



**Report on the Active Inclusion Learning Network:  
Marginalised in Communities Platform 2 Transnational Event  
Bremen, 04 - 05 February 2015**

**Overview:**

The event focussed on

- Offenders/Ex-offenders
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Homelessness and;
- Physical, Mental and Learning Difficulties

31 experts, from 19 different nationalities, participated in the event. The event was hosted by the Ministry of Justice Bremen.

6 project partners also attended to facilitate and scribe the 2 sub-theme workshop groups. Dr Ioan Durnescu attended the event in the capacity of the researcher and moved between the workshops to observe. The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, who are evaluating the Network observed and invited feedback from delegates via a questionnaire.

Presentations were given by Vivette Wadey, Project Support, Jurgen Hillmer, Ministry of Justice Bremen and Dr Ioan Durnescu on the Systematic review.



**Aim and format of the event**

The aim of the event was to identify key points of the inventions which had been identified by previous analysis by an expert panel in the Platform Level 1 meetings.

On day one, interventions and experts were assigned to one of the two workshops according to their expertise; the Offenders/Ex-offenders and Drugs and Alcohol workshop or the Homelessness and Physical, Mental and Learning Difficulties workshop. Participants had been sent the written overview and original questionnaire of each practice, and were asked to read these prior to the event.

The invited interventions presented their approach to their workshop. All participants were asked to draw upon their own experience and knowledge of best practice to draw out the key points for each practice using the five themes of:

- Innovation,
- Transferability,
- Learning,
- Finance and;
- ESF.

Unfortunately due to illness and other commitments, not all invited practices were able to attend. Those marked as ~~strikethrough~~ on the tables below did not attend.

The Offenders/Ex-offenders and Drugs and Alcohol workshop was facilitated and scribed by Vivette Wadey, NOMS, UK:

<u>Intervention name</u>	<u>Survey code</u>	<u>Country</u>
"My Guru" (Salad Bar)	OFF26	Lithuania
Jobtrack	OFF31	Northern Ireland
Working in Handsworth and Shard End (WiSH)	DA10	UK
I Choose	DA18	Lithuania
Tailor's of Solidarity	OFF21	Italy
<del>Essential Skills Programme</del>	<del>DA20</del>	<del>Northern Ireland</del>
Directions	OFF12	UK

The Homelessness and Physical, Mental and Learning Difficulties workshop was facilitated by Heather Law, Birmingham City Council, UK, and the scribe was Olwen Lyner, NIACRO, Northern Ireland:

<u>Intervention name</u>	<u>Survey code</u>	<u>Country</u>
Growing Lives	HOME2	UK
Youth Advocate Programmes	IE15	Ireland
Supporting People: Housing Support Programme	HOME1	UK
Andra Chansen	DIS27	Sweden

Vilnius Night Shelter	HOME13	Lithuania
The Chrysalis Programme	OFF8	England and Australia
Coloured Roofs	HOME11	Italy

On day 2, a plenary discussion was held where participants from both workshop groups were asked to discuss the key points from the five themes. This was facilitated by Vivette Wadey, Ioan Durnescu, Heather Law and Olwen Lyner. All participants were asked to get into groups of approximately five people who they hadn't spoken to before and were from the opposite workshop to allow a good range of discussion and different perspectives. Each group was asked to write down the five key points they felt were most important for each of the five themes so that there would be a total of 25 points per group.

There then followed a facilitated plenary discussion where feedback from the post it notes was discussed in more detail to facilitate further discussion and analysis. This was felt to have the advantage of better utilising the expertise and experience from all delegates across all interventions from both workshops. Several opportunities to ask general questions were provided and encouraged to the whole group.



### **Overall Summary**

Overall the event appeared to prove successful with all the delegates networking and exchanging ideas on best practice with Marginalised in Communities groups. With many experts and projects exchanging details to further discussion. CESI collected feedback questionnaires from most participants.

It was felt that there was some overlap with the other two themes of Disaffected Youth and Troubled Families. However, this wasn't a bad thing as the interventions were created to fill a gap in society where help was needed and this does sometimes extend across a multi-layered approach. Some interventions were outside the four sub-themes but were still within the marginalised in communities group and showed great innovation. For example, the Tailor's of Solidarity intervention works primarily with older

women in Tuscany, Italy, teaching them how to tailor. However, the intervention stretches to include immigrants and children and anyone who wants to join. There are no conditions to joining which allows for anyone to enquire and be welcomed. Their voluntary work also includes helping immigrants with language and to engage in society. An issue that is sometimes forgotten in society and fosters segregation if nothing is available to help integrate in an informal and non-judgemental setting.

The group discussions were quite lively and focused on innovation and the importance that is put on innovation especially when it comes to funding. There was a strong opinion for innovation not being the focus of funding and rather recommending ESF MAs focus funding on interventions by their merit rather than whether they are innovative or not. For example, if an intervention works and is producing good results the funding should continue rather than giving funding to something new and untested. However, the counter argument is that funding based on innovation allows projects to try something new and if they fail the funding ends.

Feedback from some delegates suggested that networking with other interventions not just across Europe but also within their own countries wasn't readily available and events like this were useful for bringing experts together to discuss issues and ways to improve services and share best practice. One suggestion was to have a central database for all interventions and networks funded by ESF on a website hosted by the European Commission to allow interventions and ESF MAs to see what else is being done and where to go for more information.

### **What worked well**

The pre-event information and location of the hotel and meeting venue and the proximity to the airport was received very well by participants.

Feedback suggest that breaks for networking were good and the longer group discussions on day 2 allowed in depth analysis and generation of ideas and points relevant to all projects.

### **What didn't work well**

As described above not all invited interventions were able to attend. Bremen as a location for some meant very long flights or several stops but once there the local transport was very good and the city was easily accessible.

### **Learning for future networks**

Mixing themes or having larger networking events to allow discussion and time for experts to properly discuss issues and possible solutions. Maybe having more ESF MAs make these networking opportunities a priority.

