
**LEAP – Local Employment Access Project:
Low Cost Innovative Solutions to unemployment at a
local level**

**Preliminary project outline
for the RE-BLOCK Partnership**

Budapest, February 2015

Background

The current project outline aims at further developing the project idea created by the RE-BLOCK partnership during the project development workshop held in Budapest on 29 October 2014.

The Europe 2020 strategy aims to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. Raising employment levels is among the targets to achieving this ambitious goal. As such, a number of funding programmes are supporting actions in the field of employment that could be considered by the RE-BLOCK partners for the below project idea.

Starting points:

- Disadvantaged urban areas / districts with: high unemployment, low-skilled workforce, unattractive image
- Municipalities for the most part are already active to support the improvement of the labour market situation and do not have additional budget to extend their services
- New, out-of-the-box thinking is needed to refresh their functions and services in this field and make them more effective, using resources in a different way
- The municipality role has to shift from a provider towards facilitator that is better at exploiting resources available at the local level

Objectives

Overall objective:

The project wishes to explore novel low-cost solutions at local municipality level that contribute to increasing employment levels in lagging behind urban districts.

Focus intervention areas / topics:

- Skill development
- Employment, entrepreneurship, SMEs
- Sectors with potential to creating jobs: green economy, creative industry, social economy, public services
- Renewed urban environment
 - Image of urban districts
- Local support groups
 - Participation
- Capacity building of public authorities

Target group

- Local, unemployed people that can be categorized: according to: age, skills, length of being unemployed, needs, etc.

- Authorities that wish to carry out effective actions at local level to improve employment situation but face serious budget cuts ([partners from Re-Block: Malaga, Salford, Vilnius](#))
- Businesses that could potentially use labour force

Expected outputs and results

Outputs:

- Needs analysis (labour demand / offer, support services)
- Comparative analysis and collection of good practices
- Innovative solutions tested
- Revised local strategies, action plans and service portfolios
- Community platforms created

Results:

- Improved functioning and efficiency of labour services operated by municipalities and their institutions
- Better match between job demand and offer
- Increased employment rate within the urban area
- Improved image of deprived urban areas
- Improved community involvement

Composition of a strong partnership

The geographical coverage and type of institutions to be involved depend on the selected funding programmes. In any case, a mixed partnership representing all relevant players in relation to the project topic should be established including:

- City municipalities
- Public and private institutions providing labour or training type of support services
- Representatives of local communities

In terms of partner cities, the target areas should cover populations representing different levels of deprivation (e.g. chances of finding an employment) to which need tailor made solutions can be identified, tested and compared.

Potential Funding Programmes

- Transnational programmes such as CENTRAL or MED
- URBACT III – social challenges of cities and urban areas
- Targeted calls of the PROGRESS programme

Details of programmes:

- **European Territorial Cooperation programmes**

The CSF funds aim to make an important contribution to sustainable growth, employment and competitiveness and increase the convergence of less developed Member States and regions with the rest of the Union. CSF Funds aim at jointly fostering competitiveness and convergence and territorial cooperation by setting the right country-specific investment priorities. These programmes have strong focus on inclusive labour markets fostering quality employment and social cohesion, delivering the highest productivity gains.

These territorial programmes are focusing on more harmonized cooperation, better elaborated strategies and cooperation between national, regional and European planning processes. In terms of actions, in these programmes mainly strategy planning, knowledge sharing, pilot actions and smaller investments are supported.

Based on the geographical distribution of the participating countries or regions of the partnership, different Programme can be selected. As relevant two examples Central Europe and MED Programme are presented in more details.

CENTRAL Europe

The central Europe area is facing social polarisation and segregation. Unemployment is a serious problem in some central European regions. According to the EU2020 ambitious goals, employment has priority importance: 75 percent of the 20-64 year-olds should be employed by 2020. Calls are expected to be published in the first quarter of 2015, and the application is going to be a 2 round process.

PRIORITY AXIS 1 – Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive

The priority addresses regional disparities in knowledge and education such as brain-drain, and will strengthen capacities and competences for entrepreneurship and social innovation

Specific objective 1.2: To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions

MED:

PRIORITY AXIS 1: Promoting Mediterranean innovation capacities to develop smart and sustainable growth

Specific Objective 1.1: To increase transnational activity of innovative clusters and networks of key sectors of the MED area

Innovation, competitiveness and growth are highlighted in the EU 2014-2020 programming period. Human capacity building and better employment possibilities are cornerstones of the inclusive growth.

- **URBACT III**

URBACT is a transnational funding programme focusing on cities and functional urban areas and dealing with their specific problems. One of the key priority themes of URBACT is economic development which involves the improved employability of people in the participating cities.

In spite of the fact that URBACT is programmed under the TO11 “enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration” it has a special reflect to other thematic objectives. Among them the relating ones are the following:

- promoting employment and supporting labour mobility (T08)
- promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (T09)

URBACT supports strategy planning and strategy implementation actions in form of analysing, knowledge sharing, piloting, and monitoring processes.

- **PROGRESS:**

PROGRESS (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity) is one of the three axis of EaSI (Employment and Social Innovation), that helps to improve to improve policies in three thematic sections:

- employment, in particular to fight youth unemployment;
- social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty;
- working conditions.

Regarding the theme of this current proposal, PROGRESS reflects perfectly on the social challenges of Europe, including to develop employment situation as a cornerstone of social problems.

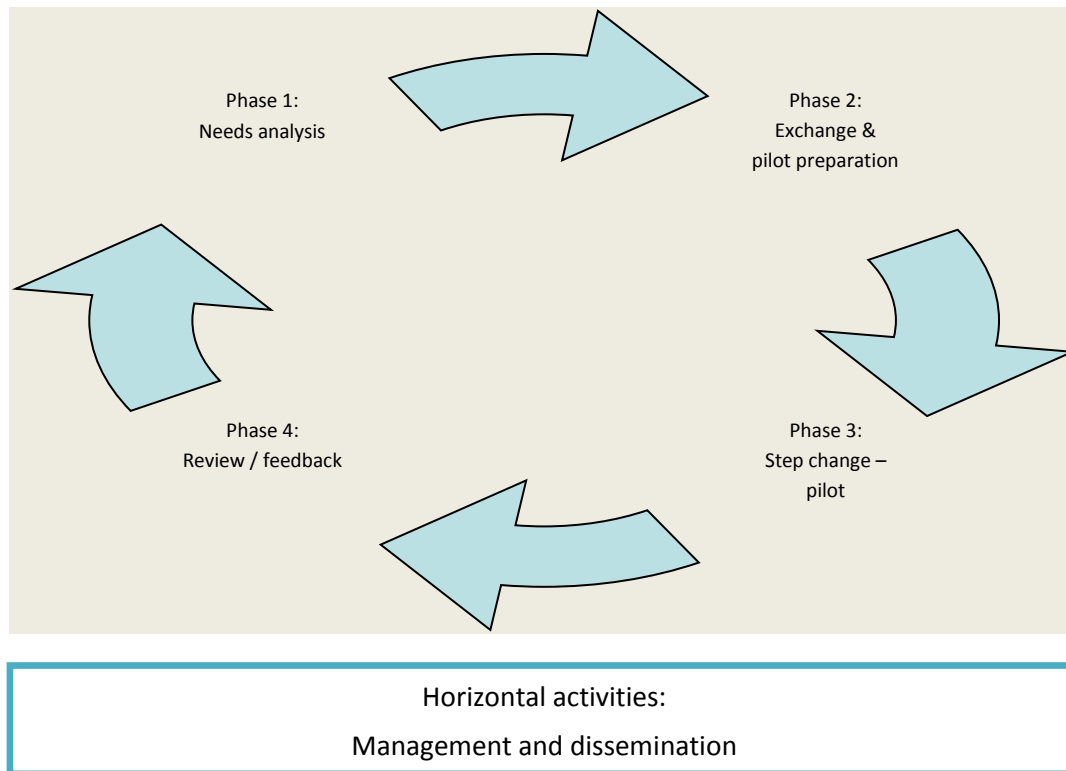
Currently one call is open and available reflecting to social problems: Establishing a network on quality and costeffectiveness in long-term care and dependency prevention

The purpose of this call is to bring together institutions that can develop solid evidence on the costeffectiveness of investments in a wide range of measures to reduce the gap between the need for, and supply of, long-term care, including prevention, rehabilitation, assistive technologies and agefriendly environments as well as a more efficient organisation of care systems.

- Deadline for submission: 31 March 2015
- Starting of implementation of the project: August/September 2015
- Budget for the call (and for the only selected proposal): € 1M
- Co-financing rate: 80%

Proposed methodology and main actions

The project implementation could be structured as follows:



Phase 1: Identifying and assessing the special needs of the target group

- Joint methodology for need assessment:
- Initial need assessment at local level
 - Job seekers: level of deprivation, skill gap, target group specific challenges
 - Job providers: potentially interesting sectors, companies, possibilities to attract business activity to the area
 - Support already available
- Assessment and synthesis and of local findings

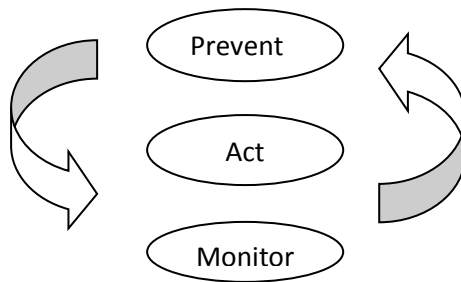
Phase 2: Exchange and planning

- Collecting good practices from partner cities tailored to the needs of the different target groups:
 - People being a long distance from finding an employment
 - People being medium distance from finding an employment
 - People being at a close distance from finding an employment / engaging in entrepreneurial activities
- Organise transfer / knowledge exchange sessions
- Creating matrix on transfer of practices among partners

- Draft recommendations on upgrading relevant local action plans and service portfolio
- Trainings for municipality staff

Phase 3: Testing services in pilot actions and reach step change in output

- Joint methodology for the testing based on the following cycle:



- Testing out-of-the-box solutions in the pilot locations
- Cross-mentoring among partners during testing phase

Phase 4: Review / feedback

- Monitor and Evaluate the pilot process at local level
- Assess and compare results and share experience
- Introduce successful solutions into daily operation of municipalities
- Formulate recommendations on further improvements in local strategies, action plans and service portfolio with a view to cost saving / increasing efficiency of public administration

Horizontal activities: management and dissemination

- Management:
 - Process Management
 - Reporting - overview on the progress of implementation including activities carried out and costs incurred
 - Quality control (mid-term and final) on the progress of thematic implementation
- Dissemination:
 - create local platform for the community: virtual forum promoting exchange and services making use of local community resources (skill sharing, time bank, etc)
 - website, promotion actions

Previous EU projects and initiatives to build on

Promoting Youth Employment with enterprising skills and attitudes - My Generation at Work

The main objective of this URBACT project is to promote the employability of young people in a changing labour market, with special focus on enterprising skills and attitudes.

My Generation at Work aims at making new service products (social innovations) in the following areas:

- Developing Enterprising Curriculums: Better connections between education and work, with special focus on building enterprising skills and attitudes
- Developing Spaces for creative connections and business development
- Developing Brokerage for Reintegration and work: Providing facilitated pathways of reintegration, second chances and connections to work demand
- Local Action Plans where the new service products are consolidated, and further development outlined.

A European Network of Local Partnerships for the Advancement of Youth Employment and Opportunity – JOBTOWN

The URBACT project seeks to address structural youth unemployment and poor employment, by establishing Local Partnerships for the advancement of Youth Employment and Opportunities, driven by city administrations, of local stakeholders, to advance youth employment and opportunities, as an approach to the development and maintaining of a competitive and sustainable local economy and social model.

Women, Enterprise and Employment in Local Development - WEED

The URBACT WEED project therefore focussed on identifying and developing integrated local actions that improve women's situation in employment, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy. A considerable challenge for the partners was to juggle between their initial objectives and a context of economic crisis that was hardly favourable in order to make gender equality a local policy priority.