

Newsletter

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Together
Against
Poverty



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4th Partners meeting in Madrid was organized in CECE office on February 18-19, 2016. The main topics in agenda were overviews of work within Output 3 “Methodology of workshops for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion” and Output 4 “Methodology of workshops for decision makers and politicians”.

Partners agreed on O3 draft prepared by CILSDGC (Romania) and discussed in details the structure and deadlines for inputs and real O1 cases from all partners for O4 prepared by CECE (Spain). Also deadlines for O3 and O4 evaluation and translation to the national languages were established.



Dissemination activities in partners' countries, evaluation process and information about audit of TAP project from Polish National Agency also were discussed. Partners took into account all recommendations from the NA for future cooperation. They also discussed and agreed about topics for the next TAP project Newsletter, talked about administrative and financial issues.

Sharing information about dissemination activities in the partners' countries



Effective discussions amongst partners

In our entrepreneurship training curriculum (O3), we decided to focus on the following: increasing self-awareness and self-confidence; enhancing knowledge of career opportunities; and improving planning skills. This decision was mainly informed by the findings of the research conducted earlier in the TAP project.

We learnt from the report **Poverty and social exclusion in selected European countries** (Szczygieł, 2015) that people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion may consider it impossible or irrelevant to take any action to improve their financial situation. This report concluded that the people in or at risk of poverty whom we engaged with are used to their situation and show limited willingness to change it. Rather, they resort to such coping strategies as limiting their current needs, using institutional aid and taking loans. The solution involving additional work was indicated by merely a quarter of the respondents. Clearly, their employment prospects are limited not only by personal considerations, but also by socio-economic conditions. The respondents also pointed to the shortage of entrepreneurial predispositions.



Feedback discussions on the entrepreneurship training curriculum (O3)

The recommendations made in the same report inform the curriculum by pointing to the learners' need to become better aware of and learn how to tap into inner resources that can support entrepreneurship; to become more self-confident to be able to act as entrepreneurs; the need for basic practical knowledge of the relevant legal framework, business, management, finance and marketing; as well as the need for support with planning one's own career path in the short, medium, and long terms.

In addition to informing the content of the training, the recommendations of the report also have methodological implications: highly practical approaches and participatory methods should to be used, access to relevant information in terms of both business and social issues should be facilitated.

Further, the report entitled **Social security models in selected European countries** (Triacca et al, 2015, pp. 99-100) includes the following recommendations relevant for the design of training for people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion: one-off training programmes should be avoided; personal and professional development plans should be designed and solutions identified that are conducive to empowering individuals; prior to training stricto sensu for starting and running one's own business, there may need to develop the learners' their basic skills and attitudes that are favourable for entrepreneurship (self-confidence, resilience, communication skills, family budgeting skills, simple planning skills, etc.), which are grouped by some under the term 'soft skills'.

The training curriculum is currently ready for piloting, and conclusions about the extent to which it responds to the needs identified in the TAP studies are due by August 2016.



CONCEPT FOR O4 TRAINING

The main goal of the training is to support the professional development of stakeholders in the social welfare system for the alleviation of poverty and/or social exclusion.

Each partner convenes a group of 10 policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners (staff) in the field of tackling poverty and social exclusion; their task will be to provide solutions for addressing the needs of the people described according to their country's /region's legislation, and describe the step-by-step procedure to address the situation by all involved institutions represented in the group of 10 participants. The main goal of the training is to support the professional development of stakeholders in the social welfare system for the alleviation of poverty and/or social exclusion.

The objectives of the training are:

- To develop the participants' problem-solving skills;
- To model multi-agency work skills (involving cooperation and active listening);
- To enhance the participants' knowledge about how other European social welfare systems operate;
- To develop the participants' reflection skills and implicitly professional growth.



Feedback discussions on the curriculum of the workshops targeted at decision-makers and social policy makers (O4)



In the framework of the project, starting in March this year, workshops will be carried out for the two target groups: one being the poor and socially excluded or at risk of these problems, and the other are politicians interested in social issues and policy-makers. Workshops are scheduled for both groups, with 10 participants each.

In the first group, decisive criterion is the fulfillment of the following conditions:

- being unemployed,
- having low qualifications or education (up to secondary school),
- being a single parent,
- being a parent in a large family,
- income entitling to welfare benefits.

In the second group, the workshop's participant should be a representative of a welfare institution or an institution, that determines welfare assistance.

The recruitment process is open, but finding volunteers from the first target group may be difficult. For this reason, the decision has been made to employ different means of reaching volunteers for this group. Apart from a database with beneficiaries of similar projects, which can be accessed by CEES, the Association is also using its network of collaborating welfare institutions. These are: Municipal Social Welfare Centers, private aid associations (e.g. "Victoria" Association or nationwide St. Brother Albert Aid Society), protégées of which, took part in the research. The participants also play an important role in disseminating information on the workshops, by passing this information on to their friends and relatives, who face similar problems.

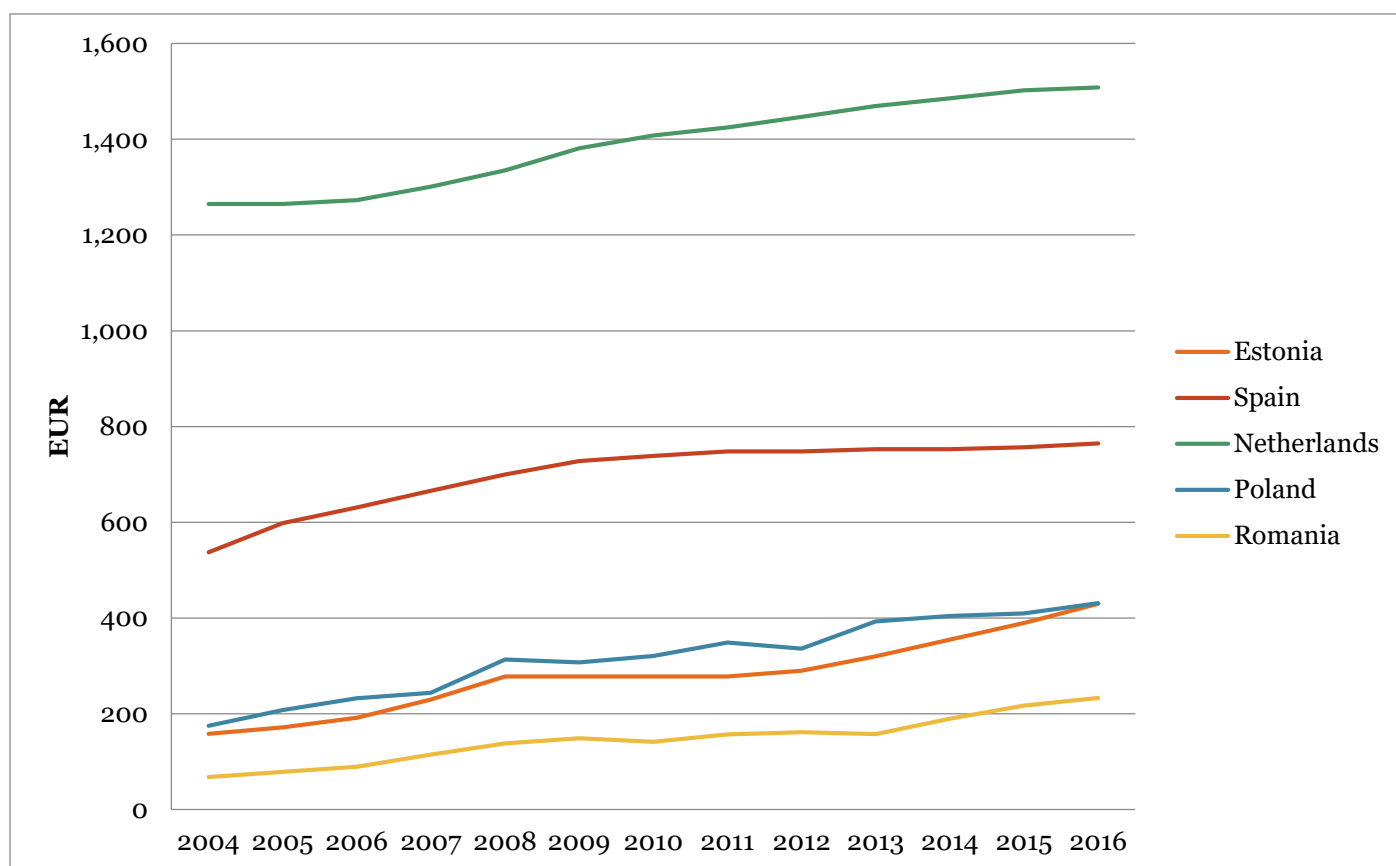
As for the second group – contacts with the institutions, where the research was carried out, is crucial.

THE MINIMUM WAGES AND LABOUR INTENSITY IN SELECTED EU COUNTRIES

The research on poverty and social exclusion, carried out within the project, concerned also the economic aspects of these problems. In each of the partnership countries, that is Estonia, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Italy, the minimum wage and work intensity have been analysed in terms of their interrelation and impact on the "model" of poverty [1].

EUROSTAT data for years 2004-2016, (as of 1st January of a given year), were used for this analysis. In the given countries a wide spread of minimum wage, could be noticed (Chart 1). The highest minimum wage was noted in the Netherlands, and in the period examined, it averaged out at 1,400 euro. The lowest minimum wage was recorded in Romania and over the last two years it reached slightly above 200 euro. It's worth noting that the average wage in these countries is two to three times higher in relation to the minimum wage.

Chart 1. The minimum wage in the years 2004-2016 in selected EU countries



Part of the households belongs to the group of households with low or even very low work intensity, which may result in really low incomes. In this respect, having children contributes to the situation, though it is not a rule. In the case of really low work intensity, it happens more often in households with no children (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Households characterised by low or very low work (in percent)

Country of residence	Households with children		Households without children	
	very low	low	very low	low
Estonia	2,2	2,9	4,6	1,8
Spain	5,2	5,0	7,2	4,2
The Netherlands	1,9	2,0	5,8	2,3
Poland	1,9	4,5	5,5	3,3
Romania	1,9	4,2	4,0	1,9
Italy	3,4	4,7	3,5	3,6

Source: EUROSTAT, data for 2013

The total percentage of households (with or without children) characterised by low or very low work intensity in Estonia amounted to 11,5%. In Spain it reached as much as 21,6%. In the Netherlands it was lower by almost a half and amounted to 12%, similarly in Romania. In Poland and Italy it was 15,2%.

Comments:

[1] The statistics do not record the minimum wage in Italy.



NEWS FROM ASSOCIATIONS: FOOD COLLECTION TO FIGHT POVERTY

At the end of 2015 the organization Banco Alimentare lunched to Food Collection at national level. 1.300 volunteers were involved, staying at 11.000 food shops, as market and supermarket, asking to 5.500.000 Italians to donate 8.990 tons of food. Only in Piedmont more than 872 tons were collected by volunteers all around the region. The data show as the persistent economic crisis did not affect on the response of this great gesture of solidarity represented by this call to action.

Vol.To was involved supporting Banco Alimentare Piemonte Onlus. The result is positive considering that in one day the generosity of the inhabitants of Piedmont region has allowed Banco Alimentare to give food aids to about 115.000 people. This initiative started for the first time in 1997 and it is growing since the last 19 year becoming an effective way to spread food and the enforce the culture of solidarity.

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Associazione Banco Alimentare del Piemonte Onlus

More info at: [Banco Alimentare website](#).



ATTENTION FOR OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The first half of 2016 the Netherlands is holding the Presidency of the European Council. One of the focus points of the Dutch government is the fight against poverty.

That's why the annual conference of the European Social Network will take place in the Netherlands, in June. Leido has proposed to take care for a workshop during this event to report about TAP, but another Dutch organisation (Cordaid) is also involved in 'social entrepreneurship', and their application was accepted. But we are both members of a national platform for organisations involved in the 'fight against poverty', which means that we can stay in touch about what we are aiming for.

Besides that, the Ministry for Social Affairs started a specific portal on the internet for good practices. Leido has taken the opportunity to upload the most relevant documents as outcomes of TAP: O1 and O2. This means that more stakeholders' groups in Europe can anyway learn more about our project.

The contacts that we have at the moment as result of the surveys we have conducted in 2015, are 'paying themselves out'. Some of the municipalities we have used for the O2 survey to learn more about the structure they are using for helping people at risk for poverty and social exclusion, are showing interest in hosting the final event of TAP.



Meeting of the national network representatives

Our aim as Leido is to have on the 8th of July an international seminar in the Netherlands in one of those cities, giving all partners the opportunity to present the results of the project, with good practices at their own national, regional or local level. In this way that decision makers working for this municipality can learn from those good practices, but they will also invite colleagues from other parts of the Netherlands. This can lead to a specific network, just as seen as one of the aims of TAP.

Last but not least Leido will start after the summer holidays with setting up a national network with possible institutions that are willing to organize courses on request of institutions for social services for the target group of TAP. Basis for those courses will be the methodology that has been developed in the last six months and that will be combined with the international training programme called Life Management. This means that also after ending this project there will be enough opportunities to work together across the borders of the member states.

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