

Youth – Actor of Social Change

“Mamme in Comune”

This document is part of a larger collection of examples of current policies for young people in Europe. The collection is an outcome of a European research project called “UP2YOUTH – Youth: actor of social change?”

The basic idea of the “current practice” collection is to see how current practices and policies relate to young people as active agents in shaping their lives. Therefore, our intention is not a collection of “good” or “best” practices. Rather, it includes also practices, which are interesting because of their relation to young people’s agency but which involve problematic aspects, such as restricted financial resources, a very thin spread, or no clear evaluation criteria. We have applied a searching pattern which asked for “strengths” and “weaknesses”. This explicitly opens space for your own evaluation, because also policies are included, which definitely do have weaknesses, but are highly interesting for specific reasons. Therefore we have to stress that the researchers did not evaluate these practices themselves.

The whole collection can be found at <http://www.up2youth.org/content/view/192/60/>

Section	Indications of contents
Title of programme/ practice	“Mamme in Comune: Doppia presenza Doppia soddisfazione, tornare a lavorare meglio di prima” (“Mothers Together” as well as “Mothers in the City Council”: Double Burden, Double Satisfaction, Working better than before)
Location	Italy, North, Alessandria
Main theme	Young parenthood
Practice/Programme-related keywords	Work-life balance
Summary of programme/ practice	The Plan “Mothers Together” is a positive action aimed at finding temporal organizational models useful to young mothers, who re-enter the labour market after maternity leave. Experimental participation experiences, immediately practicable and innovative, are promoted. The projects has to be put in the framework of a broader life-work balance programme.
Target	Mothers; the city council itself.
Objectives of programme/ practice	Purposes of the plan “Mothers Together” are: 1) to help the Alessandria Municipality to optimize the parent’s management of the double responsibility of child care and working engagement; 2) to support the working mothers in managing the period of leave from the job and the re-entry in the company after the maternity leave in a more satisfactory way (both for them and the company). The model elaborated involves actions aimed at optimizing the management of human resources in pre- and post- maternity leave, so that working mothers can improve their work-life balance.

	It consists in a series of actions which want to improve: a) the flexibility of working hours; b) working "atmosphere"; c) organizational and individual well-being. On a general level, the project can be related to the development and management of human resources. Due to its contents and methodology, as well as to the means used, it can be easily reproduced in different local situations.
Content of programme/ practice	<p>The realized actions are synthesized in:</p> <p>a) Activation of a counselling aimed at coping with problems related to work-life balance (and to the working organization).</p> <p>b) Organization of focus groups aimed at locating mother's needs.</p> <p>c) Organization of learning strategies aimed at solving problems in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizational well-being in the job environment; - individual strategies used to manage the stress at work; - problem solving as a strategy for mental flexibility; - use of technology by women at work; - affirmative actions in relation to the law no. 125/1991 on Equal Opportunities; <p>d) Offer of a tutorial service for working mothers.</p>
Time scale	The Plan "Mothers in Together" is funded on a regional level (the Piemonte Region) within an European project. It has been realized by the City Council of Alessandria during around one year, from January 2006 to March 2007.
Programme/ practice design	1) Development of programme/practice: The Piemonte Region, EU and the City Council of Alessandria.
	2) Decision-making actors and process: The Piemonte Region and the City Council of Alessandria.
	3) Management and leadership of programme: City Council of Alessandria.
	4) Implementation: The Piemonte Region
Resources involved	This plan consolidates and develops the results obtained in a previous plan called "Job on Measure", already realized by the City Council of Alessandria from September 2003 to October 2004 within an European project.
Evaluation	<p>Results / impact of programme:</p> <p>The plan introduced new practices of flexibility open to the companies requirements as well as to the needs of working mothers. The goal is to improve the quality of personal and professional life with a greater balance between working life schedules and familiar life times.</p>
	Assessment of programme/ action/ practice in terms of sustainability: Depending from EU funding, its sustainability is week.

Lessons to be drawn from programme or practice implemented	A weakness is that it includes only mothers (and not also fathers) in the discussion about work-life balance. It can be valued as a good practice because it aims at developing and optimizing the management of human resources in the pre- and post- maternity leave period.
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