



# GOOD PRACTICE INVENTORY

Exploiting Potentials of Social Enterprises through Standardized European Evaluation and Development System

**SOCIAL SEEDS**  
Interreg Europe



SME  
competitiveness



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

## I. GOOD PRACTICE COLLECTION

### 1. Name of the good practice (100 characters)

Baby Office



### 2. Overview (2000 characters)

Baby Office is a project of social entrepreneurship that helps parents combine work with a childcare. The initial intention was to create a social space for parents with small children. It was to allow parents work while their children could spend time playing or discovering the world. The main idea was creating a community which would support its members in launching their own business or help them with return to work process after maternity leave. Winning Rozjezdy pro Prahu 2012 (start-ups competition) was a huge kick and confirmation that the concept was right. However, half a year later it showed up that it was not as successful as it originally looked like. The premises were ready, with coworking mini-kindergarten, conference room, cafe and massage room. Nonetheless, the interest of potential customers was close to none. After 3 months the starting sum of money was almost gone while only about a tenth of planned number of customers was a tough reality. At that time the company received 130 000 € support from EU funds but it showed up to be a incredible bureaucratic burden taking away valuable resources. The company operation had to be split into two separate part – donated and commercial. The café had to be closed down.

Soon after it became apparent that the concept is no longer sustainable. The enterprise had to move closer to the city centre. However, the coworking concept was just enough to cover expenses and did not provide any additional income to grow. During that time the most important decision was taken – to promote and run mobile childcare facility. It was initially a margin activity but it became the carrying and most profitable activity. The most important places where we made most of the these mobile childcare facilities were conferences, cultural, sport and educational events, especially for women. The mobile childcare facility is used when the presence of parents with children is expected.

Currently the enterprise has three main areas of activity – mini-kindergarten, education and mobile childcare facilities. They are provided for reasonable price in order to maximize their utilization. The price covers the expensed and generates small profit. The service is appreciated by event visitors with children. They can leave children in the facility and enjoy the event without worrying about the children. There is always interesting programme for the children somehow linked to the event subject (eg. during a job fair children played several games resembling professions in real life). Nonetheless, the upkeeping of mobile childcare facilities is not an easy task. Event organizers usually do not have finances to pay for the facility so sponsors or other patrons are involved.

### 3. Abstract (500 characters)

Baby Office is multi-line business which consists of several main activities. Coworking centre with mini-kindergarten is used by independent parents who can leave children in the kindergarten where they are cared for while the parents can work or run their business. Mobile childcare facilities are the next most important activity. They are mobile facilities where parents can place their children during conferences, cultural, sport and educational events. Parents can enjoy the event while the children are safely cared of, playing games and under professional supervision.

### 4. Coherence with the Dimension of the Social Enterprise Inventory

- ☐ *Social innovation (including services)*
- ☒ *Social impact and measurement opportunities*
- ☒ *Cooperation atmosphere (PPPs)*
- ☐ *Regulatory frameworks and bottom-up grassroots*
- ☐ *Social entrepreneurship skills and competencies*
- ☐ *Access to finance (including external funding)*
- ☐ *Access to market (including the internationalization approach)*
- ☐ *New(ly) established social enterprise model*
- ☐ *Other (specify):* \_\_\_\_\_

*You can tick more than one dimension, but emphasize which one is the most significant!*

### 5. Policy Instrument connected with the good practice

### 6. Location

Praha, Central Bohemia. It has national scope of operation.

### 7. Start date (tentative)

Started in 2013

### 8. Total revenue / income created / personnel employed by the good practice (EUR)

Total turnover: 1,2 mil. CZK (approx. 44 000 €), generating almost no profit. It employs 3 permanent employees disadvantaged on labour market (parents with small children)

### 9. Challenges

Baby Office faces several challenges – the lack of funds is stated as one of the most severe. But also lack of managerial skills and human resources is mentioned.

## 10. Would this programme work well in another European context?

Such a concept could partly work in other environment. However, it builds on the very common phenomenon in the Czech republic which is the fact that parents stay at home with their children for several years which is not common in all EU countries. But the core idea could be modified to work elsewhere.

## 11. Activities (2000 characters)

Coworking space for parents with no option to leave children somewhere else (kindergarten). Mobile childcare facilities used at conferences, cultural, sport and educational events for parents who visit the event with children but would like to leave them under the supervision of professionals and enjoy the event content.

## 12. Achievements so far

Complete change of target group over the past 3 years to cope with different entrepreneurship climate that initially expected.  
Coming over initial financial losses and reaching slight profitability.  
Finding a sustainable funding model  
Keeping first stable company customers

## 13. Strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and lessons learned

Strengths – ability to solve problems, understanding the same social group (entrepreneurs are parents with small children as well as their clients) who struggle to find for balance between work, family life and entertainment, endurance of founders to keep the business running  
Weaknesses – lack of managerial skills, lack of funding for further development  
Lessons learnt – Investment into proper settings of processes and tools always pays off. Regular control and revision of achieved results. In case the result is unsatisfactory it is crucial to alter the direction before it is too late. Human resources management is also a factor.

## 14. Tips for success

It is always very important to think twice if the SE founder has enough energy to build an enterprise which will take years to settle down and prosper with little perspective of personal financial rewards. The initial enthusiasm must be very long-lasting for at least several years. However, it is almost impossible to avoid mistakes, losses and steps that look pointless in the retrospective point of view.

## 15. Dissemination and sustainability

The project is run solely from income generated by its activities. Currently it does not take advantage of any public funds and seems sustainable in the long term.



**16. Source** – URL or Facebook

<http://www.babyoffice.cz/>

**17. Contact person and details**

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