



Theoretically informed case study accompanying the film

Place de Bleu – Denmark



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QR-Code to the Homepage and video:
Link to the video: <http://www.inno-serv.eu/place-de-bleu>

This report is part of the research project „Social Platform on innovative Social Services“ (INNOserv). INNOserv investigates innovative approaches in three fields of social services: health, education and welfare. The INNOserv Consortium covers nine European countries and aims to establish a social platform that fosters a europeanwide discussion about innovation in social services between practitioners, policy-makers, researchers and service users. This project is funded by the European Union under the 7th Framework Programme (grant agreement nr. 290542).



1. Short profile: Place de Bleu - social enterprise employing marginalised ethnic minority women

Specific innovative elements of Place de Bleu

The target group is social marginalised ethnic minority women.

The **main innovative element** is a social enterprise that integrates marginalised ethnic minority women into the labour market by providing a flexible workplace with in-service-training. As a social enterprise, Place de Bleu is based on the commercialisation of the products produced by the employed women. At the same time, the workplace serves as a way to train the women and to offer them personalised and flexible support beyond the mere training.

Social enterprise training and employing marginalized ethnic minority women

Place de Bleu is a social enterprise sewing room that trains and employs marginalised ethnic minority women. Place de Bleu is innovative as a result of the combination of training and employment on terms that allows the women to be a part of the regular labour market.

Aim: to integrate women who are not otherwise integrated into the labour market and society as a whole.

In-service training

The women start in the sewing room in job training or as trainees. They are trained in hand craft skills and language skills and taught about Danish society. Over time, the women are offered a regular job. Place de Bleu has developed a new model which allows the women to progress in accordance with their skills and needs.

Aim: to qualify the women for a regular job at Place de Bleu or elsewhere.

Key characteristics of the service

Organisation

Place de Bleu is run by the association Qaravane whose aim is to promote employment among marginalised ethnic minority women. Place de Bleu is the French translation of the name of the Square in Copenhagen where the workplace is located.

Target group

The target group is ethnic minority women who have few Danish language skills, and have no or little experience of the Danish labour market. Further, many of the women suffer from health problems as well.

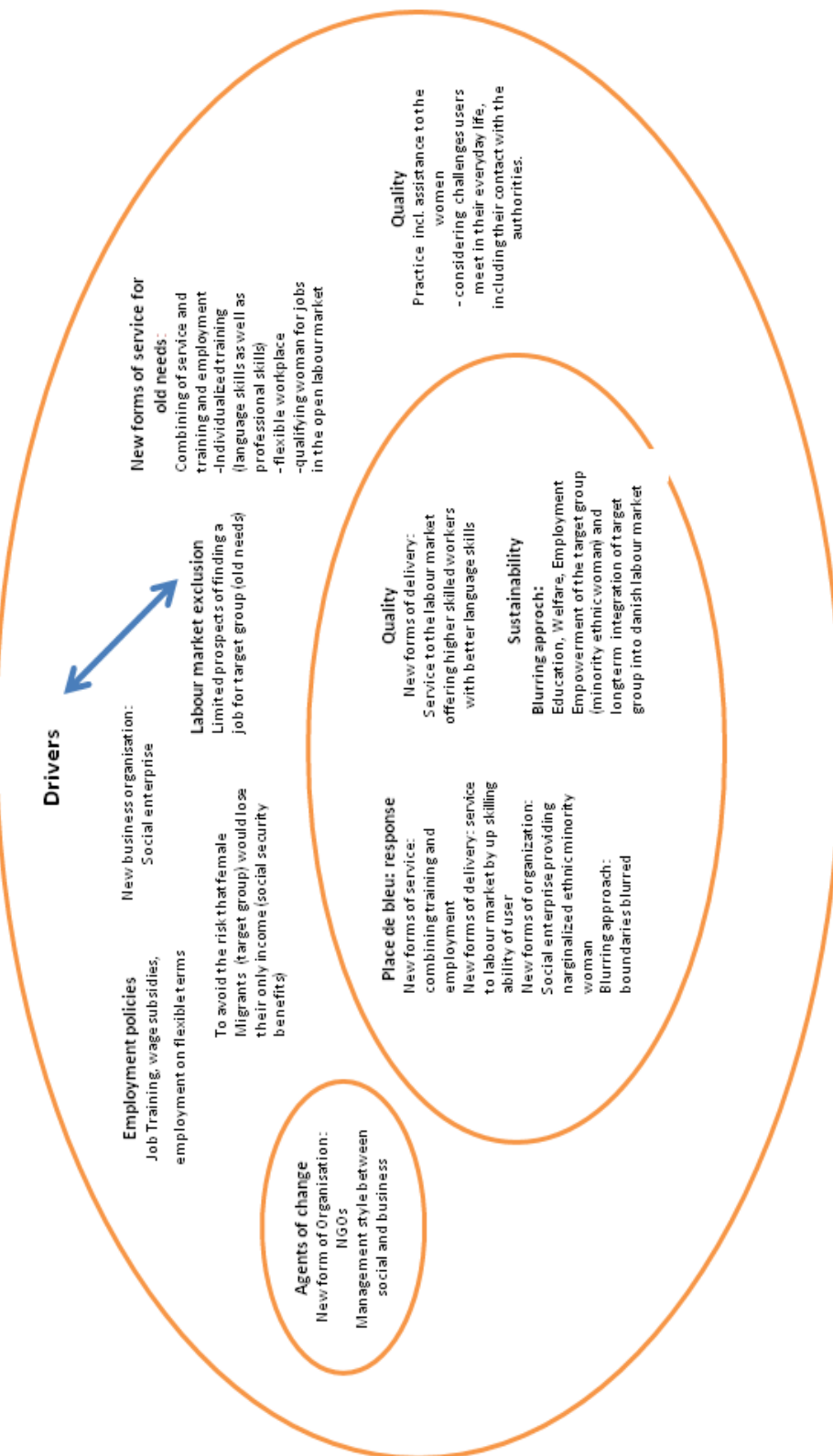
Principle

The core principle is Place de Bleu's induction programme which is an individualised programme that takes the single woman's competences as point of departure and works towards upgrading her skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Driver(s)

The immediate trigger was the introduction of new legislation that put many in the target group at risk of losing their social security benefits. Further, the development of the social economy approach as a way to address social need made it possible to establish a workplace like Place de Bleu where profit and non-profit elements are combined.

Factors influencing Social Services Innovation



2. Policy framework related to the labour market in Denmark

Principle/ Guidelines	Key organisations and actors	Services provided by government	Expenditure, resources
<p>1. Flexicurity which includes flexibility for the employer in relation to hiring of staff, and security for employees due to high unemployment benefits and active employment policies.</p> <p>2. Activation policies as part of the active employment policies, meaning that the unemployed are required to participate in activation programmes and job training.</p>	<p>The National Labour Market Authority under the Ministry of Employment is responsible for supporting and monitoring the municipalities' service and for the specific efforts targeting unemployed migrants and their descendants.</p> <p>The municipalities: are responsible for services in relation to the employment policies</p> <p>Private partners under contract with the municipality provide the actual services.</p>	<p>Legal milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on active employment policy - Law on active social policy <p>Service area characteristics</p> <p>The active employment that aims to re-introduce unemployed people into the labour market and to foster a qualified work force: This covers services both to those with unemployment insurance and those without.</p> <p>The services provided include job training, activation, positions as trainee, wage subsidies and employment on flexible terms.</p>	<p>1. Costs of the employment policies.</p> <p>Public expenditure on employment policies amounted to 1,2 % of the GDP in 2009 (Eurostat 2012)¹.</p> <p>3. Financing services at Place de Bleu</p> <p>Place de Bleu is financed by its sales income, private donations, public funding and income from their services to the municipal employment agency.</p>

3. The social, political and institutional context

3.1 Population/ Government

	Denmark (2011)	EU 27 (2011)
Total Population (2010)	5,534,738	501,104,164
Population projections 2010-2050	6,037,836	524,052,690
Percentage of migrants and descendants of migrants of total population (2012)	10.4 %	N/A
Projected percentage of migrants and descendants of migrants of total population (2050)	16.4 %	N/A
Employment rate of the total population	75.7 %	68.6 %
Employment rate among women	72.4 %	62.3 %
Employment rate among women migrants from non-western countries*	43.0 %	N/A
Employment rate among women descendants of migrants from non-western countries*	53.8 %	N/A
Expenditure on social protection (% of GDP) (2009)	33.44%	29.51%

* The statistical data regarding migrants and descendants of migrants from non-western countries is provided by Statistics Denmark and is not available at the European level.

¹ In Eurostat, the employment policies are termed labour market policies. This data covers "activation measures for the unemployed and other target groups including the categories of training, job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, and start-up incentives" (Eurostat 2012).

3.2 Information about the specific welfare state: Denmark

As an element of the Danish flexicurity model, Denmark leads active employment policies that aim to increase the employment rate and to re-introduce unemployed people in the labour market (Barbieri 2009). These active employment policies mean that Denmark spends a relatively high share of its GDP on public expenditure on employment policies. In 2009, it was 1.2 % of the GDP compared to 0.54 % in EU 27 (Eurostat 2012).

Social services, including the services regulated by employment policies, are financed through national and local taxes. The municipalities are responsible for providing the services to the labour market at the local level and provide the majority of services. The municipalities receive block grants from the national government, as well as activity based funding through reimbursements.

There is a continuous increase of expenditure in benefits in kind (including social services) as compared to benefits in cash. This shows the growing importance of social services within the social protection system. The table below presents the social protection expenditure of selected countries.

Social protection expenditure: Aggregated benefits and grouped schemes in millions of Euros

Time	Expenditure for social protection benefits in millions of Euros		Increasing benefits in kind	Part of benefits in kind of social protection benefits in millions of Euros	
	1996	2010		1996	2010
EU 27	/	3,605,678.95	/	/	34.07%
Denmark	45,334.15	78,367.78	102.60%	34.13%	40.00%
France	379,396.42	654,238.65	84.47%	31.94%	34.17%
Netherlands	94,052.49	188,731.00	186.74%	25.74%	36.80%

Source: Own calculations based on EUROSTAT 2012

4. Challenges and drivers of innovation

Structural weaknesses of the system:

- The Danish flexicurity model has been acknowledged as contributing to the low level of unemployment (Madsen 2004). However, critics argue that the model is less suitable for inclusion of people who have been outside the labour market for a longer period, those who are disadvantaged due to health and social problems, and people with low education levels (Lindsay and Mailand 2009; Andersen & Etherington 2005). Among these are ethnic minorities who have little or no work experience (Andersen & Etherington 2005).
- The complex regulation of employment services makes it difficult for small businesses to navigate the rules on different forms of employment and training. This poses specific challenges to social enterprises like Place de Bleu that recruit unemployed people.

- The lack of a legal framework makes it difficult to establish and run social enterprises, due to the lack of transparency and clear guidelines.

Innovation: Ideas, criteria, levels and added values

Against these challenges, Place de Bleu provides an innovative service that can fill the structural gaps for its participants:

Social enterprise training and employing marginalized ethnic minority women

Place de Bleu is established as a sewing room social enterprise that employs and trains ethnic minority women. As a social enterprise, Place de Bleu is a hybrid organisation that embraces both profit and non-profit aspects (Innoserv 2012:59). This implies, on the one hand, that Place de Bleu offers a flexible workplace that is capable of attending to the specific needs of each of the women. On the other hand, it is a business that operates in the market which means that the needlework is sold at various retailers.

In-service-training

The in-service-training revolves around an induction programme where the women start at Place de Bleu as trainees or in job training and where they are taught professional skills and Danish language skills during the everyday work. The in-service-training is individualised in order to meet each woman’s needs. Over time, the women are offered regular jobs at Place de Bleu, while the training continues.

Agents of change

Recent legislation put many ethnic minority women at risk of losing their only income since they had very limited prospects of finding jobs. This inspired the three NGOs to try to establish jobs for the women by creating a flexible workplace.

5. Key innovative elements of this example

Field of service	Welfare, education
Establishment of organization	2010
Type of organization	Hybrid organisation that embraces both profit and non-profit aspects.
Financing	A two year project funded by the municipality of Copenhagen and the Ministry of Integration, mix of public funds, private funds, self-earnings, voluntary donations and Corporate social responsibility
Size of the organization	Nine women employed as dressmakers Four to six freelance dressmakers One designer One production manager and one manager Three affiliated volunteers
Members and participation	3 NGOs (Indvandrer Kvindecentret, Integrationshuset Kringebakken, and FAKTI), voluntary workers, private business partners.
Contact Name of the innovative example Homepage	trine@placedebleu.dk Place de Bleu Blågårds Plads 4 2200 København N Mobil: 21 90 09 96 www.placedebleu.dk

Research has shown that there is a lack of labour market integration among migrants from non-western countries, and especially among female migrants (Deding & Jakobsen 2007). The association Qaravane, that runs Place de Bleu, works to promote the employment of ethnic minority women. The aim is to support women towards better integration into the Danish labour market and inclusion in the Danish society. This implies assisting the women and thus also their families. The association works towards this aim both by running the social enterprise, Place de Bleu, and through political means such as lobbying. The lobbying takes place in order to raise awareness of the obstacles they meet in their everyday practice.

Qaravane and Place de Bleu were established in 2010 by three NGOs (Indvandrer Kvindecetret, Integrationshuset Kringledbakken, and FAKTI) that run guidance and drop-in centres targeting ethnic minority women in Copenhagen. The direct trigger was the introduction of a new legislation that meant that a citizen had to work 300 hours in two years on regular terms in order to receive social security benefits (Bekendtgørelse af lov om aktiv socialpolitik, LBK nr 1460 af 12/12/2007 [Law on active social policy]). The legislation put many ethnic minority women at risk of losing their only income since they had very limited prospects of finding jobs. This inspired the three NGOs to try to establish jobs for the women by creating a flexible workplace. (This legislation law has since been repealed by the new government, led by the Social Democratic Party).

Place de Bleu was established as a two year project, funded by the municipality of Copenhagen and the Ministry of Integration (now the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration). Funding from the Ministry made it possible to develop and test the business model of a social enterprise that employs marginalised ethnic minority women.

Place de Bleu is a social enterprise that produces interior design products and accessories that are sold on the market like any other ordinary businesses. Presently, there are nine women employed as dressmakers, four to six freelance dressmakers, one designer, one production manager and one manager. On top of that, there are three affiliated volunteers.

The women are referred to Place de Bleu by public and private employment agencies or they learn about Place de Bleu through their personal network, such as friends and family. Place de Bleu selects women based on two criteria: that they are a migrant woman who has experienced difficulties gaining access to the Danish labour market and that they are motivated to be a part of Place de Bleu as a work place and an in-service-training programme.

The commercialisation aspect makes Place de Bleu innovative and sets it aside from other activation projects in Denmark where migrant women do needlework. Further, Place de Bleu has developed its own induction programme, where the women go from job trainee to employment with wage subsidies and in positions on flexible terms. Later, they are employed on ordinary terms but with a needed flexibility in the everyday. This is a programme that is adjusted to each of the women's individual situations e.g. their health or family situation.

In practice, Place de Bleu offers assistance to women faced with personal challenges or crises, while at the same time provides services to the labour market by up-skilling

the employees. This is made possible by organising the workplace in a flexible manner, which allows the women to work to their capabilities and gives them the possibility of taking the time they need to do the work. And if needed, they may take time off. The women are also offered assistance in their dealings with the authorities, whether that is the hospital or employment agencies.

Besides providing employment for the women, the evaluation of the initial project showed that both the managers and the women themselves perceived an increase in self-esteem. The women reported that they had changed and that their work made them proud.

The primary challenge for a social enterprise like Place de Bleu is to embrace both profit and non-profit aspects. This means that Place de Bleu has to navigate between making profit and providing social value, and between market conditions and public subsidy. This is an on-going challenge and is apparent in relation to the quality assurance process that is needed when operating in the market: quality assurance makes it necessary to place demands on the employed women in order to satisfy the consumer, while it also has to be acknowledged that some of the employees have difficulties making ends meet in relation to their economy and family life, and thus might not be as productive as other workers. In connection to this, it is uncertain whether it is possible to run a social enterprise like Place de Bleu solely on market terms. At the moment, Place de Bleu is not economically self-sufficient and is thus dependent on economic support. Financially, Place de Bleu relies on a mix of public funds, private funds, self-earnings, voluntary donations and corporate social responsibility. Besides direct economic support, Place de Bleu is also dependent on employment policies which make it possible to have trainees, wage subsidy work, and persons in work ability testing programmes.

For Place de Bleu, the way to embrace both profit and non-profit aspects is to produce products that can make a profit while employing people who might not have the same level of productivity as others. If this innovation is to be transferred to other national contexts it will be a challenge to find other products that can command a sufficiently high price.

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