

OLD CHALLENGES NEW PATHWAYS: SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FOSTERING IMPROVEMENT AND SOCIAL INNOVATION ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

NEWSLETTER 2

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EDITORIAL

This is the second newsletter of the project «Old Challenges New Pathways – Social enterprises fostering improvement and social innovation in social inclusion». The OCNP project is a 2 years European initiative (Sep. 2013 – Jul.2015) funded through the [Lifelong Learning Programme](#). Consisting in a series of exchange visits and networking among partners from 5 European countries, the project focuses on work integration social enterprises (WISEs) – organisations that provide goods and services through a commercial approach as a means to integrate disadvantaged people through work. This newsletter aims to share the visit and the debates that were held during the second project meeting in Ghent, Belgium.



WISES IN FLANDERS, BELGIUM

In Flanders, we have a social economy sector consisting more than 100 businesses with a social purpose: they empower people who have difficulties in the labour market. In Ghent we explored different businesses in the social economy such as Social workplaces, Sheltered workplaces and labour care projects.

A social workplace employs people with prolonged inactivity on the labour market due to incidents and problems in personal life (mental or/and physical disabilities, health problems or a lack of education). These reasons make it difficult to find a job in a regular company. The employees are coached daily in developing their technical and social skills.

A sheltered workplace is in an employment place for persons with a disability who are willing to work but temporarily or permanently can't work in the regular labour market. The ultimate goal of the sheltered workplace is the employment of persons with disabilities in order to improve their integration into society.

Labour Care is intended for people who do not, not yet or no longer can work in the regular labour market. Sheltered and social workplaces offers them employment activities in a work environment and supports them where needed.

You might think these three models are similar to each other. The tasks for the employees can be the same but the approach of coaching them is always different.

SST, FLEMISCH NETWORK OF WISES

The "Samenwerkingsverband Sociale Tewerkstelling" (Social Employment Cooperation) is the coordination organization of the Social Workplaces and centres for Labour Care in Flanders. SST represents way over 90 % of the members in the social sector. Remark that the sheltered workplaces are represented by VLAB, "Vlaamse Federatie van Beschutte werkplaatsen".

SST was established in 1988. Its main goal was to find a structural subsidy scheme, tailor-made for the social workplaces. By advocacy and lobby SST achieved a legislation on social workplaces in the Flemish Government in 1998. With this legislation the disadvantaged groups received the status of an employee meaning they have a contract of indeterminate time and get paid minimum wages. A new 'economic sector' was created. SST received an additional assignment and took up employer representation for the sector within Joint Committee 327.

A reorganization took place within the working scope, and a new form of labour saw the light. Some people who used to be employed in a social workplace did not fit in the disadvantaged group definition any longer, while others had a too low cost-effectiveness, so that even a job in the social workplace was not feasible. They are taken care of in "Labour Care Projects". Here as well, SST devotes itself to the sound development of the type of labour and to structural financing.

FACTS & FIGURES SST

94 MEMBERS

8800 EMPLOYEES

- [4522 disadvantaged group employees](#)
- [1538 support staff](#)
- [1236 "artikel 60" status](#)
- [1154 Labour Care participants](#)

SECTORS

- [Recycling and Re-use centres](#)
- [Landscape maintenance](#)
- [Manufacturing](#)
- [Construction and renovation](#)
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TOTAL REVENUE

- [45,81 % Government funding](#)
- [51,54 % Business Revenue](#)
- [0,07 % Donations](#)
- [2,58 % Other Revenues](#)

VISIT TO ATELJEE VZW – A SOCIAL WORKPLACE

Ateljee vzw was founded in 1986 and originates from Oikonde, a shelter for homeless people. To give these people a meaningful day job, Ateljee vzw started a second-hand store. In 1992 Ateljee vzw opened its first social restaurant. In 1995 Ateljee vzw gets the admission of social workplace and also started "De Factorij", a labour care project. Due to the legislation on social workplaces in Flanders in 1998 Ateljee could empower more people and opened in the next five years 5 more second-hand stores, 2 restaurants, the bicycle workplace, the textile sorting centre and the organic farm. Ateljee vzw continues to expand with different projects. In March 2014 a new second-hand store in Nazareth opened its doors.

Ateljee vzw realizes, from a deep social commitment, qualitative employment for people with reduced opportunities by taking into account a changing society and provide material assistance through our employment projects. The goal is to improve performance of the individual.

Ateljee vzw is a social workplace employing people with limited education, long-term unemployment history and social and psychological problems. Ateljee vzw offers suitable employment by offering a wide array of employment projects with a variety in job descriptions. Training of the technical and social skills are essential for disadvantaged groups that's why Ateljee vzw provide not only "on the job training" but also job related and general work ethics training.

Ateljee vzw has 8 second-hand stores in the region of Ghent. There is a collection and delivery service that brings around the goods. When people donate their clothing, it will first go to the textile sorting centre. In this centre they sort out the best clothing to sell in the second hand store. The not salable clothing are going to the GENTMADE project where they manufacture beautiful handbags, covers for mobile phones,... Also the electro will go first to the electro repair project. The household appliances are tested and repaired before it can be sold in the second-hand store with warranty.

Beside these projects Ateljee vzw also has 4 restaurants open to general public where people with a low income can have a meal at reduced prices. One of the restaurant, Parnassus-the old church, is also rented as venue for cultural events. Charities and social care services also distribute take-away meals that were prepared at the social restaurants. The organic farm "Het Landhuis" cultivates vegetables and fruit for the restaurants and also for other organizations. Ateljee vzw has a bicycle workplace where they maintain, repair and assemble bicycles which are rented to companies and organizations.

During this project meeting the partners visited different projects coordinated by Ateljee Vzw. The group lunched at Parnassus, visited the textile sorting centre, rode with bicycles from trans-fair and got the chance to meet and greet the employees, and ask questions about the way of empowering vulnerable people in the different projects.

Ateljee is mainly financed by the government and by the turnover created in the stores, restaurants and other projects which is essential for survival. Sometimes Ateljee gets grants for individual projects on ad hoc basis. For the goods that otherwise would be thrown away and now has a second life, Ateljee vzw gets a compensation for re-use per kg.



VISIT TO RYHOVE, A SHELTERED WORKPLACE

Ryhove vzw is a sheltered workplace with establishments in Ghent and Merelbeke with about 400 employees, of which 320 people have a disability. The sheltered workshop was founded in 1963 and is the oldest one in East-Flanders. Ryhove vzw is specialized in packing of sweets and chocolate, in graphic finishing (both manual and mechanical) and working in enclave (people with a disability working in group in another company).

THE FUTURE - A UNIFORM LEGISLATION ON 'SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT'

The Flemish parliament approved the new legislation for suitable employment on 21 March 2014. The new legislation has two main pillars: tailor-made employment and the backpack-principle.

The main goal is creating employment for people with a distance to the regular labour market such as psycho-social restrictions, disabled people and very vulnerable persons. These people have to operate within a regular production process in a regular economically healthy production environment. The employer has to focus on (re) integration of these people in the regular labour market.

The government finances these employers with the backpack-principle. The subventions for employers depends on the personal situation of the employees.

CHALLENGES

- Evolution of entrepreneurship & economic crisis
- Subventions varying on personal situation
- Political choices on subventions
- Scale of operations
- Focus on (re)integration in the labour market



VISIT TO PSYCHIATRIC CENTRE SINT-JAN-BAPTIST, LABOUR CARE PROJECT

On the second day of the project meeting we went visiting the psychiatric centre Sint-Jan-Baptist. The psychiatric hospital offers a path to work for their patients. They call it the 'Hink-Stap-Sprong'. Everyone starts at the Hink and can grow to the Sprong. Hink and Stap are inside the hospital area. The Sprong is located in the city-centre of Zelzate, near Ghent.

Hink is a semi-industrial workshop. The goal in Hink is to observe, orientate and evaluate the social skills in a working environment of the patients.

Stap is the intern job service of the hospital. The goal in Stap is to offer the patients a daytime activity in a labourcontext where they can train their working attitudes.

Sprong is a labour care project. The goal is to support the patients in developing a professional career. In Sprong they can work in a social restaurant, a coffee house, a bicycle workshop, a landscape workshop,... The Sprong also offers trainings concerning the search for a job like working with a computer, making a resume, learning to apply, ...

