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The Social Services Helpdesk on EU Funds

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HELPDESK

SESK – Social sErviceS helpdesK on EU Funds

Project number: 101052902

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The Helpdesk Project

What is it?

Goal: Increasing and facilitating the use of EU funds (ESF+ and ERDF) for social services

Reach: All EU Member States

Focus: The **European Social Fund Plus** and the **European Regional Development Fund**

How:

1. Supporting **Social Services** in accessing and using EU funds (in particular ESF+ and ERDF)
2. Helping **Managing Authorities** use EU funds to finance quality interventions in the field of social services.

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The Helpdesk Project

What is it?

- Co-funded by the European Commission
- Timeline: May 2022 – April 2024
- Consortium of 16 partners: European networks and national organisations
- Representing all kinds of social services

EASPD · European Social Network · European Ageing Network (www.ean.care) · ensie · Social Services Europe · Fundación ONCE · idee in rete consorzio nazionale · Federation of European Social Employers · caritas europa · APSS ČR · Eurodiaconia · UNIPSO · CEDAG · FEANTSA · epr · HUBBIE

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The Helpdesk Project

4 Main Strands of Work

- **Evidence Gathering:** What are the needs and challenges of Managing Authorities and Social Services?
- **Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building:** Sharing knowledge with Social Services on accessing EU Funds
- **Simplification and facilitation:** How can we help Managing Authorities fund social services projects and reduce the administrative burden?
- **Policy and Technical Guidance:** How can we support Managing Authorities (and Social Services) to ensure EU funds are used for effective high quality social services interventions?

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Evidence Gathering

Challenges for Social Services (from survey)

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Limited awareness about the opportunities provided by EU Funds

Lack of accessible information, complex regulatory frameworks, and poor communication from Managing Authorities. Additionally, there is a lack of awareness about using EU funds for pilot projects and policy reforms, and difficulties in finding necessary information, contacts, and tools.

Staff Shortages and Project Literacy

The lack of specialised staff and/or insufficient financial capabilities to hire professionals is particularly evident among SPs. The financial resources to pay project managers when developing project applications are also limited.

Co-Financing & Pre-Financing

The co-financing rate emerges as a consistent obstacle for Social Services who want to apply for EU funds. Finding adequate resources for the co-financing is thus a major issue. Moreover, there is often the need for the social services providers who want to apply for EU funding to advance money in order to be able to start projects and do initial investments.

Involvement of small Social Services

There is a growing concern that large consultancies and universities are increasingly dominating the development and implementation of projects related to social services, with little or no input from SPs. This approach can create a disconnect between the needs of end-users, and the services provided, which may not adequately address their needs.

Consultation Mechanism and Co-Design

The dialogue mechanisms that exist are often ineffective, especially at the design and formulation stage of OPs and calls for applications. The identification of the needs that should be addressed by the calls for proposals – along with other research and data analysis mechanisms - should come from the stakeholders and users' perspectives as well. For example, from the social/affordable housing and homelessness sector, are not invited in the planning/programming phase.

Check out the survey reports here

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Knowledge Sharing

The Website

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Check out the website here

The Booklet of Promising Practices: Tips and Tricks

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Community Engagement

Engage the communities and beneficiaries you serve in the design and implementation of projects. Their voices can make proposals more compelling.

Invite to Project Activities

Actively invite representatives from the MA to attend project events, launches, or any significant milestones. This provides them with a firsthand look at the project's impact.

- Initiatives improving access to EU funding
- Relationships with managing authorities
- Successful project teams
- Handling project difficulties
- Project sustainability
- Administrative simplifications
- 12 recommendations from successful organisations

Capacity Building

Invest in the training and development of local staff and stakeholders. This ensures that there is local expertise to continue the project even after the initial funding and external support end.

Seek Policy Integration

If your project aligns with national or regional priorities, work towards integrating it into local or national policies. This can ensure that it gets sustained support and recognition.

Documentation

Maintain detailed records of all challenges encountered and the solutions implemented. This not only aids in accountability but provides a reference for future projects.

Check out the Booklet here

The Booklet of Promising Practices: Inspiration from other projects

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Home Based Therapeutic Services

Organisation: FSWS (Foundation for Social Welfare Services)

Country: Malta

Project Description:

This European Social Fund-funded project in Malta reunites families in crisis through personalised assistance and support, helping children stay with their families.

fsws.gov.mt

Training Care Workers and Changing Lives

Organisation: The Cyprus Paraplegic Organisation

Country: Cyprus

Project Description:

In this project, unemployed individuals in Cyprus are being trained to become home care workers for people with disabilities. Participants are provided with foundational care training and practical experience, enhancing the quality of life for caregivers and recipients alike.

opak.org.cy

Poweria!

Organisation: KVPS - Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability

Country: Finland

Project Description:

With help of ESF-funds, this project assists multicultural individuals with mild intellectual disabilities or special needs in Finland in discovering educational and career paths. It offers group and individual coaching sessions, fostering self-awareness and social inclusion, and aims to determine effective support for diverse individuals.

kvps.fi

The Online Course

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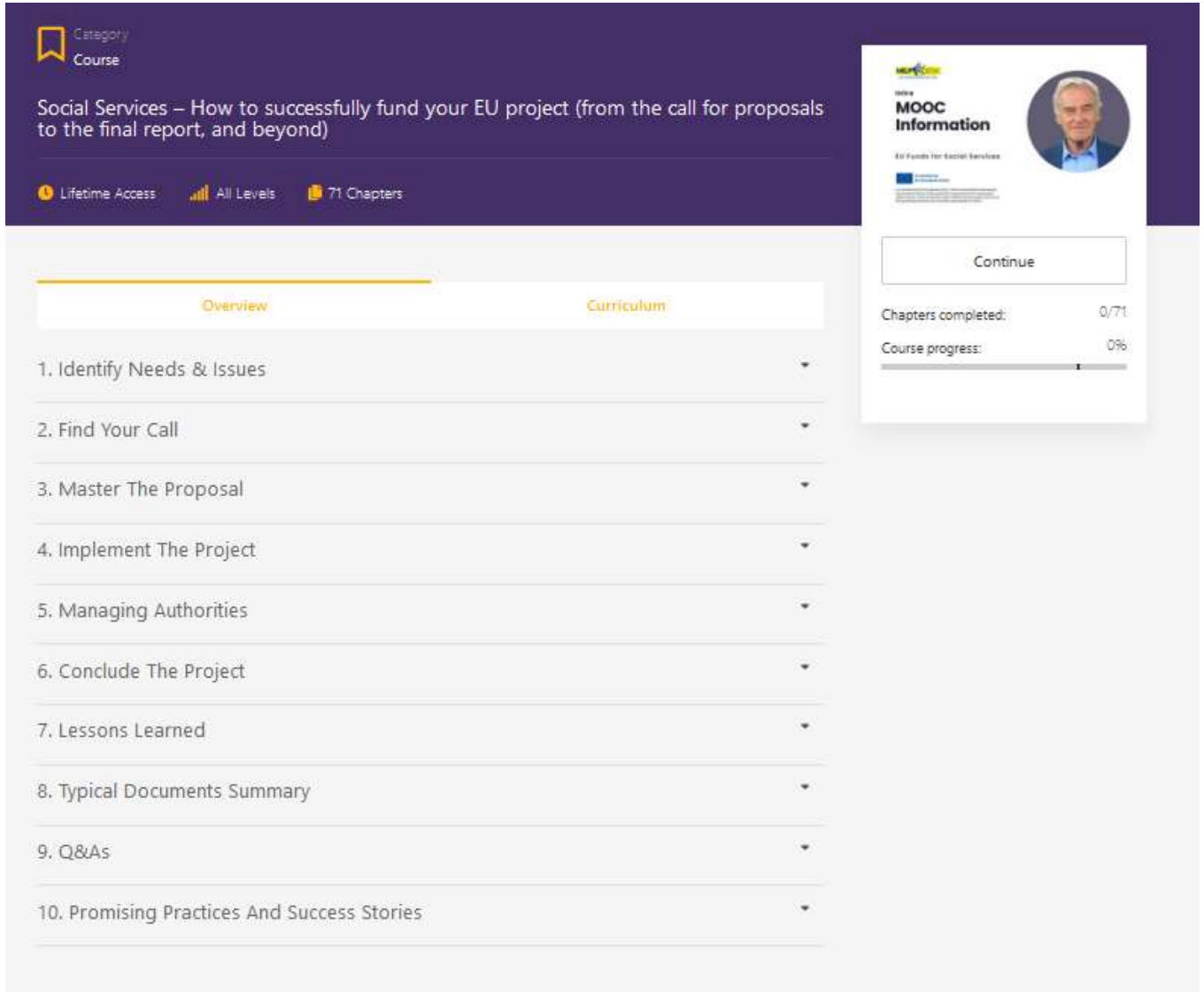

Check out the Course here

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Simplification & Facilitation

The Facilitation Toolkit

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Includes Tools such as:

- Social Services Inslusive Call Design Tool
- Recommendations and Templates for using a 2-step Application Process
- Recommendations for Managing Authorities on the use of Simplified Cost Options in social services projects
- Best practices to be adopted by Managing Authorities to facilitate reporting

Check out the Tools here

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Policy and Technical Guidance

Policy Guidance

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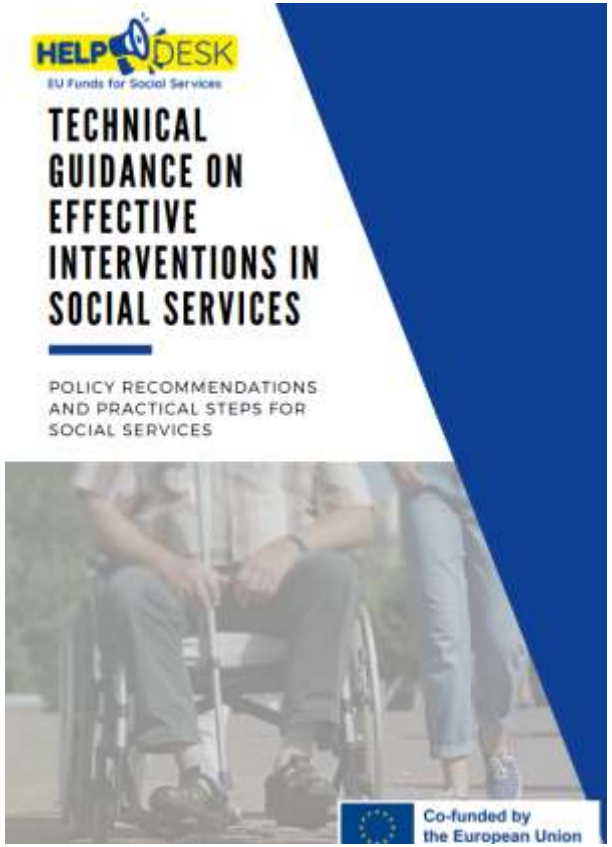
Figure 7 – Relevant concepts, rights, principles or approaches for effective models of service organisation.

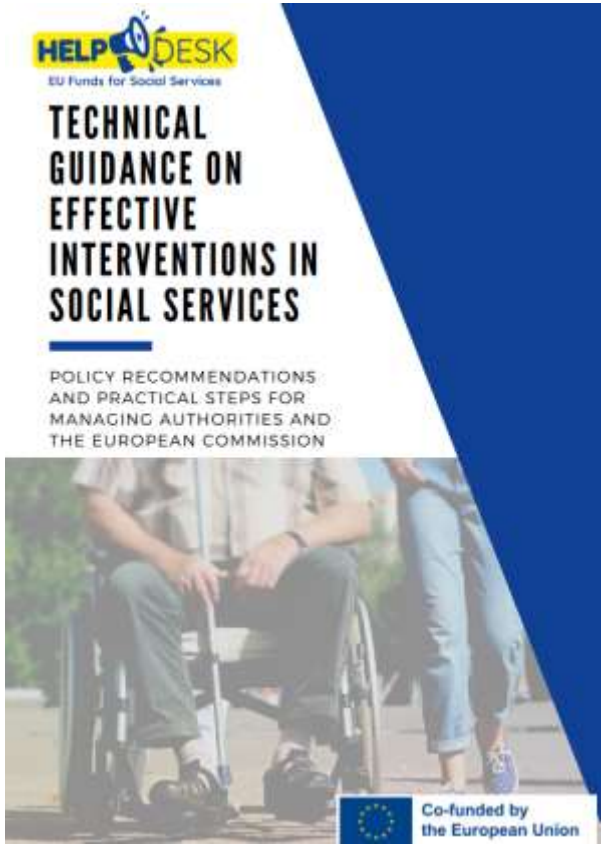
Specific Guidance on:

- Childcare and Child Poverty
- Services for Persons with Disbalities
- Services for Older Persons
- Homelessess
- Work Integration

Check out the Guidance here

Policy Guidance





Two shorter documents:

- Policy Recommendations and Practical Steps for Managing Aurhorities and the European Commission
- Policy Recommendations and practical steps for social services

Check out the Guidance here

The project will soon be over but…

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- All the deliverables will remain accessible on the Helpdesk's website
- We plan to continue to work on access to EU funds for social services
- We are very happy to hear about your experiences

Contact: lilith.alink@easpd.eu

Thank you!