In this issue, we proudly present 20 videos as visual sociology examples of innovative social services in health, education, welfare and across those sectors. These examples serve to foster the discussion about what is innovative in social services.

We want to overcome communication gaps between stakeholder groups.

For INNOSERV updates and project outputs visit www.inno-serv.eu.

INNOSERV project uses innovative communication tools

FP7 Project INNOSERV invites you to contribute to a discussion on research in “social service innovation” by elements of Visual sociology. The method has been selected in order to overcome language barriers and to encourage communication between practitioners, researchers and service users all over Europe. You can contribute by watching and commenting on videos online, or participating in one of our events.

We are now in the second half of the INNOSERV project. Here is what we have accomplished so far. We have:

- Diagnosed current trends and directions from literature research on social services in target sectors;
- Identified 167 innovative social services that have been developed within and across the boundaries of these sectors;
- Developed 20 case studies and videos on innovative practices;
- Designed the INNOSERV web platform for information and exchanges on innovative social services;
- Launched LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter accounts to facilitate broad participation and enable global dissemination;
- Started targeted dissemination involving academics, experts, researchers, service users, service providers, national and European policy makers.
Research practice on innovation in social services

Visualising social services and discussing innovation

Why visualisations?

The INNOSERV project seeks to identify potentials, characteristics, drivers, and agents of change for innovation in social services throughout Europe, and to discern new research questions to inform the future EU research agenda.

Out of a total of 167 innovative practice examples collected in 20 European countries, the INNOSERV Consortium partners selected 20 examples for visualisation, i.e. production of 5-6 minute videos on the drivers and actual content of innovation. These videos aim to stimulate broad public debate about innovation in social services among practitioners, researchers, service users, service providers and citizens across Europe.

These projects have been selected principally as examples of innovative ideas in social services, rather than as examples of best practice.

Visualisation enables for low cost sharing and exchange of practice-based approaches. This method is also used to trigger discussions at the practice level (e.g. with users and practitioners), and to ensure their involvement in scientific research.

‘Visualisations’ enable people to get good information on a low threshold.

One should always bear in mind that, what is or is not innovative, always depends on the specific perspective (researcher, policy-maker, user, social service provider etc.) and (national) context. The videos portray certain aspects of innovation in order to discuss if others view this as innovative as well.

Filming process

In September 2012, the INNOSERV Consortium members together with key stakeholders and in cooperation with a media agency, started the visualisation of the selected social services. The Hungarian Partner Budapest Institute (BI) took over the producer role in this process. BI connected all relevant partners, instructed stakeholder and film teams, set quality standards and managed the film-process from mid 2012 to March 2013.

Hamburg University of applied sciences took over the management role, including identification and selection of a media team, organising contracts and schedules, connecting INNOSERV work packages and taking care of the overall quality control.

The national partners worked together with the respective stakeholders in innovative social services to produce the visuals. They shared information, created story-boards and overall design. In addition, they created access to all important facts regarding target services. National partners organised a one to three-day shooting at each service location together with a media agency experienced in European policy. The media agency then spent many wo/men hours to illustrate these innovative ideas.

This was only possible as a result of an intense cooperation among all Consortium partners and stakeholders. These visualisations are rich illustrations of what is going on in ‘social’ services in the European Union. What is more, every visual example is a strong documentary. Viewers gain a clear idea of what is considered as innovation. Innovative practices and ideas can spread all over European welfare state systems.
Theoretically informed case studies

In addition to visual demonstrations of innovative social services in health, education, welfare and across those sectors, INNOSERV Consortium partners and innovative service providers produced theoretically informed case studies for each of the selected practices. These documents will be available on the INNOSERV web site in April. Case studies are informed by the theoretical research work completed in the literature review.

Each case study is 5 to 8 pages long and it includes a short explanation of the specific operating framework, the innovativeness, the replication potential and the added value.

Background: Innovation in social services

Social innovation and social services innovation are two central concepts in future political and research strategy in the EU (Horizon 2020). A key element in this (scientific) research approach is the ability to support comparative discussion, peer reviews, experimentation and research design across nation states.

One aim of the ‘new’ EU research strategy is to acquire knowledge, capture trends and shed light on challenges that are being discussed on social policy micro-level. In other words, to understand what service users, practitioners, relatives and families of service users think about social services in their local and national context.

Social services are a crucial instrument of every European welfare regime. Continuous innovation is an important feature of social services that correspond to real needs. A key question for future European social policy strategy is how social service can be better adjusted to user needs. Another one is how these needs can be met more efficiently and more effectively.

The background of research and discussion on social service on general interest (SSGI) influenced EU-policies (like the single market act) and ended in solid findings and consensus on the meaning and further development of social services in Europe. But beside the discourse on SSGI, there is a need in EU policies to ground these findings in some research on the micro level of service provision, like the viewpoint of users, practitioners and local contexts.

This approach that integrates micro level of service in a discourse on innovation and quality of SSGI, opens new challenges and issues in research methodology. It is to address these challenges that INNOSERV has visualised examples on innovation in social services, and it is now disseminating them to different audiences.

Your feedback is needed in April, May and June

Each INNOSERV Consortium partner will organise events, online and face to face discussions, workshops and webinars with groups of professionals, practitioners, experts and users to launch discussion on innovation in social services. These events will take place in April and May 2013.

We will present selected visual examples of innovative social services along with background information (theoretically informed case studies) in the national language.

The central concept of comparison of innovative practices, dissemination, feedback and stakeholder groups’ involvement will be drawn up from discussions with specific audiences in local, national and cross-national fields of work for different types of social service innovation.
At the same time, these discussions based on individual ‘cases’ and comparisons across cases (and contexts) will help us to move further from a national to a European level. The feedback received will be integrated into the emerging research agenda.

Your feedback will further serve to identify main impressions, emerging questions, suggestions and challenges. These qualitative reports will be part of a final comparative feedback report. As all other completed project deliverables, the summary report will be available to the public in late July 2013.

The main topics that we would like to discuss with you include:

1. Core innovative aspects, changes and potential impacts of the innovative service/practice;
2. Ways to improve and develop the innovative examples, alternative ways to meet the same needs and identify problematic aspects;
3. Transferability (and barriers to the implementation), adaptation and replication of the practice;
4. Key conditions for innovation in social services, future challenges in social service innovation.

Combining art and science for a unique perspective on social services and innovation

The INNOSERV Consortium sought assistance from a group of filmmakers to produce visual examples of innovative social services in health, education, welfare and across these sectors. In the period between June 2012 and March 2013, the filming crew spent some 40 days in the field, talking to service users, service providers, experts, officials and other relevant stakeholders. We bring to you their unique afterthoughts and reflections.

Please describe your INNOSERV experience in a few illustrative words

It was a huge, colourful, somewhat stressful adventure. And a wonderful excuse to meet a lot of very inspiring and kind people, to whom a 2 day visit and a 5 minute video don’t do justice. There are several projects we would love to return to!

Our INNOSERV-mission gave us access to all sorts of situations and worlds that we would never have discovered otherwise. So many fascinating insights into modes of working within organisations, into people’s homes, into village life…

What particular aspects of social service innovation were you made aware of during the filming process that you were not aware of before?

A lot of the projects we encountered were about giving service users more autonomy and freedom. This always happened in a supportive, enabling way - in a way that really did appear to benefit all parties. When new technologies were involved they were about facilitating a more important paradigm shift.

With the examples that were selected for INNOSERV any fears that we might have had at the beginning - that the innovations might (in the current economic and political
When ideas are adopted in a new context they are enriched.

Please share with us your takeaways regarding visual sociology.

For us, the INNOSERV videos were about visualising ideas that had been established by the researchers and practitioners. Because of the time constraints (we spent an average of two days discovering each project, and the final videos are about 5 minutes long) we were not always able to let the images speak for themselves, and had to rely on interviews to capture ideas we could not film. But the videos do provide a window into the projects through which you can see the real people, and that’s something a text can’t provide. More generally, though, we are a little bit wary of visual sociology in the sense that video can have a sort of air of neutrality or objectivity that is really deceptive!

Anything else you would want to add regarding the INNOSERV future?

We hope that the films will prompt questions and discussions. We are interested to see if and how they will draw a wider group into the debate. On a couple of occasions we experimented with asking service users to film themselves. For various reasons we didn’t get very far with this. Perhaps if there’s a follow-up project, you can by-pass people like us and give the camera to the service users themselves. We’re sure the results would be very rich.
INNOSERV project - next steps

Collection of stakeholder feedback
Throughout Europe, Consortium Partners will solicit feedback on 20 videos and case studies from existing networks, local and national stakeholders. INNOSERV will use facilitated group discussions, workshops, online discussions, focus groups and social media to gather and document feedback.

Pushing research further: international expert meetings on innovation in social services
High level expert meetings will be held in Budapest (8 May) and in Brussels (17 May) to assess the status quo and identify future challenges, trends and research gaps related to innovation in the social service sector. Experts and academic researchers will gather to link up empirical evidences with the theoretical discourse and identify future scenarios and new research problems related to social service planning, provision and evaluation. Participation in these workshops is by invitation only.

Draft Research Agenda
Taking suggestions from researchers, service users, providers, policy-makers and other stakeholders, the Consortium will draft a future research agenda and make decisions about the knowledge that will be needed in the near future.

Presenting and finalizing the research agenda
Researchers, stakeholders and umbrella organizations will take part in assessing validity and feasibility of the proposed research agenda. Based on their input, INNOSERV will compose final research agenda as suggestion to EC. Versions adopted to different audiences will be produced.

A living web based platform and new media
Our web site will continue to serve as a relevant place for information and discussion on innovation in social services. We will seek out to you through new media.

INNOSERV visual discussion material

New housing solutions and inter-generational support
Inter- and intra-generational cohabitation as an integrated solution to tackle social problems - Auser Abitare Solitàre, Italy

Mobile health services for hard to reach people
Mobile health offer for foreign women in prostitution, The Danish Centre against Human Trafficking, Denmark

Care for older people in a community setting
A nursing home and a meeting place for people across generations, cultures and persons with an untraditional combination of culture, local community and voluntary work – Ammerudhjemmet, Norway

User involvement for independent living and personal assistance
Accreditation of personal assistance provider training - CIL Serbia
Empowering parents
Coaching parents to prepare them for educating and caring for their children - Eltern AG, Germany

User driven service evaluation
Users evaluate the outcome quality of social services – Nueva, Austria

Patient led home based stroke rehabilitation - Early Supported Discharge after Stroke
Early stroke specialist multidisciplinary rehabilitation and support is provided in the community (patient’s home) - USH, United Kingdom.

Social enterprises for integration and development
Sewing room employing marginalized immigrant women - Place de bleu, Denmark

Living Independently:
Bringing people with disabilities into work
Framework for use of personal skills in dependent life - GPE Society Mainz, Germany

Community building through art-education
Art-education of underprivileged/Roma children + online web shop, Realpearl, Hungary

Empowering people to manage their finances
Financial Home Administration Programme - Humanitas, Netherlands

Integrated housing, social and health services for mental health rehabilitation
Housing solutions for people with mental health problems - Light Residential, Italy

Changing perceptions of people with mental illnesses
The dialogue citizen’s initiative consisting of persons with psychi/mental diseases, family members, relatives and professionals from the health system - Irre Menschlich, Germany

Community solutions to prevent public health problems
Community well-being initiative through acting - Sante Communitaires Seclin, France

Breaking the Poverty Cycle: Early Child Development and Parents’ Employment
Social support of disadvantage/Roma, supported employment – Katymar, Hungary

On-line patient self-management tool
Patient led digital health for long term health conditions - Somerset Pain management Service and Know Your Own Health, United Kingdom

Flexible child care for single parent families
Network for after school childcare for disadvantaged families - Mom’artre, France

Managing care services to support independence – changing focus for old age
Training of street level employees to take assignments to citizens - Vitality, Denmark

On line coaching empowers disabled people
An icon combined with a message to ask strangers for help, Blue Assist, Belgium

Unified approach to care: a certificate for entry level staff
The European Care Certificate (ECC) is an entry level award now available in 16 EU countries, EASPD, Europe
INNOSERV is a 7th Framework Programme project funded by the European Union dealing with innovation in the field of social services.

INNOSERV aims to establish a platform bringing together researchers, practitioners and policy-makers working on the planning and conduct of social services. Eleven research institutions from nine European countries are involved in the two-year project. Its funding amounts to just under EUR 1.5 million.

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