities did not manage to offer child care, which led to some parents taking legal action

Welfare system

All parents – independent of income – are entitled to child care support, approx 110 euro per month. Single parents are entitled to extra money for housing. The parent who does not live with the child is entitled to alimony/maintenance from the other parent. Of the single parents, 23 % of the women and 8% of the men, receive subsidy because their income is considered too low.

Issues/barriers faced by single parents

Four out of five of all single parents' children have shared parental responsibility.

Save the Children Sweden had campaign against child poverty in 2013.

There has been a vivid discussion about what child poverty means and relative poverty vs absolute poverty.

Country report France/French Guyana

European good and best practice projects and methods in supporting single-parents

Abstract

In the following chapter, the main result of our two year project, we will present what our consortium considers to support single-parents to lead a self-determined life and raise their quality of life. So we will introduce good and best practice examples of projects which are capable of creating learning and development for single-parents as well as concrete methods we use in the interaction with our target group. And last but not least: we invite you to use these examples and exploit them for your work in the field of Lifelong Learning!

Best practice project example 1 presented by Isadora Duncan (Spain): **SOLIDARITY LOAN FOR ONE-PARENT FAMILIES**

In our SOLIDARITY LOAN FOR ONE-PARENT FAMILIES, small loans to cover immediate needs and basics are provided. In Spain financial strains for single parents are not likely to be financed as a matter of course or not with the urgency necessary by local and national authorities or financial institutes. Therefore we started our program SOLIDARITY LOAN FOR ONE-PARENT FAMILIES - these loans are individual and flexible to meet basic needs, such as safety in regard of paying the rent for housing, to meet arrears, bills, electricity, water or gas, school supplies, etc.

To get access for a solidarity loan, beneficiaries have to fulfill two requirements; to be a single-parent family and to have some income. The purpose of this program is to solve a specific situation of indebtedness and not to create a line of increased credit debts of families and limit their ability to purchasing.

Both the amounts borrowed and repayment terms are set in regard of each individual case without charging interest or fees. The loan fund is fed back to receive reimbursements for amounts borrowed, so as to allow its continuation. For granting loans, the need for the loan is assessed, a social report is produced and a Committee formed by the President of the Foundation, representatives of the Territorial Management of Social Services of the Junta de Castilla y León, Town Council of León, Provincial Council of León, a former beneficiary (or recipient) of the program and the technical program then decide if the loan is granted.

The beneficiaries of the program commit to participate in workshops for the topics family, education and regular financial and economic monitoring to increase the beneficiaries' chances not to be in need of loans in the future.

The situation of many families that are part of this program makes it necessary in many cases, to implement additional actions for their support e.g. mediation between landlords and renters, to support active job seeking, social counseling, legal advice, etc.

CHALLENGES AND FOLLOW-UP

Because the economic situation of families has not improved in recent years, we have to consider the permanent existence of such programs, which meet basic needs, hence we propose two innovations for the program and its permanence:

- expanding the loan fund , to reach and provide all families in need;
- to remit a percentage of each repayable loan to facilitate each family's economic stability. We consider fulfilling the requirements to access the program, to commit to the learning offers we provide and to develop options for self-efficacy should be considered in the arrangement of payback conditions. The actual percentage of reduction should depend on the individual family situation. The main objective is to facilitate the assessment of compliance responsibilities. In any case, the aimed percentage is equal to 100 % of the amount loaned.

The Foundation developed a number of other activities that complement this program, including most notably the efforts to combat fuel poverty (program development), activities to promote healthy and affordable food (a guide edited by Isadora Foundation Guide Duncan and supported by the Alimerka Foundation, "Economic Power and Healthy for one-parent families").

Best practice project example 2 presented by Isadora Duncan (Spain): SAFE HOUSE PROGRAM

This program was created in 1990 and it was the first non religious resource for single mothers and their children in Spain. It serves as a women's refuge where women in acute need because of domestic violence can get shelter for themselves and their children.

Our Safe House Program aims at global support and considers the complete life situation of women in need: education, health, employability, technology, economy, etc. in order to empower them in all relevant aspects of her life.

It employs positive parenting and therefore creating a good relationship between parents and their children.

Also the programs work with the mother and their children separately. In the year 2000 we incorporated into our program attention to victims of gender violence. Our efforts are directed at helping the female victim of gender violence to break free from the abuse cycle suffered/experienced by her and her children. The proposed intervention plan for each woman is always tailored specifically to the situation in which she may find herself, since not all of the women need the same kind of help and support.

Likewise, with each minor a plan is developed to enable a healthy development and work on any areas that may be in need.

This plan is developed and carried out by a multi-disciplinary team composed of different professionals (psychologists, social workers, child educators, social educators, etc.) and is always supported by our foundation's workers and volunteers.

The workshops we offer at the Day Center (Information Technology, Spanish classes, cooking classes, etc.) focus on the women. We offer a conciliation service that introduces activities for children in gender equality. Our goal is to empower the women at all levels, making her completely autonomous and in charge of her family.

In the last year, a total of 10 women and 9 children stayed in our safe house and received support.

Best practice project example 3 presented by Isadora Duncan (Spain): INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND FREE ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

Since 2003 we have a classroom to provide courses in digital literacy, primarily aimed at socially excluded groups (unemployed persons, women with low income, immigrants, etc.), although it is open to society as a whole. We provide workshops to computing, job search via the Internet, digital retouching, electronic commerce, IT playgrounds, etc..

This resource also serves as a catalyst for other activities of our entity, e.g. workshops integrating people from different groups and ages. Also these content related topics often lead to the detection of risk situations faced by people, their families and friends involved through this resource.

Our Foundation has created and directed various resources on the Internet, they have given us visibility at national and international level. All interested persons can access our Website

and Consultancy online: <http://isadoraduncan.es>. The Web portal has become a benchmark for single parents' network in Spanish-speaking countries. We also established a social network for single parents: <http://social.isadorduncan.es>.

Over 1,900 single parents can get in contact and communicate together in this social network. We also provide information on other network organizations, e.g for immigrant women: <http://redormiga.org> or a platform for online training: <http://formacion.isadoraduncan.es/>.

We also have a very active presence on social media like Facebook and Twitter.

Parallel to these activities we perform design services and web development projects for both our own entity as other NGOs and agencies.

Also we provide streaming services: for years we have been broadcasting our talks and workshops. The professional level we have achieved in this type of service has other NGOs and government agencies assign our services in seminars and educational training. So the ICT offers we provide are also a important resource for Isadora Duncan to gain additional revenue for our foundation and to ensure that we further are able to provide services and support for single-parents.

Best practice project example 4 presented by team training (Germany): Counseling Centre for lone parents

The target group of our coaching center is single parents with need for support in social and occupational integration, as well as those whose partner faces a similar problem.

Our main goal is by providing training and counseling to activate our participants' resources and support their access to the labour market. We aim to find individual solutions to the question of reconciling work and family life through training courses and individual coaching and thus improve the lives of the individual participants and their children.

Thus, our concrete goals are the integration of single parents and returners into the job market and, specifically, developing a concrete strategy for the return to the job market after the childcare phase.

Another goal is to lead the participants to a job by initiating internships. Important steps also include, if necessary, dealing with family-related, health, and financial burdens, as well as conflict counseling for dealing with the former partners.

The usual time of attendance is six months with an average of 18 hours a week. Every single parent can make use of 3 hours individual coaching and counseling and 15 hours of participation in group activities, like ICT training, etc.



Psychosocial Support and Coaching

At any of our locations, a socio-pedagogical specialist working full-time is responsible for psychosocial support and coaching. Their job includes individual coaching, coordinating the support process and leading the activation and integration plans, (outreach) networking, employment service, and project work.

Here an abstract of the repertoire of methods within the framework of psychosocial support:

- Support with everyday life questions,
- Health orientation,
- Economic behavior,
- Clarification of perspectives in conflict situations,
- Clarifying inner conflicts in the area of work/life balance.
- Job market/oriented elements:
 - Vocational guidance,
 - Job application coaching,

- Job placement,
- Counseling in regard to side jobs and additional income options.

The coaching centre as a network point:

- Strengthening of social networks in local areas,
- Outreach counseling for participants in need,
- Joint networking activities of participants and employers in communal areas,
- Creating contact points for participants, employers and organizations,
- Interconnectedness with additional counseling options,
- Creating learning opportunities,
- Guidance in regards to further professional qualifications and school-leaving qualifications.

Qualification and practical experience in different occupational areas

At any of our locations, a teacher working 24 hours a week is responsible for the qualification of the participants.

The content and didactic presentation of the course depends on the needs of the participants. This course consists of different modules and we have options for participants in different work and family situations and stages of development.

Set qualification and project components are:

- Job application training and occupational guidance: job market and requirements, developing perspectives, cv and cover letter, interviews, telephone interviews, online applications.
- Project work in the areas of work and creativity designed to improve self-confidence and self-efficacy.

Topics for demand-oriented workshops are, for instance:

- Work and family,
- Body and health,
- Educational counseling,
- Violence in the family,
- Dealing with the ex-partner,
- Legal issues,

- Communication training,
- Conflict training,
- Self-marketing,
- Language courses.

Best practice project example 5

presented by Initial e.V. (Germany): Social Garden

Short description of the project:

Addicted persons work on 5000qm in the garden and produce organic vegetable.

The garden products are distributed for free to charities.

The project "Social Garden" is created by Initial e.V. in Karlsruhe 2009 for long-term unemployed persons with addiction background and a small number of long-term unemployed without addiction. Out of approximately 30 participants a year 80% are men. Men respond more often to problems with addictive behavior. Generally the participants stay half a year in the project.

The addiction is just ONE serious obstacle to find a regular job. Many of the participants have low vocational qualification, debt and serious health, psychological or social impairments.

Less than 30% are living in families: most of the participants are single parents. Since the majority has not been employed for many years, the children have not seen their parents getting up in the mornings and going for work. So in the time of the project even the children who are not addressed directly by the project live in a more organized way.

The project has the goal to strengthen the connection of the participants to the social net and by doing this to support their stability. The project offers to the participants a daily structure and the possibility to regain some important social qualities while working in a social group. These social skills are trained with superiors, colleagues and other social groups. The project participants develop a positive approach to their own health and improve their performance. The situation of such work in the project minimizes the relapse for persons who had stopped their addictive behavior.

The project uses the concept of "work instead of drugs." An important principle is to avoid drugs while participating in the project.

One of the most important methods in the project is garden pedagogic. This means that the nature is used to strengthen the health. The participants learn to take care of living nature and learn how to take responsibility. They advance from „been taken care of“ to a person „who takes care“. The success of having taken care of the vegetable from the seed to the harvest gives gratification which is very different from their usual one of consuming drugs. An important factor of strengthening the experience in the group is the possibility to taste the products of the garden and enjoy them in a common meal.

The participants distribute harvested vegetables to charities in the neighbourhood and help this way other needy persons. This has also a positive impact of the project participants who maybe for the first time have an opportunity to help others.

In the project the participants can use individual social counseling. They regularly attend some social activities such as breaks, common meals, team meetings, excursions.

In the project we support participants to find a job and to enter psychotherapy.

Participants: 30 persons, mostly men, with addiction problems, unemployed
 longer than 24 months

Goal: strengthening the health, training of social skills, entering psychotherapy,
 finding a regular job

Duration: 6 months to one year

Staff: gardeners, social workers

Best practice project example 6 presented by Initial e.V. (Germany): "Initial Café – a training restaurant for long-term unemployed persons"

Since 2010 the "Initial Café - training restaurant for long-term unemployed persons" offers a training possibility for women and men who are unemployed for longer than two years.

A well-designed restaurant and a professional kitchen provide a space for learning and training for the participants and an appreciative possibility to get a tasty and healthy lunch for approximately 40 citizens of Karlsruhe – every day.

The project aims at increasing the employability of the long-term unemployed who are disadvantaged in the labour market. Women have bigger difficulties than men to change their status and once unemployed they tend to remain it for longer time than men. They are also over-represented in precarious jobs (60% of those are women). Therefore, this project

is mainly aimed to support women on their way to the job and personal stability.

The project has three main goals:

First: To offer a protected working space that allows participants to experience the demands of the labor market, under conditions which resemble usual labor market conditions.

Second: To enable the personal stabilization of the participants through intense socio-educational support and help.

Third: To organize direct contacts with potential employers

On a personal level, the participants:

A. Get new daily routine, social contacts, and hopefully increase their self-esteem

B. Increase the employability and skills for the labor market in the field of gastronomy assistants, and housekeeping services

C. increase job-related social skills

The training is done "on the job" during the work process and in a accompanying theoretical course.

We offer the following activities:

Cuisine: Preparation of food instructed by a professional chef in a modern professional environment. Qualification is offered in all areas of work in a professional kitchen, as catering and restaurants.

Service: All participants are also qualified in service and the guest care.

The social counseling accompanies the participants in stabilizing their private life and increasing employability through addressing relevant barriers. To prepare for the first labor market also includes the updating of documents, assistance with job applications and preparing for interviews with prospective employers. The project regularly offers an encounter of the potential employer, actively invited by the project organizers and the participants. The idea behind this is that our participants have no chance at the labour market if they apply conventionally, through paper, because of the c-v which shows major gaps in the working process, but they do have chances if the employers meet them directly and see how they work.

Best practice project example 7

presented by Initial e.V. (Germany):

Multi Generation House in Karlsruhe

Multi-generation houses are mirroring a well-organized extended family, bringing together all age groups – from babies to 80-year-olds – and constituting a successful model in an era characterized by demographic and social change.

The multi-generation house in Karlsruhe, the “Brunhilde-Baur-Haus”, offers a kindergarten and 16 flats for assisted living for young parents. A big professional kitchen and a cafe offer good food and delicious cakes and at the same time they are a place for the assisted vocational training for young persons, for internships and other steps which can help qualify and access vocational life.

A multi generation house offers space and the opportunity for living for all generations. Volunteers and professional staff work closely together. It addresses the different needs of the different generations:

In the Café of the Multi Generation House breakfast, lunch, coffee and cakes are being served - healthy meals at reasonable prices - in order to bring all generations around the table. The single parents are supported in everyday life, they can make contacts with young and older persons.

Children older than six months are cared for. For working parents, special places in the house are reserved.

Good and qualified counseling is provided. Issues as dealing with authorities, raising children and all other challenges can be dealt with on the basis „we help you to help yourself“.

At the same time services are being used and offered by the inhabitants of the house: cooking food or help in the household and garden. The users of these services thus experience significant relief. And the people who offer this service get a chance to take care of themselves on a financial level.

In the "Senior Academy" senior inhabitant can attend computer courses for seniors.

Such houses provide benefit for all generations – single parents get a great opportunity to manage their life in the first, often most difficult years as parents.

Best practice project example 8 presented by One Parent Families (Scotland): Peer Mentoring

One Parent Families Scotland work with local communities to empower families to overcome the barriers they encounter. Our tailored peer mentoring services and training for lone parents helps support single parents to take positive steps towards their future and give their children the best possible chances in life. Lone Parent Peer Mentoring is a tried and tested successful model to engage with young lone parents and lone parents who are in need of additional support. Single parents are faced with many issues and barriers that can restrict their involvement in accessing services, community engagement, parent groups and other support agencies. These may include:

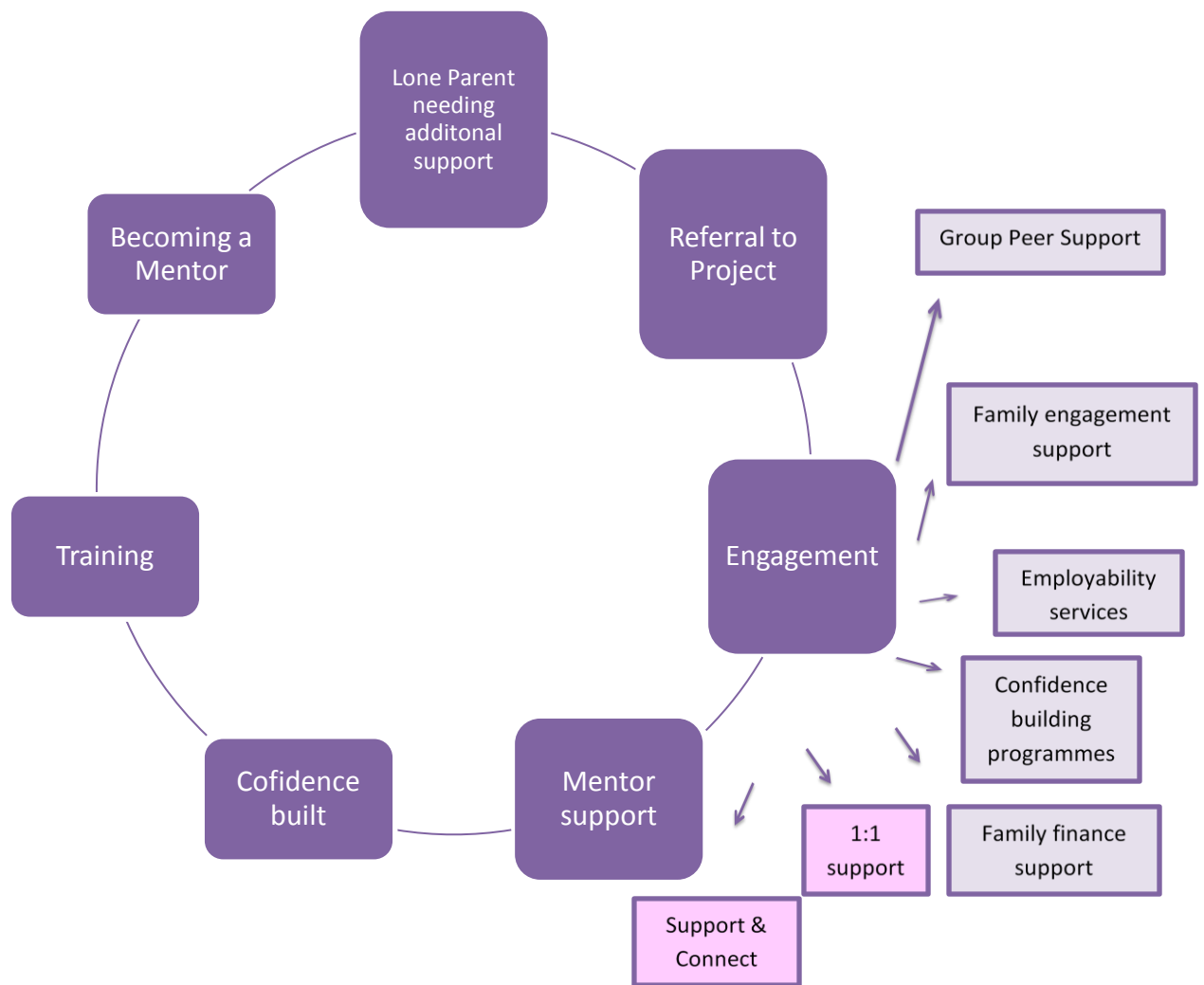
- Access to affordable, flexible quality childcare
- Conflict with ex-partner/family
- Isolation
- Unaware of legal rights
- Not knowing where to look for help
- Barriers to accessing statutory and local services
- Uncomfortable about using family services through judgemental authorities

The specialised support offered by One Parent Families Peer Mentors improves confidence and self-esteem, builds improved family relationships by offering parenting skills, advocacy, activities, sign-posting and encouraging lone parents to support each other through our peer mentoring programmes.

The Lone Parent Peer mentoring approach has been implemented across all OPFS services and a Peer Mentor training programme has been developed.

Lone Parent Peer Mentoring Model

How it works



Best practice project example 9 presented by One Parent Families (Scotland): Helpline: Information and Advice

The Lone Parent Helpline offers a unique, free and confidential advice service for lone parents and practitioners. The helpline is staffed by experienced Rights Workers and operates Scotland wide. The workers keep abreast of any new developments that may impact on lone parents including updates on benefit changes sweeping across the UK, Universal Credit, Bedroom Tax and changes to CSA.

Our factsheets inform parents and agencies on varies issues affecting single parents and their families. Topics include:

- Separation and divorce:
- Going back to work
- Money for Single Parents
- Maternity rights
- Child Maintenance

The helpline has a comprehensive website and all factsheets are publications downloadable. Rights workers have been at the forefront of training other professionals from the voluntary and statutory sector and provide essential information to professionals working with families affected by the benefit system changes.

Best practice project example 10

presented by One Parent Families (Scotland): Family Finance

For many lone parents welfare benefits can form a significant part of their family income. OPFS delivers a free Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service in local communities. Services are delivered by specialist Welfare Rights and Money Advice Officers who work with lone parent to help with questions and problems on a range of benefit and debt issues including:

- Giving information on benefit entitlement and how to make a claim
- Checking that lone parents are receiving the appropriate benefits including child maintenance.
- Advising on what will happen if your circumstances change
- Giving advice on how to appeal against a decision on your claim.
- Informing you about changes to benefits such as Universal Credit.
- Make an informed decision regarding starting paid work/changing their hours of work
- Access the appropriate benefits for their children, including child maintenance
- A Support for any debt / money worries /budgeting issues

The service to lone parents is free and is available to all lone parents and those who may want to know about potential changes to their entitlements facing a transition in their lives.

Best practice project example 11

presented by One Parent Families (Scotland): Childcare

One Parent Families provide flexible, affordable, customised service to lone parents who struggle to find essential childcare that matches individual family needs. The flexible childcare services operate throughout Scotland, offering childcare in the home; in group based settings and at crèches for events. Our Childcare@ home services provides quality, tailored, home based childcare for single parent families. The professional staff, care for children in the safety of the family home. Operating seven days a week from early morning

until late, the service makes a valuable contribution to family life. Its ability to support shift patterns allows parents with limited external support to pursue employment or education. One Parent Families also offer a quality mobile crèche that can be used by community organisations and organisations. Our experienced registered childcare workers provide fun and engaging activities in a safe and stimulating space. Staff have particular experience of personalised care for children with a disability or special educational need as well as helping parents with health problems that restrict their ability to look after their children. One Parent inclusive support for the whole family – not just the children.

Best practice project example 12 presented by Superact! (UK): SEPE – Supporting employability and personal effectiveness Informal learning through the Arts: the SEPE Award.

Supporting Employability and Personal Effectiveness (SEPE) is a BTEC qualification being offered by Edexcel and Superact in the UK, and it is now being launched on a European level.

The SEPE award is designed to help those who may find accessing traditional routes to employability challenging, to build confidence and gain a meaningful qualification. It is also hoped that in taking this qualification students will develop a passion for learning through the unique holistic delivery of this course.

The purpose of this qualification is to equip learners with employability skills and the self-confidence to use them. Essentially, employability skills are the skills needed to obtain jobs and skills that help you to stay in a job and develop a career. Whilst there will always be some job-specific skills that an employer is looking for; most employers will also want to see a set of generic skills associated with teamwork, communication, and self-motivation in potential employees. In fact there is clear evidence that employers are often less demanding of job specific skills in which they can assist a potential employee with the appropriate training; however, they do want employees to exhibit generic employability skills.

As an organization, Superact! focuses on holistic learning through the arts. The experience of many successful projects have demonstrated to the company the clear role that the arts can have in developing self-confidence and essential 'soft skills' for employability.

Evidence has shown that a well-delivered arts project will develop participants' reflective learning, their overall personal skills, their ability to manage relationships, their

communication skills, their concentration on tasks, their enthusiasm, motivation and self-esteem. Many studies have made similar observations when comparing the impact of the arts on self-esteem and employability.

Superact's involvement in the SUSIPE project has led to dialogue and funding on a local level to work with young parents aged 16-18. We are offering through SEPE the chance for 3 groups across the Devon County to develop their own young parent network. The development of this network is the outcome for their SEPE project and through fun creative engagement with and without their children and the sharing of new experiences these young parents start to develop their own identity and self confidence to re access education or apprenticeship opportunities with new objectives.

Best practice project example 13 presented by Superact! (UK): Single Parents in prison – Eastwood Park

Superact regularly works in different areas of the Justice system. We work very closely with both the probation and youth justice service.

One of our projects led us to work in the mother and baby unit at Eastwood Park (Female closed prison). In this environment women can sometimes enter prison pregnant and give birth in the mother and baby unit – the child is permitted to stay with the mother for up to 1 year and is then taken away into care. Superact has delivered some powerful music workshops within this unit – allowing the mothers some time to spend with their child.

We have now trained another arts organisation to deliver our SEPE accreditation and this is being developed more intensely at Eastwood Park.

Best practice project example 14 presented by Superact! (UK) Music in Hospitals – Superact Hospital Music Programmes

Superact works in partnership with a number of hospitals and NHS Trusts across the South West of England, including Dorset County Hospital, Thornbury Hospital, Musgrove Hospital and local community hospitals. Superact currently works regularly with Southmead Hospital, Frenchay Hospital (both part of North Bristol NHS Trust), Bath Royal United Hospital and Bristol Royal Hospital for Children, to deliver monthly music programmes in various wards and waiting areas.

For all patients, a hospital stay can be an undesirable experience. It comes not only with health concerns, pain, anxiety or uncertainty, but also with losing independence, being away from home and family and coping in a clinical environment.

Superact's live music hospital programmes aim to:

- Entertain and inspire both patients and staff
- Provide a focal and talking point
- Help create a more relaxed, less clinical atmosphere
- Create a positive healing environment to support the recovery process
- Support hospital staff and patient wellbeing by decreasing levels of stress, anxiety and depression and creating distraction
- To enable patients and their families to meet the musicians and discover more about their music and instruments (and in some cases to play their instruments themselves)

"Having music sessions supplied by Superact benefits the children and families in many ways. It provides a time to socialise with others whilst enjoying sing-a-long with families, staff and performers. This enables the child to be distracted from what is an unfamiliar environment, allowing them to have fun. When children are distracted they are able to cope much better with their hospital admission and procedures."



Julie Fisher, Senior Play Specialist, Barbara Russell Children's Unit, Frenchay Hospital



"It was amazing, my husband attended the performance for the whole hour and was able to interact through the use of instruments and even vocalised on a few occasions – the music and story telling was really beneficial for him

and it was so emotional for me to see him taking part and smiling.”

Patient's wife, Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit, Frenchay Hospital (*pictured left with her husband*)

“It gives [the children's] parents a break – I think they often don't know what they can do to entertain their children all day, every day, so when your musicians visit it is such a relief. It makes the children happy. It gives them something fun and creative to do.”



Maria Indelicato, Play Specialist at Bristol Children's Hospital

Superact has evaluated that all of our ongoing music programmes within hospital settings have had a profound impact, thanks mainly to the musicians for their professionalism, the staff for being so accommodating and to the patients, for allowing Superact to provide something that it believes is of benefit to them, the staff and the wider healthcare environment. There have been many positive and powerful responses that go some way to demonstrating the influence of music and performing arts within a healthcare setting.

The programmes have helped create upbeat and relaxing atmospheres, provoked affirmative responses, provided a distraction, created a talking point for patients, carers and staff and supported the medical staff in their work. They have provided many memorable and affecting moments too, not just for the recipients but the performers too. The fact that musicians are performing music, live and acoustically, provides a focal point, a talking point and something tangible that touches the senses, creating an atmosphere that recorded music could not.

“Paul and Linda were a great duo – I never thought the oboe and accordion could sound so wonderful together! Paul, especially, is such a nice guy - so sensitive and



responsive to each situation we were in. Neither of them blinked when we sadly had to leave the Children's Unit immediately after arriving yesterday afternoon, when a baby stopped breathing and the resuscitation team had to take over. It would have been wildly inappropriate to have musicians there but what's so good about all the musicians you send is that they are professional and flexible enough to cope with all situations. Please thank them both for the great pleasure they've brought to many people in the last two days and I hope to see them back in our spaces very soon."

Ruth Sidgwick, Arts Coordinator for North Bristol NHS Trust

The Project Manager for Superact recently observed a session

A few months ago, I met a single mother who's 6 month old baby was very poorly with a heart condition which meant he had not left hospital since his birth. The mother had three other older children and as it was a school holiday, the three older children had to spend days in hospital with their mum and younger brother. Our musicians, Craig Yates and Rhiannon Pritchard (tenor singer and piano accompaniment) performed a few songs on the ward and the whole family came to watch. As Craig and Rhiannon were performing, a nurse told me that this was the happiest she'd seen the whole family and it was so lovely that they were able to do something all together. The baby also seemed engaged, couldn't take his eyes off our musicians, and also smiled and babbled a lot, which the nurse told me was rare.

Best practice methods example 1 presented by team training (Germany): The method Life-Work-Planning (LWP)

One of the methods we use in our counseling centres is called Life-/ Work-Planning, shortly LWP. It is a method to find out

- what I really like to do,
- what kind of job title I can give it,
- where I can find this kind of job.

It helps to get a better idea of the abilities and resources the participants already have and how they can be used to find a job suitable for their situation.

In our training centers we use mainly the first part: How to know what I really like to do.

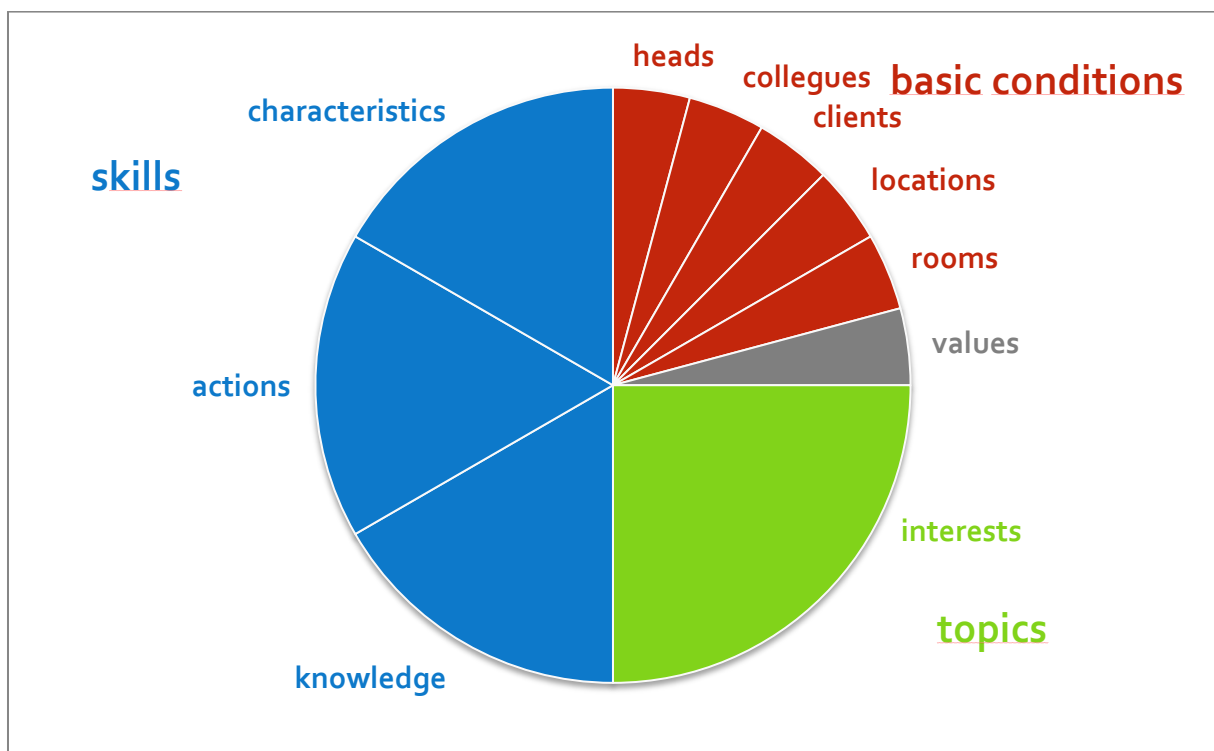
It is a versatile method with a lot of exercises and it takes some time work through all parts of the method. Because of this time-consuming aspect we use mainly some exercises as single interventions – and we can provide here is a small insight in this method. At the end of this article you will find a reference where you can find more information.

LWP 1: How to know what I really like to do

The idea behind LPW is that when you do what you really like you will become unbeatable in doing that. So we use some exercises to create a picture of all the things the participants like most in their lives. This picture contains four parts:

- skills,
- topics,
- basic conditions,
- values.

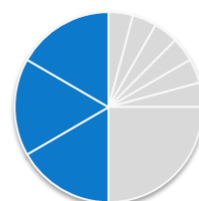
At the end of the workshop all participants write three key words in each section of the circle displayed below this paragraph. Those words are chosen of a list of a lot of words and expressions the participants create for themselves and which represent best their experiences in life and how they want to live in the future.



Skills

Skills contain three parts:

- how you like to be – characteristics
- what you like to do – actions
- and what you love to know – knowledge



Knowledge

What you love to know can originate from your professional or private life. Mostly it is something you learned about a lot at one point in your life, for example if you learned something about healthy diet while cooking for your children, you can write it in the circle. Or if you became an expert in the organization of an office, in motivating other parents to help at a school party or something you studied in school, all these aspects can find a place here. The only important thing is that it makes you happy that you have the knowledge about it.

Characteristics

How you like to be is another point in this circle that represents yourself. What do you like best about yourself? Do you like to be nice, smart, fast, well organized, relaxed, happy... You could also write down that you are lazy, stubborn or competitive – if you really like that about yourself.

Actions

What you like to do can also be everything you can think of and know of yourself. Do you like to laugh, run, dance, knit, cook, talk in a foreign language, negotiate, make phone calls, write articles, place orders, unload trucks, plant trees... The only condition is that you did that at least once in your life and you loved doing it.

But how do you find out what you like to do, what you like to know and how you like to be? For that we use an exercise that is called Success Stories and that always can be used as a single intervention with a great impact.

Success Stories

Everyone has done things in their lives that they are proud of. But often we notice that our participants forgot those things and feel they had never done anything good in life. Telling success stories is a great exercise to raise confidence and faith in themselves.

We start with the list of 21. Here you write down 21 experiences, that

- were fun to do,
- were a challenge while accomplishing them and
- were successful.

It can be everything from learning how to swim, organizing a big family meeting or finding your way in a town in southern Italy without knowing any Italian. It can be a story out of your childhood, your teenage years or your life as an adult. You could have had this experience while going to school, in your working life or your free time, together with a group of people or alone.

In the beginning it is often difficult for our participants to think of these stories. A good way to help them is to create some groups where they read aloud their ideas to each other. Whenever someone reads something you also have experienced in a similar way you write it on your own list. For

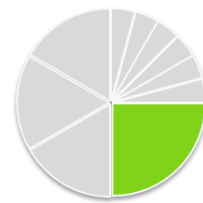
example if someone learned how to bake a cake for matrimony and you cooked once a meal for 30 people, you write it down.

Once you have 21 things you liked to do, you choose seven topics of different times and areas of your life and write for each a success story. In this story you tell exactly every step you did to achieve your goal. Imagine a small child sitting next to you that is asking: "And then? What did you then? And then? And then?" This point is important because it does not matter what happened, it only matters what you did to achieve the goal.

After you have written down one story you look for all the skills in it you can think of. Then you ask your friends or the people sitting close to you if they find other skills and so on until you have a list of 20-50 different skills – only in this story. From the skills of all seven stories you choose in different steps the skills you like most until you have three expressions for characteristics, actions and knowledge that you can write down in your own circle.

Topics

Topics are special interests that have accompanied you for some time in your life. Once again it doesn't matter if it is a work-related topic or something you love to do in your free time. If you love all about carrier pigeons, you write it down. If you love cultivating or drinking or reading about wine, you write it down. If you love fast cars or skyscrapers or industrial production processes, you write it down. The exercise that will help you finding as many topics as possible are called Sheets of Interests.



Sheets of Interest

For every bullet point you create an own sheet. Find as many keywords as you can for:

- things you like to see
- things you like to hear
- things you like to smell
- things you like to touch
- magazines you like to read
- stores you like to go in
- topics you would like to give as a book to a friend
- topics of fairs or events you would like to go to

Again you share all the things in groups and add the ideas of the other people that apply also for you. For example if someone says he loves looking at the sky and you think in this second about how good the air smells after a thunder storm, you write it on your own sheet.

Out of this collection you create in several steps your own interest sheet until you have identified three topics your heart is beating for. This means that once you start talking about it this topic your eyes begin to shine and your friends can not stop you anymore.

Basic conditions

The third big part of your circle are shows basic conditions you want to work and live in. To help you finding them (and because it is more fun) you take 5 sheets of paper and on each sheet you write as many things you can think of about what is lousy in



- people you are taking orders from (heads of business)
- colleagues
- clients
- locations
- rooms

After you talked with the other members in the group about what your ideas and added their ideas to your sheet, you change the point of view from lousy to great. For example if you hate working in a shared office then maybe you love to work in your own room where you can close the door if you want to. Or if the worst thing that could happen is a constant rain where you live then you change it to a sunny region – at least on your sheet. Maybe it will not be possible to live in Spain or on one Caribbean Island, but you could always look for a possibility to spend there as much time as possible.

LWP 2: Job title

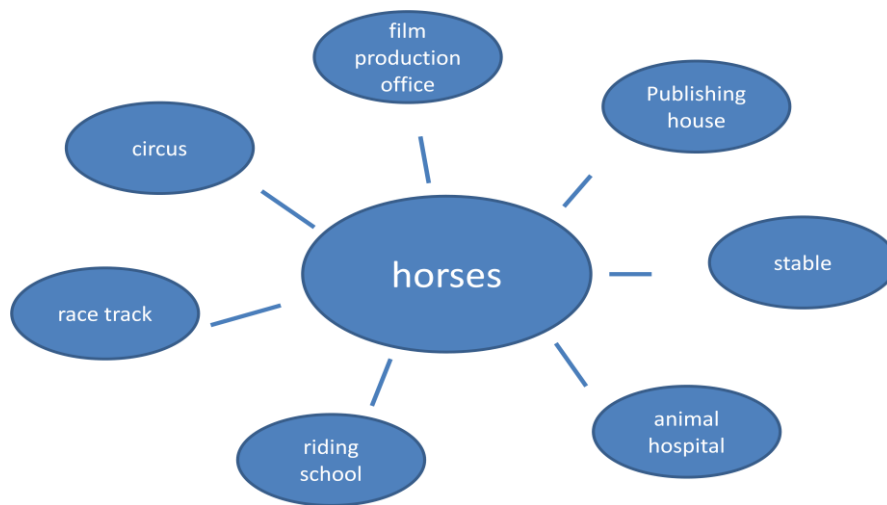
After you created your own circle and filled it with your own personal words it is time to think about how to include it in your life. The idea is that you create an environment where you can include as many points as possible. It is absolutely fine if not all points can be included in your working life. But you can think of a possibility to include those more in your life than you had in the last years.

For example one participant knew a lot about dents (because she was a dentist) and spent all her free time to act in a theatre play. But she hated to look in people's mouths day after day so after creating the circle she came up with a different idea. And for the next couple of years she put on a huge toothbrush costume and went to child-care institutions to teach the children how to clean their teeth.

Or a friend of mine loves to sew and is really good at it. For years she created presents for her family and friends and had the idea to sell her creations. She has a small daughter and is dependent of a regular income. She did not want to leave her secure job as a clerk but was able to reduce it. Now she spends one day a week to sew and sell her products.

But how do you find a job where you can include as many points as possible? One exercise that can help is called explosion:

You put an interest in the middle of one sheet and ask as many people as possible if they can think of places where people work that have something to do with the chosen topic. One short example:



This you do with all three interests you have chosen. And then you do some research and go to the people that are working at these places. For example you go to an animal hospital and talk to all the people working there the same question. The aim is that you get an idea what the different people in an animal hospital are doing and if there is something that you also want to do in the future. The people you ask are working while you do your interviews so they do not have much time. You ask only 4 questions and do not take more than 7 minutes – even if they want to talk longer. After that you send a card and thank them for their time because you never know when you will see them the next time.

The questions are:

- How did you become a clerk in an animal hospital?
- What do you like about being a clerk in an animal hospital?
- Is there something you don't like that much about being a clerk in an animal hospital?
- Do you know three other clerks in an animal hospital who would like to talk to me?

Those questions are only the first step. You do not use them to get a job offer in this second but to get more ideas about where you could do what you like to do. With time the people you talk to will be closer to your idea of a perfect life and in the end you will know exactly what you want, how you want to do it and where you can do that.

Conclusion

This article can give only a little idea of what Life-/ Work-Planning as a method can be. If you want to know more about this method and all the little steps in between – for example, how you use the power of the group or how it feels to create your own circle of keywords – you can visit a workshop

or read the following book. It is the first one written in this way and describes some exercises and the more theoretical background. It is revised every year.

Richard N. Bolles: What Color is your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers. Ten Speed Press, 2012.

Best practice methods example 2 presented by One Parent Families Scotland (Scotland): Speed Networking

Speed Networking is a structured opportunity to share and gain information on the services that organisations deliver to lone parents, updates partners, organisations & agencies on research findings and best practise developments of these services and the types of support provided.

An overview of the services & support provided by the host organisation is presented to the attendees as a welcome and a way of setting the focus of the day, usually enhanced with the use of video and power point. The structure of the networking sessions are explained to the whole group, who are divided into small groups for table information sessions to start.

Speed networking tables are clearly marked with titled subject areas used as the focus of small group discussions.

Small groups are invited to choose their starting point table which ensures that everyone will have the opportunity to gain and share subject information relating to the focus of each table. This encourages members from each of the Projects, Agencies & Organisations to work together in a small group format, further build working relationships, sharing understanding of differences in working frameworks and discuss how models of services delivered could relate to the continued development of current services. This format also supports any language barriers by being aware of participants needs and giving relevant support for full inclusion ie: translator, small groups being able to move around tables together, information shared & discussed at a pace to suit all.

Subject table discussions are time limited and each group changes table usually by the sound of a bell. Host partners provide scribes to support table facilitators and group discussions.

When small groups have taken part in each tabled subject discussion, participants are invited back to meet as a whole group. Feedback from each of the tables is shared with whole group and main points recorded.

Feedback on the use of this exercise has been extremely positive.

- Good at setting the scene
- Inclusive of all participants
- Set time for focused discussions on specific elements of services
- Supportive to any language barriers
- Encourages pro-active working to continue the development and sharing of best practise frameworks.

Best practice methods example 3 presented by One Parent Families Scotland (Scotland): Ice Breaker (drama exercise)

Ice Breakers can be an effective way of starting a training session or team-building event. As interactive and often fun sessions run before the main proceedings, they help people get to know each other and buy into the purpose of the event.

If an ice breaker session is well-designed and well-facilitated, it can really help get things off to a great start. By getting to know each other, getting to know the facilitators and learning about the objectives of the event, people can become more engaged in the proceedings and so contribute more effectively towards a successful outcome.

Asking the participants to sit on chairs and form a circle, the facilitator starts the exercise by standing in the middle of the circle and asking all participants to change seat when a statement is called out to the group that is true to each individual i.e:

Everyone

- with brown eyes
- who has a teenage son/daughter living with them
- wearing black shoes
- wants to go to college
- who has a pet

Whilst participants are changing seat the facilitator also finds a seat in the circle leaving a new person from the group to stand in the middle and call out a statement for participants to change seat to. The person who has stood in the middle and called out their statement should always change.

This exercise:

- Helps participants to find out about each other in an informal group setting.
- Supports relationship building by sharing things in common with each other
- Builds confidence by allowing all participants to stand in the middle of the group and make a statement
- Enables participants to sit next to people who they do not yet know
- Is fun, informal and good for building energy levels back up (particularly after lunch).

Best practice methods example 4

presented by Superact! (UK):

Music with everyday objects (e.g mobile phones)

Many of the groups that Superact works with are often difficult to engage, socially awkward or lacking in confidence.

This session can be used as an ice breaker or warm up session with difficult to engage groups.

The learners split into groups of three to five. The trainer gives the instruction to each group to make use of the ring tones of their mobile phones to tell a story (e.g. how do we feel today, my favourite holiday, etc.) and gives each group around ten minutes to develop their performance with their ring tones. It is a way of accessing music with no instruments or items with which to make music.

Mobile phone ring tones vary and when played as a group can either produce a whole new piece of music or tell a story. The session is fun and engages all ages and abilities.

Best practice methods example 5

presented by Superact! (UK): Story telling in education

The use of narrative and stories in teaching and learning has been put forward by adult educators as an appealing and richly satisfying approach. Narrative is known to be a fundamental structure of human meaning making. Identity formation and personal development can be understood in terms of narrative structure and process as well. In this

respect one can appreciate the power of stories in teaching and learning. A narrative approach to education involves much more than introducing storytelling to the learning; it should also involve an experience-based, constructivist pedagogy.

Superact has two storytellers working on projects in all areas of the community. They both have different approaches and we work with the most relevant personal approach to the client group. One of our recent projects - The Sheherazade project explored the potential of storytelling as an educational tool for different target groups in formal and non-formal adult education. Not only by using stories as carriers of (cultural, historical) knowledge and attractive goals to practice listening and speaking skills, but also because it offers a strong tool for empowerment and social inclusion. Storytelling is a complementary language, other than the more abstract language which is usually used in education. Together with our European partners, we at Superact believe that storytelling has a great potential to attract and motivate the adults to learn. In addition storytelling is a means to connect with others, to express oneself and to integrate in society.

In the following website many stories for the use in adult learning are provided for free:

SHEHERAZADE: 1001 STORIES FOR ADULT LEARNING

www.sheherazade.eu

Background

Most of Western Europe – drowned in modern media - has lost its link with storytelling and oral tradition. Some countries though witness a revival of storytelling as a performing art. In many other cultures oral tradition and storytelling have an important place as translators of heritage, communicators of values and are a vital part of artistic and socio-cultural processes.

Content, language and performance turn stories into genuine products of their culture. In a multicultural Europe, where it is absolutely necessary that bridges are built between the different cultures, storytelling could provide an ideal vehicle to bring about the intercultural dialogue. A revitalisation of storytelling would help Western cultures to regain a link with their own heritage and cultural identity and would provide them with a 'new ear' to better understand other cultures. The latter – migrant and minority cultures - would be able to better use this new channel to bridge the gap of understanding and acceptance they face.

Outcomes

By the end, each student stood in front of the group and told a story, with much emotion and laughter. Some great talents were discovered. One important outcome for mothers in the group was to be able to engage their children with story. In general, much more ease in just speaking out, a critical threshold was passed for many.

Best practice methods example 6

presented by Arbetetsmuseum Norrköping (Sweden):

Object exercise in a historical museum exhibition

This exercise gives an example of a museum visit where a personal relationship between visitor's lives and objects can be found. Participants tell stories and exchange memories.

In preparation for this exercise each participant should be informed to bring a small object, older than him- or herself and connected with a personal memory, a story or anecdote, that he or she are willing to share.

Participants are invited to sit down in a circle. Everyone holds up the object that each person has brought along and tells what it is, for example a book, a photo etc, but only the substantive. Then the personal object is sent around for everybody to examine, during silence.



Photo: Anna Carlsson

The next step is for the participants to choose the perfect spot for their object in the museum exhibition, as if it should be exhibit. The perfect spot could be because the object fit in age wise, story wise or simply because it looks very good. It can really be because of any reason and the participant should be able to express why he or she chose their spot. Give the participants around 10 minutes for this part of the exercise. Participants don't require any pre-knowledge of the exhibition but should fairly fast make their own conclusion about it, looking for the right place for their object. If possible tell participants to leave their objects at the spot. (Only if the object is secured.)

The last step in the exercise is to perform a guided tour through the exhibition in the group where each person tells their own story connected with their object and tell why they have choose the particularly place. The tour should be guided by a museum pedagogue whom are familiar with the exhibition and can tell something short of the exhibition at every stop. This enables the participants to put their own personal story in perspective of the bigger history of the society.



Photo: Anna Carlsson

Ideal group size: 6-8 persons. Maximum: 12 persons. Time: about 1- 1 ½ hour depending on the group size.

Conclusion

Our Grundtvig learning partnership "Supporting single-parents in Europe", conducted from 2012 until 2014, has produced a variety of results. During the lifespan of the project the consortium has met five times all over Europe. Also a lot of work was done by all partners between the meetings. On the content level this project lead to the product you keep in your hands now – a handbook which we are very satisfied with.

All partners had the opportunity to share their approaches in creating positive learning environments especially for single-parents taking part in Lifelong Learning. The awareness of the difficult situation in regard to labour and education for single-parents across Europe empowered the partners to provide and develop positive learning surroundings. The project partners benefited from the experience and creativity of the other partners. Especially the methods used by the partners were evaluated as highly transferable to the other partner countries and will ensure the sustainability of the project. In regard of transferring the projects transfer possibilities are more complex: some of the projects (the garden, the restaurant) can be transferred 1 to 1. Other projects like the ones using music and arts as well as public national funding cannot be simply transferred to other countries where the resources may differ. Nevertheless the basic idea to make use of different ways of expression or providing a broad variety of services and to create learning options in social interaction and the development of self-confidence out of these is an exciting idea which can be adapted in other countries as well.

Rightly so our project contributed to the development of our professional skills as well as creating new impulses for our organisations. We feel empowered to create new learning opportunities for single-parents.

Therefore we gladly share one exemplary in-depth description of effects on regional level by the SUSIPE project.

How can a museum support single parents?

The project SUSIPE inspired The Museum of Work to investigate how the museum supports single parents and if there are other organizations nearby that we can cooperate with in the future.

Arbetets museum – The Museum of Work – a museum out of the ordinary

This old cotton mill is simply full of life. The focus of the museum is to depict and highlight the conditions in and around the workplace through exhibitions, seminars and program activities. The aim for the Museum of Work is to be an innovative meeting place which promotes discussion on peoples work, lives and conditions. The museum does not collect any objects, but people's stories. The museum is open every day 11 am - 5 pm, Tuesdays 11 am - 8 pm, with free admission. At the Museum of Work we put forward and highlight the values of all family constellations (both social and biological).



Photo: Mattias Åström

In our exhibitions we combine research in work related issues with social topics in current debate. We address issues of gender, democracy and human rights and want to encourage individual thinking, reflection and discussion. Therefore the visitor is often given opportunity to participate and experience the exhibitions by using many of their senses. On Tuesday evenings and weekends, the museum offer open programs. For example, we recently had a debate about single father's rights to be with their children.



Photo: Mattias Åström

For families

The Creative Workshop offers activities every Saturday and Sunday for Children and adult assisted by the Museum's instructors. The workshop is also open during school holidays. The intention is to encourage children and adult to do things together. We have various themes throughout the year and the entrance is free of charge. The instructors are aware of that it is a lot of single fathers that come every other week.



Photo: Mattias Åström

The museum arranges a lot of open activities for the whole family, and mostly we have free admission.



Photo: Mattias Åström

New contacts

We were inspired to investigate if we have organizations in Norrköping that supporting young and single parents. We found two, who we visited and invited to the museum.

Young parents and children is a meeting place. Here you can meet and make new contacts and build networks. Young parents have the opportunity to participate in various circles as cooking and outdoor play. They also provide resources if the language would be a barrier. Everything is free.

Young mothers came to the museum, without children, to a guided tour in an exhibition, where a museum educator reenacted historical figures that had impact on family politics in Sweden during the 20th century. After that the educator and the single mothers discuss the situation then and now

The bridge Norrköping is a party political and non-religious, non-profit organization that support the contact between adults and children who have been separated from one or both of their parents through detention caused by a correctional measure. The bridge Norrköping works with adequate support and arrange leisure activities for both children, youth and families, such as excursions and camps.

After our visit at The Bridge we organized activities at the museum, in an exhibition and in the creative workshop – a collaboration that we intend to maintain.

Besides these content-based effects, the project created spaces for meeting professionals from the area of Lifelong Learning and encounter similarities and differences in our work. Our individual horizons were broadened and the experience of positive cooperation and reaching a common goal was a very satisfying experience.

We would appreciate it, if you get inspired by the projects and methods presented in this handbook and contribute to supporting single-parents and Lifelong Learning!