



Internal Control and Education - Services to Persons with Disabilities

Administrative and basic information

Name of Project	Internal Control and Education - Services to Persons with Disabilities
Registration Number	TEMP1180
EPSA 2017 Administrative Category	Supra/local and Local
Previous EPSA participation	
Previous EPSA number	
Submitted by	2005
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Date of Creation	12 April 2017
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Contact Details of Lead Applicant

Name of Organisation	The Municipality of Hafnarfjordur
Size of the Organisation	500-5000
Number of people directly involved in the project	>15
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Other Applicant(s)

Partner Organization(s)	The Municipality of Kopavogur The Municipality of Garðabær The Municipality of Mosfellsbær
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Project received EU funds (co-financing)	No
If yes, please specify which fund(s)	

Case Description

Executive Summary (2500 to 5000 characters)	<p>In 2011, the operation of 24 hour homes, habilitation centres, and short term facilities for persons with disabilities was handed over from state to local government in Iceland. According to the new law, local governments are now responsible for inner supervision and so the Municipality of Hafnarfjordur and other smaller nearby municipalities founded a committee that was to design the inner supervision with the aim of ensuring the provision of professional services to inhabitants as well as preventing any irregularities in the services provided. The solution is a quality control audit of the services provided to persons with disabilities that is constantly being improved in collaboration with users and caregivers. The quality standards used as basis for the audits are based on local and state law and regulation on services and rights of persons with disabilities as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p>
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The specific aim of the project is to increase the quality of life for persons with

disabilities and ensure that users have a say in how the services they receive are being developed and decided upon as well as giving support for those caregivers who provide services to persons with disabilities. The supervision enhances the likelihood that the services provided are done so based on the needs of the users and that their rights are not being violated in any way.

The initiative has been implemented on four municipalities in the capital area and shown to increase quality in professional services to persons with disabilities. The work processes and methods have been evaluated and adjusted to better serve the needs of the service users and the results are used to set up an action plan and improve the quality of the service. Furthermore, the measurement tool and audit process are part of a continuous improvement project aiming at increasing the quality of life, well-being, and inclusion of persons with disabilities. An example of an outcome is that one of the observations revealed the importance of the service users having the opportunity to participate in the creation of their individual service action plan as a way of increasing inclusion and empowering the individual to take part in decision making

This specific collaboration has allowed for better use of public funds as one person can administer the quality control audit in all four municipalities. It has also provided opportunities for further collaboration in terms of other categories within social services, which might result in other initiatives being started in the future.

The total yearly budget of the project is around EUR 50,000 and is fully funded by the Iceland Ministry of Interiors. The initiative has been successful thusfar and the municipalities have decided to increase funding to further develop and carry out the initiative.

The initiative is sustainable and transferable and has been introduced to other municipalities, offering them to use the quality measurement tools and quality control audit. This may also be transferred to public services on an international level, especially with regards to the neighbouring countries.

Type(s) of sector - Public administration, modernisation and reform
- Public order and safety, justice and human rights
- Social protection

Other Sector

Key words of project Social inclusion, persons with disabilities, government transparency, innovation, participatilm

Main web address(es) of the project (if applicable) N/A

Main content part

Background (e.g. grounds/reasons for the project idea, max. 5000 characters) In 2011, one of the largest projects of improvement and transfer of responsibilities between the state and local government to be conducted in Iceland begun when the operation of 24 hour homes, habilitation centers, and short term facilities for persons with disabilities was handed over from state to local government.

According to the new law, local governments are now responsible for inner supervision, which was practically non-existent before the change in law. The district office for persons with disabilities (i. Svæðisskrifstofa málefna fatlaðra) had managed all supervision on a state level, which was in much smaller scope than the initiative called for. The state continues to be responsible for outer supervision of the services which is in the form of calling for statistical information from local governments and making sure that specific services required by law are being provided.

After the transfer, the Municipality of Hafnarfjordur and other smaller nearby municipalities founded a committee that was to design the inner supervision with the aim of ensuring the provision of professional services to inhabitants as well as preventing any irregularities in the services provided.

The main challenge was to make sure that habitants and users of the services would not be negatively affected by this change and that, in time, the services provided would become better adjusted to individual needs than before as they were now being lead by the local community. Another challenge was public concern in light of a recent report highlighting malpractice at a former state run home for persons with disabilities, Kopavogshaeli, which was closed in 1993. It is of utmost importance for government to prevent such malpractice to happen again and so creating a transparent and responsible system was key to restoring the publics' trust in the system.

The solution is a quality control audit of the services provided to persons with disabilities that is constantly being improved in collaboration with users and caregivers. An experienced developmental therapist was hired to lead the project and has, since 2014, been conducting quality control audits in the homes of persons with disabilities, short term homes, protected workplaces, and habilitation centres. The quality standards used as basis for the audits are based on local and state law and regulation on services and rights of persons with disabilities as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

General and Specific Objectives (max. 2500 characters) The main objectives of the transfer were to enhance the quality of services to persons with disabilities and increase the opportunity to adjust it to individual needs, taking into account different circumstances; to contribute to the coordination of local services for the habitants of municipalities; to make sure only one level of government is responsible for the

largest part of social services; enhancing coordination and decreasing overlap of responsibilities of different levels of government; ensuring the good use of public funds; to strengthen the local government; and to simplify the division of responsibilities between state and local government.

The specific aim of the project is to increase the quality of life for persons with disabilities and ensure that users have a say in how the services they receive are being developed and decided upon as well as giving support for those caregivers who provide services to persons with disabilities. The supervision enhances the likelihood that the services provided are done so based on the needs of the users and that their rights are not being violated in any way.

Input/resources utilized/allocated to the project [HR, budget, etc] (max. 2500 characters) The costs of the project have been mostly in terms of human resources with the committee accounting for most of that cost. The Project Manager also serves as the head of social services of the four municipalities and has a part-time position of 50% within this project, which constitutes the financial resources associated with the initiative. The committee is not paid separately for their work on this project. The total yearly budget of the project is around EUR 50,000 and is fully funded by the Iceland Ministry of Interiors. See a letter of support from the Ministry of Interiors in Appendix.

Implementation (e.g. structure, processes, management, communication, max. 7500 characters) Services to persons with disabilities were moved from the state to local government in 2011 and local government took part in the preparation of the transfer. This was a huge governmental shift and it took local government considerable time to find footing in terms of managing and executing this new project. In 2011, a group of four municipalities in Iceland launched a committee, made up of a team of development therapists and social workers from each of the municipalities, to oversee the matters of persons with disabilities in the area. The committee held bi-weekly meetings where different parts of the services were discussed. Soon after the start of the committee it concluded that a more strategic and professional supervision was needed. In 2013, the committee set goals for the initiative, designed the quality measurement tools, and created an implementation strategy. They then hired a Project Manager with an education and vast experience in developmental therapy to carry out the implementation and quality control audit. In 2014 the quality control audit initiative was officially launched.

The committee designed a quality measurement tool for the services provided at facilities for persons with disabilities through observations. The observations are conducted regularly where the observer uses a standardised questionnaire to conduct the audit. An emphasis is put on measuring the quality of the service and methodological work processes related to the users of the services as well as getting feedback from the users. The tool specifically measures individual services provided, the dominating culture in the facilities, service contracts, the creation of individual service plans, the use of constraints in service provision for persons with disabilities, personal spokespeople, the use of personal information, hiring and training of caregivers, and work processes. The results are used to analyse the services provided and create an action plan for improvements in services to persons with disabilities. An example of an outcome is that one of the observations revealed the importance of the service users having the opportunity to participate in the creation of their individual service action plan as a way of increasing inclusion and empowering the individual to take part in decision making.

The Project Manager worked with measurement tools that the committee had designed but since these were completely new processes and work tools, she soon learned that adjustments were needed. An emphasis was put on iterating the tool and methods built on accumulated experience where professional focus and point of view were a key component to delivering a better measurement tool. For example, we learned early on that to reach the goal of seeking feedback from the users of the services we needed a more extensive preparation period, making sure that the interviewee understood the purpose of the conversation, that he agreed to be interviewed, and that he understood that he had the choice of getting additional support during the interview. The Project Manager has throughout the project adjusted the methods and tools with the aim of better reflecting and measuring the services being provided while keeping the best interest of the user in mind.

The Municipality of Hafnarfjordur lead the implementation in all four municipalities that participate in the initiative. Hafnarfjordur is a municipality of around 27,000 habitants, making it the third largest municipality in Iceland, located in the vicinity of the country's capital of Reykjavik. Around 150 people using the services of 30 homes, habilitation centres, and short term stays, have directly benefited from this initiative throughout the four municipalities. The committee meets once a month to review the development of the project and the Project Manager reports to the committee every quarter. Monitoring of the initiative is in the hands of the Ministry of Interiors, which calls for yearly reports on the development and outcomes.

Most important innovative features according to the applicant's point of view (max. 2000 characters) The main innovative aspect of the project is the collaboration between municipalities. This specific collaboration has allowed for better use of public funds as one person can administer the quality control audit in all four municipalities. It has also provided opportunities for further collaboration in terms of other categories within social services, which might result in other initiatives being started in the future. Finally, the collaboration provides a standardisation of sort as the same quality control audit is conducted in four different municipalities, which makes the project even more sustainable and transferable.

Stakeholder Involvement (max 2000 characters) A joint committee of representatives of each municipality was formed. This committee set goals for the initiative, designed the quality measurement tools, and created an implementation strategy. The committee, made up of a team of development therapists and social workers, then hired a Project Manager with an education and vast experience in developmental therapy, to carry out the implementation and quality control audit. This

individual adjusted the measurement tools as to better reflect and measure the services being provided. The Project Manager communicates directly with the service users and their families as well as with the employees working at the facilities involved.

Each of the municipalities has a user committee, which has representatives of different organisations and interest groups, that serves the community and so these committees have received an introduction of the initiative, its goals and implementation. The project will also be introduced to an advisory committee for persons with disabilities in the Municipality of Hafnarfjordur.

The initiative has been introduced in professional meetings, at conferences, with press releases, etc. Citizens have knowledge of the existence of the initiative and have access to information online. When discussing government accountability it has proven valuable to be able to refer to the quality control audit that has been put in place in terms of services to persons with disabilities as this is an important part of increasing the quality of the services and that the services being provided are satisfactory.

Results (e.g. concrete quantitative performance measurement) (max. 5000 characters)

The most appropriate way to evaluate an initiative of this type is through qualitative evaluation. As part of the design of the initiative, the Project Manager actively seeks feedback from the users of the service as well as the caregivers and administrators at each facility during the interview process, which is part of the quality control audit.

The municipalities that are part of the initiatives all receive feedback based on standardised measurement tools as the same individual goes to each facility and evaluates the services as well as pointing out opportunities for improvement. Thus, the reliability of the service has increased while better assuring that the best interest of the service users is always a priority.

The initiative has shown to increase quality in professional services to persons with disabilities. The work processes and methods have been evaluated and adjusted to better serve the needs of the service users and the results are used to set up an action plan and improve the quality of the service. Furthermore, the measurement tool and audit process are part of a continuous improvement project aiming at increasing the quality of life, well-being, and inclusion of persons with disabilities. An example of an outcome is that one of the observations revealed the importance of the service users having the opportunity to participate in the creation of their individual service action plan as a way of increasing inclusion and empowering the individual to take part in decision making.

The committee has sent requests to the Ministry of Interiors for continued financial support every year along with a report from the Project Manager leading the initiative and has been granted support every year based on the reports and the continued success of the initiative. In the near future, a more formal qualitative evaluation will be conducted.

Social inclusion of the project (max. 2000 characters)

The groups affected by the initiative are persons with disabilities and their families as the services offered have been better adjusted to the needs of the users, thus increasing quality for the users and peace of mind for their families. The initiative supports professionalism in services to persons with disabilities and is designed to assure that its users receive high quality and humane services.

Sustainability (embedding in future activities) (max. 2000 characters)

The quality control audit creates a platform to evaluate success and contribute to improvements and development of current services as well as ensuring that the quality of life of persons with disabilities does not stagnate or decrease. The initiative has been successful and the municipalities have decided to increase funding to further develop and carry out the initiative.

The most important lesson learned is the importance of local government working together to improve services to citizens. Even though the aim of this initiative was to bring the service closer to its users and to coordinate social services of the municipalities, it is no less important for government to enhance specific aspects of the services, e.g. quality control.

Transferability

The initiative is sustainable and transferable and has been introduced to other municipalities, offering them to use the quality measurement tools and quality control audit. This may also be transferred to public services on an international level, especially with regards to the neighbouring countries that have similar social infrastructures, levels of services as Iceland. As the matters of persons with disabilities are now the responsibility of local government, the participating municipalities have decided to further introduce this initiative, the opportunities it offers, and the success it has had so far to other local government around the country with the aim of transferring it nationwide.

Reference Documents

Description of references:

Letter of support from the Ministry of Interiors
Press release on the project (in English and Icelandic)

Files

-  [InternalControl.pdf](#)
-  [LetterMinistryOfWelfareIceland.pdf](#)

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