

So Stay Hotel

Summary

So Stay is a socially responsible hotel established to provide young people transitioning from foster care into adulthood with job skills development opportunities.

The motto of the hotel is "RESPONSIBLE FOR BUSINESS - RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNITY".

So Stay Hotel was established by the Foundation for Social Innovation in 2016. The hotel's operational model is perceived an innovation since it's the first such development in Poland. It combines market orientation - earning on services, with social responsibility – vocational training for young people leaving care. The hotel was created to change the lives of young people who, due to their neglect by adults, grew up outside of their family homes, in care homes. Young people gain professional qualifications and experience under the guidance of professionals. The qualification is highly valued by employers in the open labour market (Gdansk is widely recognised tourist destination). So Stay Hotel was established in cooperation with the Gdansk local authority and business partners. The local government leased the building free-of-charge and the business partners donated money to renovate and equip the facility to accommodate a three star hotel. The hotel and its occupational training are funded without the use of public subsidies, solely on the basis its business income. Those of young people participating in the employment program, who experience a difficult housing situation, are provided with a housing support organised by the Foundation, in the model of assisted living. Support compatibility gives young people opportunities to leave care facilities and start their independent, adult life.

So Stay is a response to the problem encountered by all cities in Europe, ie youth unemployment. Young people, due to lack of appropriate professional qualifications and professional experience, experience difficulties in finding and maintaining permanent employment in the open labour market. It's even more challenging for the young people at risk of social exclusion. Without the family support at the time of transition from care to adulthood, they need to build financial independence quickly in order to build their independent life. The good practice of So Stay is about creating places of paid internships and first jobs for youth at risk of social exclusion (leaving care). It is a place where young people learn the profession and get their first professional experience under the guidance of professionals. They learn in real working conditions and get paid for their work. Acquiring experience and practical skills allow them to gain first job in the open market and meet the expectations of employers, which will hopefully offer them permanent and stable employment. Supporting young people to succeed in adulthood prevents them from returning to the social assistance system. At an early age they are given the opportunity to build belief in work values and life responsibilities. Participation in the internship program at the hotel is also linked to housing assistance organised by foundations (assisted living). Participants (trainee, apprentice, hotel worker) in difficult housing situation have the possibility to rent accommodation on preferential terms, in premises managed by the Foundation. To secure this possibility The Foundation created a three-sector cooperation with municipality and business which enables it to acquire apartments from the city's municipal resources, repair and equip them in cooperation with business partners. The practice implemented in Gdansk by the NGO strengthens the employment activity, creates conditions for the development of young people from groups at risk of social exclusion, combining the potential of self-government and business partners in the realization of social responsibility. This is a response to the need for synergy and the development of cross-sectoral cooperation.

So Stay Hotel is a social company that operates on the market, providing its clients with high quality services while pursuing the social mission of vocational education for youth at risk of social exclusion. The profit from the services provided covers the costs of youth education and running a business. This is a solution that decouples social projects from public subsidies, thus reducing public spending on social and vocational activation programs. An important aspect of practice is the use of business tools in implementing social programs. Customers who are service recipients value a solution where they receive high quality of service and participate in social responsibility in parallel. The hotel has a high market position due to the quality of services and the added value distinguishing the hotel from other hotel brands - mission and social purpose. Another aspect of good practice involves an educational process based on professional mentoring in a social company. Professional mentoring consists of professional development and the mentoring of a young person in a professional career path. Mentor educates, supports and motivates throughout the professional development process. It is an experienced employee of a given career path, who shares knowledge and experience with their apprentices. Professional mentor is focused on a qualitative approach both to the work and to the educational process in which he/she communicates knowledge and creates conditions for the professional development of the young employee. After two years of hotel operation, the roles of mentors are being taken on by former apprentices, who by now have acquired professional readiness to perform this task and are able to mentor younger colleagues. Good practice is an example of effective knowledge transfer from business to NGO sector. Hotel is owned and managed by an NGO which needed to gain skills and competence about hospitality management. At the first stages the organisation used advice and consulted private sector experts. This process enabled creation of a hospitality service provided by an NGO to an open business market. The key to success was the support provided by business expert to an entity created by social integration experts. The cooperation opened an opportunity for social innovation. Good practice is also an example of solution based on the diversity of funding sources as a way to add to its sustainability perspective. The building in the city center is leased free of charge to the foundation by the municipality of the City of Gdańsk (50-year-lease), funds for the renovation and equipment are donated by the Velux Foundation and local businesses - companies and private companies interested in investing in the development of social projects. The foundation raised a total of 4 million PLN from various sources for the investment and the capital renovation of the building. At present the effect is a Hotel *** with a restaurant, offering 29 beds and employing 20 people, half of whom are members of the employment program - young people from 16 years of age who are descended from foster care.

This is an action field strengthening the development of urban community residents, creating opportunities and conditions for harnessing the potential of residents, regardless of their birth status and education. Young people who grow up without the support of the families are provided with opportunities fitting their needs and strengthening their chances in the open job market. Integrated approach based on the concentration of human, institutional and financial resources are invested in social capital of young people starting their own career path. Person-centred approach puts people with their unique way of acquiring competence and qualifications in the centre of the process facilitated by friendly environment where sharing knowledge and skills is made up by mutual respect and understanding. **In the situation of public funds for social policies being restricted**, So Stay is a practice providing a solution not demanding public funding for operational activities. The City receives tax revenue from So Stay as business. The operation of the hotel is financed by the income from service provision. Young people's work generates revenue, which creates their understanding of work-income correlation as well adds to the entity's sustainability. The City receives revenue in the form of taxes levied on its business. The means of business comes from the money of employees, natural persons using the services of a social company. Noteworthy is the capital, skills, organizational capabilities and social sensitivity of members of a social organisation, which allows to act accurately to recognised needs and to involve many stakeholders around the common goal.

So Stay Hotel is a well prospering social enterprise with quality of performance is evaluated on the daily basis by its clients by the booking.com on-line tool

http://www.booking.com/hotel/pl/so-stay.pl.html?label=gen173nr-1FCAEoggJCAIhYSDNiBW5vcmVmaLYBiAEBmAEeuAEMyAEM2AEB6AEB-AELqAID;sid=03a0f231b6ee01867451e908cc8b5022;all_sr_blocks=132430402_98731221_2_2_0;checkin=2017-03-27;checkout=2017-03-28;dest_id=-501400;dest_type=city;dist=0;group_adults=2;highlighted_blocks=132430402_98731221_2_2_0;hpos=1;raw_dest_type=hotel;room1=A%2CA;sb_price_type=total;srfid=6b0c908360b618e3ed0d68f0b2f41df9325cbf76X1;type=total;ucfs=1&#tab-main

The hotel has been frequently featured in local and national media

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfDPB6hgrVY>

<http://dziendobry.tvn.pl/wideo,2064,n/hotel-prowadzony-przez-mlodziez-z-domow-dziecka,214922.html>

<http://www.dziennikbaltycki.pl/artykul/3792097,gdansk-pierwszy-na-swiecie-hotel-odpowiedzialnosci-spoecznej,id,t.html>

<http://www.polskieradio.pl/80/1007/Artykul/1698065,Hotel-reportaz-Grazyny-Wielowieyskiej>

<http://kobieta.wp.pl/to-hotel-inny-niz-wszystkie-pracuje-tu-mlodziez-z-placowek-wychowawczych-6034021428778113a>