



## Exemplary Project

SUSTAINABLE WORKING LIFE - SWEDEN  
April 2018



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Author: Milieu Ltd

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# Sweden - Sustainable Working Life

General information	
OP information	<p>Title OP: National ESF programme for investments in growth and employment 2014-2020.</p> <p>Priority axis: Competency Provision</p> <p>Investment priority: 10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competence</p> <p>Specific objective: Strengthening the position of women and men in active employment, but also of persons far away from the labour market, and to meet the labour market's needs for work force and skills through development of competency based on business requirements and the needs of the labour market.</p>
Timeline	<p>Start date: 01/02/2016</p> <p>End date: 31/07/2018</p>
Budget	<p>Total budget: 6 523 787 SEK<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Co-financing rate: 75%</p> <p>EU Fund: ESF</p>
Beneficiary/ies	<p>Main beneficiary: <i>Specify who is the main beneficiary (the one running the project) as well as a list of other organisations involved in the project. Please don't only write the name of the organisation but also the type (NGO, university, public sector, private company etc.).</i></p> <p>Other organisations:</p>
Category of intervention:	<p>117 - <i>Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</i></p>
Contact details	<p>Name: Filippa Önblad</p> <p>Organisation: Municipality of Sundsvall</p> <p>Role in project: Project manager</p> <p>Email address: Filippa.onblad@sundsvall.se</p>
Project website	<p><a href="http://sundsvall.se/halsoprojektet-hallbart-arbetsliv/">http://sundsvall.se/halsoprojektet-hallbart-arbetsliv/</a></p>
Thematic block covered	<p>T6.1 Health workforce (including i.e. training, lifelong learning, workforce planning, retention)</p> <p>T5.2 Workplace health and safety</p>

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to 682.940 Euro, ECB, 30.12.2017

## Project summary

The project Sustainable working life focuses on promoting health and prevent illness through training and includes both preventive, promotional and rehabilitative activities and actions. The aim is to contribute to health equity and to develop a sustainable organization that is able to meet current needs and requirements of Sundsvall Municipality in the field of safety, health and gender equality. With a health promotion perspective through skills development, the project intends to increase awareness about the relationship between work and health and focus on measures which maintains and promotes health, and in learning environments try methods that increase readiness and skills for a more sustainable working life. Education of 'health, work environment and equality coaches' plays a central part of the project that aims to be established as a permanent resource in the municipality.

The project is targeting the municipal sector in the municipality of Sundsvall and focusses on three key areas, namely:

- Education for managers in health promoting organisations and health management
- Cutting edge education for staff employed in the areas of health, working environment and gender equality.
- Certification of health promoting organisations (Pilot project Residential house Tomtegränd).

The aim is to create long-term change to achieve lower sickness rates in the whole municipality of Sundsvall. The tools and methods developed are expected to be implemented and used across the whole municipal sector and which will be part of future management programmes. One of the expected effects is a system for the entire municipality to define where ill health arises and the reasons to why it occurs in order to prioritize and provide the right support where necessary.

## Development and Implementation

<p>Initiator/trigger</p>	<p>The project has been developed to address high levels of sick leave in the municipality (described in reports by the National Employment Agency and the National Insurance Agency) as well as to meet the challenges of the ongoing structural change of the society. These changes relates to demographic changes but also to technology innovation to which the municipalities have to adapt by introducing new ways of thinking and working.</p> <p>The project has been developed from a parallel project implemented in the municipality; SAMKLANG, which is focussing on meeting the challenge of increasing sick leave through rehabilitation. Sustainable working life was developed as a separate project which instead uses health promotion and prevention to reduce sick leave. Inspiration to the project also came from a similar project in the municipality of Gävle (mid-Sweden) where the concept of Health, Work Environment and equality coaches was developed and introduced as a permanent unit in the municipality.</p> <p>The project is also coherent with the regional policy objectives and is in line with the municipality's action plan for working environment, health and gender equality.</p>
<p>Project objective</p>	<p>The global project objective is defined as <i>"Better health and a sustainable working life for employees in the municipality of Sundsvall"</i>.</p>

	<p>The specific project objective is that <i>“health promoting approaches and working methods are absorbed and integrated in the regular work and routines in the municipality of Sundsvall”</i>.</p> <p>Sub-objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– New knowledge and competencies as well as perspectives in health promotion;</li> <li>– Integration of health promoting tools and methods on organisational level;</li> <li>– Definition of health promoting work, leadership and citizenship in the municipality of Sundsvall.</li> <li>– Development of strategic platform/organisation for continued process of coaches for working environment, health and gender equality.</li> </ul> <p>The project has three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Education for managers in health promoting organisations and health management</li> <li>– Cutting edge education for staff employed in the areas of health, working environment and gender equality.</li> <li>– Certification of health promoting organisations (Pilot project Residential house Tomtegränd).</li> </ul>
<p>Target group(s)</p>	<p>Target group 1: Managers in the municipal organisation (around 120 persons)</p> <p>Target group 2: Coaches for work environment, health and gender equality (17 persons)</p> <p>Target group 3: Staff of the residential home Tomtegränd (around 30 persons).</p> <p>The target groups have been involved in defining preconditions, possibilities and needs and how measures and educational activities could be best designed to meet the real needs. The aim is to create relevant and meaningful working methods that the target group feel ownership over.</p>
<p>Project health-related indicators</p>	<p>The project is not using indicators in the monitoring of project results and there are no specific health-related indicators used. Rather, the achievement of goals will be based on qualitative assessments. Surveys will be used for assessing the increased knowledge among managers at the end of the project (based on self-assessments). The expected long-term impact regarding reduced sick leave in the municipal organisations are effects that are not possible to measure within the life of the project.</p>
<p><b>Results</b></p>	
<p>Expected/attained results, outcomes and potential impacts</p>	<p>At organisational level the expected effects is an organisation with lower rates of sick leave and a redistribution of resources from rehabilitation to health promotion and prevention. One of the expected effects is a system for the entire municipality where ill health arises, why it occurs in order to prioritize and provide the right</p>

	<p>support where necessary. At individual level the expected impact is an improved perceived health and fewer sick leave days among employees.</p> <p>More specifically expected effects of the result includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the increased competency and the methods and tools developed will be considered and integrated in the decision making process, e.g. in re-structuring and budgeting of organisations where for example the number of employees per managers, possibilities for participation and involvement and employees' possibilities to influence their working environment are factors to consider.</li> <li>- a new approaches to and a common definition of "health" with all its dimensions;</li> <li>- that gender issues and health promoting approaches are included in the regular routines and structure of the organisation.</li> <li>- results from educational workshops are integrated into existing management courses and leadership programmes and that these new perspectives are taken up in management plans, strategies, checklists, recruitment processes etc.</li> <li>- integration of good practices from pilot studies into the organisations to promote better health and a longer working life in the municipality</li> </ul> <p>The expected long term impact of the project is that the new tools and methods developed by the project should be implemented and lead to a long -term change to lower sickness rates in the whole municipality of Sundsvall.</p>
<p>Success factors &amp; Challenges</p>	<p>With one year left of project implementation, a few success factors can be identified.</p> <p>Firstly, the high quality and relevance of the tools and methods developed in the project are highlighted as a factor of success. The tools presented and introduced to the managers during the workshops have been highly appreciated by the project's target group. Also the process itself in which the tools have been presented and introduced in interactive workshops, where managers got the chance to experience and try the tools and methods already at the workshop. This have proven to be a fruitful approach that facilitated that many of the tools have already been immediately implemented into the organisational structures.</p> <p>Another success factor that can be highlighted is the exchange of experiences across the municipal sector (including, health care, care, education, culture, sports, etc) which has been very relevant and appreciated by the target groups. Also, the participation of the work environment, health and gender equality coaches ensures the sustainability of the process.</p> <p>The main challenges facing the project have been to ensure participation among the managers (target group 1) and to convince them to dedicate a full working day. The participation in the workshops has been showing a</p>

	<p>negative trend. The project team has therefore promoted the project more extensively and has tried to raise the profile and attractiveness of the workshop by inviting better speakers as well as planning for an attractive headline speaker by the end of the agenda (which the municipality has decided to finance, outside the project budget). According to the project managers, to better schedule the workshops, by avoiding collisions with other events and meetings for the managers, could have helped to ensure participation. The dates for the workshops were already set in the application phase and to have scheduled the workshop at a later stage could have facilitated.</p>
Potential for replication	<p>The project would have potential for replication as the challenges facing the municipality of Sundsvall are challenges that are relevant for Sweden in general as well as in many other EU member states. It is necessary to tackle the increasingly high levels of sick leave throughout Europe and to approach the problem in new and structural ways by using tailored tools and methodologies.</p> <p>The project has a transnational cooperation with the Netherlands.</p>
<b>Wider context</b>	
Relevance of the project to the objective of the relevant thematic block	<p>The project is relevant to thematic block <i>T6 Health workforce (including i.e. training, lifelong learning, workforce planning, retention)</i> as it focusses on competency development of staff in the municipal sector, out of which health care workers are a majority. The project is supporting measures for good working conditions and health promotion to retain retention people in the profession. Moreover, one of the project's main objective is to improve health among the workforce through health promotion, which is the focus of thematic block <i>T5.2 Workplace health and safety</i></p>
Relevance of the project objective to the specific objective of the OP	<p>Through competency development the project's strives towards maintaining good health among employees sector and to respond to some of the challenges facing the municipal sector; high level of sick leave among employees. By providing new tools and methods, the project aims to ensure a long, healthy working life for the workforce. This is contributing to achieving the specific objective of “Strengthening the position of women and men in active employment, but also of persons far away from the labour market, and to meet the labour market's needs for work force and skills through development of competency based on business requirements and the needs of the labour market”.</p>
Relevance of the project towards reducing health inequalities	<p>Persons employed in the healthcare sector is one of the groups that are showing increasing numbers of work related illnesses, according to recent report from the Swedish Employment Office and the National Insurance Agency. A third of the cases are related to illness caused by organisational or social factors at work (e.g. from stress or physical labour). Moreover, a study from the National Insurance Agency shows that persons working in healthcare and, educational sector faces increasing risk of sickness, professions that are dominated by women.</p> <p>The project is addressing both these areas; health promotion at work in the municipal sector where healthcare and education constitutes the main sector as well as the gender issue in this context.</p>

	<p>The project is highlighting that through structural changes, better health can be achieved in the work environment. The project is showcasing that there are many small measures, without additional investments or expenses, that can make a difference and lead to improved health, such as better communication among employees and managers, positive thinking and by appreciating the individual responsibility for work environment of colleagues.</p>
<p>Relevance of the project towards the reform of health systems</p>	<p>The project is tackling the municipal sector in Sundsvall and addresses health promotion and prevention of sickness in which context it aims to implement a long-term sustainable change in terms of working environment, health and gender equality. The project's main relevance is rather towards promoting health in the municipal organisation rather than the health system itself.</p> <p>The relevance of the project is dependent on how well the new working methods developed within the project and how successful their uptake is in the organisation and beyond.</p>
<p>Relevance of the project objective to the national context and policy goals</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Relevance of the project objective to health policy goals at EU level</p>	<p>The project supports good working conditions and health promotion - both aspects are priority areas of investment according to the EU health policy, as expressed for example in the EU's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Strategic Framework 2014-2020.</p>