



**Cities for Active Inclusion**

## **Social Economy in Cities: Cracow**

**EUROCITIES NETWORK  
OF LOCAL AUTHORITY  
OBSERVATORIES ON  
ACTIVE INCLUSION**

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### **EUROCITIES-NLAO**

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The EUROCIITIES Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (EUROCITIES-NLAO) is a dynamic network of ten European cities - Barcelona, Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Cracow, Lille Métropole - Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm - each with a Local Authority Observatory (LAO) within its administration. Their aim is to share information, promote mutual learning and carry out research on the implementation of the active inclusion strategies at the local level.

The ten observatories are coordinated by EUROCIITIES, the network of major cities in Europe, and supported through Inclusive Cities for Europe, a partnership between the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and EUROCIITIES.

EUROCITIES-NLAO website: [www.eurocities-nlao.eu](http://www.eurocities-nlao.eu)

# 1. Introduction: social inclusion policy at city level

## 1.1 City context

Cracow is the second largest Polish city after Warsaw in terms of population. At the end of 2008 the city had 754,624 inhabitants, accounting for 1.99% of Poland's total population, and 23% of the population of the Malopolska region of which Cracow is the capital.

As the proportion of those too young or too old to work in Cracow is increasing, the economic burden for those who are economically active is growing. By 2008, 51.1% of Cracow's population were of non-productive age and the share of people aged 65 and over had grown to 18.5% (see Annex 1).

However, unemployment in Cracow is lower than the national average. In July 2010, Poland's national unemployment level was 11.4%, with 1,812,800 people out of work, while in Malopolska, 9.5% were out of work, and in Cracow, the figure was 4.6%: a total of 17,600 people. More than half of those unemployed are women: 55.7%.

There are a variety of reasons why people in Cracow need help from social services, including unemployment, homelessness, protection of motherhood, disability, long-term or serious illness, single-parent family, large family, alcoholism, drug abuse, difficulties as a result of leaving care (children's homes and foster homes), and domestic violence. As a result, the following main groups are at risk from social exclusion in Cracow:

- unemployed people (short-term and long-term);
- sick and disabled people, and those with poor mental health;
- large families;
- single-parent families;
- children and young people from difficult environments;
- homeless people;
- People with addictions (drugs or alcohol);
- older people;
- people on low incomes;
- ethnic-minority Romani people.

Social services in Cracow are organised by the City Social Welfare Centre (Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej (MOPS) [3]). The total amount of assistance provided in 2008 was valued at approximately €14,000,000 (56,000,000 PLN). Social services support is directed at groups at risk from social exclusion, and in 2008, 5% of Cracow inhabitants benefited from social services. The City Social Welfare Centre provided help to 20,986 families (42,157 people in all), including 5,578 families with children, 3,077 single-parent families, and 7,071 households made up of senior citizens and pensioners. In order to provide help (both cash and non-cash), 51,625 interviews were conducted, and 153,054 administrative decisions were made.

## 1.2 Organisation of social inclusion policies in Cracow

The April 2005 Cracow development strategy [2] is a continuation of the previous strategy passed in October 1999, but also takes into consideration new regional development factors resulting from Poland's accession to the European Union. The strategy stresses the importance of cooperating with social economy organisations and of

building partnerships with them in order to achieve the city's development goals.

One of the city's strategic goals is for Cracow to be a family-friendly city, and an attractive place to live long-term. Associated with this goal are various social policy priorities together with relevant social programmes to be provided by the Cracow City Council and by social enterprise. These programmes are designed to help achieve various operational goals, such as creating the right conditions for people and groups at risk of exclusion to participate in community development.

The following table shows a sample of current social inclusion projects in Cracow, together with the organisations responsible for their implementation:

Action plan for disabled people: 2007-2010	Cracow Department of Social Services
Strategy for solving Cracow's social problems: 2007-2013	City Social Welfare Centre
Programme of local activity in Cracow: 2007-2013	City Social Welfare Centre
Programme for the integration of services for disabled people in Cracow: 2008-2010	City Social Welfare Centre
Programme for adjustments to the Cracow transport system to meet the needs of disabled people	Cracow Department of Social Services
Annual programme of cooperation between the autonomous Cracow government and the social economy (non-governmental organisations and other entities providing social services)	Three Cracow City Council Departments: The Department of Sport and Social Initiatives; Health Care Office; City Social Welfare Centre.

To help improve the labour market, a programme for 2006-2013 has been put in place by Cracow's Municipal Jobcentre to help develop the social economy, prevent unemployment and increase professional skill levels. This programme involves various specific activities, as defined in the April 2004 Act on improving employment and labour market institutions, and in the March 2004 Act on social assistance. But it also includes innovative activities aimed at helping those with particular difficulties in finding work. For example, it includes the creation of 18 fast-access points to employment services, as well as a variety of social economy initiatives.

### 1.3 Main policy priorities for social inclusion

Social inclusion policy in Poland is based mainly on the Social Welfare Act. This regulates the social inclusion activities of the autonomous and regional administration bodies, their rules and procedures, and how social services should be organised and controlled. In line with the Act, local government organisations can work in partnership with social enterprise, non-governmental and church organisations, as well as with legal individuals and legal experts. In addition, the government Act on public benefit activity and volunteering (2003) is also very important for promoting the activities of the social economy in Poland. This defines how local government and non-governmental organisations can work in partnership to provide support for the socially excluded.

Policy priorities for social inclusion in Cracow are also set out in Strategy for Solving

Cracow's Social Problems (2007-2013). These priorities include:

**Further action to reduce the causes of social exclusion:**

- Support for individual and community initiatives to increase employment and ensure full social participation for people with disabilities;
- Support for older people to ensure full social participation, appropriate to their health and abilities;
- Development of conditions and programmes to prevent homelessness;
- Increased accessibility to early intervention and prevention services for those suffering from excessive drinking, and alcohol and psychoactive drug addiction;
- Increased support for unemployed people;
- Initiatives and early intervention programmes for ex-offenders to reduce the social and employment effects of prison and poor mental health;
- Support for people in critical situations who feel unable to cope, to enable them to continue to fulfil their social and working-life roles.

**Action to reintegrate socially excluded people, families and social groups:**

- Support for disabled people to reduce their dependence on institutions and increase their social inclusion and employability;
- Assistance for homeless people to help them into regular accommodation.

Cracow's City Social Welfare Centre also provides free meals, in line with the government's programme of state assistance.

The main goal of social services in Cracow is to help people overcome difficult life situations. This includes helping people and families become independent of social services, and to be socially included. The Romani people are a social group especially at risk from social exclusion in Cracow. Social programmes to help the Romani people integrate into the community are organised by Cracow City Council's Social Benefits Department. These programmes include the pre-school education of Romani children, and the associated co-financing of textbooks and school equipment, as part of the Closer Together Programme; preventative health examinations for Romani children by a Romani nurse; and a Santa Claus event for Romani children.

### **1.3 The importance of the social economy in achieving social inclusion**

The strategy of social inclusion is important for Cracow, especially given the extent of poverty in the city and in the whole country. According to the data of the General Statistical Office as many as 17% of the population in Poland are at risk from poverty. Poverty affects many different social groups as well as people from different educational backgrounds. For example, those at risk of unemployment include not only unskilled workers and manual labourers (there are 12% of workers in the group) but also many people with a university education are now facing the problem of poverty - almost 10% are unemployed. The number of working poor has also been growing: there are some 2,000,000 working poor in Poland, representing 6.6% of all adults. The unemployed and their families are also at risk from poverty: in 2009 around 19% of people lived in households with at least one person living below the statutory poverty threshold. Social economy organisations in Cracow offer a real chance for active inclusion of those at risk from poverty and exclusion.

## 2. Organisation and trends in social economy

### 2.1 The potential

The Malopolska region has a large potential in terms of providing social services via the social economy, both through traditional and new forms of social enterprise organisations. Since 2004, conferences on the social economy have been organised in Cracow and the Social Economy Development Academy has been established as part of the Regional Centre for Social Policy in Cracow.

In 2008, the Malopolska Pact for Social Economy was established by representatives of interested organisations, in order to support the development and running of social economy entities, and to promote the concept of the social economy. This is the first such Pact in Poland. This inter-sector initiative creates an innovative public-social-private partnership, and is the result of cooperation between the various sectors.

Altogether, the Pact involves 24 organisations and experts. Participants in the Pact include representatives of the territorial autonomous government and its departments, both at the local and regional level; central government; academic institutions; private entrepreneurs; non-governmental organisations; foundations; voluntary associations; cooperatives; employers' associations; church organisations; and the media.

Various social economy initiatives have been taken in Cracow (and in the wider Malopolska region) thanks to co-finance from EU funds as part of the European Social Fund and its support for the social economy. These initiatives have helped to promote the social economy and to establish social enterprise companies in Cracow.

In addition, the innovative Malopolska Fund for Social Economy has been established as a foundation by a group of partners in the Department of Public Economics and Administration at Cracow University of Economics. The university's research into a viable social economy model for Poland has highlighted a key problem for social enterprise organisations: the difficulty in obtaining the necessary finance for activities and equipment. The new Fund aims to provide access to capital for social enterprise organisations by guaranteeing their loans. Given that funds are still limited, a good practice replicable formula will help to ensure the quality and viability of supported organisations and their services.

### 2.2 Value added

The most significant added values that Cracow can achieve through promoting active inclusion via the social economy are firstly, increased information, improved practices and innovative approaches to providing social services for people at risk of social exclusion; and secondly, a reduction in stereotyping of people who are sick, have mental or physical disabilities, or who are older. For example, social enterprises employing people with mental health issues not only help to integrate the group back into society, they also contribute to raising awareness of the unacceptability of stereotypical responses and prejudices, and the negative effects these can have on socially excluded people. People with mental health problems are often wrongly perceived as unable to work; and people who are in poverty are often wrongly perceived as being less intelligent. By employing socially excluded people, social enterprises can help dispel these stereotyped myths.

Social enterprise companies can also, through their own work, contribute to the development of the whole local community. In addition, social enterprises often introduce new ways for all types of social service providers to work together, exchange information and share good practice. For example, many social enterprise organisations make active use of the internet to exchange of information and good practice, including the following:

[www.wortales.rops.krakow.pl/partnerzy](http://www.wortales.rops.krakow.pl/partnerzy)

[www.ares.rops.krakow.pl](http://www.ares.rops.krakow.pl)

[www.politykaspoleczna.obserwatorium.malopolska.pl/pl](http://www.politykaspoleczna.obserwatorium.malopolska.pl/pl)

### **2.3 New trends in Cracow**

For Cracow, projects implemented through the European Social Fund and the Human Capital Operational Programme are the most effective in increasing the social services provided by social economy organisations.

In June 2010, Cracow's cooperative movement (which includes some 340 cooperatives) began work on a new project: the Social Economy Infrastructure in Malopolska [4]. They are working in partnership with the Foundation of Public Economy and Administration and also the Malopolska School of Public Administration at Cracow University of Economics. Co-financed by the European Social Fund, the main goal is to strengthen and develop the social economy sector by providing a professional support infrastructure, a friendly environment, and, perhaps most importantly, raising awareness of the social economy across the Malopolska region.

The project is aimed at the Malopolska region's citizens and social economy organisations. These include social cooperatives, work cooperatives, cooperatives run by people with disabilities including sight impairment and legal cooperatives, as well as non-governmental organisations providing private services or chargeable statutory social services. In addition, the project will also support employment institutions and social services institutions. Support will be in the form of training sessions and individual and group counselling for people interested in establishing a social enterprise.

For entrepreneurs already working in the third sector or the cooperative sector, counselling and training sessions will be given by the Social Entrepreneurship Academy and the Cooperative Management Academy.

As part of the project, support will also be given for the development of social economy partnerships. Local seminars will be held to popularise the idea of the social economy and to promote the benefits of partnerships between social economy organisations, labour market institutions and social services institutions. Printed information on intersector cooperation will also be published; and an online newsletter will be created to highlight the social services being delivered by the social economy in Malopolska.

Social economy solutions are on the increase in Cracow: however the rise is only gradual. Social enterprises need further support because so far, many of these organisations in Cracow have unfortunately been unsustainable. It is only recently, in 2010, that legislation has been revised to allow social enterprises to be promoted and supported, to

meet contemporary social needs. It is to be hoped that policies at state level and local level will improve the ability of the social economy to provide active inclusion services.

## **2.4 Monitoring quality**

The quality of the social services delivered by the social economy is controlled as part of the monitoring of specific community programmes. Every programme includes indicators that measure effectiveness in achieving planned goals. Additionally, quality controls for individual projects are included in Cracow City Council's annual programme of cooperation with non-governmental organisations. In 2009, 40 quality control checks were carried out on partnership projects. Each project was assessed in two ways: analysis of grant application documents, and analysis of the likely impact of the project in meeting social needs; and the majority were passed without reservation. Important factors in the success of the programme of cooperation are the number of NGOs willing to provide social services in the local society (using public funds), and the number of volunteers involved in these activities. Project evaluation is not easy because of the diversity concerning, for example, the different groups, scale of activities, or extent.

## **3. Main challenges in supporting the development of the social economy**

### **3.1 The main challenges**

As described earlier, one of the main challenges for the social economy is funding: financial support by Cracow City Council for social economy organisations is optional, not obligatory. Cutbacks in expenditure, due to the European economic slowdown, have led Cracow City Council to reassess its social policy priorities and redefine the areas for support. Priority is being given to those activities that are most effective and also most cost-effective, which leaves many organisations without funding.

Social enterprises in Cracow are usually relatively new, with little or no experience of the formalities of obtaining of public funds and the associated reporting requirements. The result is that applying for grants and contracts is often a major problem for them: too complex and very difficult to understand. Over 80% of social economy entities do not qualify for access to the commercial finance needed to develop and achieve their social goals. These organisations rarely take out loans, due to their low income and their lack of property ownership to serve as a guarantee. As a result, social economy organisations become dependent on public funds and donations, which may be insufficient. This can lead to reductions in service quality, which can give the whole social economy sector a negative image and lead to a loss of trust.

In addition, competition between social enterprises does not necessarily achieve the best results. Although competing for funds (public or commercial) can be useful in awarding finance to the most interesting and innovative organisations, competing for social services contracts can lead to the selection of lower quality services and less innovative solutions: contracts are often awarded to the lowest priced tender, which often provide more basic or more limited services.

### **3.2 Possible solutions to these challenges**

One of the most obvious ways for Cracow to overcome these challenges and support the growth of the social economy is to provide training for organisations planning to work in the social economy arena. Training that focuses on the best way to obtain funding will be especially useful.

Raising general awareness of the activities, services and results delivered by Cracow's social economy is also vital, in particular the specific achievements of individual social enterprise companies.

In addition, since over 80% of social economy organisations have problems with obtaining funds and equipment, it might be useful to create an 'incubation' centre for new local social enterprises with limited resources. The main goal would be to help organisations build a strong and sustainable future, with a viable administrative and services structure: this could help social enterprises to survive beyond the life of a single project. Currently, many of these organisations only operate for the duration of a project and then disappear.

## 4. Good practice examples

The following social inclusion projects have been successfully implemented in Cracow:

### 4.1 “U Pana Cogito” hotel

Cracow’s U Pana Cogito hotel is a good example of a social enterprise company that is working to increase social inclusion and rehabilitation in the city. The hotel provides jobs for people who are recovering from mental health problems, and adjusts the work and conditions to the capabilities of each employee. This helps them overcome their illness, and enables them to function both in the labour market and socially. 21 people are employed in the hotel. In addition, about 12 people have been on training courses organised as part of the Equal Cracow Initiative for Social Economy (COGITO) programme. The hotel has space for 34 visitors and during the high season it has a 90% occupancy. Annually, some 2,500 people use the hotel and its catering services.

[www.pcogito.pl/eng/index.htm](http://www.pcogito.pl/eng/index.htm)

### 4.2 “INES” project - Malopolska Social Economy Infrastructure

Związek Lustracyjny Spółdzielni Pracy, in the partnership with Public Administration and Economy Foundation and Malopolska School of Public Administration of Cracow University of Economics, commenced in June 2010 implementation of the INES project (“Malopolska Social Economy Infrastructure”)

This project is co- financed by the EU - funds within the framework of the European Social Fund (ESF) and executed within 7.2.2 Sub - measure Support to Social Economy of the Operational Programme - Human Capital.

The main objective of the project is to reinforce, to develop social economy sector by means of creation and existence of a professional support infrastructure, shaping a friendly environment of social economy entities as well stimulating of of social awareness in this respect.

The project is addressed to Malopolska inhabitants and its social economy entities, including social cooperatives, labour cooperatives, disabled workers cooperatives, blind workers cooperatives and NGO’s carrying out economic activity or payable activity in accordance with their Articles. Additionally, the help within this project is offered to the people active on the labour market as well as the employees of social support and integration institutions.

In order to improve the execution of these activities Cooperative Center and Center for Social Enterprise in Krakow came into existence. Moreover, supporting points are going to be established in four Malopolska counties.

For people who are interested in carrying out an activity in social economy sector e.g. in the form of social cooperatives, legal persons’ cooperatives may benefit from support through trainings as well as groups or individual counseling. Trainings and the counseling is organized throughout Malopolska.

People who are acquainted with the nature of the third and cooperative sector, which results from the professional experience within the area, will be entitled to take advantage of counseling and training carried out within the framework of the Social

Entrepreneurial Academy (Akademia Przedsiębiorczości Społecznej) as well as Cooperative Management Academy (Akademia Zarządzania Spółdzielnią).

Entities active in the social economy sector e. g. social cooperatives, labour cooperatives, disabled workers cooperatives, blind workers cooperatives and NGO's carrying out economic activity or payable activity in accordance with their Articles will be able to take advantage of legal, accounting and marketing services. The services will be delivered by experts in the field, who will adapt the scope of support to the individual needs of the entity.

Within the INES project "Malopolska Social Economy Infrastructure" activities supporting the development of partnership for the sake of social economy will be undertaken. Local seminars will be conducted. Their objective will be popularizing of the idea of social economy and partnership of social economy entities, labour market institutions and institutions of social support and integration. A publication on inter-sector cooperation will be produced.

One of the most important activities foreseen within the project is the promotion of the idea of social economy in Malopolska. Malopolska social economy entities and institutions supporting this sector will help at preparation of visualization social economy activities in Malopolska. Organisation of conferences, seminars, fairs promoting the idea of social economy is also envisaged. Publication devoted to social enterprise in Malopolska and support to social economy entities will constitute an important product of the project. In order to facilitate reaching public opinion, a campaign promoting the activity and products of social enterprises is going to be launched. Moreover an electronic bulletin devoted to the support of social economy in Malopolska is going to be issued. Social economy vertical portal/vortal ([www. wortales.rops.krakow.pl](http://www.wortales.rops.krakow.pl)) is going to be supplied with separate subpage/sub site devoted to social economy enterprises in the region.

## 5. Future plans for promoting active inclusion through the social economy

The European Union is now particularly focused on the important role that the social economy can play in delivering social programmes to achieve active inclusion. Cracow's Development Strategy has therefore been updated in order to take EU recommendations into account.

Like other cities in Poland, Cracow currently has limited opportunities for the public-private social inclusion initiatives that are seen as so important for cities: not just in the EU but across the world. On the other hand, Cracow has significant potential for developing its social economy, building on a long tradition of working with social enterprises.

Capitalising on the social economy potential in Cracow will be a major challenge, especially given the need to develop viable rules for organisations to cooperate together. As central, regional and local government updates their social and employment policies and strategies over the coming years, it is hoped that these will bear in mind the important role of the social economy.

Educating society on the types of solutions that can be offered by social enterprises is also very important. Research indicates that if the general public has a good understanding of the positive role that social enterprise can play, this drives government organisations to change the way they view social enterprise, and can open their eyes for the first time to the positive contribution these enterprises can make.

It is clear that administrative representatives will be more inclined to work cooperatively with social enterprises the more they understand these organisations. The quality of the social services delivered by the social economy depends on the willingness of government to work in full cooperation with the social economy, which is why it is so important to educate society about the social economy sector.

## ANNEX 1. References

Polish version of the Cracow Development Strategy and an English version of the brochure:

[www.bip.krakow.pl/?mmi=209](http://www.bip.krakow.pl/?mmi=209)

[www.pcogito.pl](http://www.pcogito.pl)

[www.spoldzielnie.org.pl/ines](http://www.spoldzielnie.org.pl/ines)

## **ANNEX 2. Data**

In 2008, for the first time in some 12 years, Cracow achieved a positive birth rate. This was mainly the result of an 11% rise in the number of births. However, general changes to the city's demographics are gradually contributing to the diminishing share of children and young people in the population to around 15.5%. In the last two years Cracow has experienced an ageing population profile: the number of inhabitants of post-productive age has been growing and there are fewer people of pre-productive age. This is caused by growing life expectancy and a low birth rate. According to the predictions of the General Statistical Office, in 2030 senior citizens will make up almost a third of the inhabitants of Cracow.

## ANNEX 3. MOPS

### Municipal Social Welfare Centre (MOPS)

MOPS is the official social services department of the Municipality of Cracow. It provides comprehensive and complete social services to all inhabitants of Cracow who need help.

The primary goals of the social services provided by MOPS are:

- To help the persons and families who find themselves in difficult life situations and are not capable of overcoming the problems without any external help;
- To prevent such situations by undertaking actions to help individuals and families to become self-sustainable and well-integrated into the society.

Social services provided by MOPS are regulated by national law. There are nine branches of MOPS in Krakow. Two of them are situated in the district of Nowa Huta.

The major reasons for providing social services in Cracow are:

- Poverty;
- Homelessness;
- Unemployment;
- Being orphaned;
- Disability and long-term illness;
- Domestic violence;
- Alcoholism or drug addiction;
- Protection of maternity;
- Protection of families with many children;
- Difficulties regarding raising children or housekeeping;
- Social adjustment difficulties after serving a sentence.

The main social services provided by MOPS include:

- Financial aid: in various forms ranging from income support to social insurance, or public transportation tickets;
- Social workers' assistance: for example home visits, counselling, assistance in everyday activities, co-operation with other institutions and NGOs;
- Specialist counselling: legal, psychological, or on family matters. In addition there are two family therapy and counselling centres in Cracow which are supervised by MOPS. One of them is situated in the area of Nowa Huta;
- Food and clothing supplies;
- Assistance for disabled and elderly people: including domiciliary services, day care centres, residential care homes, senior clubs, therapy workshops;
- Day care centres for children: these support families in maintaining their ability to raise a child and help children to overcome educational difficulties or behaviour problems;
- Shelters for homeless people;
- Hostels: for single mothers or pregnant women;
- Assistance for home violence victims: there is centre for Home Violence Victims in Nowa Huta which provides twenty-four-hour care and professional assistance;
- Care and upbringing: in a foster family or in a children's home;
- Social and occupational rehabilitation: including financial benefits for liquidation architectural or technical barriers, refund of the expenses for employees who hire disabled person, financial loan for disabled persons to launch their own business.

According to the Social Welfare Act, social services such as shelters, hostels, day care centres, and residential care homes can be provided by NGOs and by churches. Units run by NGOs are supervised by MOPS.

## **ANNEX 4. The social inclusion projects successfully implemented by Cracow's City Social Welfare Centre (MOPS):**

### **4.1 Streetwork project**

The Streetwork project took social work out onto the streets for 18 months (2005-2007). The project was mainly aimed at homeless people (who are socially withdrawn and functioning outside society) and vulnerable young people aged 15-24 (who are neglected and spend a large part of their time on the street without supervision).

In Cracow, some 800 people are homeless: 89% male and 11% female, with 60% over 40 years old. In addition, some 1,370 children under 18 spend most of their waking hours on the street. They are often from dysfunctional or socially excluded families, and are mainly found on housing estates, at supermarkets, at railway stations or in a local neighbourhood. 15% of these children are under 10 years old. The shared characteristic of these two groups is that they treat the street as the centre of their lives, both in personal and social terms.

As part of the Streetwork project, two groups of social workers focused on helping young people and one group of social workers focused on helping homeless people. Counselling points were also set up for clients to visit.

The Streetwork method is built around making effective and stable contact with each client. This allowed the Streetwork team was able to help homeless and young people to take an interest in the social services and initiatives available to them, and motivated them to take advantage of these services, providing the support they needed given their critical situation.

The project was successful in making contact with 900 young and homeless people. Contact with these clients was stable and continually maintained, and the counselling points proved to be an important factor. Individual social service plans were created for 20 for homeless people and 17 young people; and the Streetwork team helped over 80 people with paperwork and official issues and helped break down the barriers to dealing with officialdom. This kind of support is particularly important for homeless people, because they often suffer from learned helplessness and have a fear of public institutions. Whenever a client made a reasonable claim for assistance, the Streetwork team supported them with food, sanitation and tickets for public transport. Clients were also encouraged to improve their living conditions and to organise their free time. In addition, the Streetwork team, together with the local police, helped 43 homeless and vulnerable people needing medical assistance.

## **4.2 “Time for Activity” project**

The Time for Activity project was aimed at achieving active inclusion for Cracow’s Social Welfare Centre clients and their families, as well as young people aged 15-25 at risk from marginalisation. It was set up under the European Social Fund’s aim of popularising active inclusion via social assistance centres. Clients were able to benefit from the following support:

- Participation in activities organised by the Social Integration Club (257 people);
- Advice from an employment expert (89 people);
- Training sessions to improve qualifications essential to the job market as well as vocational courses (79 people);
- Help from a family assistant (53 families);
- Legal advice (8 people);
- Psychological counselling (19 people);
- Educational advice (5 people);
- Active inclusion trips (lasting a few days), with activities aimed at improving life and social competences, as well as family and addiction therapies (321 adults; 145 children).

## **4.3 Socially Active, Professionally Resourceful project**

The main goal of this project was to help children with disabilities and children who had been living in foster care who were now becoming independent. Set up under the European Social Fund’s aim of developing and popularising active inclusion through district assistance centres, the project helped 1,004 children, and included improved access to specialist counselling and information. In particular, children moving out of foster homes benefited from the following support:

- Support for moving into independent accommodation (32 people);
- Legal advice (21 people);
- Educational advice (19 people);
- Activities improving vocational competences (21 people);
- Family therapy (2 people).

## **4.4 Learn about Possibilities: ‘Help Yourself’ project**

As part of a programme to actively include people with disabilities, this project provided help for unemployed disabled people living in Cracow who are of working age and living on benefits. Support included:

- A new service to provide an assistant (321 people);
- Employment-focused classes held in occupational therapy workshops (522 people);
- New information points in ten locations, offering advice on rights and entitlements to help disabled people become more independent and return to the labour market (537 people used the centres June to December 2008);
- Improved access hours for eight specialist City Social Welfare Centre counselling points, some of which are located in residences for people with disabilities (hours extended to 8.00-18.00).

#### 4.5 Social Integration Clubs (SIC)

Cracow City Council provides significant financial and non-financial support for the socially excluded. As part of this support, Social Integration Clubs are becoming increasingly popular. The Cracow City Social Welfare Centre runs two of these clubs, offering specialist counselling, social services advice, employment advice, assistance for socially excluded groups, educational activities and social inclusion activities. In particular, these clubs offer help with employment through:

- **Socially useful work:** a programme for unemployed people not entitled to unemployment benefit. They undertake socially useful work organised by the City Social Welfare Centre in cooperation with the Municipal Jobcentre, and are paid from Cracow City Council funds. This work helps them reintegrate back into the community and employment.
- **Public works:** a programme for long-term unemployed people receiving benefits. Organised as part of the Professional and Social Reintegration Workshop, this provides them with employment on public works projects to help reintegrate them back into work.



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