Troubled Families
What do we know so far?

Conf. dr. Ioan Durnescu
Brussels, 13.11.2014
Troubled families

- Offender’s families
- Long term unemployment
- Anti-social behaviour
- Educational problems
The procedure so far:

- Systematic review – 93 papers identified for all themes
- European survey – 98 returns for Troubled Families
- Platform meeting 1 – peer review evaluation based on evaluation templates
  - 5 + 3 best practices selected for PL 2
What do we know so far?
1. Offender’s families

- Little research on the topic – how can they be assisted to get into employment?
- Family can play a constructive role but also ‘re-enact old and negative dynamics’
- Offending – negative impact on family – threats, harassment, stigmatisation etc. especially for sex-offenders – **multisystemic therapy** most effective
- **Systemic approach** – offenders and their environment – can lead to desistance and other intermediate outcomes.
- **Family approaches** more effective than individual based ones, but 5 conditions:
  - a dedicated worker, dedicated to a family,
  - practical ‘hands on’ support,
  - a persistent, assertive and challenging approach,
  - considering the family as a whole – gathering the intelligence,
  - common purpose and agreed action.’
What do we know so far?

1. Offender’s families

- Survey
  - Only 12 interventions reported
  - Employment not the primary target but spin off

What works

- Holistic approach – offender and the family – housing, employment, health etc.
- Coordination and non-fragmentation
- Tailor made intervention focused on the family
- Cooperation with other agencies
- Clear objectives and procedures
- Employment brokerage – direct partnership with employers
- Use of mentors
- Job support even after placement
- Social economy and self-employment – especially for women
What do we know so far?

1. Offender’s families

• Interviews
  – Family as a ‘social system’
  – Take the child’s best interest as a starting point
  – Involve also the imprisoned fathers
  – Emphasise the role of the employer – flexible to accommodate crisis’, prison visits, child care etc.
  – Avoid stigmatisation
  – Provide emotional support and coaching to deal with the trauma
  – Accessible for all members of the family and holistic
What do we know so far?
2. Long term unemployment

• Systematic review
  – Intergenerational unemployment – lack of evidence – ‘hunting Yeti and shooting zombies’
  – Understand the area – labour market intelligence, transportation
  – Person centered – mentors, coaches, work buddies etc.
  – Training work focused
  – Engage with employers
  – Join-up offers – multi-service
  – Large partnership – state, local authorities, NGOs and employers
  – Progressive approach – first get job ready!!
What do we know so far?

2. Long term unemployment

• Survey
  – 35 returns
  – Bottom up design – empowerment
  – Personalised services
  – Flexible delivery
  – Use of IT systems
What do we know so far?

2. Long term unemployment

• Interviews
  – well structured,
  – well design interventions,
  – value-driven approach whereby all project staff share the same mission and values,
  – mentoring and employer brokerage,
  – use of social enterprise,
  – combining labour skills and non-labour skills training with real work experience.

• Whole person approach

• Importance of soft outcomes – move closer

• Plans for the future
  – Improve evidence of success
  – State more present in co-producing interventions
What do we know so far?

3. Anti-social behaviour

• Systematic review
  – Family based interventions target behaviour and indirectly intermediate outcomes
  – Start with sport-based activities – compliment later with life skills, career counseling, training etc.
  – Strong and active engagement of all stakeholders seems to be essential.
  – The location of the project has to be familiar to the participants.
  – Evaluation has to be based on clear and concrete expected outcomes
What do we know so far?

3. Anti-social behaviour

- Survey
  - 21 interventions
  - bespoke, personalised, tailor-made, mobile working etc. – CONSTANT ADAPTATION
  - Strong support from the stakeholders
  - Ownership of the users
  - Large partnerships – comprehensive services
What do we know so far?
3 Anti-social behaviour

• Interviews
  – Individual offers that combine different sorts of interventions
  – Use of the group to create positive peer learning

Dreaming:
  - provide short term incentives – maintain motivation
  - allow small mistakes – ‘not a Monopoly game’
What do we know

4. Educational problems

- Systematic review
  - Female, older participants and those receiving financial help together with training - more likely to complete a certificate, be employed at exit and maintain employment for at least 90 days
  - individuals with psychiatric disabilities and other skill barriers - less likely to obtain positive outcomes.
  - Market-led and work-related learning opportunities
  - Reconciliation between accessing the labour market and opportunities for progression - access to continuous education to have access to ‘knowledge-based jobs’ - long term strategies not quick fixes!!!
  - Importance of labour market readiness
  - Involve the stakeholders
  - Client centered and not provider-focused
  - Importance of reaching out the ‘hard to reach’
  - Tackle the societal inequality - access to opportunities
What do we know
4. Educational problems

• Surveys
  – 30 returns
  – Education important for employability
  – Not only formal but also informal education – life skills but also employment skills
  – The role of family
  – Combination between top-down and bottom up initiatives
What do we know

4. Educational problems

• Interviews
  – Take the local context seriously – involve the local networks, employers etc.
  – Involve family
  – Reform schools to become more inclusive – prevent underachievement
  – Make education relevant for the labour market
  – Long term commitment (including funding!!) to achieve sustainable and long term educational goals.

Dreaming:

– Change the social or educational mind-set with a more entrepreneurial mind-set
Aims of this meeting

• Understand better the success factors
• Identify learning and innovation points
• Check transferability
• Explore the potential role of ESF
Thank you!!

idurnescu@gmail.com