

Healthy work for the future

"Gezond Werken aan de toekomst"

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Organisation: "Kind en Gezin" (Agency of the Flemish government. Mission to actively contribute to the well-being of young children and their families.)

Country: Belgium

Level of government: Regional/State government

Sector: General public services

Type: Human Resources, Organisational Design

Launched in: 2010

Overall development time:

24 months

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

With “Healthy work for the future,” we wanted to find out if our district nurses and family enablers feel that they have an active and healthy job enabling them to deal with the challenges that “Kind en Gezin” will have in the near future.

We wanted to learn from teams who are facing great challenges, but have excellent managing skills to deal with them. How are they able to manage their work in a difficult area? During a series of workshops we got insights in the ways they solve problems and what the boundaries of the teams are.

Aside from a series of workshops, “Kind en Gezin” launched a survey to explore whether the organisation has a creative learning culture. A creative learning culture is a critical success factor for healthy jobs in self-managing teams.

We used different instruments to support teams to have more healthy and lean jobs:

- Workshops.
- Insights of Karasek and social engineering methods.
- Questionnaires & interviews with stakeholders.
- KWIC toolbox (European Social Fund): a toolbox with 17 useful tools for managers of autonomous teams to help the team achieve results and develop an efficient organisation in an optimal atmosphere.

Furthermore, we started to focus on management and leadership in self-steering teams. We launched innovative projects to give air to change management (i.e. internal job switches as a learning program, ‘Do-Tanks’ with The Netherlands).

Why the innovation was developed

“Kind en Gezin” is focusing on different challenges. Our district nurses have to deal with more complex and stressful family situations and our preventive health services have to compete with private actors on the market. Employees at the administration are also under pressure. We have to do more work with fewer employees as financial resources are being cut. These challenges triggered the project in order to find out more efficient ways to manage our work.

Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve user satisfaction

- More efficient and effective ways of working.
 - New ways of sharing information.
 - Better awareness of policy needs.
 - New ways of planning and evaluating teams.
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Main beneficiaries

Families, General population, Government staff, High-risk populations, Low-income groups, Young people

Results

Efficiency

- We received feedback from the teams that work is done more efficiently than before (less meeting time, more effective learning programmes).
 - Internal problems got solved in a more efficient way.
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Service quality

Accessibility:

Family workers and district nurses made better schedules to provide their service to vulnerable families.

Other:

We gained insight into the way we measure service quality and the way it is received by our employees.

Other improvements

- Improved employee satisfaction:
 - We learned from best practices.
 - We learned how to create innovative project teams.
 - Communication between different levels of the organisation improved.
 - The management board started a programme to enhance their teamwork and started to create a more strategic focus. This has led to a more transparent project management and the alignment of similar projects within the organisation.
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Evaluation

- We tracked time and calculated the cost of the consultants.
- On a regular basis we take time to evaluate the different projects (qualitative). We evaluated it by intervision and workshops.

Development

Design

Human resource staff and field workers.

Testing

After the surveys and small tryouts in teams, we started to implement the concept for the whole organisation. Every team was supported to create a team charter in order to set goals and ambitions to succeed in the vision and mission of Kind en Gezin. Teams started to evaluate themselves on a team level and personal evaluations were transformed into feedback systems.

Implementation

Tools used:

- Literature study.
- Scan of workability: ESF (European Social Fund) and VOV (learning network of Flanders).
- Surveys, e.g. on positive learning culture (Vlerick Management School).
- Workshops, e.g. with a district focusing on great challenges but with excellent managing skills to deal with them. The aim was to learn from the team: how are they able to manage their work in a difficult area?
- Insights of Karasek and social engineering methods.
- Questionnaires.
- Interviews with stakeholders.
- KWIC toolbox (European Social Fund): A toolbox with 17 useful tools for managers of autonomous teams to involve the team in achieving results and the development of an efficient organisation in an optimal atmosphere.
- The results of the workshops and surveys were communicated to the management. Quick wins and long term goals were developed in order to create a better organisation.
- Teams received presentations and training in order to support them to develop team charters and skills to deal with management problems and improve their working processes.
- We are implementing this on every level of the organisation.
 - District teams.
 - Administration.
 - Management team.

Resources used:

We needed consultancy in order to support the innovation. In order to finance the consultancy we worked with:

- The total cost was around EUR 40 000.

Indirect costs:

- Working hours of internal staff (around 750 hours).
 - VOV and Vlerick Management volunteered (around 1 000 hours).
 - Staff members of Kind en Gezin
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Diffusion

We have implemented this method in other teams.

The management team, the HR administration and the policy department “preventive family support”:

Similarities:

- More effective ways of working.
- New ways of sharing information.
- Better awareness of policy needs.

Differences:

- For the workshops we used a different toolbox, based on the same indicators. In the beginning, it was an external consultant who supported the team. Afterwards team leaders managed the workshops themselves.

Management team:

Similarities:

- More effective ways of working.
- New ways of sharing information.

Differences:

- Management team has a more strategic focus and team members have different responsibilities. That is why, it needed a different approach.
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Challenges and solutions

The challenge was to make the vision and mission of Kind en Gezin a tool to work with. We solved it by frequent communication and workshops. There was intensive interaction between policy and field workers.

Partnerships

Consultancy

Private sector

We needed consultancy in order to support the innovation.

VOV (learning network of Flanders), Vlerick Management School

Academics and Research Bodies

ESF (European Social Fund).

Other

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Innovation is a continuous process. When you let it go, the process stops.
 - Innovation is only a success if the management team supports it completely.
 - When you work on the self-management of teams, employees discover they can do more. A good rewarding policy is important.
 - We would build in more rewarding systems during the project and better communication about the goals of the project. We are working on that in the sequel of the project implementation.
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Conditions for success

- Open culture and trustful management.
 - The freedom to undertake new ideas and to take risks.
 - Good project management and communication.
 - Networking with other organisations outside Kind en Gezin.
 - Crazy people willing to try it out and to believe in this project.
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