INTEGRATED SERVICES AT LOCAL LEVEL
SOCIAL INVESTMENT IN CITIES
# Executive Summary

## Part 1: Cities Investing in the Integration of Migrants
- Barcelona: A City for All
- Gothenburg: Welcome to Sweden

## Part 2: Cities Putting Young People First
- Belfast: Mentoring its young people
- Oulu: Creating a one-stop-shop for young people

## Part 3: Integrated Childcare for an Integrated Society
- Nantes: Investing in children and their families

## Part 4: Accessible Cities for All
- Ljubljana: Improving accessibility for people with disabilities

## Part 5: Inclusive Labour Markets for Inclusive Cities
- Newcastle: Tackling unemployment at local level

## Part 6: Cities Combating Homelessness at Local Level
- Birmingham: The Youth Hub
- Riga: The Shelter Project
- Rotterdam: The integrated chain approach

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# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1: Cities Investing in the Integration of Migrants</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona: A City for All</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gothenburg: Welcome to Sweden</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: Cities Putting Young People First</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast: Mentoring its young people</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oulu: Creating a one-stop-shop for young people</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3: Integrated Childcare for an Integrated Society</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantes: Investing in children and their families</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4: Accessible Cities for All</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljubljana: Improving accessibility for people with disabilities</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 5: Inclusive Labour Markets for Inclusive Cities</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle: Tackling unemployment at local level</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 6: Cities Combating Homelessness at Local Level</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham: The Youth Hub</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riga: The Shelter Project</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam: The integrated chain approach</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities play a crucial role in developing and delivering effective social policies. They are front-line providers of social schemes and coordinate projects between diverse organisations at local level. City authorities are often responsible for early childhood education, healthcare, local economic development, and housing; as well as public services designed to combat poverty and social exclusion.

European cities are committed to providing integrated and quality social services to people to ensure their active inclusion into the labour market and society and to foster social cohesion. In 2014 EUROCITIES established a taskforce on the Social Investment Package (SIP) to work specifically on the implementation of SIP priorities at the local level. As part of our work, we identify good practices on social investment from cities, facilitate mutual learning, and raise awareness amongst regional, national and European stakeholders on how to make the SIP work.

The SIP was launched by the European Commission in 2013. It called on member states to prioritise social investment and to modernise their welfare systems. The European Commission encouraged member states to:

- ensure that social protection systems respond to people's needs at critical moments throughout their lives such as when they first enter the labour market, become a parent, or require care services,
- adopt better coordinated and targeted social policies,
- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social intervention, such as creating ‘one-stop-shops’ and reducing red-tape,
- take a preventative approach to social inclusion, and
- upgrade active inclusion strategies through affordable and quality public services.

By developing coordinated and integrated services cities adapt to the needs of their users, rather than the other way around. Simplified procedures and integrated services via single access points allow people to access quickly the information they need and find comprehensive solutions to the issues they face.

Social investment is about investing in people to help them participate fully in employment and contribute to their communities. As a transversal approach, it can include diverse policy areas such as education, quality childcare, healthcare, training, assistance in finding employment, and combatting poverty. The idea is that targeted and adequate investments in key areas bring future economic and social benefits. Social investment is therefore at the heart of the European social model.

In this publication we focus on the provision of integrated and coordinated services at local level. We demonstrate how cities have worked to ensure highly coherent and integrated social services, as well as coordinating relevant actors providing related services. In particular, this collection of good practices gives examples of improved coordination for social intervention and services related to:

- migration and integration,
- young people,
- childcare,
- accessibility for people with disabilities,
- employment, and
- homelessness.

Although the good practice examples are quite diverse, a number of common trends can be observed:

- **Flexibility**: all of the projects are flexible and designed to adapt to the individual’s needs and to their changing social situation; this can be seen well in projects on childcare and services for migrants.

- **Preventative approach**: the projects highlighted all aim to find a timely and comprehensive solution to the person’s needs in order to prevent any further difficulties, such as protracted unemployment or social exclusion.

- **Coordination and integration between different policies and services**: this results in a ‘single access point’ or ‘one-stop-shop’ for multiple services and combines access to social services with, for example, labour market activation measures.

These trends result in the delivery of social services of a high quality, which offer comprehensive solutions and ensure that social investment is effective in fighting poverty and social exclusion and brings a social return in the long-term.

These good practices show a firm commitment among cities to Europe 2020; the EU’s jobs and growth strategy that was launched in 2010. They have contributed to the Europe 2020 targets of lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty by 2020, and having 75% of 20-64 year olds in employment.

This publication is divided thematically; between six headline policy areas

1. **Cities Investing in the Integration of Migrants**

Migrants make a valuable contribution to European cities; they bring with them fresh experiences, new ideas, and new businesses. Migration into European cities meets an economic need, given the increasingly ageing population. However, the economic crisis has created new challenges with regards to the integration of migrants, both in terms of their opportunities on the labour market and their risk of poverty and social exclusion. Cities have an important role to play to ensure that migrants can play a full role in society.

The SIP points out that migrants are more likely to be at risk of poverty, and children from a migrant background are more likely to leave school early. In our examples we show how Barcelona and Gothenburg have invested in the integration of migrants at local level, and how the provision of integrated services is paramount to their local integration policies.

2. **Cities Putting Young People First**

The rise in youth unemployment over the past five years has been alarming. In August 2014 almost 5 million young people under 25 were unemployed in the EU, which means a youth unemployment rate of 21.6%. Youth unemployment is closely related to a number of other factors including family poverty and educational attainment.

We present two examples of cities that have developed integrated services in order to effectively tackle youth unemployment and social exclusion. Through its CO-MENT project Belfast established one-to-one support for young people from socio-economically marginalised areas in the city. Oulu has established a one-stop-shop, Byström, where young people can get advice and support on everything from relationships to finding a job.

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3. INTEGRATED CHILDCARE FOR AN INTEGRATED SOCIETY

The provision of integrated childcare services that cater to the needs of families and children is very important. It can remove barriers that parents face in accessing the labour market, assist the integration of migrant children, and help break the cycle of poverty. The SIP urges member states to ‘adapt the design and eligibility criteria of childcare services to increasingly diverse working patterns’, and emphasises the need to ensure ‘access to quality and affordable childcare, children’s health and the situation of the most vulnerable children’.

This is the approach of the city of Nantes, which has rolled out a project in the north of the city to offer quality and flexible childcare, particularly in poorer communities, in order to remove barriers to employment, especially for women and single parents. A one-stop-shop childcare point allows parents to process their request for childcare and access information on the range of childcare options available to them.

4. ACCESSIBLE CITIES FOR ALL

It is important that everyone can fully participate in society and in city life. Ensuring the active inclusion of disabled people extends well beyond the labour market and requires a comprehensive approach.

Ljubljana has adopted a holistic approach in their inclusion strategy for the disabled. This involves several city departments responsible for employment, transport and urban planning, as well as third-sector organisations working for the rights of people with disabilities. The city has worked to improve the lives of the disabled by improving access to employment opportunities and the city they live in.

5. INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS FOR INCLUSIVE CITIES

Cities are the level of government closest to citizens and have considerable expertise on the local economy and the labour market. They are also aware of the challenges involved in combatting unemployment at local level. In this regard they play a vital role in supporting national employment policies and adapting them to local needs.

Newcastle has been developing a comprehensive strategy to tackle unemployment and promote a more inclusive local labour market over a number of years. In 2007 Newcastle created a not for profit company to tackle unemployment. Newcastle Futures Ltd. provides support for young people, the over 50s, lone parents, workless families, incapacity claimants, and those living in disadvantaged areas.

6. CITIES COMBATTING HOMELESSNESS AT LOCAL LEVEL

Homelessness is a visible and severe manifestation of poverty and social exclusion. Those that are homeless for a protracted period of time are much less likely to be able to secure suitable accommodation, or make their way back onto the labour market. Homelessness has become a severe problem in the EU since the financial crisis.

The causes and effects of homelessness are complex and inter-related. Highly integrated services are required to deal with the often diverse impacts of homelessness on the individual, from basic medical care and psychological support to building self esteem and improving basic skills. Birmingham, Riga and Rotterdam are working with the homeless, and those at risk of becoming homeless, in a comprehensive way to improve their situation and help them to become fully included in society.
Due to its 2,000 year history as a port city, and as its current status as a leading European city for trade, culture and innovation, Barcelona has a long and growing tradition of migration. Today the foreign population of the city stands at 17.4%, a figure which has quadrupled over the past decade.\(^3\)

The city's popularity among migrants has helped it to develop economically and culturally. It also presents a number of challenges. The vast majority of the city's migrants are from outside Europe, can have diverse needs and often find it difficult to access essential services to help their situation.

Barcelona created the Service Centre for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER) in 1989. SAIER is a municipal service that provides any citizen living in Barcelona with information and advice on migration, asylum and voluntary repatriation. Barcelona City Council jointly manages this free, specialist service with several associations. The city has continuously developed the services offered in order to cater to the needs of immigrants and asylum seekers. The most recent transformation of the centre took place in 2013 when it incorporated two new services, namely information for city residents wishing to emigrate, and information about voluntary return for those not from the EU. The centre provides a comprehensive range of services, and consists of 45 fully-trained staff, which assisted 9,784 users in 2013.

SAIER is a one-stop-shop for migrants, meaning that it provides a comprehensive range of services, administered through strategic partnerships with a range of partners, including:

- the Mutual Aid Association for Immigrants in Catalonia (AMIC/UGT);
- the Association for Foreign Workers’ Guidance, Training and Labour Insertion (CITE);
- the Consortium for Language Normalisation (CNL);
- the Red Cross;
- the Catalan Association for Solidarity and Aid to Refugees Private Foundation (ACSAR);
- the Barcelona Lawyers Association.

SAIER provides advice on healthcare, employment opportunities, employment contracts, labour and social rights, the recognition of academic degrees, social and cultural issues, language learning resources, as well as a range of other services for immigrants. Specialised and individual assistance is also provided for accommodation and legal aid for applicants for asylum and international protection.

SAIER is a municipal service, located in two buildings, in which all the partner organisations operate together. Internal coordination is ensured through meetings between the coordinators of each entity, through conferences on planning and assessments for all staff. In addition Barcelona also works in coordination with the Government of Catalonia, the Spanish Government, national consulates of non EU-countries, and managers of voluntary return programmes.

SAIER has enjoyed a high level of success in its goals of assisting migrants and contributing to their integration into society. The new integrated service on international mobility offered at the centre has reduced the workload of other municipal services. The specialisation of the service, and the new coordination mechanisms put in place, have improved the overall work of the city’s social services.

Another example of the success of the centre in making services more responsive to users’ needs is in the area of voluntary return. Until recently, those who were interested in returning to their country of origin, and needed support to do so, were obliged to register their request at a number of different services, and follow a number of simultaneous procedures. This has been taken over by SAIER and vastly simplified. Migrants interested in voluntary return can access all the information they need from one place, and process their application through the centre.

The highly coordinated approach of the centre makes it a strong example of non-public entities, such as the Red Cross, trade union associations, and public administrations working together.

A process of ongoing evaluation has also contributed to the success of SAIER. For example, the communication strategy has been improved to reach out to the users and gauge levels of satisfaction. Brochures, and information on the centre, are available in a number of different languages, particularly those of migrant communities in the city.

Every month, people using SAIER are surveyed on their level of satisfaction with the services offered by the centre. These are then reviewed and relevant improvements made.

An emphasis is made on offering timely solutions. For example, group sessions are organised when there are a number of similar requests, and response rates are monitored through a dedicated computer application and regular evaluation.

Global issues, such as growing inequality and international conflicts, and the specific challenges posed by globalisation, have a huge impact on migratory flows, which often demand a response at local level. This requires continued investment in services and regular revision of the services provided in order to ensure that they are as effective and efficient as possible.

The success of services like SAIER depends on political support, as well as continued partnership with community organisations and the Catalan and Spanish governments.
Gothenburg is a highly multicultural city with a diverse population. Close to 200 different nationalities are represented in the city, and over 100 different languages are spoken in daily life. Over 20% of Gothenburg’s population were born in another country. As well as a large number of people from neighbouring countries, Gothenburg has relatively large Iraqi, Iranian and Somali communities.

Gothenburg has aimed to respond to the challenges associated with young migrants who have little or no knowledge of the Swedish language and who need assistance in order to understand Swedish society and Swedish public services. The Center för Språkintroduktion, or ‘Language Introduction Centre’ addresses these multiple challenges. The school is for young people aged between 16 and 20, from all over the world, when they first arrive in Gothenburg. Students normally attend the school for one year, and around 450 students attend the school every year.

The integrated service aspect of the school is that it goes beyond providing Swedish as a second language to young migrants. It also provides civic education, healthcare and social support. As the school is often their first point of reference for Swedish society, students are given advice on how to deal with day-to-day issues and challenges that they may experience in their new country. The needs of the students are often diverse, with many of the asylum applicants experiencing difficult personal circumstances. The school therefore offers important structure and support for young people.

The school employs professionals from a number of different sectors, including social counsellors, nurses and teachers. There is also a strong level of cooperation with different departments in the city, such as the department handling refugees and asylum seekers, the social service department and the healthcare department.

The school emphasises cultural and social integration more than the transition to the labour market, but new students are informed about the Swedish labour market and get all the necessary skills and competencies. The school also works with local authorities in Stockholm and Malmö, who have similar migration trends and often face similar challenges.

Source: Gothenburg city management office
The flexibility of the school, both in the way that it operates and in the way that it provides support to its students, has been the key to its success. The school offers three different pathways for education:

- one for illiterate students,
- one for students with between two and seven years of education, and
- one for students with a higher level of education.

This allows students to learn at different paces, and for more relevant goals to be established for each student. The school year is divided into five semesters, with an exam at the end of each semester to progress to the next level.

Students also have the possibility to change their pathway, in order to better accommodate those that are learning more quickly.

All of the staff at the school, including administrators and maintenance staff, participate in specific training programmes about migration and global conflict, to better understand the challenges that students are facing. There are also training sessions on cultural and religious practices. The student healthcare team, which includes school nurses, social counsellors and teachers for special education, also focuses on the skills required to work with those dealing with post-traumatic stress.

Creating a hub for young migrants centred around education can significantly improve their lives. In addition, it can help to avoid the costs that are associated with maintaining diffused and fragmented services.

It is particularly valuable for the students that they can make contacts that are helpful for the rest of their lives, such as with healthcare and legal professionals. This can support their care and development in the future and improve their quality of life. This approach also results in reduced costs in the long-term, both for the individual and the city.

The key to the success of the language centre in Gothenburg has been to integrate important services that young people need when they first move to Sweden. The school provides a vital first contact with Swedish life, and within a year most students are ready to move on to other educational establishments or make their transition towards the labour market.
CO-MENT (Collaborative Mentoring) is a project delivered through GEMS Ni, which is a social enterprise and a local integrated labour market intermediary, and Belfast City Council. CO-MENT is designed to help young people who have left school and do not have the necessary support to make their transition into the labour market or undertake training. The programme works with young people on an individual basis and is flexible to their specific needs.

With the support of a personal mentor each young person in the scheme designs their own programme, based on different development areas, and comes up with their own weekly timetable for development. They have at least three hours of one-to-one support every week from their personal mentor, and have the opportunity to undertake a learning placement with an employer in the Belfast area.

In addition, participants get access to training allowances and other funds that can help them buy materials they need for work. For example, one participant in the scheme bought a bicycle and protective clothing in order to make sure that he could get to job interviews on time.

Young people targeted by the programme can be easily discouraged due to their lack of self confidence. Many have been outside the mainstream educational system for some time and are unaccustomed to structured daily obligations and routine. Some are from economically deprived areas and may have unsettled living arrangements, mental health issues, learning difficulties, or family obligations. To deal with these challenges, the ‘CO-MENT approach’ ensures that the young people are given the time to become familiar with the host organisation. Training is not formalised in instances where stress and pressure would affect the participant’s likelihood of attending. The programme also embraces the concept of ‘small targets’ as stepping stones to allow participants to move forward and continuously gauge their progress.
CO-MENT has been in operation for one year and currently has 22 mentors from 14 organisations involved in supporting young people. The mentors come from a variety of training, community, and voluntary organisations. In total these mentors have delivered over 4000 hours of personalised mentoring to 131 young people, helping them to create their own individual development plans.

A total of 47 young people involved in the project have gone on to secure either employment or a place in further education.

CO-MENT’s success is becoming increasingly acknowledged and disseminated. The model is now being adapted for young people with serious and long-term illness such as cancer, as well as for disillusioned graduates who can not find employment. This adaptability is possible due to the project design, which makes it transferable to young people with diverse needs.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

CO-MENT has been in operation for one year and currently has 22 mentors from 14 organisations involved in supporting young people. The mentors come from a variety of training, community, and voluntary organisations. In total these mentors have delivered over 4000 hours of personalised mentoring to 131 young people, helping them to create their own individual development plans.

The scheme has transformed the lives of many of the young people involved, enhancing their skills and changing their perspectives of the future. As one participant stated: “I left school years ago and had really wanted to get a job...I knew my chances weren't great as I had no qualifications, no work experience and wasn't confident in myself. CO-MENT has given me a focus. I've completed an accredited programme and whilst I have some way to go yet, I am confident I will get there.”

Outreach to those that are most marginalised and resistant to these schemes has proven to be a challenge. The commitment of the mentors and the positive reviews of the scheme by young people themselves helped overcome these challenges. As a result many ‘hard to reach’ young people have registered for CO-MENT. With additional funding CO-MENT will be able to build on its resources and reach out to more young people in Belfast and beyond.

FRANCES MURRAY
EU OFFICER, BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
MURRAYF@BELFASTCITY.GOV.UK

ANNE DOWNS
EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS MANAGER, GEMS NI
ANNE.DOWNS@GEMSNI.ORG.UK
Six different units of the city of Oulu, as well the state’s public employment services, are active at the Byström youth services. The centre is coordinated by the city’s youth services unit and hosts a range of professionals from different organisations and units within the local authority. For example, local social workers give advice regarding issues such as housing and money matters, and specialists at the public employment services help young people to find employment. There is also a good level of cooperation with the private sector, particularly with local businesses. This is done through various channels, including employment themed events at the centre, where local businesses come to recruit young people in search of employment.

There are a number of different employment services that young people can access through the centre. They can look directly for jobs through the job search facility, where young people can use the IT services available and with specialised support. They can also apply for the city of Oulu’s ‘try-out’ jobs, which are short-term positions within different units of the city council, as well as within third-sector organisations working with the city.

All young people aged between 15 and 17 can also receive a summer job voucher which entitles them to two weeks work experience with a local company.
To ensure that these services are effective there is a high level of cooperation between the third sector, educational organisations, companies, and other stakeholders.

For the centre to be effective young people have to be fully engaged in the planning of the initiatives and they are encouraged to participate. They are also regularly consulted on the centres activities via questionnaires and interviews, and can participate in working teams to develop the activities of the centre. Young people are also invited to give feedback via social media, for example through the centre’s Facebook page.

The centre also has a social function: young people are also able to use it as a base for social and professional events. For example, the centre has been used for concerts and gaming evenings. These activities are successful in bringing young people in through the doors.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

Instead of having to visit many offices, young people can come to Byström where they get the services they need quickly and from one single point of access. Another added value of the centre has been that it is possible to help the progression of the young person in a fully integrated way. For example, after the young person is helped with very immediate concerns, such as housing or difficult personal circumstances, they can eventually be helped to find a job in order to improve their long-term situation. In this way the centre is helping the most disadvantaged young people to significantly improve their lives.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Oulu has created a common vision for the Byström youth services. This has required a strong commitment from employees, management and politicians to develop the activities further. Young people have been involved in developing the Byström youth services together with employees and managers from the city of Oulu.

Coordination is key and is ensured by joint team meetings and regular cross departmental meetings. A precondition for success is the involvement of staff from the beginning of the development phase. Responsibilities and principals for cooperation between different organisations must be agreed upon as early as possible.

Byström is recognised as the go-to resource for young people in Oulu. Young people’s needs are addressed from one single service point. It significantly improves the services offered to young people in the city and creates a new level of interaction between young people and the municipality. The workload of civil servants has also been reduced due to the elimination of duplicated services.
The early childcare service is an innovative project to adapt and improve childcare services for children from 10 weeks up to three years old. The aim is to improve labour market access for women and single parents in the north of the city. This district, Nantes Nord, has the largest concentration of social housing in the city: 40% of the population is made up of single-parent families, mainly single mothers, of which 71% live on low income levels.

The project is coordinated by the early childhood department within the city of Nantes’ General Directorate for Social Cohesion. The service is targeted at families receiving income-support benefits (RSA), where the parent or parents are seeking employment and need suitable childcare in order to find or hold down a job. As part of the service the city directly manages 25 multi-purpose childcare centres (‘multi accueils’), each varying in capacity and in facilities offered, including long-term, short-term, flexible and ‘emergency’ childcare. These childcare centres offer comprehensive childcare options to parents. For example, centres offering flexible childcare will be able to look after children when required, such as for a few hours per day or on certain days of the week. Centres offering ‘emergency’ childcare can take children in at very short notice to cover an unforeseen event, such as a job interview or unexpected work obligations.

In 2011 Nantes set up a single service point (‘Relais Nord’) to manage family requests for early childcare and identify the most suitable childcare services, in cooperation with the family. The ‘Relais Nord’ is more than an information point and all requests for places in early childcare facilities are processed through this single point. If a place is not available the parent is helped to find an alternative childcare solution. Since 2013 this service point also includes childcare services not managed directly by the city. This single point of access greatly simplifies the lives of families in the city, most notably single parents.
As part of the scheme 60 people, all women and mostly single parents, have been able to return to employment or undertake training.

**An Integrated Approach**

The early childcare service is at the crossroads of three public policies in Nantes: early childhood, social protection and employment. The city’s early childhood department, the employment department, the French Family Allowances Fund (CAF), the departmental council, and the local employment centre have been involved in establishing the scheme.

This joint approach resulted in the provision of services that have a strong focus on lifting barriers to employment, and ensuring social inclusion through a flexible and responsive approach. Through these working models, Nantes hopes to build on the success of this project and ensure even closer coordination in the future.

**Success Factors and Results**

Nantes’ work has brought with it positive results. As part of the scheme 60 people, all women and mostly single parents, have been able to return to employment or undertake training. It has helped to boost the local labour market and has had a positive impact on the lives of the women concerned. It also has a positive effect on gender equality in the workforce.

Existing childcare schemes have been strengthened to further contribute to this, by increasing the number of reserved places in municipal flexible childcare facilities, providing childcare at home via non-profit organisations, making childcare available outside normal working hours, and offering emergency childcare at child minds homes.

For Nantes, the involvement of a large number of stakeholders in the project was crucial in developing a solution adapted to individuals’ needs. Every case is different and can be influenced by several factors, which complicates the task of defining requirements, understanding them, and finding a solution. Coordination between early childhood and social workers is one of the keys to the success of this project.

**Challenges, Recommendations & Work for the Future**

Nantes has invested in coordinating departments and organisations that were not accustomed to working with each other in the past. The success of the project is attributed to having all relevant organisations and service providers working together, both on early childhood and social inclusion. In the future Nantes will focus on extending the childcare services available, adapting them to the specific needs of women with irregular or flexible working hours and who require childcare during leisure or cultural activities.

The project on childcare is also being trialled in another part of the city. As part of the trial, social workers and early childhood professionals are working together to develop social integration projects for families, for example, by arranging childcare to help parents take driving lessons or get involved in charity and community organisations. This trial period is essential to establish a network of relevant actors and carry out an evaluation of the services required. If the results of the trial are positive, the service will be extended to all priority districts in the city of Nantes.
Considerable progress has been made in making Ljubljana a more accessible city is evident in the physical changes to the city's infrastructure and increasing international recognition of the city's achievements.

In addition to making the city physically more accessible for the disabled, Ljubljana also prioritises improving access for the disabled to the labour market.

THE PROVISION OF INTEGRATED SERVICES

Ljubljana has been working to improve the built environment and services for people with disabilities for more than 20 years. This began with the establishment of the Council for the Elimination of Architectural and Communication Barriers (CEACB) in 1989, and continued through activities in the context of the ‘Ljubljana – My City’ programme, which has been ongoing since 1996.

Ljubljana started developing a systematic and comprehensive approach in the area of accessibility in 2007, incorporating not only architectural design but also accessibility of public services, public transport, public information, cultural and recreational facilities. A number of changes have been made to improve accessibility, including the installation of tactile paths for the blind, the re-cobbling of the old town centre, and installing lowered curbs and ramps in non-pedestrian areas.

The city has also invested in accessible public transport. Almost 90% of buses are fitted with low-floors to be accessible for wheelchair users. Most of the low-floor buses have both audio and video stop announcements and many bus stops are equipped with information displays announcing arrivals and signs in Braille. Public transport is free of charge for disabled residents and their carers.

In September 2013 the city set up an education centre for training professional staff to teach children with special needs. Sign language and other courses have been provided for staff in the city’s health and social institutes, as well as other workers who regularly interact with the disabled, such as those working on the city’s public transport.
IN ADDITION TO MAKING THE CITY PHYSICALLY MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR THE DISABLED, LJUBLJANA ALSO PRIORITISES IMPROVING ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED TO THE LABOUR MARKET.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

A particular factor contributing to the success of Ljubljana’s work is that people with disabilities regularly take part in detecting and resolving accessibility issues. This is done through face to face meetings and designated contact points within the city administration. An important role in this process is played by the CEACB, which is a mayoral advisory body whose members represent a range of disability NGOs, as well as relevant city departments, and policy and architectural experts.

The CEACB develops initiatives to remove architectural barriers and eliminate problems that people with disabilities experience in accessing information, warns of possible new issues, suggests practical solutions to the relevant bodies, and actively contributes to raising public awareness on the needs of disabled persons. This approach resulted in solutions being found for many issues faced by people with disabilities, as well as in the engagement of people with disabilities in the work of the city.

Today the city centre of Ljubljana is completely renovated and pedestrianised. This is largely due to a coordinated approach of the city and the development of a common priority for improving the lives of the disabled.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & WORK FOR THE FUTURE

The work done since 2007 in the city has effectively changed attitudes and the perception towards disabled people. It has also allowed more citizens to make an active contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of the city. Having overcome the initial challenges, Ljubljana strives to become one of Europe’s leading cities in terms of accessibility for the disabled in the future. This will be done in partnership with disabled people in the systematic planning and implementation of future work.

IN ADDITION TO MAKING THE CITY PHYSICALLY MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR THE DISABLED, LJUBLJANA ALSO PRIORITISES IMPROVING ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED TO THE LABOUR MARKET.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

A particular factor contributing to the success of Ljubljana’s work is that people with disabilities regularly take part in detecting and resolving accessibility issues. This is done through face to face meetings and designated contact points within the city administration. An important role in this process is played by the CEACB, which is a mayoral advisory body whose members represent a range of disability NGOs, as well as relevant city departments, and policy and architectural experts.

The CEACB develops initiatives to remove architectural barriers and eliminate problems that people with disabilities experience in accessing information, warns of possible new issues, suggests practical solutions to the relevant bodies, and actively contributes to raising public awareness on the needs of disabled persons. This approach resulted in solutions being found for many issues faced by people with disabilities, as well as in the engagement of people with disabilities in the work of the city.

Today the city centre of Ljubljana is completely renovated and pedestrianised. This is largely due to a coordinated approach of the city and the development of a common priority for improving the lives of the disabled.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & WORK FOR THE FUTURE

The work done since 2007 in the city has effectively changed attitudes and the perception towards disabled people. It has also allowed more citizens to make an active contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of the city. Having overcome the initial challenges, Ljubljana strives to become one of Europe’s leading cities in terms of accessibility for the disabled in the future. This will be done in partnership with disabled people in the systematic planning and implementation of future work.

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NEWCASTLE
TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT
AT LOCAL LEVEL
REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH TAILOR-MADE,
INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

Combatting unemployment is an important challenge for Newcastle City Council. In 2007 the city created a not for profit company called ‘Newcastle Futures Ltd’. Newcastle Futures has a number of key objectives, including helping people find sustainable employment, and reducing the duplication of employment services, by integrating the national Jobcentre Plus and Newcastle City Council’s front line employability services. Newcastle Futures helps groups that often do not receive adequate support for their complex needs from standard employment services: namely young adults, the over 50’s, lone parents, incapacity claimants, those with multiple barriers to employment, and those living in deprived areas.

Newcastle Futures is evidence of the city’s work to address unemployment in an innovative way, as well as a comprehensive effort to address inequality in the city.

THE PROVISION OF INTEGRATED SERVICES

Newcastle Futures is a service that is highly integrated with other social and employment services in the city. Newcastle Futures directly employs 11 staff members, as well as four seconded staff from the city and 11 Jobcentre Plus staff. The service offers support with additional employability services, such as:
- group work in local libraries and community settings called ‘Work Clubs’, with ICT coaching, and online job searching and budgetary support,
- a ‘Life Package’ where users examine their skills and strengths to ensure they explore the right employment options, and
- a ‘Steps to Excellence’ course, a six week programme which establishes a number of personal development goals.

People with multiple barriers are case managed alongside specialist partners such as ‘Changing Lives’ and ‘Crisis UK’, which are charitable organisations providing support services for the vulnerable and homeless.

Newcastle Futures staff is based in Sure Start centres, a service delivered by the council to work with parents and provide enhanced employability support. This helps to provide integrated services, as parents who attend Sure Start children’s centres are offered Newcastle Futures employment support. Newcastle Futures work is also closely coordinated with ‘Your Homes Newcastle’, providing housing support alongside the delivery of employability support. In addition to this Newcastle Futures has a dedicated drop-in centre in the west of the city.

Job opportunities provided by Newcastle City Council are handled and managed by the Newcastle Futures team to ensure supply and demand is brought together.
The key to the success of Newcastle Futures has been that it is not simply linked to the national public employment service, but is fully integrated at local level. The services of the national public employment service are delivered, enhanced and integrated by the local level offer. Newcastle Futures works intensively with people who need specialised support and their advisors help to build the skills and competencies of the people that come to them for help. This is particularly valuable for the long-term unemployed, who may lack confidence or need help in building their ICT or soft skills in order to apply for jobs or perform well in interviews.

Newcastle Futures also provides vital post-employment support for the people using their services. Their research has shown that unforeseen circumstances or financial constraints early on in employment can result in people leaving their job at an early stage. Newcastle Futures works directly with new employees and managers to help resolve any issues and help the individual transition towards long-term employment.

In addition, there is more robust accounting of those entering employment by ensuring that data capture is complete and effective. The information is used to highlight the work which is funded from Newcastle council, as well as at local level to make social investment plans and urban development strategy decisions.

As an organisation with a certain degree of independence Newcastle Futures can trial and offer a platform for innovation that is not possible for the national provider; for example, home visits to support those most at risk of poverty. The service is very popular with the people of Newcastle, since 2007 12,403 people have used the service and 5,920 have been supported into work. Newcastle Futures staff can meet with people in various locations around the city, such as community centres and cafes. This change of environment is very successful in reaching out to those who will not go to the jobcentre.

One of the challenges that Newcastle Futures has faced has been to find the necessary funds for the service. Although the work of the organisation has a significant medium to long-term impact, finding the immediate funds to finance its work has often proved to be a challenge.

Newcastle Futures is currently working with the council to develop a long-term cost effective business model. As local authorities examine their budget responsibilities, Newcastle Futures and its stakeholders are considering other funding resources that would allow it to further enhance and develop its services.
Before the Youth Hub was created there were a number of disparate services and access points for homeless young people, making it challenging to understand the scale and nature of the problem and have a consistent service response. Locating services under one roof has enabled a greater understanding of the needs of young homeless people and has led to a more streamlined and consolidated service, also making it more cost effective. An example of this has been the creation of the multi skilled assessment and mediation team to replace four separate teams and functions.

Each partner in the Youth Hub service provides specialist support. In particular St. Basils’ homeless prevention workers provide:

- housing advice and home-finding,
- help with family problems,
- advice and guidance on education, employment and training,
- debt advice, and
- advice on housing rights.

Birmingham City Council’s homeless service assesses whether interim accommodation can be provided, and Birmingham City Council children’s services work with the 16 and 17 year olds in the programme to assess whether they need to be looked after by the local authority.

Youth Hub is working with other NGOs, including the Children’s Society and the Prince’s Trust, community volunteers, and social housing providers. In addition, the local mental health trust provides support to staff to ensure the hub is a psychologically informed environment.

This involves intensive training on the mental and emotional health needs of young people, including tools to better support, understand and respond to the needs of those using the service.
SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

The Youth Hub has been very successful in preventing homelessness among young people in the city. The service has prevented over 90% of the 16 and 17 year olds and almost 85% of 18-21 year olds that have come through its doors from becoming homeless.

The hub has also helped to make homeless services more efficient by aligning budgets and eliminating the duplication of services within Birmingham City Council.

The Birmingham City Council estimates that there has been a cost reduction of around 250,000 EUR per annum as a result of service integration alone.

The proper coordination of the services provided is essential to its success: the hub has a multi-agency steering group to manage the process of ongoing integration of services. The group critically appraises each other’s policies, strategies and day to day performance, in order to improve services for young people.

St Basils also delivers training sessions for agencies and professionals working with young people. This training provides a shared space to exchange experiences and knowledge of staff from different agencies, as well as supporting a strong network of staff and a common approach.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Through the Youth Hub, St. Basils and Birmingham City Council have worked to create a culture of collaboration. The social exclusion of young people is being overcome with strong supportive leadership, shared strategic outcomes and working methods which support a common vision. This work will continue in the future. Most importantly, the Youth Hub will continue to ensure exchange of information and building trust between the services providers and the users.

JEAN TEMPLETON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ST. BASILS
JEAN.TEMPLETON@STBASILS.ORG.UK

SUWINDER BAINS
PARTNERSHIP MANAGER, THE CHALLENGE UNIT, BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL, SUWINDER.BAINS@BIRMINGHAM.GOV.UK
The SHELTER PROJECT in Riga is a three month motivation programme for homeless people. Due to their acute situation homeless people often have low motivation and poor social skills. They can find it difficult to access services that could improve their situation, such as public employment services, housing services or other key social services. The goal of the homeless motivation program is not only to meet the basic needs of the homeless, but also to raise self-esteem, motivate them to improve their situation, and help them engage with individuals and organisations that can help them.

The SHELTER PROJECT, in collaboration with the public employment services, developed and implemented an incentive program for the unemployed. This consisted of three key elements:

- Raising self-esteem and perception of oneself as a capable member of society.
- Self-care to build the individual’s willingness and understanding of how to take care of themselves, particularly in relation to their health.
- Acquisition and development of skills necessary for work and finding work, such as ICT skills to seek employment, and for identifying their own abilities and put them in practice.

Motivational program activities were carried out through individual counselling as well as group sessions with psychologists, social workers, health care professionals and teachers. An individual rehabilitation plan was developed for each person.

Each program lasted three months, with the total timeframe of the project lasting two years. In total 240 homeless people went through the programme between 2012 and 2014.
240 PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED INFORMATION ON THEIR WELLBEING, IMPROVED THEIR SELF-ESTEEM, THEIR HEALTH, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, DEVELOPED A MORE POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PERSPECTIVE ON THEIR SITUATION.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The motivation program is run in collaboration with the national public employment service, which acts as a supervising authority. Individuals have to be registered with the national employment agency before they can avail of municipal services.

The Riga shelter also cooperates closely with municipal library resources to help people acquire ICT skills and provides resources such as leisure and educational facilities.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

The 240 participants received information on their wellbeing, improved their self-esteem, their health, and most importantly, developed a more positive and constructive perspective on their situation. This enabled them to become more involved in society, with some of them making the transition to becoming active members of the community. In total, during the monitoring stage six participants successfully found jobs with a further 60 beginning the process of independently looking for work.

There were 10 people enrolled in the programme that had physical disabilities or some form of learning disability. One of the disabled users of the scheme went on to study at the National Agency for Social Integration Centre, which is a special educational institution for people with disabilities.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & WORK FOR THE FUTURE

The evaluation of the program indicated that although users experienced a positive change during the programme, the majority required longer assistance than the three months previously planned. Homeless people require sustained and comprehensive support in order to improve their situation.

Riga is fostering a greater level of involvement with local businesses to boost the employment results. There is also the intention to promote social entrepreneurship in Riga under the overall framework of the work of the Latvian ministry for social entrepreneurship.

The implementation of motivational programs for homeless people takes a lot of time, as well as human and financial resources. The longer a person has been homeless, the longer the rehabilitation program required. Riga has proved that they are ready to engage and meet these challenges, and that with adequate investment the lives of homeless people can be dramatically improved in the city.
Rotterdam uses the integrated chain approach for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, with a particular focus on young people. The integrated chain is a transferable strategic model for preventing homelessness, where services work together under a common strategy that seeks to support homeless individuals, couples and families. Within the chain there is a range of services to meet the diverse needs of those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Above all it is a flexible model that promotes the prevention of homelessness.

The integrated chain approach consists of a one-stop-shop and close cooperation between all service deliverers involved, which include housing corporations, centres for people with addiction issues, Salvation Army night centres, and local care networks. In order to make the service as integrated as possible, areas such as housing, income, work, training and health care are all addressed simultaneously. The city's policy on homelessness is a holistic one; the multifaceted aspects of poverty and exclusion are addressed together in order to improve the individual's situation. In Rotterdam the causes and effects of homelessness can be quite diverse. Many of the people that find themselves homeless have addiction or mental health issues, which impacts on their cognitive decision making, ability to find work, and ability to improve their situation.

There is an emphasis on a preventative approach through helping vulnerable people at an early stage. In this way the users will become more self-sufficient and will need less care in the long run. Within this approach, objectives are designed specifically for the target group, providing structured daily activities for them to participate in. These can include horticulture, carpentry workshops, computer skills training, as well as wide range of educational activities tailored to the skills and competencies of the individual in question. Although paid employment is not always possible for all vulnerable people, a focus is kept on the possible employment opportunities for those enrolled in the service.
AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Social workers engage directly with the service users to make a comprehensive analysis of their needs in different areas of their lives. This results in an individual plan of action, coordinated by a case manager in close cooperation with the individual and other stakeholders. Each action is specified in positive outcomes and completed within a timeframe. The positive outcomes are specific to the individual, for example:

- obtaining independent housing via supported housing arrangements,
- re-establishing relationships with family and friends,
- getting involved in structured daily activities,
- being involved in volunteer work,
- rehabilitation from drugs, or gradual reduction of drug usage, or
- a stable income through employment.

Close cooperation between the different city departments is essential to implement the programme. Currently the participation and welfare, public health and care, work and income, and direction of safety issues departments are all involved.

Rotterdam and other large Dutch cities such Amsterdam, Utrecht and The Hague regularly consult with each other on strategies to deal with homelessness, there is also regular consultations with the state ministry of public health care, welfare and sport on the issue.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

The success of the integrated chain approach is evidenced by the dramatic reduction of homelessness in the city. Through long-term investment many people are now in stable and independent accommodation. Within the city of Rotterdam there are almost no people sleeping rough.

Research conducted by the city and the police has shown significant decreases in nuisance and anti-social behaviour by those with no fixed accommodation in the city.

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Programmes such as Rotterdam's integrated chain approach to homelessness require substantial investment if results are to be maintained in the long term. Budget cuts to individual programmes and local authorities can impact negatively on this kind of service.

Rotterdam is currently investing in close co-operation with all stakeholders in the strategy. With a well-developed civil society, effective communication between the local administration and third sector organisations is vital for a project to remain relevant.
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Ljubljana: City of Ljubljana archive, Mióko Kranjec
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Oulu: Joni Rajaniemi