

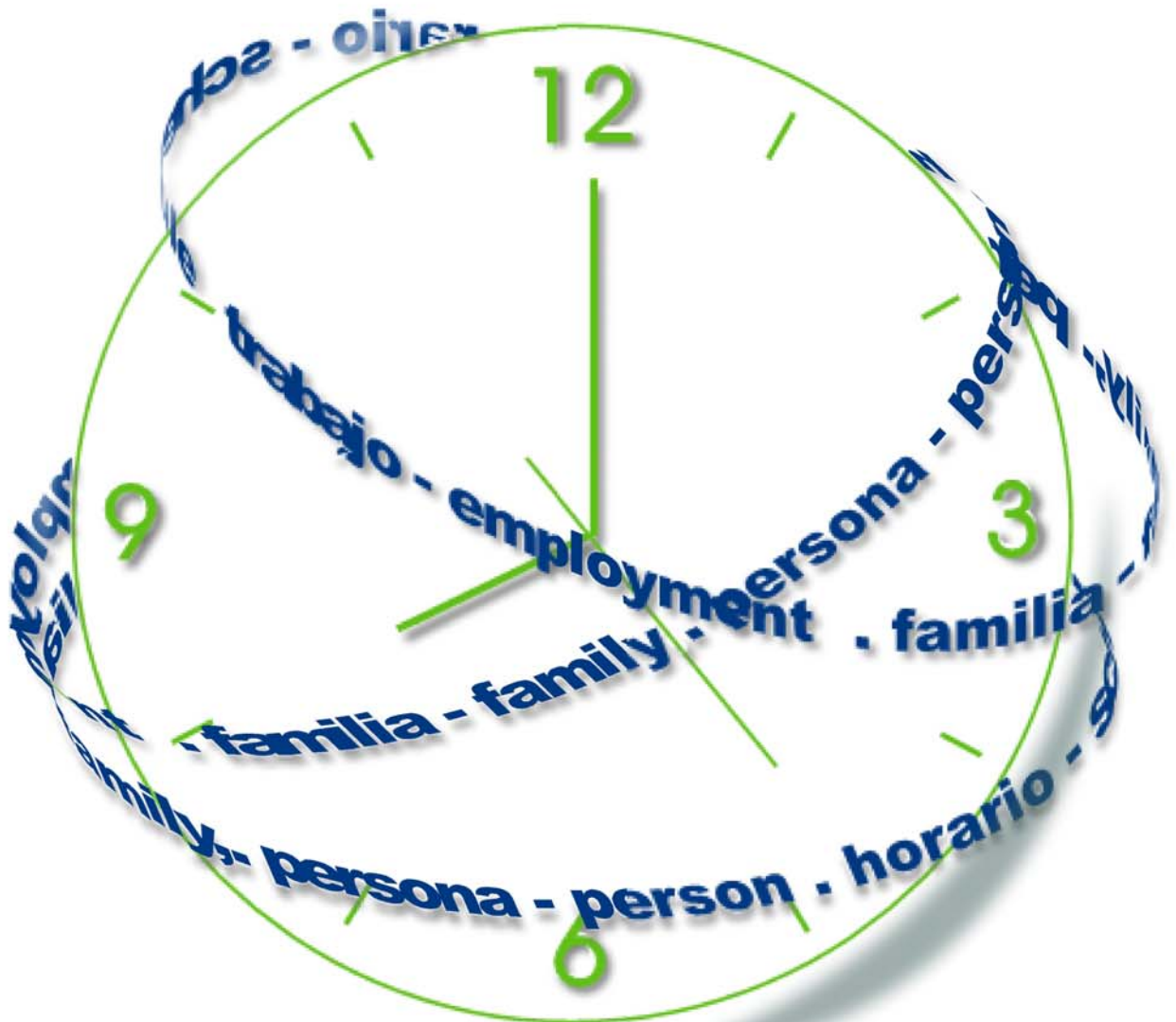
21 ILLUSTRATIVE
EXPERIENCES

Guide to Best Practices FOR PROMOTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE THROUGH LOCAL BODIES in Spain and Norway



21 illustrative experiences

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Title

Guide to best practices for promoting work-life balance through local bodies in Spain and Norway. 21 Illustrative experiences

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PROJECT

Balance among personal, family and professional life in Spain and Norway

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Project Led by the Spanish Women's Institute, in cooperation with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS).

Índex

1. INTRODUCTION	9
1.1. WHAT CAN I FIND IN THE GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICES WITH REGARD TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE AT LOCAL LEVEL?	9
1.2. IN WHICH CONTEXT HAS THIS GUIDE COME INTO BEING?	11
1.3. HOW DID THE GUIDE COME INTO BEING? METHODOLOGY	11
1.4. WHAT CAN BE CONSIDERED AS A BEST PRACTICE?	13
1.5. WHAT DOES WORK-LIFE BALANCE STAND FOR?	14
1.6. WHAT BENEFITS DOES WORK-LIFE BALANCE PROVIDE?	16
1.7. WHY SHOULD PUBLIC LOCAL AUTHORITIES SEEK TO IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG CITIZENS?	17
1.8. HOW CAN WORK-LIFE BALANCE BE SUPPORTED THROUGH PUBLIC POLICIES? ...	18
1.9. NORWAY AND SPAIN, TWO DIFFERENT REALITIES FACING THE SAME CHALLENGE	25
2. BEST PRACTICES REGARDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE	31
2.1. AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PROMOTE WORK-LIFE BALANCE	32
2.2. ONE GOAL: MANAGING AND SAVING TIME	37
2.2.1. FLEXIBILITY IN WORKING HOURS AND PLACE OF WORK	37
2.2.2. "A CITY FOR CITIZENS": TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY POLICIES	42
2.3. COUNCILS AS SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ORGANISERS	44
2.3.1. WHO CAN LOOK AFTER MY CHILDREN WHEN I AM UNABLE TO?	44

2.3.2. WORK-LIFE BALANCE SERVICES FOR DEPENDENT PERSONS: CARING FOR THE ELDERLY AND THE DISABLED	49
2.3.3. ENCOURAGING LEISURE AND FREE-TIME	54
2.3.4. OTHER BEST PRACTICES.....	57
2.4. CHANGING MENTALITIES: A QUESTION OF IDEAS AND AWARENESS	59
3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
3.1. CONCLUSIONS	65
3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	68



Guide TO BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE THROUGH Local Bodies in Spain and Norway



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHAT CAN I FIND IN THE GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICES WITH REGARD TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE AT LOCAL LEVEL?

WHAT DOES THE GUIDE INCLUDE?

This “Guide to Best Practices for Promoting Work-Life Balance through Local Bodies in Spain and Norway” offers **methods, measures and guidelines for planning and implementing programmes, projects and initiatives which favor balance, harmonisation and better time-management for those whom this guide is addressed to.**

OBJECTIVES

The ultimate goal of this publication is to ensure that work-life balance becomes part of the fundamental objectives for Local Bodies, whilst also aiming at:

1. Demonstrate that it is feasible to successfully implement local policies which promote and favor work-life balance. In a word, the Guide aims to show that Local Bodies can support citizens in finding a new and more efficient manner of using and managing their time.
2. The Guide also aims to serve as a guiding instrument for Local Bodies when implementing initiatives which strive for similar objectives or when attempting to deal with problems related to work-life balance.

In this respect, this Guide aspires to go beyond the merely descriptive approach and to offer an in-depth analysis.

WHO IS THE GUIDE ADDRESSED TO?

This Guide is addressed to Local Bodies but, also, to anyone interested in this subject and/ or in how to implement initiatives aimed at responding to demands and needs linked to the work-life balance sphere.

HOW IS INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS GUIDE?

The information included in this Guide has been analysed and systematised so that is now easily accessible. The contents are divided into four different sections.

- i. The Guide begins with an introduction, in which volume, objectives and beneficiaries are presented. The why and wherefore of the volume and contents' structure are also discussed in this section.
- ii. The following section contains a number of initiatives which have been validated as best practice regarding work-life balance. They have been classified under four headings according to their thematic focus:
 - ii.1. Initiatives which promote work-life balance by means of a methodology based on an integrative approach, that is, by having an effect on the different dimensions of the phenomenon.
 - ii.2. Best practices which aim to balance uses of time through more efficient time management both in the private and in the public sector.
 - ii.3. Initiatives addressed to granting citizens access to services and infrastructures which promote work-life balance. Most specifically: services addressed to attenuate familial responsibilities and domestic chores, as well as other types of resources, alternatives or spaces, which are conceived to develop the personal sphere, including leisure and free-time.
 - ii.4. Initiatives which aim to raise social awareness with regard to the obstacles hindering work-life balance and the absence of a model of joint-responsibility, not only within the family, but also among the different socio-economic agents.
- iii. The third section contains a set of recommendations and proposals obtained from previous analysis and which Local Bodies should take into consideration when implementing actions towards improving work-life balance in their areas.
- iv. An appendix – in the form of summary-cards – has also been included. In this part, a description of the previously analysed best practices is shown; this includes information about the institution behind the best practice and the initiative itself: objectives, target groups (people and/or institutions), time-span, description, key actors and obstacles.

1.2. In which context has this Guide come into being?

This Guide came into being in the context of the trans-national Project “**Work-Life Balance in Spain and Norway**” (Balance Project). The Spanish Women’s Institute (Instituto de la Mujer) is responsible for this project, which has been developed by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS). It has been co-financed by the Spanish Women’s Institute and the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area.

The Balance Project’s general objective is to spread out **a strategy based on different initiatives designed to improve local public policies in order to obtain more and better conditions for achieving work-life balance**. With that aim, the Project is structured in two well-differentiated phases:

1. The first phase was intended to bring both geographical groups together and to exchange initiatives gained in the Spanish as well as the Norwegian local spheres, which could be transferred to similar environments. A further aim was to discuss and reflect upon such initiatives, and, as well as other strategies, to have them published. The “**Guide to Best Practices for Promoting Work-Life Balance through Local Bodies in Spain and Norway**” constitutes the final product of this first stage.
2. The second phase is focused on planning and testing initiatives to promote work-life balance in ten Spanish Local Bodies, which are committed to taking action in order to favor balance among the three spheres of life: personal, familial and professional.

1.3. How did the Guide come into being? Methodology

The contents of the Guide are the outcome of a learning **process and knowledge transfer, as well as of analysis, reflection and discussion**, which result from the following:

- The study, evaluation and analysis of a set of questionnaires received between June and December 2009, aimed to examine the initiatives promoted and/or developed by Norwegian and Spanish Local Bodies.
- Representatives of the Spanish Women’s Institute, FEMP, KS and Norwegian and Spanish Local Bodies, made two study tours to both Norwegian and Spanish Local Bodies – in June 2009 and November 2009 respectively.

- In addition, representatives of the Spanish Women's Institute, FEMP, KS and Norwegian and Spanish Local Bodies took part in a technical seminar about Best Practices, which took place in November 2009.

The **methodology** employed to identify and validate best practices was developed in two main stages:

- 1. Collection of data, which was further analysed and evaluated, in order to undertake a preliminary identification of potential best practices.** With this purpose in mind, an intense in-house study was conducted, during which work-life balance initiatives were gauged and a preliminary assessment completed based on the following criteria: innovation, efficiency and transferability.

In order to compile information, an **ad hoc questionnaire** was prepared and distributed in cooperation with FEMP and its Norwegian equivalent body, KS. The questionnaires sent to Local Bodies in Norway and Spain were used as a source of information, together with other initiatives analysed, which supplied further data that had not been collected through these questionnaires.

- 2. Analysis and validation of the best practices, taking into account the following criteria: innovation, efficiency and transferability.**

Potential best practices were also assessed during this second phase with regard to the aforementioned criteria. Best practices were validated both through desk-job as well as over the course of a technical seminar.

All in all, several sources of information were used. On one hand, these consisted of the questionnaires sent to Norwegian and Spanish Local Bodies, and also several surveys, which were conducted on the telephone or via e-mail. On the other hand, the information gathered during the study tours to Norway and Spain, in June and November 2009, respectively.

Taking the methodology previously described as a starting point, it is necessary to state that the initiatives assembled in this Guide do not correspond to an exhaustive account of all work-life balance initiatives which were implemented upon the request of the Local Bodies. We have attempted to offer a representative overview of the reality of Local Bodies. However, due to the limited resources and restricted time and scope of this publication, which is conceived as just one part of the Balance Project, many other best practices have not been analysed and will, thus, not appear in the following pages. This fact does not make them less valid though.

1.4. What can be considered as a best practice?

With a view to this Guide composition, it became necessary to adopt a definition of best practice in the local sphere, which would be suitable for the established objectives. In this context, a **best work-life balance practice** has been defined as:

Any innovative initiative, measure, behaviour, methodology or tool which, after being promoted and implemented by the local bodies (Town Councils, Provincial and Insular Governments and Associations of Municipalities) or by a private institution or company in the local environment, has demonstrated its effectiveness in achieving the goal of favoring work-life balance for citizens and is also suitable to be transferred to other contexts.

The criteria employed to identify an initiative as best practice can be inferred from the previous definition. They are, specifically, the following:



Innovation will be examined in a broad sense, taking into account the wide-ranging spectrum of possibilities and aspects in which one can detect innovative elements. Among other reasons, the initiative can be considered as innovative in relation to the target group; with regard to the particular problem that is tackled; to the specific characteristics of the procedure, through which it is implemented, be it the model of organisation, management mechanisms, services being offered or methods/instruments employed in the accomplishment of the different actions; or also because it offers pioneering solutions to a given problem.



Efficiency: the initiative should be able to accomplish, with a proven record and consistency over time, the objectives, which were established at a specific and global level.



Transferability: the initiative should be suitably transferred to other different contexts, either in a geographical sense or with regard to the groups involved – namely beneficiaries or involved agents – to confront similar problems related to work-life balance.

1.5. ¿WHAT DOES WORK-LIFE BALANCE STAND FOR?

The notion of “work-life balance” has been analysed by several disciplines within Social Sciences and assigned numerous meanings. From a **sociological perspective**, the concept of work-life balance represents a *process of change in an originally rigid social structure, founded on traditional values and on fixed gender roles. This process of change, despite the conflict with resistance mechanisms opposing change, leads to individual emancipation (and, particularly, to female emancipation), specially with regard to decision-making capacity in relation to time and effort invested in different aspects of personal and professional spheres.*

On the other hand, within **the realm of Economics**, the process of work-life balance *is understood as the externalisation of costs associated with household tasks, in order to find out a model of joint responsibility among the different economic agents (families, market, State) that corresponds to the potential benefits and which – from “familial” care – are assigned to each of those agents. Therefore, it is necessary to correctly assess the “invisible costs” of house work, in order to equitably distribute household and work functions among family members.*

From a **more functional perspective, closer to each individual context**, *work-life balance corresponds to the individual liberties’ sphere because it represents the right to decide over the use of one’s own time, within the limits imposed by work and family obligations.* The desire to approach people’s reality should not be mistaken with a merely individualistic or individual understanding of work-life balance. On the contrary, the *commitment and joint responsibility of all social actors involved, as well as all family members and the private and public sectors, are essential to achieving an adequate balance between the different spheres of private and professional life.*

Beyond these interpretations, within the context of the **Balance Project** and, most particularly, of this Guide, work-life balance will not be understood as a mechanism merely intended to favor the accomplishment of professional and familial duties (dual approach), but rather is conceived as what should become a **clear objective in the realm of welfare policies. Once this objective is achieved, all individuals will benefit from the time they have now available, without neglecting any of their necessities – whether in relation to leisure, or individual and/or family care – or professional obligations.**

Our aim is to avoid the one-dimensional vision of the family sphere as a niche of burdens and obligations, which one is forced to make compatible with the professional realm, and also to allow that the balance between these two aspects expands, so that other domains beyond the strictly familial one are also taken into consideration (leisure, education, social participation, etc.).

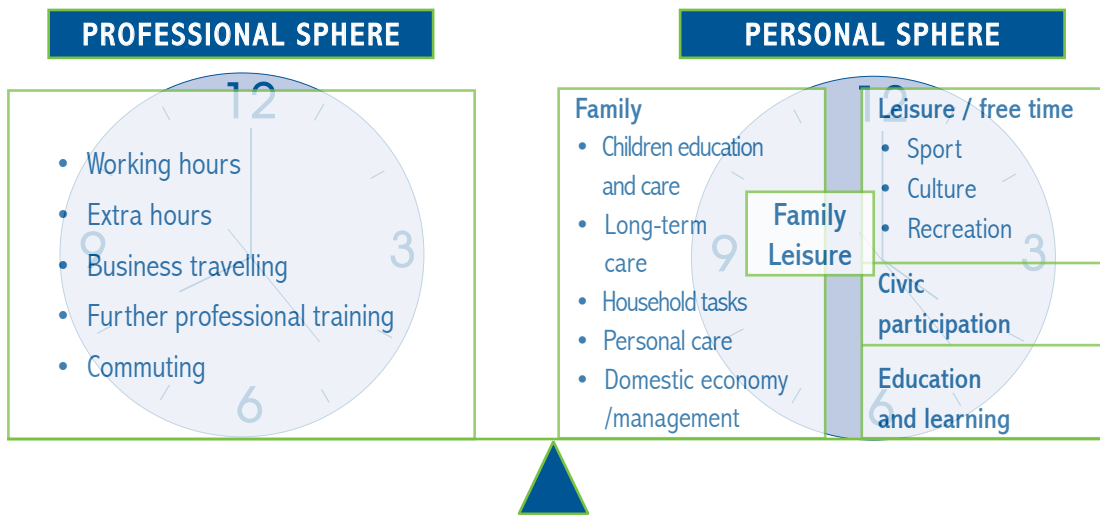
In this context, the current climate makes it not possible to refer to work-life balance without mentioning the notion of **joint responsibility**, since they are closely related. Joint responsibility stands for *the equitable acceptance – both by men and women – of responsibilities, rights, duties and opportunities which are related to the domestic sphere, family and its care. In conclusion, it implies that all social and institutional agents (State, companies, trade unions, associations...) need to assume their responsibilities with regard to personal, familial and professional realities arrangements.*

In order to achieve balance and harmonisation among the three life-spheres – personal, familial and professional – it is necessary to make joint responsibility, in all its different dimensions, our philosophy and principle for life¹:

- *Individual joint responsibility among women and men, to break down traditional gender roles and sexualised uses of time.*
- *Social joint responsibility among the different social and institutional agents, (State, institutions, companies, trade unions, NGOs, etc.), in order to enhance the degree of freedom, so that men and women can choose different ways of combining their personal, professional and familial life and reach a state of balance.*
- *Family joint responsibility throws an intergenerational agreement among all family members to support the household financially and emotionally.*

¹ Casado Aparicio, E. and Gómez Esteban, C. (coord.), (2006). *Los desafíos de la conciliación de la vida familiar y profesional en el siglo XXI*. Biblioteca Nueva. Madrid.

Balance between the different spheres of life...



1.6. WHAT BENEFITS DOES WORK-LIFE BALANCE PROVIDE?

There are numerous advantages in the harmonisation of the different spheres of life. In general terms and from a global perspective, work-life balance is a strategy which ensures balance, both in the work market and in the family domain, and allows individuals to make use of their own time, thereby providing the following benefits.

- a) **It improves quality of life and personal well-being:**
 - Firstly because it introduces a different philosophy with regard to time-management: work stops being the central axis around which our lives revolve and a space is reserved for personal development and social and political participation, both for men and women.
 - Secondly, it encourages the creation of a new model for domestic life in which family responsibilities are equitably assigned.
 - And, lastly, it reduces stress and work-related illnesses, allowing professional promotion within the same company.
- b) **It creates an environment of equal opportunities for women and men** because it contributes to breaking down the barriers, which have prevented women and men from being able to combine and develop their familial and professional lives on equal terms.

- c) **It encourages social participation for both women and men.** Even though work-life balance is by no means a matter exclusively related to women or even to the realm of the couple, but rather a social problem, it, nevertheless, facilitates the incorporation of women into the job market and the involvement of men in the domestic and familial domain.
- d) **It strengthens the democratic system** by enabling both women and men to exercise their rights entirely.
- e) **It improves the productive system** by allowing all human resources to be developed in every respect, due to the women and men incorporation and permanence in the job market, the retention of talent and the improvement of the work climate. Moreover, it enhances the external image of companies, which will subsequently attract new clientele.
- f) **It increases efficiency and productivity in companies,** which, therefore, become more competitive and flexible. Competition and flexibility are undeniable requirements in order to be sustainable in an environment defined by constant changes, globalisation and internationalisation.
- g) **It improves the welfare social-system protection,** which will then be able to count on the contributions of all, women and men.

1.7. WHY SHOULD PUBLIC LOCAL AUTHORITIES SEEK TO IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG CITIZENS?

All the benefits related to work-life balance, which were specified under the previous heading, validate themselves the public sector involvement in supporting its citizens when dealing with this challenge. In this respect, we should start off with the premise that **achieving an equitable distribution of time, balancing out or harmonising the different spheres of life directly improves the individual well-being.** Given that any local body should have the improvement of the quality and conditions of life as its main objective, it should also make all possible efforts to turn its municipality, province or association of municipalities into a “**good place to live**”, with everything that this set phrase entails:

- “Good” refers to the quality of things. In the local area, this “goodness” is reflected in many different aspects: infrastructure, public and private equipment, services, business... but, also, security, life in the community, etc.
- “A place where” hints at a definite location. Town councils should compete fairly to offer their citizens the best possible life. Each province or municipality is placed in a particular environment which radically affects their reality and which is also included in its very own configuration of spaces. Such spaces can nevertheless be adapted to the different necessities of a particular time.

- **“Live”**. For each individual, “to live” has different connotations: work, leisure, business, culture, education, hygiene, personal care, child or dependent persons care, nursing for those in need, diet, sport, life at home, transport, health care... They are all activities which make up our daily life, which fill our timetables one day after the other, even if there are numerous ways – particularly, depending on age – of living any normal day. And precisely this combination is the one that should be good for all, women and men.

However, our society is still defined by attitudes and forms of work organisation in cities – services, schedules and working hours – or forms of family organisation which do not favor a work-life balance for women and men. In order to break down the existing barriers, both society and companies should update the idea of “working hours” or “shared family responsibilities”. Furthermore, cities and town councils should also create a space and environment which favors a change of mindset and that can be used and lived in so that everybody succeeds in harmonising time in their lives.

Local governments should promote conditions which turn their cities, towns or areas into “good places to live in”. Such conditions have a positive impact and by promoting them, local bodies are contributing to retaining and attracting population, maintaining a good level of socioeconomic development, supporting investment and improving life in the community. In a word, **when the right to a work-life balance becomes a reality, it has immediate effects on the well-being and quality of life of the citizens.**

1.8. How can WORK-LIFE BALANCE BE SUPPORTED THROUGH PUBLIC POLICIES?

Work-life balance proves to be a multidimensional phenomenon, which is defined by:

- The broad number of agents involved (families, employees, employers, public sector, service suppliers, etc.);
- The diversity of areas converging in the balance for different spheres of life (work, leisure, family life, dependent persons care, etc.) and, lastly;
- The scenario of work-life balance appears to be a complex system of relationships and interests dictated by a whole range of public initiatives, which are implemented at different territorial levels of decision making.

In this context, the public sphere must intervene and play a central role through specific actions in order to achieve work-life balance for the citizenship.

When dealing with this context, one might very well raise the following question: What are the main reasons for individuals not being able to achieve work-life balance? The answer contains key arguments for public involvement and will serve as an axis in order to systematise all the elements in play:

What are the main reasons for individuals not being able to achieve work-life balance?

- Non-existent and/or inefficient time management, both at a personal a contextual level.
- Work-life balance requires all sorts of financial, human and infrastructural resources, which are often limited and inaccessible.
- Lack of social awareness when it comes to understanding work-life balance as people's right to be able to harmonise different aspects in their life, such as: work, leisure, family, social involvement, culture, etc.

The public involvement areas regarding work-life balance (strategies, programmes and initiatives) revolve around the factors which hinder the achievement of a balance between the basic three spheres of life. This is explained in the following charts, which, on one hand, give a detailed account of what the areas of public intervention should be, that is, in which direction public authorities should intervene; and, on the other hand, which propose steps that could be taken to achieve the desired objectives or, in other words, how public authorities should intervene.

1.- SCARCITY AND/OR INEFFICIENCY REGARDING TIME MANAGEMENT

AREAS OF PUBLIC INTERVENTION

AREAS	DEFINITION
1. Measures to introduce flexible working times (flexitime)	These are measures aimed to make working time or hours more flexible and, therefore, enable employees to distribute their time in a more efficient manner to be able to reconcile other aspects of their personal and familial life.
2. Work-life balance at workplace	Availability of services and infrastructures, which allow working people to fulfill tasks or needs related to personal sphere at the workplace, in order to avoid unnecessary traveling.
3. Transport and travel policies	Initiatives to reduce travel times by developing infrastructures, efficient public transport networks and travel planning.

TYPOLOGY OF POSSIBLE MEASURES THAT HELP OPTIMISE TIME MANAGEMENT AT WORKPLACE

CONTEXT OF INTERVENTION		POTENTIAL ACTIONS
Within public bodies: management of human resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support measures promoting work-life balance within collective bargaining. ▪ Improve current legislation concerning the public sphere. ▪ Monitor and supervise how the current legislation on work-life balance is implemented. ▪ Conduct studies about the influence of work conditions on employees' family life. ▪ Ensure availability of services and infrastructures, which allow employees to fulfill tasks or needs related to the personal sphere at workplace.
Beyond public bodies	Intervention in local companies – incentives for private initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide financial and/or technical support for the private sector to define and implement work-life balance plans. ▪ Offer excellence awards for companies favoring work-life balance. ▪ Issue work-life balance certificates, validated by public administrations, for companies favoring work-life balance. ▪ Support the establishment of cooperation networks among companies favoring work-life balance. ▪ Provide social marketing and publicity for those companies favoring work-life balance.
	Measures with direct impact upon the citizenship: intervention in time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop transport infrastructures. ▪ Prioritise management and optimisation of public transport networks and travel planning within the field of public policies designed to improve work-life balance.

2.- Need for financial, human and infrastructure resources

AREAS OF PUBLIC INTERVENTION

AREAS	DEFINITION
1. Improving access to services and infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide services to support work-life balance: lessen domestic responsibilities and household tasks (kindergartens, schools services to improve work-life balance, leisure and free-time services for children, homes for the elderly, etc.). Offer other services: encouragement of leisure and free-time (sports facilities, cultural activities).
2. Developing system of social protection	Improve financial benefits granted to individuals or families (maternity and paternity benefits, high-risk pregnancies, tax benefits for birth, etc.).
3. Regarding its own administrative tasks and procedures	<p>Develop unified, more accessible and transparent work-life balance policies.</p> <p>Simplify time consuming administrative tasks and procedures so that citizens have more time at their disposal.</p>
4. Arranging and coordinating private services	Private services are very often responsible for supplying – through concessions and subcontracts – services originally offered by the public administration. In this regard, it is very important to establish quality criteria throughout the contract procedure. These criteria should be part of the required qualifications assessed by the public administration.

TYPOLGY OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE MEANS AND RESOURCES, AS WELL AS INFRASTRUCTURES TO IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

CONTEXT OF INTERVENTION	POTENTIAL ACTIONS
Beyond public bodies: Provision of community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase or improve institutions which provide child, elderly or disabled care. Offer financial support to enable access to institutions or social benefit for children protection or for those committed to taking care of elder or disabled relatives. Determine quality criteria for family services allocation and qualified personnel training. Establish other initiatives: advising of these services among the personnel working within the realm of public bodies; assessment of how public services match the needs arising from work-life balance. Conduct studies about the needs and works in the area of health and social care services.

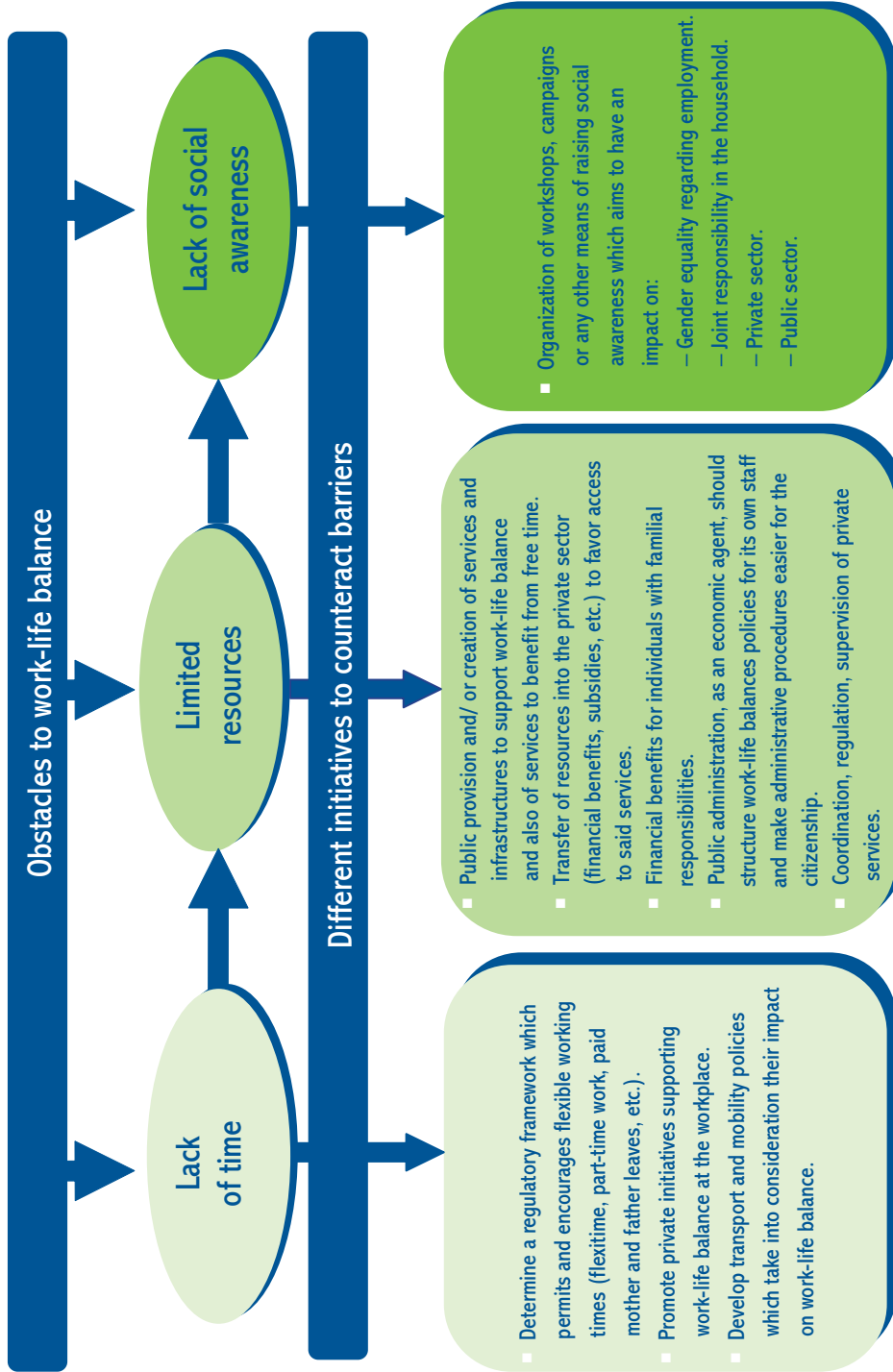
3.- Raising social awareness: encouraging JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

AREAS OF PUBLIC INTERVENTION

AREAS	DEFINITION
1. Providing equal opportunities for women and men in employment	Raise social awareness for the need of equal conditions for women and men to have access to employment, suppression of discriminatory barriers and reduction of salary gaps or occupational segregation between women and men.
2. Promoting joint responsibility within the household	Promote equitable distribution of household tasks and roles among family members, and most specifically among men and women. This should be part of a process of normalization actively supported by the public authorities, among other organisations.
3. Raising awareness within companies	Encourage companies to accept their quote of responsibility regarding their staff and within the realm of social responsibilities as part of a joint responsibility model. Besides having a positive effect on the well-being of its most immediate beneficiaries, work-life balance contributes to increasing the growth and the revenue of the company and, consequently, permits the development of a more sustainable economic model.
4. Raising awareness in other administrations belonging to different territorial and functional spheres	Raise awareness that local bodies have the power to, in turn, exert a potential impact in raising awareness in other administrations whose field of action concentrates on different territorial and functional spheres: given their privileged close position to citizens and the limited scope within definite territories regarding specific necessities, local administrations prove to be a source for best practices and innovation for other institutions.

TYPOLOGY OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO RAISE AWARENESS IN THE SOCIETY

CONTEXT OF INTERVENTION	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
Beyond public organisation: information and social awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Raise awareness regarding working hours and schedules, in order to make work, family and school compatible.▪ Organise direct public campaigns to encourage equal responsibility at home. These can be aimed at society in general or just specific groups (parents, employees, etc.).▪ Launch direct campaigns, with the support of institutions and associations, to take action regarding social awareness and education.▪ Encourage initiatives within the private sector to promote social awareness and best practices' transfer.▪ Introduce initiatives in co-operation with the media.▪ Implement campaigns to promote awareness in the realm of regular education and occupational training.▪ Conduct studies about social values and work-life balance conflicts.



1.9. Norway and Spain, two different realities facing the same challenge

As it has been previously mentioned, both Norway and Spain co-operate in the Balance Project expecting to learn from each other context and aiming to exchange best practices. It is certainly true that they are **two countries with two very different realities** regarding their geographical, demographic, socioeconomic and work-related situations. However, it is also true that **they both face an identical challenge**: to achieve work-life balance for their citizens.

This section will briefly introduce the different contexts of both countries, so that it will be possible to know the socioeconomic framework in which the best practices examined in this Guide were developed.

From a geographic and demographic perspective...

Norway² has a land mass of 323,802 km², including its lakes, and is scarcely populated (4,799,252 inhabitants in 2008). The majority of the population is concentrated in 430 municipalities, only five of which have over 100,000 inhabitants. With an area of 505,990 km², Spain³ is divided into more than 8,000 municipalities and has a population which is almost ten times larger than that of Norway (46,745,807 inhabitants in January 2009). The population is predominantly clustered in large urban hubs.

The Norwegian population is slightly younger than the Spanish one. The birth rate in Norway is higher (there are 11.0 births per 1,000 inhabitants in Spain, whereas in Norway numbers rise up to 12.6 births). On the other hand, the population over 65 is higher in Spain, where the ratio of elderly people in need of care – which relates the population over 65 to the population between 15 and 65 – amounts to 24%: two more percentage points than the same ratio in Norway⁴.

² Data on Norway have been obtained from Statistics Norway. The Norwegian Foreign Office has also published a volume (2009); *Minifacts on Norway / 2009*.

³ Information regarding Spain was obtained from the INE (National Institute for Statistics) database (2010). INEbase. Municipal census.

⁴ This information is taken from Eurostat (2009).

From an economic perspective⁵...

Worldwide, Norway is the third largest oil exporter. With regard to *per capita* income, the country is top of the list (64,700 euro per inhabitant), second only to Luxemburg. It also exceeds by far the European average rate (EU-27=100), so that the *per capita* income index, in terms of purchasing power parity, was established on 174.8 for 2008.

Figures for *per capita* income in Spain amount to 24,000 euro per inhabitant, which establishes its income level above the average in the EU-27 countries (104.3 of the gross domestic product, measured in purchasing power parity).

Public expenditure, with regard to gross domestic product, is similar in both countries (40% GDP in 2008). However, the distribution in territorial terms is different. In Spain, an in-between level with significant competences exists, the Comunidades Autónomas (regional autonomous governments), which managed a budget of 16% GDP in 2008: the same percentage that the Spanish national administration had at its disposal. On the other hand, in Norway the resources for local administrations (13% GDP) were as twice as much that of Spain (6% GDP).

WORK-RELATED ASPECTS⁶

The structure and characteristics of the labour market both in Norway and Spain are very different and they correspond to two completely distinct models.

Among the traits that define the job market in Norway, one should highlight the following: high economic activity rates (76% for men, from 15 to 64, and 70% for women) and very low unemployment rates (3.6% for women and 2.9% for men).

The Spanish job market presents a radically different scenario: lower activity rates (in the case of women it amounts to only 51%, whereas for men it comes up to 68%), higher unemployment rates, which in the second quarter of 2009 had risen up to 17.9%, with a more significant effect on women (18.3%) than on men (17.6%).

On the other hand, figures for part-time employees are higher in Norway (29.1%) than in Spain (12.9%). However, in both countries, women dominate the part-time work sphere: the percentage of Spanish women with part-time contracts constitutes 23.5%, while the number of women working part-time in Norway amounts to 44.3%, as opposed to 4.7% and 15.8% of Spanish and Norwegian men, respectively.

⁵ The source for such data is also Eurostat (2009) and they refer to the last available and verifiable data.

⁶ Data refer to the second quarter of 2009, since it is the most stable quarter regarding employment rates. Data have been obtained from Eurostat (2009).

With regard to the complete number of hours dedicated to paid employment, the average weekly hours in Spain amounted to 41.9 in 2008. In Norway, employees did not exceed 40 hours per week when it comes to full-time jobs. Still, in both countries women work fewer hours than men. In this respect, though, differences between genders seem to be less noticeable in Norway.

Social aspects: long-term care and the use of time⁷

In order to understand the way in which individuals try to achieve work-life balance in Norway and in Spain, different aspects should be examined. For example, how people take care of their children.

In 2007 in Norway, 61% of children under 3 years old were exclusively being cared for by their father and/or mother, as opposed to 44% in Spain. Regarding the latter, the gap existing between children under 3, who do not receive formal care (61%), and those who are exclusively cared by their father and/or mother (44%), were covered by “informal care”, that is, by other relatives or people who work in the household. With regard to children from 3 to the schooling age, the percentage of those who do not receive any sort of formal care is higher in Norway, where it amounts to 20%, than in Spain (6%). However this situation is now changing in Norway as all children 1-6 years old, have a legal right to day care at a maximum price from 1.1.2009.

It is also interesting to examine time management and its use, as well as how time is assigned to the most habitual tasks⁸. In this context, Norwegians spend on average one hour more on leisure than Spaniards, who dedicate more time to household tasks.

Likewise, there are substantial differences between men and women, particularly in Spain: Spanish women spend four hours and 55 minutes on domestic chores as opposed to one hour and 37 minutes which men dedicate to household tasks. In Norway, women dedicate three hours and 47 minutes to household tasks, whereas men spend two hours and 21 minutes doing domestic chores.

The general trend suggests that Spanish women choose to give up leisure time in order to be able to fulfil housework, while Norwegian women prefer to reduce their working time to be able to comply with their domestic responsibilities.

⁷ The source for such data is also Eurostat (2009) and they refer to the last available and verifiable data.

⁸ Eurostat (2009) and European Time Use Survey (2006).

GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE THROUGH LOCAL BODIES IN SPAIN AND NORWAY

2

2. BEST PRACTICES REGARDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The following pages bring together the analysis of the initiatives submitted by Spanish and Norwegian local bodies and which meet the criteria required to be considered best practices. The criteria were previously defined in the methodological section of the Balance Project. Other initiatives will also be included, in order to complete the analysis.

Best practices will be examined with a view to the following categories:

- 1. An Integrated Approach to Promote Work-Life Balance.** Those initiatives which adopt an integrated methodology in order to promote work-life balance locally will be examined under this heading. Integrated methodology is based on the idea that work-life balance affects the entire society: women and men, the active population and care-dependent individuals, companies and employees, public authorities and also the different areas and sectors within the local government (social services, employment, education, health, culture, etc.).
- 2. One Goal: Managing and Saving Time.** The initiatives examined in this chapter have been promoted by local bodies with the objective of ensuring better time management, either through measures which intend to implement flexitime and make work places more flexible, both within the private sector and in the realm of local bodies, or through direct intervention, that is, by adapting times, services and spaces to comply with citizen demands.
- 3. Councils as Service Providers and Organisers.** The initiatives under this heading have been analysed with regard to their capacity as generators, coordinators, mediators and safeguards of the service and infrastructure which ensure work-life balance.

4. **Changing mentalities: a Question of Ideas and Awareness.** This section examines those initiatives implemented by local bodies – acting as a catalyst for mindset changing through awareness-raising and communication campaigns – with the objective of modifying the social, economic and business structures in their area to meet citizen demands and needs.

2.1. An INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PROMOTE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance proves to be a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, which not only has an effect on people's life but in which, to a greater or lesser extent, co-responsible social agents are directly involved. This circumstance makes public intervention necessary on the closest level to citizens, namely Local Bodies.

In this context, the complex nature of work-life balance – as a way of harmonising spaces in each individual's life and ensuring participation in the personal, familial, work and domestic spheres – requires a global approach to tackle the problem from different angles of intervention.

Of the cases studied, it follows a set of fundamental elements and features, which have been considered key to the success of the integrated initiatives encouraging work-life balance, are listed below:

1. **Integration:** in order to conceive and implement the different measures it is necessary to co-ordinate input from a great variety of fields of actions, such as education, professional training and employment, social services, women's services, health, transport, urban planning, etc.
2. **Mainstreaming** among the different fields of action and the programmes being implemented. Initiatives are considered interdepartmental because a) they are co-ordinated by a Department (i.e. Women Services, Social Welfare, New Uses of Time) in cooperation with the rest of departments working on work-life balance programmes, or b) because they involve collaboration between each department and its local services.
3. **Leadership and political support** are particularly relevant as key elements to enhance this type of initiatives, which involve and demand not only the participation and efforts of technical personnel, but also of all regional social agents.
4. The application of **rationality criteria** also contributes to the success of initiatives. In this respect it is important to maximise existing resources through co-ordinated management and also to avoid the doubling and overlapping of programmes and initiatives.
5. All initiatives examined respond to the following methodological process: **analysis-planning–assessment**. The first step is the diagnosis of needs and resources. Objectives and measures are then determined, and the suitability of actions is also evaluated. Finally, the monitoring and assessment mechanisms are defined. With this regard, social awareness and education of the individuals responsible for developing the initiative, have proved essential to obtain the desired results.

METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATION OF THE UNIVERSAL RIGHT TO WORKLIFE BALANCE

DRIVING BODY: CASTELLDEFELS TOWN COUNCIL

Province: **Barcelona**

Autonomous Community: **Catalonia**

Target groups and/or bodies

Population of Castelldefels municipality.

Description

To pave the way for implementing and carrying out a Council Equal Opportunities Plan which considers worklife balance a universal right, the following milestones were established:

- Setting up a process of political agreements in order to approve proposals aimed at encouraging and promoting balance between the personal and professional life of citizens, with the aim of building a new model for daily life and uses of time (2003).
- A Gender Audit, carried out with the support of the Barcelona County Council. Its aim was to analyse and diagnose the municipality and to enable a political and technical presentation of results to the council staff (2003-2004).
- Creation of a committee made up of different Town Council departments to create a report on initiatives, services or projects in Castelldefels related to new uses of time (2004).
- A two-phase study, the first a “Diagnosis of the Organisation in Relation to Worklife Balance” and the second a “City Plan: Castelldefels, a City Working Towards Worklife Balance” (2004-2005).
- Presentation of a Motion for Worklife Balance and Joint Responsibility at the Council plenary session in February 2005.
- Creation of the Council Equal Opportunities Plan (2005). Unanimous approval at the Council plenary session (February 2006) and presentations to various groups (operational staff, political staff, etc.) (2006).
- Approval by the municipal government board to join the Local Network for New Uses of Time, run by the Equality & Citizenship Department of Barcelona County Council (2005).

Following the approval of the Council Equal Opportunities Plan a number of initiatives relating to worklife balance were set up. The following points give an overview:

1. Internal – the Council as an employer:
 - a. Pilot teleworking scheme.
 - b. Staff training in areas such as worklife balance, joint responsibility and new uses of time.
 - c. Creation of a municipal intranet with information about the progress of the Council Equal Opportunities Plan, specifically about new social uses of time.
 - d. Email and intranet distribution of information of interest to council staff relating to worklife balance and time management.

2. For the general public:
 - a. Awareness-raising.
 - Organisation of Awareness Raising Days relating to new forms of time management and joint responsibility.
 - Training initiatives for businesses to raise awareness about the importance of worklife balance.
 - Co-education project in a state Secondary School.
 - b. Services.
 - Creation of a Nursery School (0-3 years of age) and signing of an agreement to build two further schools.
 - Creation of a single office for public enquiries.
 - Extending opening hours: for public enquiries, council sports centre, library, schools...
 - Childcare Services and Children's Playgroup for families who want to take part in activities and courses organised by the council.
 - Increase in Childcare Services, Home Care and Sign Language Interpreters for activities organised by the Department of Equality Policies.
 - Inclusion of gender and worklife balance issues in urban planning of public spaces involving all the municipal areas organised by the urban planning departments.
 - c. Information technology.
 - Ajuntament obert/'Open Council' digital certificate for public procedures.
 - Virtual Office for public enquiries.
 - Wi-Fi. Free Internet access zones and training courses.
 - Website for Castelldefels citizen associations.
 - Local home tele-assistance service.
 - Creation of a Calendar section in the municipal website.
 - Women on the Web programme.
 - d. Mobility.
 - Car-sharing.
 - Night bus.

Duration of the initiative: 2005-2010.

Contact

Organisation: **Concejalía de Políticas de Igualdad, Ayuntamiento de Castelldefels (Department for Equality Policies, Castelldefels Town Council)**.
Telephone: (+34) 93 665 11 50 Website: <http://www.castelldefels.org>

Agder Regional Gender Equality Council

Driving Body: REGIONAL AGDER GENDER EQUALITY BODY

County: **Vest Agder and Aust Agder**

Target groups and/or bodies

Population of the Agder region.

Description

The Regional Agder Gender Equality Council was created in 2005 in response to evidence showing that the Agder Region was at the tail end of Norwegian regions in terms of gender equality. The area is characterised by higher than average unemployment levels and a labour market with considerable gender segregation. The aim of the Council is to mainstream gender equality making it an essential part of strategic regional planning, and as a result, improve quality of life.

The Council is made up of representatives from various local Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations: the two counties in Agder, regional government, diverse businesses and trade unions, the university, the regional branch of the National Welfare Agency and the Norwegian Association of Regional and Local Authorities. Its main activities are:

- Participation in conferences and international projects about gender equality.
- Promotion of research projects and development work on gender equality.
- Collaboration with the Gender Equality Centre at Agder University, opened in 2008.

One of the research projects promoted by the Council which stands out is "Free Choice for Equality". This project, started in 2006, aims to encourage equal opportunities from a young age. Its goal is to encourage youth to choose the training and profession they really want, free of traditional gender stereotypes. In doing so, they hope to narrow the huge gender division currently found in the region's labour market, a division accentuated by the fact that the majority of women only work part-time. Measures undertaken include:

- Campaigns in schools aimed at teachers, students and parents.
- Providing non-traditional role models for children.
- Employment of male staff in nurseries, etc.

Duration of the initiative: 2005 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Agder Gender Equality Council.**

PROGRAMME OF LOCAL AGREEMENTS FOR WORKLIFE BALANCE

DRIVING BODY: INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN NAVARRE

Province: **Navarre**

Autonomous Community: **Navarre**

Target groups and/or bodies

Local bodies in Navarre regulated by the Regional Law 6/1990, of 2nd July, Regional Government of Navarre.

Description

In signing a Local Agreement local bodies commit to working together towards a series of objectives aimed at helping citizens of the region improve balance between family, personal and professional life.

INAL organises and offers:

1. Annual public tender for local bodies to participate in the Programme of Agreements.
Local bodies wishing to get involved in the programme are selected according to criteria based on population and their commitment to equality.
2. Meetings with representatives of councils, to inform about participation in the programme.
3. Design, monitoring and renewal of Agreements that have expired or are about to. Specifically:
 - a. Technical assistance during the process.
 - b. Personalised training in Gender and Equal Opportunities for representatives of the bodies that sign Local Agreements for Worklife Balance.
 - c. Resources for awareness-raising and support of citizenry.
4. Awareness-raising by organising conferences, participating in events and publishing resources.
5. Subsidies by the Government of Navarre to local councils to organise services and activities included in the Agreement.

The process of signing a Local Agreement should preferably be led by the City Council and involve the largest possible number of public and private bodies and organisations in the area. The agreements aim to achieve the greatest possible social and institutional consensus.

Duration of the initiative: An annual programme since 2004.

Contact

Organisation: **Instituto Navarro para la Igualdad (Institute for Gender Equality in Navarre)**.
Telephone: **(+34) 948 20 66 04** Website: **<http://www.navarra.es>**

2.2. One Goal: Managing and Saving Time

Time is a sparse, but also a very versatile resource. Its use, prioritisation and distribution have an effect on our quality of life. In this regard, a further obstacle to work-life balance is **inefficient time-management**, which prevents society from achieving the balance in life it strives for.

2.2.1. FLEXIBILITY IN WORKING HOURS AND PLACE OF WORK

Nowadays, we are currently experiencing a change in this model: **more flexible organisation of time and space or the new adjustment of career paths according to the different life stages** are some of the main social demands. These demands are partly sustained by society, but also encouraged by the private sector.

The strategies for **the optimisation of working time and space management** can become a means of obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage, of preserving and encouraging one of the most important assets which companies have: the human capital, and to improve the functioning of any organisation, through **efficient human resources management**.

2.2.1.1. INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL BUSINESSES – INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE INITIATIVES

When approaching this context, the following question arises: **what role should Local Bodies play in the development and implementation of policies designed to achieve work-life balance?**

Some conclusions from the analysis of the experiences reviewed are:

1. Among others, the role of Local Bodies is focused on **encouraging companies** to incorporate measures to help harmonise the use of time. In many cases, companies perceive work-life balance as a conflict with negative consequences for them. For this reason, Local Bodies should approach **work-life balance not so much as a “right for workers”**, since such approach leads to a no-win situation, but rather as a **condition to increasing productivity and a requirement in an environment defined by globalised and technological competition**.
2. To a great extent, the success of the intervention depends on the level of **commitment and involvement of all parties** (Local Bodies, trade unions, business associations, managers, employees, etc.). In this context, **education and social awareness prove to be key elements** when trying to achieve a proactive attitude, since the ultimate objective is to develop a new organisational culture, in which the company’s needs are compatible with those of the staff members and in which agreements are reached on a collective basis and not only on the individual one.

NETWORK OF Businesses in NUST (new social uses of time)

Driving BODY: BARCELONA CITY COUNCIL

Province: **Barcelona**

Autonomous Community: **Catalonia**

Target groups and/or bodies

Businesses in the municipality of Barcelona belonging to the network and their staff.

Description

Businesses within the New Social Uses of Time (NUST) network share a common philosophy of promoting workers' new social uses of time. They aim to create a work culture in which efficiency, working towards goals and the use of technology to the advantage of people and business competitiveness are key values.

The network focuses on:

- Sharing information, knowledge and initiatives.
- Finding out about the experiences of other countries and businesses.
- Public recognition of the progress and innovative work they are carrying out in the field of new uses of time.

Specific actions carried out by the Network, promoted by the Local Council are:

- Training days to promote the sharing of knowledge between businesses which are part of the NUST Business Network.
- Conferences and debates to create synergies with trade unions and employers' associations working to improve people's time management skills.
- A free assessment service for businesses which are part of the Network.
- A Guide to Good Models for better use of time, "Businesses and people" was published. The aim of the guide is to draw attention to the work of businesses within the Network which are innovative in time management practices.
- A forum for sharing practical experiences with Spanish and European companies that are developing similar initiatives.
- Production of a DVD to publicly recognise the innovative efforts of the businesses within the network.

Duration of the initiative: 2006 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Dirección de Nuevos Usos del Tiempo, Ayuntamiento de Barcelona (Directorate of New Social Uses of Time, Barcelona City Council)**.

Telephone: (+34) 93 256 45 98 Website: <http://www.bcn.es>

AWARDS FOR BUSINESSES, ASSOCIATIONS, THE MEDIA, TRADE UNIONS AND OTHER
PUBLIC/PRIVATE BODIES SUPPORTING THE INCORPORATION OF BEST PRACTICES IN
WORKLIFE BALANCE WITHIN THEIR ORGANISATION

Driving body: VALDEMORO TOWN COUNCIL

Province: Madrid

Autonomous Community: Community of Madrid

Target groups and/or bodies

Businesses, associations and media representatives in the Municipality of Valdemoro.

Description

This project consists of awards being presented to public or private businesses in the Municipality of Valdemoro which successfully incorporate measures, or even a plan, for worklife balance within their organisation to improve productivity and profits. The award is also given to associations within the municipality demonstrating best practices, as well as local media that have published stories that promote worklife balance and equal opportunities.

Alongside the award, necessary work tools and information are provided through technical and operational support. This aims to establish measures for worklife balance in the organisations of Valdemoro through collective bargaining. The following steps were undertaken to ensure this:

- a. Firstly, a mailout was sent to businesses of the municipality by the Women's Section of the Department of Social Affairs, Women and Family, offering them the service.
- b. Secondly, practical and easy to use educational materials were produced. These 12 sheets detail the methodology to incorporate measures for worklife balance.
- c. Thirdly, businesses are offered individual tutorials. These teach them how to create their own worklife balance plans.
- d. Finally, once the plans have been analysed, the assessment team recommends public recognition for the businesses that have successfully produced their plans.

Duration of the initiative: From 2008, indefinitely. (An agreement is signed annually with the Community of Madrid).

Contact

Organisation: Área de Mujer, Concejalía de Acción Social, Mujer y Familia, Ayuntamiento de Valdemoro (Women's Section, Department of Social Affairs, Women and Family, Valdemoro Town Council).

Telephone: (+34) 91 809 96 66 E-mail: mujer@ayto-valdemoro.org Website: <http://www.valdemoro.es>

2.2.1.2. Councils as an employer

The following conclusions were drawn from the analysis of initiatives regarding the role of Local Bodies as employers:

1. Local Bodies cannot remain strangers to the lack of work-life balance among their employees. They should also attempt to **be seen as an example** by presenting themselves as driving forces for change.
2. A wide range of possibilities exists to improve work-life balance among staff members, from **expanding and improving general regulations** (paid leave, voluntary leave or reduction in working hours) to introducing **measures to make time and space more flexible** (compact daily or weekly hours, part-time work, working from home, etc.) or **bringing child and long-term care services closer to citizens**.
3. The results of the initiatives reveal the following basic facts:
 - A new work philosophy based on self-management and mutual trust is required to make working times and spaces more flexible.
 - Workers should have the **right and freedom to choose among different options**: full or part time work, working in-house or working from home, without them being discriminated against or treated differently.
 - **New technologies** are fundamental tools to improve flexibility.
 - Besides implementing **measures** for favoring work-life balance, Local Bodies should **advise staff members on the existence of such measures, so that they can benefit from their options**. This is not always the case and it is therefore necessary to make the corresponding diagnosis.

Flexibility in Working Hours and Workplace

Driving Body: KRISTIANSAND COUNCIL

County: Vest Agder

Target groups and/or bodies

Workers in the Kristiansand Council, although it can be applied to all Norwegian public administration, local and national, and the private sector.

Description

This working system is based on flexible hours and locations. It emerged in the 1980s in response to workers' needs, particularly those caring for children or with other special family circumstances. It aims to help achieve balance between working time and personal/family life.

This system is currently implemented not only in Kristiansand Council, but throughout Norwegian public administration, both at local and state level. It also applies to much of the private sector.

On one hand, average working hours are 37.5 hours a week in the public sector and 40 hours in the private sector. Whenever possible, working hours are continuous between 08:00 and 16:00. There is 30 minutes for lunch break.

On the other hand, some employees can choose to work following a flexible schedule provided they do a certain number of hours per month, as well as completing their assigned duties and responsibilities. This flexibility is made possible by an electronic log of hours worked each day. Employees keep this up-to-date themselves. It divides working time into sections (projects, absences, holidays, etc.) and therefore provides a record of hours during a specific period. If an employee has done overtime, he/she has the right to take the equivalent amount of time off when employer permits her or him. When the tasks at hand permit it, sometimes it is also possible to work outside the office, through the use of IT.

This way of organising work depends strictly on mutual trust between staff and supervisors, as well as decentralised decision making.

Duration of the initiative: It began in 1990 and will continue indefinitely.

Contact

Organisation: Department of Social Development, Kristiansand Council.

Website: <http://www.kristiansand.kommune.no>

2.2.2. "A CITY FOR CITIZENS": TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY POLICIES

The analysis of the initiatives implemented in this context leads to the following results:

1. Local Bodies face the challenge of making **towns or cities inhabitant-friendly so that citizens** can find balance between the different spheres in life.
2. With that objective in mind, public policies should take the following measures into consideration:
 - **Co-ordinating times** in the realm of general and supporting services.
 - Co-ordinating travelling and **improving urban planning and mobility**, in order to reconcile times.
3. The following **initiatives** have been implemented in this area: research on the uses of time in cities, time management plans for the local area or school routes.
4. **Information and raising awareness** campaigns, as well as **political commitment**, are **Key success factors** for these initiatives.

Time management plan

Driving body: VILAGARCIA DE AROUSA TOWN COUNCIL

Province: Pontevedra

Autonomous Community: Galicia

Target groups and/or bodies

General population. Public and private bodies and organisations within the municipality.

Description

The City Time Management Plan started out as a local measure for worklife balance, part of the Second Municipal Equality Plan in Vilagarcia de Arousa, adopted in 2008. The two key aspects of the plan are:

- Time is in short supply and each individual has the right to manage his/her own time. Citizens need to be given the means to achieve this.
- The city's current hours of work are based on traditional family models. This prevents women from entering the workforce.

This Plan aims, therefore, to coordinate opening hours of council offices open to the public, shops, businesses, cultural activities, recreation and public transport with citizens' personal, family and professional needs. The goal is to organise existing schedules more effectively, without requiring extra services, as increasing opening hours would force staff to work longer hours.

The project began in 2009 and thus far has achieved the following:

1. Informing the municipality's public and private organisations about the plan: business associations, guilds and associations of fisheries and maritime industries, public transport companies, neighbourhood associations, women's organisations, political parties, trade unions and government at a local, regional and national level.
2. A diagnostic study, consisting of a questionnaire for businesses, administrative bodies and associations of the city, to determine existing opening hours and people's scheduling needs.
3. Establishment of a Consultation Board to analyse proposals suggested in the questionnaires. The Board is also responsible for taking appropriate action and reaching agreements to organise the city's schedules more effectively. The Board is composed of representatives from all areas of the city's daily life and its first meeting has already been called.

Duration of the initiative: It started in 2009.

Contact

Organisation: **Centro de Información a la Mujer, Ayuntamiento de Vilagarcía de Arousa (Information Centre for Women, Vilagarcia de Arousa Town Council)**.

Telephone: (+34) 986 09 92 00 E-mail: muller@vilagarcia.es Website: <http://www.ivilagarcia.com>

2.3. COUNCILS AS SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ORGANISERS

In numerous cases, the lack of time available to **achieve work-life balance** is not a result of inadequate distribution of working hours, lack of flexibility at work or time-consuming travelling, but rather reflects the **constraints in certain resources and necessary infrastructures**.

An excess of duties in the domestic and familial spheres together with professional obligations, compels citizens to resort to public or private services, which substitute their own personal involvement in these tasks. **The demand for certain domestic, educational or personal care services has evidently increased**, even in cases when the person has complete time flexibility at their disposal, which should enable them to achieve work-life balance. In other instances, however, this balance remains out of reach due to the limited availability of leisure and free-time services, as it is usually the case in rural or isolated areas.

There are, thus, **needs to be met which Town and City Councils could satisfy** by directly providing goods and services, coordinating and regulating the already existing services or by granting the private sector a variety of subsidies or other incentives which promote the creation of these types of services, working, in a word, for the ultimate goal of achieving work-life balance.

To do so, **Councils intervene**, to a greater or lesser extent, with the objective of harmonising the uses of time. Firstly, they **provide citizens with access to services and infrastructures** that have an impact on achieving this objective. In particular, those services and infrastructures are:

- A. Services supporting work-life balance designed to reduce familial responsibilities and domestic chores:
 - Addressed to child-care.
 - Addressed to care-dependent persons.
- B. Other services, alternatives or spaces designed to entirely develop the personal sphere and the active use of leisure and free-time (sports centres, cultural activities, etc.).
- C. Other services (time banks).

2.3.1. WHO CAN LOOK AFTER MY CHILDREN WHEN I AM UNABLE TO?

Being the closest administrative level to citizens, Local Bodies know best about what the demands and needs are, and are certainly more aware of the services' choice in their area. Consequently, **Local Bodies are meant to co-ordinate public policies designed to create childcare services, and should also support, promote or induce their use.**

The analysis of initiatives shows that councils pursue several lines of action, in order to respond to social demands:

- Taking care of children during periods in which work and school times are incompatible. In order to do so, councils have chosen to organise socio-educational activities in some schools and to keep them open before and/or after classes. Key success factors for these initiatives are making supporting services flexible and **affordable** for families.
- Taking care of children while their **parents invest time in other personal or professional activities**. In this case, Local Bodies also provide **very flexible services** with **long opening hours**. However, in order to avoid misuse the use of such services is limited.
- Local Bodies also offer services designed to satisfy the needs of groups at risk of social exclusion and whose demands cannot be met by the usual services. Such is the case of childcare **services adapted** to the children of women suffering domestic gender violence or in danger of social exclusion. All these services are free of charge and offer psycho-pedagogical assistance for the children.
- Besides the provision of childcare services, Local Bodies **advocate improving the management of resources** in this realm, to efficiently achieve a maximum coverage and the best quality.

PERSONALISED CARE PROGRAMME

DRIVING BODY: ALDAIA TOWN COUNCIL

Province: **Valencia**

Autonomous Community: **Community of Valencia**

Target groups and/or bodies

Children and people in long-term care (moderate degree) and their families.

Description

The personalised care programme is available from Monday to Saturday from 07:00 to 20:00. During these times care is given to children and people needing long-term care, according to families' needs. The process by which the service is provided is as follows:

- a. The family, either by telephone or in person, says when they require the service to look after their child or care-dependent family member. They can request from one to a maximum of four hours of care per day.
- b. The user is enrolled. The team is kept up-to-date with people being enrolled and discharged so as to be able to welcome and care for users. A registration form, showing arrival and departure times, with a parent's signature if applicable, is used to this end. A form with personal information on the attendee and contact telephone numbers must also be completed. The family receives a card indicating the agreed pick-up time.
- c. During the time requested by the family service users have access to leisure and training activities. Personalised care offered includes catering, hygiene care when necessary (in specially adapted bathrooms) and education and rehabilitative programmes.
- d. A transport service to and/or from the centre is available for elderly care-dependent adults. This is provided through an agreement with the Red Cross.

Incident forms are created to monitor and improve the project. Feedback forms, to gauge satisfaction with the service, are given to users or their families at various times throughout their involvement with the programme and always when they have finished using the service.

Duration of the initiative: 2009 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Área de Participación y Desarrollo del Ayuntamiento de Aldaia (Department of Participation and Development, Aldaia Town Council).**

Telephone: (+34) 96 198 88 11 Website: <http://www.aldaia-ajuntament.es>

Casal de Mares i Pares (Parents' Centre)

Driving Body: BADALONA TOWN COUNCIL

Province: **Barcelona**

Autonomous Community: **Catalonia**

Target groups and/or bodies

Population responsible for children. In particular one-parent households, immigrants and people with problems organising their schedules.

Description

The “Casal de Mares i Pares” provides childcare for children aged 0 to 12 years allowing parents to conduct their daily professional or personal activities. The process by which the service is provided is as follows:

- The opening hours are long, organised in two shifts:
 - 08:30 to 13:00 for children aged 0 to 3 years.
 - 16:30 to 20:30 for children aged 3 to 12 years.
- Badalona Council provides two carers for each age group. The ratio of children/staff is between 15 and 6, depending on the age group.
- The use of the service is limited to no more than three days a week and no more than three hours a day, except for families referred by Social Services who may exceed these restrictions.
- At certain times, demand exceeds supply. In this event, to avoid people arriving at the centre only to find there is no space available, families can telephone the same afternoon or morning to inform the centre of their plans. Reservation is only allowed 30 minutes prior to drop off (the time needed to travel from home to the centre). Whole day reservations are not allowed except in situations where specific needs warrant this.
- It is a free service, subsidised by various public administrations.
- Activities provided by the centre include:
 - For children: Recreational and school support activities.
 - For families: Educational psychology services and a meeting space to form childcare support and cooperation networks.

Duration of the initiative: 2008 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Servicio de Políticas de Igualdad del Ayuntamiento de Badalona (Service of Equality Policies, Badalona Town Council).**

Telephone: **(+34) 93 483 29 32** Website: **<http://www.badalona.cat>**

Municipal coordination and management of nurseries at a fixed price

DRIVING BODY: BÆRUM COUNCIL

County: Akershus

Target groups and/or bodies

Population of the municipality with responsibility for children aged 1 to 6 years old.

Description

The Norwegian Childcare Act (1975) was introduced in response to the country's lack of child care provision and the inequalities within its availability. The Act, and its amendments, guarantees the right to a nursery place for the entire target population. It makes local authorities responsible for coordinating and organising the municipality's existing childcare resources to ensure access. As of January 2010, any family without a place in a local nursery can sue the Council.

Bærum Council's initiative, in force in all Norwegian municipalities, aims to establish council coordination of all nurseries located in the municipality regardless of ownership (whether public, private, religious, belonging to voluntary organisations, etc.). The application system is centralised and involves submitting an online or paper form. The team responsible for managing applications allocates places according to certain criteria such as location, age and specific needs of families. Admission and waiting lists for all nurseries are available on the Internet.

Parliament has set a maximum fee for the service, and the councils are responsible for the quality. The current maximum fee is 300 Euro per month for each child. There are discounts for two children from the same family onwards.

Minimum opening hours are from 08:00 to 17:00, although many centres are extending these to suit parents' needs.

One of the priorities in these nurseries is the equal treatment of boys and girls and the transmission of values of gender equality. In 2004 the National Action Plan for the Recruitment of Men into the Childcare Profession was launched. This aimed to increase the number of male staff employed in these centres from 10% to 20%. The goal was to help get rid of gender stereotypes and achieve a balanced distribution of housework between women and men.

Duration of the initiative: It began in 1975 and is ongoing. It has been improved and updated over the years.

Contact

Organisation: **Bærum Kommune (Bærum Council)**. Website: <http://www.baerum.kommune.no>

2.3.2. WORK-LIFE BALANCE SERVICES FOR DEPENDENT PERSONS: CARING FOR THE ELDERLY AND THE DISABLED

The following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis presented above:

- **Local Bodies play a central role** with regard to the provision of care services addressed to the elderly or disabled people, as the attention they need involves an obligation within the familial sphere which takes time from other activities in the personal and professional spheres.
- The current socio-demographic context – as reflected on our ageing population – represents a challenge for the Public Administration in general, but also for Local Bodies in particular.
- In Spain, in spite of the complex map of competences, **Local Bodies count on a great degree of intervention and competence** with regard to providing long-term care services, as established in the Support of Personal Autonomy and Long-Term Care Act (39/2006).
- The study of best practices reveals that councils are pursuing several lines of action within this realm:
 1. Provision of **long-term care services** (either for elderly or disabled people) to ensure that they can live **at their home and in a family environment for the longest possible time** (“meals on wheels”, rehabilitation services and technical aid). **Affordable prices or services** which are **free of charge** constitute key elements for success.
 2. Setting up of services designed to **free people in charge of long-term care from certain responsibilities and give them time and space to breathe**, without neglecting the stimulating activities that care-dependent people need (personalised care, companionship services). In this context, **flexibility** is one of the most appreciated aspects.
 3. **Improving resources management and offering quality services, which are adapted** to the care-dependent people needs and their families.

Municipal service of meals for the elderly and care-dependents

Driving body: ARANDA DE DUERO TOWN COUNCIL

Province: Burgos

Autonomous Community: Castile and Leon

Target groups and/or bodies

Elderly people and/or care-dependents registered residents of Aranda de Duero.

Description

The Meals service is for elderly people and/or care-dependents living in the municipality. It is managed by the Council's Social Services in collaboration with a private company. Two types of services are offered:

- a. Delivery of meals to the service user's home. This is available to people who fit into one of the following categories: over 65, disabled to a level of 75% or higher, those with limited mobility; people up to second degree blood relation of the applicant, who are also over 65 years of age and/or with a level of disability of over 65%.
- b. Meals provided at a day centre and the headquarters of two neighbourhood associations. This is available to people over 55 who are retired, have taken early retirement, those receiving unemployment benefits and their spouses, or those with a level of disability equal to or greater than 65%. The service user should not have any infectious/contagious disease.

The initiative is carried out according to the following steps:

1. Social workers and those responsible for the Council's Employment Guidance and Advice Programme set a pricing structure and service regulations.
2. Creation of a committee to evaluate and approve applications for the service. Results are presented in a report including information about the applicant's mobility, ability to independently prepare meals, shop and clear plates and dishes and their economic, social and family situation, etc.
3. Eligibility for the Meals Service is decided on a point-system according to the criteria set in the service regulations.

Duration of the initiative: 2007 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Concejalía de Acción Social, Ayuntamiento de Aranda de Duero (Department of Social Affairs, Aranda de Duero Town Council).**

Telephone: (+34) 947 51 18 21 Website: <http://www.arandadeduero.es>

Daycare Service (S.E.D.A.)

DRIVING BODY: MAJADAHONDA TOWN COUNCIL

Province: Madrid

Autonomous Community: Community of Madrid

Target groups and/or bodies

Elderly people at the onset of basic to moderate care-dependency, and their families.

Description

The S.E.D.A. service provides preventive care and assistance for elderly people who are beginning to become care-dependent. It aims to improve their quality of life and to allow service user's families to carry out work and leisure activities.

Features of the programme:

- a. A free service aimed at those elderly people not provided for by other resources such as day care centres requiring users to come in by their own means, or residential homes for those who are highly dependent.
- b. A transport service to and from the centre for those that require it. Service users can be collected from their homes in accessible, adapted vehicles from 09.30 to arrive in time for the start of activities at 10.30. When activities finish, at 13.30 transport is also provided to take them home or they can be collected by their families. Activities run from 10.30 to 13.30.
- c. Activities include cognitive stimulation, leisure, recreational and cultural activities, social integration activities and others aimed at improving relations between family members.
- d. S.E.D.A. also offers guidance and advice to families and intervenes in situations of family conflict.
- e. The service can be requested by the individual, their family or an institution.
- f. In order to gain access to the service a member of the family is interviewed by a social worker to assess the socio-familial situation. The technical team then determines whether the resource is appropriate and the individual care programme best suited to the applicant. In the event of any changes in circumstances that originally qualified the user, the family is guided to the most appropriate care service for the new situation (residential homes, day care centres, home care service, voluntary organisations, etc.).

Duration of the initiative: 2000 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: Área de Mayores, Ayuntamiento de Majadahonda (Department of Elderly People, Majadahonda Town Council).

Telephone: (+34) 91 634 91 67 / 29 Website: <http://www.majadahonda.org>

COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

DRIVING BODY: BÆRUM COUNCIL

County: Akershus

Target groups and/or bodies

People aged over 18, in need of temporary or permanent care.

Description

A municipal service coordinating physiotherapy provision and the free loan of special equipment for people dependent on short or long term care. Equipment can be loaned for a maximum of two years. The aims are twofold: to enable people to continue living in their own homes without having to enter specialised centres, and to allow families caring for them to improve the balance between work and personal schedules.

Individuals with special needs are assisted in their process of rehabilitation for the time it takes to regain their independence in everyday life. Two types of assistance are available:

- Physiotherapy which can take place wherever the patient most needs it, whether at school, work or home. Treatment is provided on an individual basis, but there are also group activities for Parkinson's patients: to improve strength and balance, cognitive problem-solving, exercises in swimming pools, etc. Close contact is maintained between the team of therapists providing these services and the nursing teams of the different districts, as well as hospital staff.
- Practical tools and technical assistance are provided by occupational therapists. There is a free loan of equipment such as crutches, wheelchairs, adapted beds, etc. Equipment is loaned for a limited period of time and the service also offers installation of the necessary equipment in the homes. Local Authorities are responsible for equipment loans for a maximum period of two years. After this, central government assumes responsibility, on completion of an application.

Support services and equipment are provided to service users free of charge. Only in the case of needing an adapted car is there a charge, which is determined according to the applicant's economic situation.

Duration of the initiative: 1970 onwards.

Contact

Organisation: **Rehabilitation Services, Bærum Council.**

Website: <http://www.baerum.kommune.no>

Home-based services centre for the elderly and/or disabled people

Driving body: MANDAL COUNCIL

County: Vest Agder

Target groups and/or bodies

Elderly people and/or care-dependents, and their families.

Description

A Council home-based care service which co-ordinates and centralises the whole range of services available to the elderly and/or care-dependents, regardless of whether the provision comes from public or private bodies, religious organisations, NGOs, etc.

Services offered, through the Centre for Home-Based Services are:

- Day care centres, with activity programmes in the mornings and afternoons.
- Home help service for everyday household chores such as cleaning, shopping, etc.
- Home health care service, such as nursing or administering medication.
- Meal delivery service.
- Special transport service for people with disabilities. An adapted accessible vehicle, which can be used as a taxi, is made available at the same price as public transport.
- A personal 24 hour Security Alarm. A device, permanently worn around the neck, which can be pressed in any kind of emergency. This notifies staff, who immediately travels to the individual's home.
- Independent, specially-adapted apartments are available within the Centre at an additional cost.

These services are all based in the same office allowing for greater efficiency and also providing more flexibility. It is possible for the number and duration of visits to be adjusted according to the changing needs of each person. For example, in the case of a service user's health deteriorating, the number of visits and/or duration of visits can be increased immediately or a decision can be made to admit the individual to a specialised centre. Some services, such as healthcare, are free to service users. The cost of others, such as home help or provision of meals, is decided according to each person's income.

Duration of the initiative: 1982 onwards.

Contact

Organisation: **Mandal Council.**

2.3.3. ENCOURAGING LEISURE AND FREE-TIME

The analysis of the initiatives implemented by Local Bodies in order to promote leisure time led to the following conclusions:

- **Leisure** represents a fundamental element to achieve work-life balance and it is also an **unquestionable right for all citizens**.
- **Local Bodies** take up the **challenge** to offer citizens the resources required to enjoy leisure and free time.
- The analysis of best practices reveals that councils pursue several lines of action to achieve their objectives:
 1. Organising leisure services and activities addressed to those **citizens less able to access them** (i.e. disabled people or women). In many cases, they fulfil a double function: on one hand, they **encourage people to enjoy their leisure and free time**; on the other hand, they constitute a **new means to achieve work-life balance**.
 2. Setting in motion services to enable parents to share their leisure and free time with their children.
- Among the aspects that ensure the success of this sort of initiatives, the following ones should be underlined:
 - A. **Quality services**, for which qualified and professional personnel is appointed.
 - B. **Affordable fees** for families.
 - C. **Easy access** in terms of proximity and management.
 - D. **Encouraging citizens to get involved** in the initiatives implemented.

TEMPS DE BARRI, TEMPS EDUCATIU COMPARTIT (NEIGHBOURHOOD TIME, SHARED EDUCATIONAL TIME)

Driving Body: BARCELONA CITY COUNCIL

Province: **Barcelona**

Autonomous Community: **Catalonia**

Target groups and/or bodies

Children in the municipality of Barcelona in Infant, Primary and Secondary Education, and their families.

Description

A team of technical/operational staff belonging to the various bodies involved – The Barcelona Institute of Education, the city districts and the Jaume Bofill Foundation – was established to lead the programme.

Services and resources:

- Quality extracurricular activities open to the whole neighbourhood. These are jointly organised or coordinated by Parents Associations, organisations and schools.
- Opening of schoolyards at weekends for public use. They are attended by monitors and are open to all children, regardless of whether or not they are pupils at the school.
- Weekend Family Activities, organised by different schools and Parents' Associations.
- Service to accompany children to the neighbourhood's open activities, so as to guarantee their access and mobility.

Information on the programme is made available through a resource and activity guide. It is distributed to all families of school children, as well as neighbourhood institutions, facilities and services. There are also leaflets and posters advertising all available activities.

Registration for the public extra-curricular activities is done through the website: www.bcn.cat/tempsdebarri where information about family weekend activities is available.

Duration of the initiative: 2006 - 2011.

Contact

Organisation: **Dirección de Nuevos Usos del Tiempo, Ayuntamiento de Barcelona (Department of New Social Uses of Time, Barcelona City Council).**

Telephone: **(+34) 93 256 45 98** Website: <http://www.bcn.es>

SCHOOL OF ADAPTED SPORTS

Driving body: MOLINA DE SEGURA TOWN COUNCIL

Province: **Murcia**

Autonomous Community: **Murcia**

Target groups and/or bodies

Families with children aged 5 to 25 years old, with minor cognitive, psychiatric or physical disabilities.

Description

The School of Adapted Sports is aimed at people aged between 5 and 25 with minor physical disabilities or cognitive, psychiatric or sensory impairment who possess a certain level of independence. The service is provided from Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 14:30 during the month of July.

The centre offers sports, physical activities (hydrotherapy, psychomotor skills, maintenance fitness, etc.) and various workshops. These take place in or out of water and are adapted to individual users' stages of development, from early childhood to adulthood.

The active nature of the provision aids service users' development and helps them improve their physical abilities. A participative, child-centred approach is taken which helps improve self-esteem and social skills, taking notice of their ideas and opinions and reinforcing all their efforts.

The initiative is organised by the Department of Gender Equality, through an externally contracted organisation.

It is subject to continuous assessment tracking to what extent objectives and programmed activities are adapted to personal situations and concerns of the users and the needs of target families. Quantitative indicators are developed and gathered, such as the number of families and youth involved, as well as qualitative indicators, such as the degree to which objectives have been met, service users' satisfaction and impact on the population.

Duration of the initiative: 2008 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Concejalía de Igualdad Efectiva de Mujeres y Hombres, Ayuntamiento de Molina de Segura (Department of Gender Equality, Molina de Segura Town Council).**

Telephone: **(+34) 968 38 86 94 / 3** E-mail: **mujer@molinadesegura.es**

Website: **<http://www.molinadesegura.es>**

2.3.4. OTHER BEST PRACTICES

Other initiatives, which have been set in motion or promoted by Local Bodies, due to their nature, these initiatives have not been included in the defined categories, in particular are: **organising time Banks, composing resource guides of services encouraging work-life balance, supporting private initiatives in the creation of quality work-life balance services and supporting voluntary work.**

ALCALA DE HENARES TIME BANK

DRIVING BODY: ALCALA DE HENARES TOWN COUNCIL

Province: **Madrid**

Autonomous Community: **Community of Madrid**

Target groups and/or bodies

General adult population of Alcala de Henares.

Description

The “Time Bank” is a social network composed by men and women which aims to achieve greater solidarity in the community. People offer a number of hours of their time, offering a service they can provide and, in return, can claim time needed to achieve better balance among family, personal and professional life. The network is managed in the following way:

1. The team in charge of the project meets with the individual wishing to participate. During this meeting they explain the system, encourage supply and demand of activities and provide information about current offers and contact information of all members and their activities. A registration form is completed and an ‘hours’ chequebook is handed to the new member.
2. Once a member, the individual can start to trade in services. Examples include:
 - a. Accompanying elderly people in activities such as theatre trips or helping them cook. Accompanying young people, for example collecting them from school or spending time with them. Accompanying people with Alzheimer’s.
 - b. Helping the elderly with activities such as shopping and moving objects.
 - c. Listening, reading to people who are unable to do so.
 - d. Domestic skills workshops and teaching people how to do small household repairs.
 - e. Help with homework and tutoring.
 - f. Organising children’s parties, storytelling, leading leisure activities, etc.

Duration of the initiative: 2007 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Concejalía de Mujer, Ayuntamiento de Alcalá de Henares (Women’s Advice Centre, Alcala de Henares Town Council)**. Telephone: **(+34) 91 877 17 20**
E-mail: **cmujeralcala@ayto-alcaladehenares.es** Website: **http://www.ayto-alcaladehenares.es**

VOLUNTARY SERVICES CENTRE

DRIVING BODY: MANDAL COUNCIL

County: Vest Agder

Target groups and/or bodies

General population of Mandal.

Description

The Voluntary Services Centre connects people who have free time and can offer their services to people in need of assistance in their daily lives, such as families with dependent children, elderly people, care-dependents, immigrants or refugees. 75% of Norwegian municipalities now have a centre of this nature following the Government's "Programme of volunteer centres", launched to help organise volunteer resources under council management.

Support provided by Centre volunteers is carried out in cooperation with local children's centres and local family centres and includes: helping with the shopping, accompanying people to doctor/hospital appointments, helping children with homework (an increasingly in-demand activity often offered by retired teachers), minor home plumbing or electrical repairs, telephone calls, childcare while parents perform other tasks, etc.

The Centre also organises group recreational and social activities such as daytrips, cultural activities, and visits to residential homes for the elderly, leisure activities, etc. It also offers some general services such as I.T. and internet courses, support groups for certain illnesses or addictions, to help with difficult family situations, distribution of sand for gritting the streets in icy conditions, etc.

The Centre's funding comes from various public and private institutions, and everyone who works there (currently 160 individuals) does so on a voluntary basis. There is one paid member of staff who acts as the centre co-ordinator. This person receives requests for assistance and assigns duties to volunteers depending on their skills and availability.

The Centre is governed by a board appointed by the public and private funding bodies. This board meets regularly and once a year holds a meeting open to all volunteers and service users.

Duration of the initiative: 2003 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Mandal Voluntary Services Centre.**

2.4. Changing mentalities: a question of ideas and awareness

The following lessons can be learned from the analysis of the changing mentalities initiatives carried out by local authorities:

1. A **change of mentality is a long and difficult process**, particularly among the adult population, whose perceptions and stereotypes are deeply-rooted. **Raising social awareness among young people is very effective**, and also essential to make change possible in the long run. In order to have an impact on the adult population, it is helpful to implement initiatives, **which are either continually in place over a longer period of time or which are offered briefly but repeatedly over several years and within different realms**, so that messages catch on little by little over citizens. Different type of measures into practice with the common goal of supporting **joint-responsibility**, because they can generate exponential effects by fueling social discussion and encouraging people to think in depth about issues such as joint responsibility and gender equality.
2. **Male participation should be strengthened**, not only regarding leading and organising social awareness activities, but also as part of the target population for the initiatives. Raising awareness among this half of the population is particularly relevant to spread out the idea that **work-life balance is not a female issue**: beyond gender differences, work-life balance enables all individuals **to accept responsibility and freely develop all the different aspects of their life**. Also, since role models are an essential part of any learning process, only by increasing the number of men and women who question the current situation and are conscious of the changes needed to ensure work-life balance, will it be possible to effect those changes in all spheres.
3. If social awareness is present in the different spheres of life (familial, work, personal, social...), it will be easier to **overcome sexist stereotypes** linked to gender tasks and activities. The need for individuals to reconcile all activities they want, or need to do, will also be more evident.

Therefore, **engaging all the different spheres of socialisation (schools, companies, public services, families, the media, etc.) in raising social awareness** will lead to a broad understanding of work-life balance. This will then not be limited to the professional and familial level, but will include other activities related to the personal realm which are equally necessary and desired.

4. Lastly, it is essential to **address the concerns of different social groups and take their different sensitivities** into consideration in order to catch their attention regarding the importance of work-life balance. Policies designed to raise social awareness should have the **target audience in mind** and adapt contents to their features, tastes and expectations.

Awareness-raising campaigns in Estella-Lizarrá Promoting joint responsibility

Driving body: ESTELLA-LIZARRA TOWN COUNCIL

Province: **Navarre**

Autonomous Community: **Navarre**

Target groups and/or bodies

General population of Estella-Lizarrá, particularly men.

Description

A series of campaigns about joint responsibility in parenthood and other related issues was launched within the framework of Estella-Lizarrá's Council intervention for improved worklife balance, based on a Local Agreement and the firm belief that spreading awareness of these ideas encourages worklife balance. The project has included the following initiatives:

- In the first campaign washing up gloves were given out. They bore the slogan "If you're a man, dare to wear them."; "Put your gloves on." (Si eres hombre, ¡atrévete!: pónelos-jar itzazu."; "Ven a coger el guante"). Posters were produced showing a man wearing washing up gloves and holding a baby.
- In the following campaign babies' bottles were handed out together with a card with the slogan "This is also a man's job. Working towards responsible fatherhood."
- In 2007 a controversial, high-impact campaign was launched with a poster showing a man frying eggs, with the slogan "Working towards responsible fatherhood. Don't touch them: fry them!". (A humorous double entendre). Alongside this nappies were distributed to homes with the slogan "Put me on! This is also a man's job."
- In 2008 the free gift was a teddy bear with the slogan "Caring is also for men" and a card for school children to give to their parents which read, "Dad, caring is also for men". That Christmas kitchen clocks were given out with the slogan "Life is better when we share work and time."
- In 2009 a poster was made with the slogan "Life is better when we share" featuring four of the region's well-known men performing household chores. Magnetic whiteboards were also given out, with the words "Dad, take note; this is also for men".

These campaigns are accompanied by opinion articles in newspapers, along with television and local radio station appearances. They continue throughout the year with particular focus on key times such as Christmas. Workshops and courses on infant care and massage, and household survival are also offered to men to raise awareness about joint responsibility for housework and childcare.

Duration of the initiative: 2002 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Área de la Mujer e Igualdad, Ayuntamiento de Estella-Lizarrá (Department of Women and Gender Equality, Estella-Lizarrá Town Council)**. Telephone: (+34) 948 54 82 37
E-mail: areadelamujer@estella-lizarrá.com Website: <http://www.estella-lizarrá.com>

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WORKLIFE BALANCE IS? BENEFIT FROM IT! PROGRAMME OF FLEXIBLE AND WORKLIFE BALANCED BUSINESSES

DRIVING BODY: SANTA MARTA DE TORMES TOWN COUNCIL

Province: **Salamanca**

Autonomous Community: **Castile and Leon**

Target groups and/or bodies

Small and medium-sized businesses in Santa Marta de Tormes.

Description

The initiative followed these steps:

1. An awareness-raising and information campaign about worklife balance aimed at local companies, including issues such as:
 - a. Using worklife balance to improve and enhance the competitiveness of businesses, while improving employees' quality of life.
 - b. Financial assistance, awards and tax benefits companies can benefit from if they adopt measures for worklife balance.
 - c. Measures to be implemented in organizations as set out in the Gender Equality Law.
2. A "Resource Guide for flexible and worklife balanced businesses". This is used to raise awareness and includes existing regulations, financial aid and subsidies to encourage balance between work and family life. The guide was achieved through:
 - a. Training given to a member of the Council in order to take on the role of "Officer for worklife balance and its implications in business."
 - b. A detailed study of resources for worklife balance already available in the council.
 - c. Detailed analysis of the benefits of worklife balance to employers and staff, and the disadvantages of not achieving worklife balance.
 - d. Developing the content and format of the Guide. Publication and diffusion through the press.
3. Delivery of the Guide to selected companies during a visit by the officer. Follow-up visits and counselling about measures for worklife balance.

Duration of the initiative: 2007 to the present day (2010).

Contact

Organisation: **Servicio de Conciliación de la Vida Laboral y Familiar, Concejalía de la Mujer, Ayuntamiento de Santa Marta de Tormes (Worklife Balance Service, Women's Department, Santa Marta de Tormes Town Council)**. Telephone: (+34) 923 13 10 20
E-mail: info@santamartadetormes.es Website: <http://www.santamartadetormes.es>

RESOURCE CENTRE FOR MEN (REFORM)

DRIVING BODY: REFORM

Target groups and/or bodies

The Norwegian population in general.

Description

REFORM – a resource centre for men was established in 2002 as the first professional telephone- and counselling service for men in various difficult situations. The service was originally run by volunteers as a “telephone hotline”, and from the 1980’s it was funded by the municipality of Oslo. The establishment of REFORM introduced split funding between the National Government and the municipality of Oslo. Since then, REFORM has grown into an important national centre for advocacy and information about male roles and gender equality. Organized as an NGO, REFORM is today the leading resource centre for men in Norway.

The centre has played an important part in promoting men’s perspectives on the gender issue. Presently REFORM is a knowledge centre that conveys knowledge to men and boys through activities, and research as well as participation in various projects and conferences, both nationally and internationally.

REFORM concentrates on specific areas in which male participation and presence are particularly important. The following are included among its objectives and intervention areas:

1. Promote paternity leave, which has recently been increased from six to ten weeks, but whose use is still considered insufficient.
2. Increase male presence in very feminized sectors such as in kindergartens.
3. Offer services for men which aim to prevent and fight masculine violence against women and make society aware that men are also exposed to violence from their partners.

The key perspective of this experience is that “Men can gain from gender equality – and gender issues can gain from the inclusion of men’s perspectives. REFORM’s vision is “a society based on diversity and equality where power and care are shared regardless of gender”. Presently, in Norway, there is a growing general understanding of the need to focus on male gender roles, as illustrated by a recent Government White Paper “Men, Male Roles and Gender Equality. Report to the Norwegian Parliament 8/2008-2009”.

Duration of the initiative: From 2002 until today (2010).

Contact

Organisation: REFORM. Website: <http://www.reform.no>

GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE THROUGH LOCAL BODIES IN SPAIN AND NORWAY

3

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. Conclusions

Work-life balance is one of the challenges faced by society at the beginning of the 21st century. The intense socio-demographic, economic and cultural changes which have taken place in recent times in the developed world have given this question the highest priority in the political agendas. Thus, work-life balance stands as one of the key-issues in Europe regarding policies on employment or equal opportunities for men and women, because, since the Luxemburg Summit in 1998, work-life balance has been related to protecting the European social model, which to a great extent, depends on the increasing number of women partaking in the labour market.

Neither Norway nor Spain the incorporation of women in the labour market, the population aging, the mainstream cultural transformations regarding the family as a concept and the division of roles between women and men, have compelled public policies to support the notion of a work-life balance for citizens. In this context, two central observations need to be made in order to introduce these conclusions:

First of all

Not only women – who far from balancing, are merely accumulating tasks –, but also men, and the entire society, is affected by the desire to achieve a balance between the different spheres in life. Joint responsibility – understood in a holistic and multidimensional sense – proves to be the solution to this conflict.

To put it briefly, in order to achieve work-life balance, society needs to assume joint responsibility as a philosophy and norm for life, and social agents (companies, trade unions, State, citizens, etc.) need to be committed to create a social structure which suits a more balanced distribution of professional and familial duties, but at the same time, that leaves room for personal needs and demands, allowing the individual self-construction.

In the second place

A dual notion of work-life balance overlooks the innate **needs for personal development**. For this very reason, the recommendation should be to avoid a one-dimensional view of the family sphere as a niche of responsibilities and duties, which need to be made compatible with work in order to take into consideration other aspects related to the individual sphere (leisure, education, social participation, etc.).

When the issue is considered carefully, the evolution from the term work-life balance to the idea of **harmonisation of the use of time**, also conceived **as a right for all citizens**, becomes self-evident. Lack of time and sparse, or nonexistent possibilities of distributing one's own time in a rational or harmonious manner, are then perceived as having a negative effect on the quality of life of individuals.

How can Local Bodies contribute to work-life balance?

Local bodies, holding legal instruments required in the area of work-life balance for both Norway and Spain, should **intervene to create policies favoring work-life balance on two levels**:

- As co-responsible agents: to help achieve balance in the way that individuals make use of their time.
- As government level: being the closest body to citizenship, knows it very well people needs and demands; and being a local authority, it regulates and specifies schedules and times for different social services (centres for childcare or long-term care, public services, public transport, etc.).

WHAT CHALLENGES WILL LOCAL BODIES FACE WITH REGARD TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Taking gender issues and equal opportunities into consideration, local public intervention will have an effect on the multi-dimensional reality of work-life balance by facing the following challenges:

- Stress the urgency of preventing tensions caused by the lack of work-life balance through well addressed social policies.
- Become models to be followed and fuel changes, setting examples with their own forms of organisation of work structures and opening times.
- Stimulate employment and the constitution of work-life balance-friendly businesses, which will then establish the belief that work-life balance is not a cost, but rather an opportunity to improve productivity and retain talent, because employees would be able to develop a feeling of company loyalty.
- Ensure mainstreaming regarding work-life balance within local and travel policies, in order to synchronise local and individual times, so that towns are at the inhabitants' disposal in relation to using time and space.
- Improve centres and services that provide care for children, elderly and disabled people, so that they are universally accessible and have excellent quality levels.
- Grant the citizenship free time and the opportunity to enjoy it, through leisure activities and social participation.
- Encourage changes with regard to the process of socialisation and norms and values existing in society in order to ensure, on one hand, that joint responsibility becomes a basic principle in the community life and, on the other hand, that the value of reproductive work and social care is enhanced.

HOW SHOULD THE LOCAL BODIES APPROACH THESE CHALLENGES?

Local Bodies count on the instruments and capacity to face the aforementioned challenges. The best practices, which had been examined, systematised and compared, enable us to distinguish different areas of action:

Time management and economy

Time management and economy: this area includes those initiatives aimed at making working time and space more flexible, both within the public body itself as well as beyond, in local businesses. Also it includes all measures directed to make the city a space for its citizens and their wellbeing, which implies coordinating times and improving transport and travel systems.

Provision of services

Provision of services with an effect on harmonisation of time: Specifically, these should be services supporting individuals and families, aimed at lessening family responsibilities and household tasks, and other sorts of services, forms or spaces, intended to develop the individual sphere, as well as the use of leisure and free time.

Social awareness

Social awareness: All initiatives intended to raise social awareness and educate citizens with regard to achieving work-life balance and promoting a joint-responsibility model, not only within the familial structure but in the public sphere.

Integral policies

The existence of this intervention strategy, which is based on the structuring of local work-life balance policies from a local perspective, aims at a mainstreaming approach to work-life balance and at intervening simultaneously and in a coordinated manner, in the three main areas: time management and the economy, provision and supply of services and social awareness.

3.2. Recommendations

Transversal and integral intervention initiatives

The implementation of a mainstreaming and integral methodology of intervention proves to be the most suitable way of finding solutions to this problem which citizens face on a daily basis.

The following elements are required for an intervention to be successful: integration and co-ordination of all areas of action (education, employment, social services, etc.): mainstreaming in all areas of intervention and among all programmes involved; **leadership and political support** since a great effort and energy are required to promote such initiatives; **rationality** to efficiently manage the resources; employment of a methodological system: analysis, planning and assessment.

Intervention initiatives addressed to companies

Within the private sector and with regard to initiatives with an impact, it is advisable that Local Bodies:

- Carry out campaigns to inform and raise social awareness, with the goal of changing the idea of mandatory presence at workplace and demolishing the notion that work-life balance represents a financial burden for companies. It is necessary to constitute a philosophy based on a direct relation between work-life balance, productivity and talent retention, it is key to insist on the quality of work, rather than the quantity of working hours. With that aim, it is necessary to implement social awareness campaigns and consultation services within this area of action.
- Induce companies – through incentives and distinctions (subsidies, financial support, awards, quality certificates, priority in public tenders, etc.) – to the employment of new forms of working time and space management (flexitime, compact daily or weekly working hours, etc.) or the integration of new technologies as a basic tool to achieving balance (working from home, videoconferences, etc.).

Intervention initiatives: The local body as employer

Within the realm of the Local Body **as employer**, it is advisable that those bodies:

- Become an example for the rest of society, by **fueling changes and initiatives**. In this context, it is necessary that local bodies take their responsibility towards their employees, by improving and expanding the general regulation.
- This approach requires a development within the “spirit” of every institution, a new work philosophy based on self-management and trust. Implementing new measures is not enough: it is necessary to make staff familiar with those measures and to encourage their use, avoiding at the same time any gender discrimination.
- Use tools such as new technologies, since they constitute a pillar to a favorable work-life balance.

Intervention-initiatives with an effect on urban times and spaces in the city

With regard to **time and space management** in the city, local bodies should:

- Promote the participative and mainstreaming nature of urban initiatives, as revealed in plans and programmes, and particularly influence those aspects that relate directly to uses of time, urban planning, provision of services and their opening times, traveling (frequency, timetables, and availability) and the co-ordination of services and work-places with long-term care services and institutions. In this context, political commitment and support, and social awareness and participations prove to be key elements for the success of the intervention.

Initiatives providing services and infrastructures

In their capacity as **services and infrastructures providers**, favoring work-life balance, local bodies should:

- Improve access to **long-term and child** care in order to break down existing obstacles for work-life balance in those areas. Not only is it necessary to expand opening times and make them more flexible, in order to meet citizens demands, it is also indispensable to increase the number of places available.
- Childcare services should be targeted above all to meet the needs created by the existing incompatibility between school and work times and also during school holidays. However, they should also enable fathers and mothers to enhance their personal sphere by allowing them to use their free time and by supporting the development of activities and cultural, leisure and sports centre (libraries, community and sports centres, etc.).
- Moreover, those services and activities should be financially accessible to all citizens and their cost should also be regulated with regard to the financial situation of the family.
- **Improve the management of services and make full use of existing structures** such as educational or community centres, so that the situation does not become unsustainable from a financial point of view. Frequently, it is not more resources, but more imagination which is needed.

Initiatives to promote a change in beliefs and mentality in society

Local bodies are key-elements with regard to social awareness and education:

- **Social awareness and educational campaigns** have an effect on public opinion and fight against stereotypes. The initiatives taken in the realm of education to make society aware of the need for change should bear in mind the factors responsible for keeping certain attitudes and stereotypes alive with regard to traditional gender divisions. They should also insist on the importance of joint responsibility and the necessary presence of women in the labour force, reinforcing their role in economic development.
- **Education on joint responsibility, co-education and time management** should start early in life, since today's boys and girls will be tomorrow's men and women. The co-operation and involvement of schools is essential in this context.
- It is important that the **work-life policies and measures** to be implemented **target men explicitly too**, in order to stimulate joint responsibility and show that work-life balance does not only affect women.
- Defining policies to raise social awareness, have to bear the audience in mind (children, teenagers, university students, business people, general public , etc.), in order to make them suitable and address people's worries, taking into account diversity issues, with the aim of attracting their attention regarding the importance of work-life balance.

In spite of all these recommendations, we should bear in mind that in order to achieve **balance among all spheres in life, we need local bodies to implement work-balance policies, but we also need to promote a truly responsible familial and social culture**, since that is the only way to transform society and achieve a better quality of life for us all.

GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE THROUGH LOCAL BODIES IN SPAIN AND NORWAY

21 | Illustrative
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