Impact of Social Services on Local Development

Study by EASPD

EASPD

European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities

A Study on

Impact of Social Services on Local Development

Junction Bulgaria

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Acknowledgements

This is a report of the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) subcontracted to Junction Bulgaria, authored by Natalia Mihaylova, Stoyan Mihaylov and Raya Mihaylova.

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1. Executive Summary

This is a report of the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) subcontracted to Junction Bulgaria, authored by Natalia Mihaylova, Stoyan Mihaylov and Raya Mihaylova.

The goal of this research on the impact of social services on local development is to collect and analyse information about evidence on the different areas of impact of the social services on the economic and employment aspects of local development. The research looks for evidence of the impact in terms of:

- economic impact on local development, meaning what is the level of expenditure of the social services in view of implementation of the service and production of products with a focus on whether these products are locally owned and stay locally;
- employment impact on local development, meaning creation of employment for beneficiaries and their families, as well as for the social sector itself in terms of social care professionals.

The approach is based on analysis of information for several countries with different models of Welfare Systems, in order to collect evidence regarding the economic and employment impact on local development: Germany and Belgium as representatives of a Continental model, Spain, applying the Mediterranean/Southern model, and Bulgaria as representative of the newer 5th (Central-Eastern European) model.

The main topics of this study are socio-economic and employment impact. Key topics and questions have been developed, which form the research framework of the study. The subtopics and questions have been identified based on a desk review. Based on this, questions have been formulated for the instruments for data collection. 9 interviews have been conducted with representatives of organisations, their partners, social services, and local authorities, as well as a beneficiary of the service.

The social services are various in terms of model of provision, goals, and type. They have a significant contribution to the well-being and integration of different groups of persons who need support. In order to ensure this support, they need financing for the activities that are planned

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to reach their goals. This financing is provided by different sources through different funding models. In summary, financing is mostly governmental and comes through local authorities. There is also local financing, project financing, donations, and economic activity.

Following the path of the money from the country to the clients shows that, apart from 'users of financial funds', social services also have a significant socio-economic impact on local development. The governmental funds are turned into different types of benefits for local people, which could be direct and indirect. The main findings provide information in the following areas of impact: boost for the local market and companies, employment prospects, attracting people to the local area, community development and quality of life (figure 1). Social services are generally social enterprises using local buildings and consuming local services and products. On the other hand, some of the services themselves produce goods and services for the local community, whose quality is at a good level and the price is competitive. In this way, social services are an active player at the local market for goods and services, which outlines their influence on local development. Another very important aspect is the impact on the employment prospects, viewed in terms of staff working at the organisation, employment of beneficiaries and their relatives. The lack of social services in some regions would reduce the level of employment and the perspectives they have for staying in the region. This means that the employment impact influences the whole development of the region and attracts people to it. The fact that each employment increases the purchasing power of people means that social services are important for the local economy and the quality of life of the whole community. In that sense social services contribute to the prevention of the 'desertification' of rural and remote areas across different countries in the EU and beyond, by attracting people, by providing employment opportunities and by helping local people to improve their quality of life.

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Figure 1 Aspects of the socio-economic impact of social services

The recommendations are presented in table 1 according to the areas of impact, including examples of the impact in the different aspects. They are oriented towards regional, national and EU policy level and recognition of the importance and socio-economic impact of the social services, which means that policy needs to recognise these services as a key partner in ensuring the quality of life of people they are for, but also to be viewed as a serious player in terms of social investment and social innovations.

Table 1 Recommendations

Area of impact	Examples	Recommendations
Boost for the local market and companies	Social services work with local companies at the different sectors like construction, catering, furnishing, equipment, transport, office supplies,	Simplification of the procedure of contracting between social services and local companies

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	maintenance of the buildings, medication, etc.	
	Social organisations produce goods and services like wooden and metal goods, food, toys and beds for children, industrial and construction materials, gardening, maintenance of buildings, restaurants, cleaning, laundry services, catering, etc.	Policy and regulations for development of support to social enterprises in terms of capacity building, networking and cooperation among social enterprises, improvement of public procurement practices and encouragement of stabilisation of income-generating resources
Employment prospects	Employment of staff	Creation of possibilities for supporting the social service workforce in terms of ensuring good working conditions
	Employment of beneficiaries	Support for development of social enterprises for employment of beneficiaries
	Vocational training for beneficiaries and support for working in the open labour market	Ensuring access of people with disabilities to the open labour market through support services Raising awareness on the challenges people with disabilities face when looking for employment
Attracting people to the local area and community development	Attracting more people to stay, come back/ remain to live in these regions, or even come to live from other places due to the	Strengthening social services in terms of quality, access and capacity

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	available social services and their socio-economic impact on the development of the regions, especially in rural areas	
	Professional development of the staff of social services, making the employment attractive	Creation of possibilities for supporting the social service workforce in terms of continuous professional development
Quality of life	Improvement of the quality of life of beneficiaries, families and communities	Need for more research on the socio-economic impact of social services and wide dissemination of results at national and regional levels Recognition of the role of social enterprises and social services and their impact and to enhance social investment and social innovation

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2. Introduction. Goals and tasks.

The role of the social services in the developed societies is oriented towards creating a caring, inclusive, and productive society, by putting beneficiaries at the centre of management and delivery of social services. There is no common definition of social services for all EU countries. The 2010 Council conclusions on Social Services of General Interest 'At the heart of the European Social Model' highlighted that social services differ from other services of general interest as they are 'person-oriented, designed to respond to human vital needs, generally driven by the principle of solidarity, they contribute to safeguarding fundamental rights and human dignity, non-discrimination and to ensuring the creation of equal opportunities for all, enabling individuals to play a significant part in the economic and social life of the society.'[1]

The goal of this research is to collect and analyse information about evidence on the different areas of impact of the social services on the economic and employment aspects of local development. The research looks for evidence of the impact in terms of:

- economic impact on local development, meaning what is the level of expenditure of the social services in view of implementation of the service and production of products with a focus on whether these products are locally owned and stay locally;
- employment impact on local development, meaning creation of employment for beneficiaries and their families, as well as for the social sector itself in terms of social care professionals.

This impact is seen through the different types of services: consultative, day-care, and residential services for different kinds of beneficiaries. Differences are sought in the analysis in terms of non-profit/social economy angle, rural/urban divide, the impact of the funding model, etc.

The approach is based on analysis of information for several countries with different models of Welfare Systems, in order to collect evidence regarding the economic and employment impact on local development: Germany and Belgium as representatives of a Continental model, Spain,

[1] ESN, What are the types of social services? https://www.esn-eu.org/about/what-are-types-social-services

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applying the Mediterranean/Southern model, and Bulgaria as representative of the newer 5th (Central-Eastern European) model

The current report on 'Impact of Social Services on Local Development' is structured in the following sections:

- Section 1 presents the Executive Summary of the report
- Section 2 presents the introduction, goals and tasks of the study
- Section 3 presents the background and context of the study
- Section 4 presents the research framework and methodology
- Section 5 presents the main findings of the study in terms of boost for the local market and companies, employment prospects, attracting people to the local area, community development and quality of life
- Section 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations

The list of the organisations, whose representatives have been interviewed, is presented at the beginning of the document in the Acknowledgements section and the template used for the interviews is in Annex 1.

3. Research Framework and Methodology

The main topics of this study are socio-economic and employment impact. Key topics and questions have been developed, which form the research framework of the study. The subtopics and questions have been identified based on a desk review. Based on this, questions have been formulated for the instruments for data collection. 9 interviews have been conducted with representatives of organisations of the following type:

- The organisations work at a regional level and provide services in more than one location in the region.
- The target groups of the services that these organisations provide are mainly people with disabilities (children, adults, elderly).
- The types of services offered are different: day-care centres for children and adults, kindergartens, and nurseries, assisted living and open health for people with disabilities and

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elderly, therapy services, sheltered workshops, centres for early intervention of disabilities for children, centres for social rehabilitation and integration.

- The fields of operation are in the social, educational and health sector.
- The scope of service provision is of different number of clients, depending on the regions covered, the target groups and number and types of services. This determines the number of staff of the organisations.

The key questions (table 2) in the main research areas of this study are used as a basis for making the interview guide that can be seen in annex 1.

Table 2 Key questions

Main Research Areas	Key Questions
Socio - Economic Impact	• What is the level of expenditures of the social service providers in terms of: ○ Number of staff that is hired; ○ Local expenditures for the functioning of the social services (facilities, products, furniture, bills and current expenses); ○ Products and/or services provided. • Up to what degree do the expenditures for the social services support local development in terms of: ○ Corporate responsibility; ○ Socio-economic solidarity.
Employment Impact	• What is the number and type of jobs created by social services locally? • What is the ratio between new jobs created and jobs kept, including self-employment? • What are the employment prospects created locally for the different groups: ○ For beneficiaries; ○ For the social workforce; ○ For families of the beneficiaries. • What is level of professional development for beneficiaries in terms of trainings, courses, seminars and other events conducted locally?

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	• What is the level of capacity development for the social service workforce in terms of trainings, courses, seminars, conferences and other events conducted locally?

4. Background and context

The key role of the social services in the contemporary world is highlighted in various international policy documents and analyses. The Joint Declaration: Developing the Support Services for tomorrow[2] calls for development of services that are oriented towards individualised support, person-centred planning, empowerment of individuals and their families, which need to be carefully built into all processes and policy instruments. According to the position paper of Social Services Europe 'Towards implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights – The Role of Social Services'[3], 'quality social services are fundamental to ensure the implementation of key principles within the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)', among which are: inclusion of people with disabilities, childcare and support to children, active support to employment and work-life balance, access to essential services, housing and assistance for the homeless, long-term care, gender equality and equal opportunities.

The social service workforce plays an essential part in the realisation of the role of the social services and their quality and development. In the report 'Investing in the social service workforce' (ESN, 2019), it is highlighted that 'the social services workforce, in all roles and activities, has expanded considerably in most European countries. However, this expansion has differed in scale depending on the pace of the population's ageing, public spending, and the country's welfare model. 'The social services sector is one of Europe's biggest job creators. It directly employs almost 11 million staff in Europe, representing 4,7 % of the total EU workforce. Together with health services, social services represent 7% of the total economic output in the

[2] European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), Confederation of Family Organisations of the European Union COFACE, European 94, Disability Forum (EDF-FEPH), Network of Independent Living (ENIL), Inclusion Europe, & Mental Health Europe (MHE-SME). (2016). Joint Declaration: Developing the Support Services of Tomorrow. Retrieved from: https://www.easpd.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/joint_declaration_v2_final.pdf

[3] Social Services Europe, (2018), Towards implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights – The Role of Social Services. Retrieved from: https://80cf426a-4e57-48e6-a333-91f4b1dbdd1a.filesusr.com/ugd/9f45fc_88d42adadf8f4076a6a01bec7ed8572c.pdf

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EU. Due to changing demographics, labour mobility, increasing family diversity and evolution of mindsets, the social services sector is one of the fastest growing economic sectors. Over the past 10 years, it has created more than 2 million jobs - and is expected to further grow significantly over the next few decades.'[4] Yet, the share of the social services workforce in total employment varies dramatically between countries, with a relatively small share in Southern European countries. For example, in Finland, social services are delivered by about 165 000 employees[5] which is close to 7% of the total employed persons, while in Bulgaria, there are about 32 000 employees in social services (including all paraprofessionals, i.e. social assistants, caregivers and foster parents) which is about 1% of total employed. This reflects the different welfare models across the countries, some of which emphasise cash benefits and family (informal) care over service provision (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2010)'[6] and the potential of social services in terms of job creation.

The overall direction of development of the social services of each country depends on the social welfare models. The differences between social welfare model across countries lie in their historical, political, economic, cultural, and other specificities. Regardless of their differences, the models are designed to protect people against the risks related to unemployment, parental responsibilities, health care, old age, housing, and social exclusion. The literature groups the social welfare systems across Europe in five provisional models: Continental/Bismarckian, Anglo-Saxon/Beveridge, Nordic/Scandinavian, Mediterranean/Southern European, Central/Eastern European[7]. 'The restructuring of welfare states that started in the late 1980s has profoundly affected the governance of social services in Europe. There have been changes in the 'vertical' division of responsibility among different government levels, as well as in the 'horizontal' division of responsibility among the main actors (service providers, state, family, community). There have been changes in the way social services are financed, organised, and provided, with the

[4] Federation of European Social Employers, (2020), Recruitment and Retention in European Social Services. Retrieved from: http://socialemployers.eu/files/doc/SEM%20001-20%20position%20paper_screen%20VS3.pdf

[5] Social Welfare in Finland, https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/70241/Es200611eng.pdf?sequence=1, p.25; https://tradingeconomics.com/finland/employed-persons

[6] ESN (2019), Investing in the social service workforce, retrieved from: http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/investing-social-service-workforce

[7] Social welfare systems across Europe, EASPD, retrieved from: https://www.easpd.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/d4-social_welfare_systems_across_europe.pdf

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introduction of 'market mechanisms' in the management of services and in the selection of providers.'[8]

Irrespective of the social welfare model in the country, social protection is the main component of social policy. In this sense, when we talk about the development of social services, it is important to look at the expenditure on social protection on behalf of the government. This expenditure consists of social benefits or transfers in cash or in kind to households and individuals with the aim to relieve them of the burden of a defined set of risks or needs; administration costs, or costs of managing or administering the social protection scheme; and other miscellaneous expenditure by social protection schemes (payment of property income and other)[9] Social transfers in kind consist of individual goods and services provided as transfers in kind to individual households by government units. These include social services such as residential care/home help services for the elderly, people with disabilities and families[10]. Expenditure on social protection varies markedly across EU countries in terms of its scale relative to GDP. In the report of ESPN 'Social protection expenditure and its financing in Europe: A study of national policies' there is a heuristic division of countries in the EU into three groups, using as benchmark the EU average. These groups are high spenders, where expenditure on social protection is 28% of GDP or over in 2016, medium spenders - between 21% and 28% of GDP, and low spenders - less than 21% of GDP. This distinction also, generally, divides countries by geographical area: Nordic and Continental countries are high spenders, Southern European Countries are medium spenders, and Central and Eastern European Countries are low spenders. The categories, in addition, reflect differences in GDP per head across countries, with the high GDP per head countries tending to devote a larger share of resources to social protection and those with a low GDP per head a smaller share[11]. However, there are exceptions to this – some countries with higher GDP have a lower expenditure on social protection. In this context, not only investment levels are important

[8] EASPD (2019), Alternatives in public procurement in social care, retrieved from: https://www.easpd.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/alternatives_to_public_procurement_in_social_care_final.pdf

[9] Eurostat, Statistics Explained, Glossary: Social protection expenditure, retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Social_protection_expenditure

[10] The OECD SOCX Manual 2019 Edition, A guide to the OECD Social Expenditure Database, retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/social/soc/SOCX_Manuel_2019.pdf

[11] ESPN, (2019), Social protection expenditure and its financing in Europe: A study of national policies, retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8253&furtherPubs=yes

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but also funding models become a key issue to ensure the transition towards quality, person-centred, inclusive, and community-based services. Four main funding models have dominated the scene across Europe in the last decade: public procurement; reserved markets; user-centred models and private investment[12].

The social services are provided by both public sector organisations, as well as private, for-profit, and non-profit organisations. Another general trend in the EU countries during the last decades is the growing share of non-governmental organisations in social service provision (although, as mentioned in the report 'Alternatives in public procurement in social care': 'As a result of the increasing use of competitive tendering, for-profit service providers are growing rapidly in several EU countries'[13]). 'In some countries, social services are mainly provided by the private non-profit sector (FR, NL where this is 90%). In Germany, 50% of services are provided by not-for-profit providers).[14] In the countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Scandinavia there is a leading role of the local authorities in provision of social services.

The trend of the growing share of non-profit social service providers has a significant impact over the local development due to the specific advantages of the NGOs, related to reinvestment of resources in new services, improvement of the quality of life of the community and, in this way, supporting the local development. More specifically, NGOs:

- 'are anchored in the community (and funding therefore redistributed into the local economy via wages, etc);
- work with a strong group of local volunteers; have long-term commitment to social inclusion;
- re-invest the surplus/profit into local social action;
- are socially innovative'[15].

[12] EASPD (2019), Alternatives in public procurement in social care, retrieved from: https://www.easpd.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/alternatives_to_public_procurement_in_social_care_final.pdf

[13] EASPD (2019), Alternatives in public procurement in social care, retrieved from: https://www.easpd.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/alternatives_to_public_procurement_in_social_care_final.pdf

[14] Federation of European Social Employers, (2019), Social Services Workforce in Europe: Current State of Play and Challenges, retrieved from https://bit.ly/3g97SwT

[15] EASPD (2019), Alternatives in public procurement in social care, retrieved from: https://www.easpd.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/alternatives_to_public_procurement_in_social_care_final.pdf

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Having in mind that a big share of the service providers are private non-profit, it is also important to see how organisations are financed and what are the funding sources. The main funding sources for the service providers in the selected countries are government and local funding (coming from the taxes paid by citizens which make up the national budget), donations, project funding and economic activities from selling products and services. It should be noted that in some countries (Bulgaria) local authorities are the main service providers, therefore they fully control the funds from the country that come into the services, while in other countries like Belgium, the funding comes directly from the government to the services, not through local authorities. In addition, beneficiaries of the services have their own financial contribution by paying fees in small amount, in order to use the service.

It is important to note that there is a difference among the countries in the study in terms of the national level of social expenditure as a share of the GDP, for example Germany and Belgium are high spenders[16] (Germany moved from medium to high spender between 2005 and 2016) –, Spain (moved from low to medium spender between 2005 and 2016) – medium spender[17], Bulgaria, – low spenders[1819]. The data from the study shows that the share of social expenditure in the country influences the model of financing of the social services and whether governmental funding is enough, how many and what sources of funding they need and what is the share of the funding for each source.

One example of this difference is shown on graphs 1 and 2. It could be seen that the funding models of social services in Bulgaria and Germany differ in the share of funding but have similar sources. Notably, government funding is a much bigger share in Germany than in Bulgaria. For Bulgaria, the variety of funding sources is due to the fact that the state budget is not enough to develop the quality of the service, the facilities, and materials, therefore it is necessary to apply for project funding, count on donations or have economic activities, as much as it's possible. That's why organisations in Bulgaria don't have economic stability and security and are

[16] 'High spender' means that the share of social expenditure in the country is 28% of GDP or over in 2016.
[17] 'Medium spender' means that the share of social expenditure in the country is between 21% and 28% of GDP in 2016.
[18] 'Low spender' means that the share of social expenditure in the country is less than 21% of GDP in 2016.
[19] ESPN, (2019), Social protection expenditure and its financing in Europe: A study of national policies, retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8253&furtherPubs=yes

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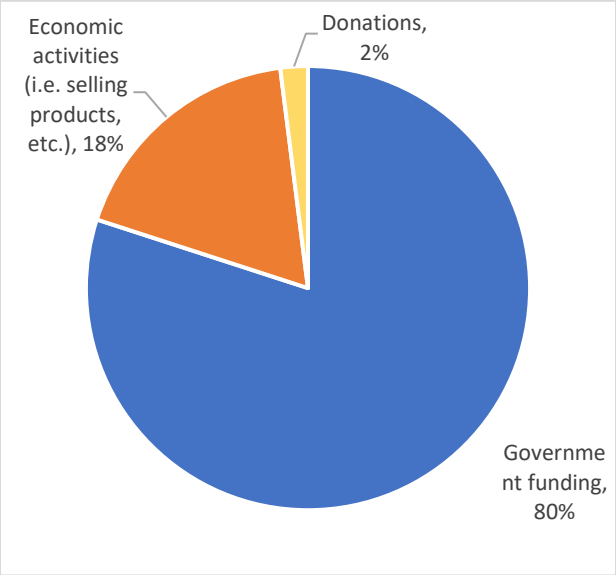
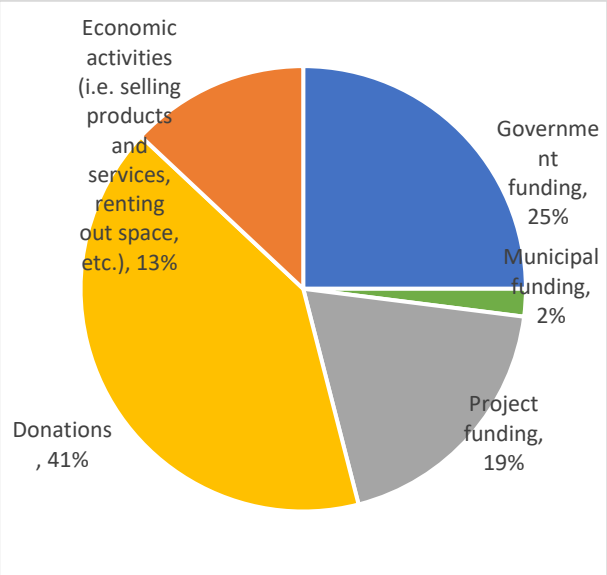
dependent on the presence of different projects and donors, striving to attract their own funding, since the share of government funding is much lower. This could be a possibility to develop innovative services, but it is often an obstacle to achieving a relevance to the local needs and sustainability.

Graph 1 Funding model of Diakoneo social services, Germany



Graph 2 Funding model of Karin Dom social services, Bulgaria



Source: Interviews with representatives of organisations, Annual report of the organisation

In some cases, the local funding is available (in Bulgaria), but in a small share, mostly in the bigger municipalities, where people have various needs, the municipality has better funding opportunities and, on the other hand, there are innovative services that don't have government funding. In any case, the local funding is only complementary to the governmental and other sources of funding.

The big share of government funding is also relevant for the so-called 'sheltered workshops' in Germany. Despite the fact that they have straightforward economic activities, around 70% of their budget comes from government funding through local funding authorities, while the other 30% are from economic activities. There is a small amount of donations from private donors. In

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Belgium there is a similar situation, around 40% of funding comes from economic activities and around 60% comes from the government.

The models of funding (public procurement, reserved markets, private investments)[20] through which the financing reaches social service providers in most of the European countries are combined for different target groups, type of services and scope of provision. The implementation of the different models outlines different requirements to the social service providers. The role of the government is to provide a framework and quality standards of social services – '*I believe that when the Government takes part in controlling the quality and the overview of the money, this is the better way that the Government controlling everything.'*[21] The social service providers need to meet these standards, which are related to the main goals and tasks of the services, related to achieving results and improving the quality of life of beneficiaries., The requirements of the reserved market model provide possibilities to non-profit organisations to meet these quality standards and not have to compete against for-profit organisations, as it is in the public procurement model. The advantage for non-profit organisations to become social service providers brings an impact on local development, as mentioned above, through a closer connection with local communities, reinvesting the surplus into local social action, working with local volunteers and social innovation.

Most often the government funding comes to the organisation through the local government using one of the three models of funding. The role of the local government is related to decision-making, contracting with organisations that provide services, controlling quality directly or through local authorities. Additionally, organisations can enter into social contracting and negotiations with local authorities in terms of the amount and ways of usage of local funds. In some cases, local municipalities provide buildings and land for construction. This gives a possibility to organisations to be able to negotiate for the local interests of the community, thus strengthens the connection with local needs and impact on local development.

[20] EASPD (2019), Alternatives in public procurement in social care, retrieved from: https://www.easpd.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/alternatives_to_public_procurement_in_social_care_final.pdf

[21] Interview with representative of an organisation

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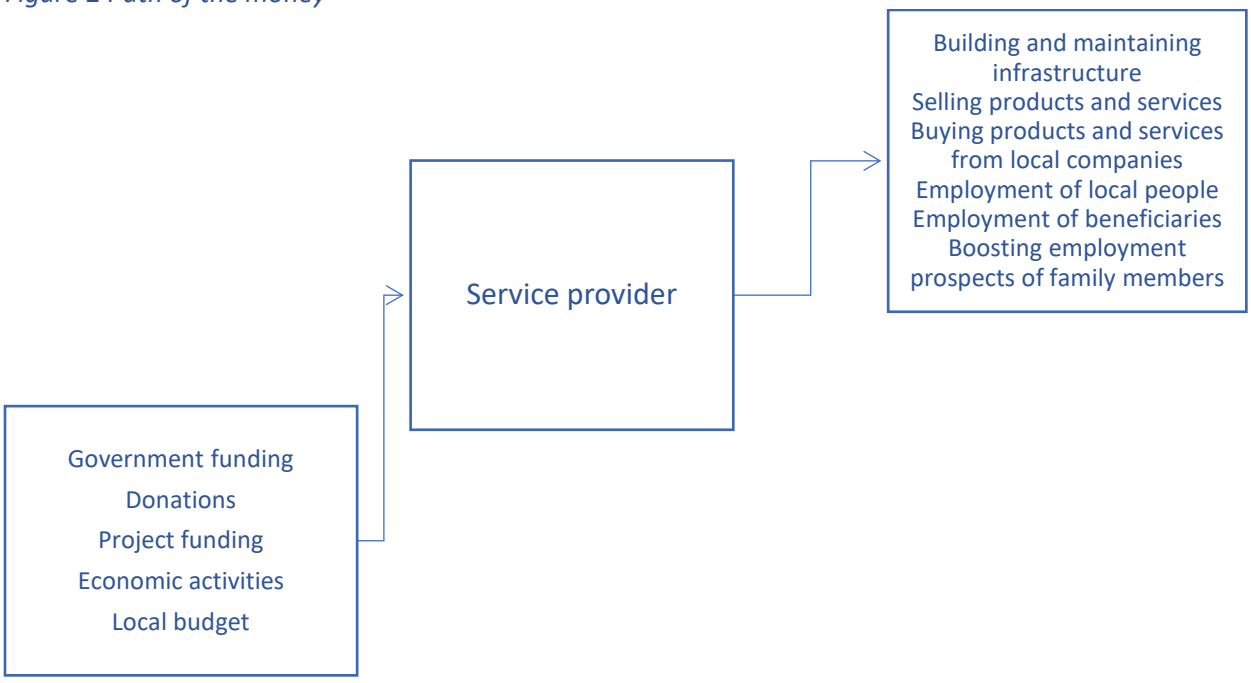
5. Main findings

The socio-economic impact is analysed in terms of the way that social services support the inclusion of vulnerable people in the lives of the communities, in order to improve their well-being and quality of life. Despite the fact that social services have a clear social purpose, they also have a purely economic influence, determined by the target group of the service, where it is provided and the scope of the services. Following the path of the money, from the funding sources to the people, how the funds are subsequently invested and how much of it is spent locally, the analysis determines several key aspects of the impact of social services on local development, related to a boost for the local market and companies, employment prospects, community development, attracting people to the local area. This means that social services can be seen not only as a way of support for disadvantaged persons, but also as a social investment. The socio-economic impact shows the return of investment, the funds that are returned and reinvested, and the impact on the quality of people's lives (figure 2).

Figure 2 Path of the money



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5.1. Boost for the local market and companies

The economic impact of social services on local development can be analysed through different aspects of their functioning. One of the most common aspects is working with local companies, when it comes to construction, catering, furnishing, equipment, transport, office supplies, maintenance of the buildings, medication – '*All the construction sector is really involved, we build houses with local companies, like for elderly or people with disabilities, this attracts or helps other companies around us to go forward as well'; 'we have a collaboration with two local companies who provide the medication'*[22]. These partnerships with local companies are stable in the long-term. In this way, the social service providers support different sectors of the local and regional economy (graph 3).

Data shows that out of the different sectors, with which social services work, the biggest share is for the construction sector, in terms of building houses and maintenance of buildings. This is important, since beneficiaries have specific needs regarding ensuring access to the buildings and free movement in them, appropriate facilities, etc. It should be noted that some of the service providers have residential services among many other types of services that have to meet certain requirements like size of the building and rooms, lighting, presence of elevators, etc. Another important aspect is working with local companies in providing food for beneficiaries through catering or local services like social patronage at the homes of beneficiaries. The scope depends on the type of the service, meaning it is bigger in residential services and smaller in day care and consultative services. Office supplies and medication are also often delivered by local companies. They are related to activities that are implemented with beneficiaries and taking care of their health as an important aspect. Although in smaller share, service providers also work with local companies when it comes to transport, IT services, working clothes and furnishing. Bigger organisations can sometimes have such professionals working in-house, like for IT services and transport, which could explain the smaller share.

[22] Interview with representative of an organisation

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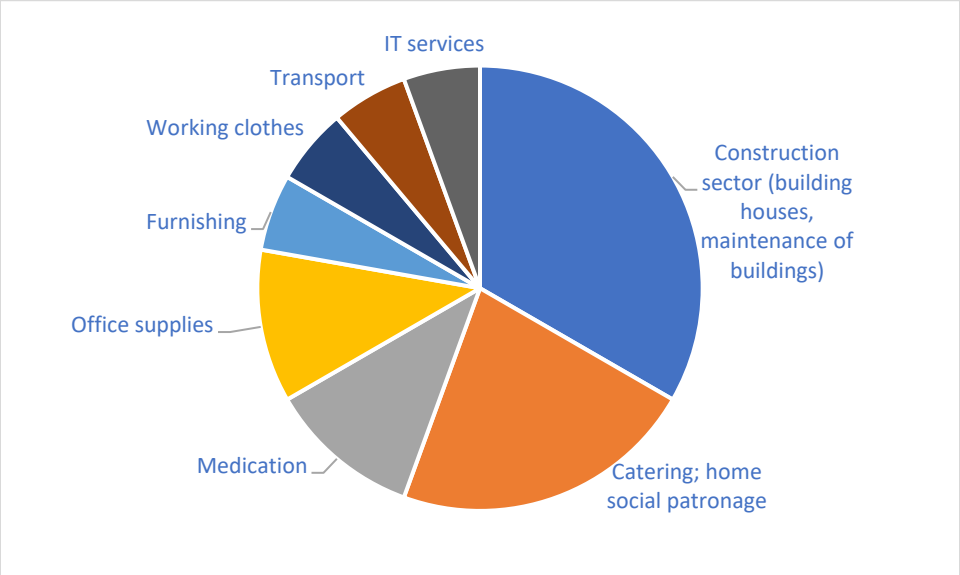
Graph 3 Working with local companies



Source: Interviews with representatives of organisations

Apart from working with local companies in terms of buying products and services, social organisations often produce goods and services, and many have social entrepreneurship activities. Most often these products are produced by social entreprises, including sheltered workshops. These goods and services are used by the local communities, for example, wooden and metal goods, food, toys and beds for children, industrial and construction materials, creating a local market for local farmers, gardening, maintenance of buildings, restaurants, cleaning, laundry services, catering, etc. (figure 3).

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Figure 3 Local economic impact

Products and services produced by social entreprises are at competitive prices, which depends on certain factors like tax reduction or state aid to cover additional costs or cover the loss of productivity of some workers. For instance, *'Prices of sheltered workshops for services can't be much higher than those of competitors, they want to sell their services and products. They have persons who can't work as fast or steady as workers in enterprises active in the open labour market, but they also have tax reductions, so prices can be a little higher, because taxes are lower, but they don't put too low prices, because they have to generate money. Normally, workshops look at the prices of competitors and try to be competitive.'*[23] According to the results of a nationwide study on social return of investment of sheltered workshops in Germany are suppliers to industry and hold orders in the region that would be outsourced abroad without the flexible, local and high-quality service of the workshops.[24] It is important to note that products and services that are produced by sheltered workshops meet the needs of local and national markets, delivering important services at competitive prices that are needed and otherwise would not be available for the local communities. This is on top of their initial social impact which is to provide

[23] Interview with representative of an organisation
[24] BAG WfbM, (2020), The results of the nationwide Social Return On Investment study, retrieved from: https://www.bagwfbm.de/page/sroi_ergebnisse

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work, training, and employment to persons with disabilities and persons with disadvantaged backgrounds.

In summary, social services are a big spender of financial resources at local level, but that depends on the social welfare model in the country and the share of government funding for social services. The social welfare model determines the types, number, and scope of the services, while the share of government funding influences how much financial resources services are able to be spent at a local level. All of this shows that investments that the public authorities make in the development of social services returns in the form of support for local economic development, as well as social integration of people at risk by empowering them to become more independent members of the community.

5.2. Employment prospects

As it is mentioned above, social service provision is one of Europe's biggest job creators with almost11 million professionals across the European Union and with over 2 million new jobs created in the last decade alone.[25]

The data from the research confirms that social services are a serious employer at the local level and their influence depends on the size of municipality and the number and scope of the services that are provided. Nevertheless, this number is significant, especially for smaller locations in certain organisations – '*We were in a rural area near a city with around 500 000 people, we offer 1500 people work*'; '*in a city with around 335 000 people, 1300 people are employed in the social services'*[26].

One example in this areas is provided in the analysis of the annual budget expenses of the Belgian organisation Groep Gidts, which shows that almost all annual expenses go for salaries, which proves the very significant and important role of staff in the social services (graph 4). This has a very important impact on local development, since most of the staff in the social services are local people who live, consume, and spend money locally for all of their needs which drives the economy in the regions, especially the smaller ones.

[25] Federation of European Social Employers, (2020), Recruitment and Retention in European Social Services. Retrieved from: http://socialemployers.eu/files/doc/SEM%20001-20%20position%20paper_screen%20VS3.pdf

[26] Interview with representative of an organisation

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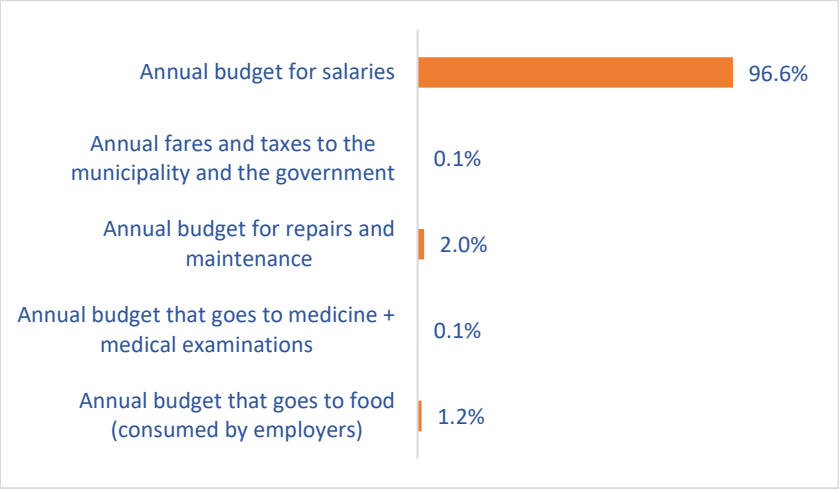
Graph 4 Annual budget expenses Groep Gidts, Belgium



Source: Data provided from representatives of the organisation

Another aspect of the employment of the staff is the trend of change in the number of staff in the last years. According to what respondents share, this trend is related to an increase in most cases, which could be explained by an increase in the number of social services and their demand. The providers take care of the professional development and sustainable occupation for people – '*80% of our importance is staff, without staff we can do nothing*'; '*our brand in the rural area is very important, it's trusted, safe, stable, you can earn good money, you know you will get it every month at the same date easily, it has a big history, so the trust is very high*'[27].

Social services contribute a lot to local development and support for the staff through employment, but sometimes they face challenges like staff shortages, overly strong focus on

[27] Interview with representative of an organisation

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Specifics of sheltered workshops in Germany

'It depends on the group of persons getting the service in the workshop, some have only psychological or intellectual disabilities, every workshop also has people with severe disabilities, and they need easy work, because not everyone can do everything. This is the main task of workshops, that they can adapt work to the people. Normally enterprises need people for their work, but sheltered workshops search for work for their people. It's the other way around. Then they have to look what is their clientele and what is the work they can get for them in the region.'

'Yes, in rural areas sheltered workshops are quite important employers and on top of that they provide services, for example food retails stores where normally another food retail store could not survive. Because sheltered workshops are funded by the state, they can also run food retail stores where another Walmart or something would not be, because it is too small or…'

management and bureaucracy and lack of recognition of their impact[28]. Therefore, it's necessary that the development of the social sector is prioritised in order to make the most of its job creation potential and use it within the local communities.

The most visible impact of the social services is related to the employment of beneficiaries when it comes to employment of persons with disabilities and people distant from the labour market and also to ensure opportunities for clients and their families to be active participants in the labour market. The employment of beneficiaries could be realised in sheltered workshops (social entrepreneurship) or as development of working skills and realisation at the open labour market. For example, the network of sheltered workshops in Germany creates work opportunities for

Specifics of sheltered workshops in Spain

In Spain, sheltered work is provided through Special Employment Centres (SECs), where at least 70 % of the workforce is formed by people with disabilities. Special Employment Centres may be public or private for profit or not-for-profit. Their primary aim is to provide workers with disabilities with employment and to facilitate their access to the open labour market. SECs receive financial support from national authorities (i.e., subsidies, discounts on companies' social security contributions, subsidies to adapt workstations and aids of other kinds). In 2013, 64 079 people with disabilities worked in Special Employment Centres.

[28] Federation of European Social Employers, (2019), The Social Service Workforce in Europe: Current State of Play and Challenges, retrieved from: http://socialemployers.eu/files/doc/Report%20-%20Social%20Services%20Workforce%20in%20Europe.pdf

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Specifics of employment of staff in social services in Belgium

Tailor-made companies (sheltered workshops) are companies that employ people who cannot enter the 'regular' employment circuit. Their aim is social, their means are economic. Customized companies, just like regular companies, must be profitable.

Tailor-made companies with more than 1,000 employees account for 16.2% of employment in the total of all West Flemish companies. Of all companies with their registered office in West Flanders, the large companies account for 12.3% of the total turnover. In the West-Flemish total, these companies represent 12.1% of the total added value. Of the total for West Flanders, 7.8% of the investments in tangible fixed assets and 39.6% of the investments in intangible fixed assets can be attributed to companies with 1,000 or more employees.

The share of tailor-made companies with fewer than 1,000 employees in the West Flemish accounts for 44.5% of employment, 53.8% of turnover, 42.1% of added value, 28.6 % of the investments in tangible fixed assets and 33.3% of the investments in intangible fixed assets out of all companies with their registered office in West Flanders.

300,000 people with disabilities and 70,000 specialist employees which are directly employed by workshop companies.[29]

The contribution of the social services towards the employment of beneficiaries can be seen in different directions. Social services, which are engaged with supporting the inclusion of people, support for overcoming risks, are oriented towards ensuring independence and self-sufficiency and a higher level of inclusion into the community, including through creating employment opportunities. Additionally, some of the services provide vocational training for a certain type of profession, but also development of social skills such as work in teams, communication, preparation for attending a job interview, making a CV and resume, organising the workday in terms of timing and tasks, etc (figure 4).

[29] BAG WfbM, (2020), The results of the nationwide Social Return On Investment study, retrieved from: https://www.bagwfbm.de/page/sroi_ergebnisse

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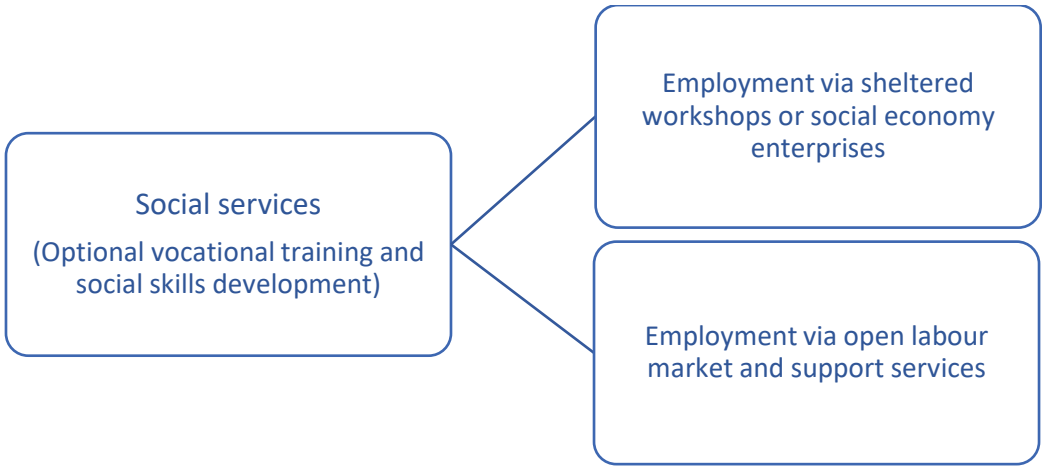
Figure 4 Paths of employment of beneficiaries



Another aspect of social support for beneficiaries working in the open labour market is providing guarantees to employers that in case of absence, another person could be sent. In general, the topic of employment of people with disabilities has different solutions in the different countries beyond the support at the social services. These solutions depend on the attitudes of people, the readiness of beneficiaries to enter the labour market, as well as the readiness of the labour market to accept them. Data shows that in some countries there is prejudice against the possibilities of people with disabilities to be employed, as well as attitudes of discrimination.

Another important aspect of the influence of social services on employment is the support for parents in terms of their possibilities for employment. In Bulgaria, parents of children with disabilities could become personal assistants to their children, which means they receive a salary that could cover their expenses in some regions. This is a form of support at the country level, but it leads to a lower level of engagement of parents at the labour market since it's not necessary for them to work. In most countries, kindergartens and day-care services are available for children before their school age. However, some parents wish to use services after their children start school, so that they are able to be employed. Having access to social services for parents or informal carers enables them to have more opportunities to seek and gain employment. Without

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having access to social services, it is often them and usually women, who do the care work, thus making it harder for them to find employment and often pushing the family in or closer to poverty. This means that social services have a direct impact on employment and thus the economic state of the families of beneficiaries, in this way creating sustainable possibilities for their participation on the labour market. According to the results of the nationwide study on social return of investment of sheltered workshops in Germany[30], mentioned above, if the care and support services are provided by the families, they cannot or only to a limited extent be gainfully employed. This eliminates taxes and contributions from gross wages of around 2 billion euros for Germany alone.

Another aspect of the economic impact is that social services, which provide employment and salaries for staff and beneficiaries, guarantee purchasing power of the local population, which also has an impact on the local economic development. For instance, workshop performance of sheltered workshops in Germany[31] creates added value in several aspects. Workshop companies, pay taxes, social security contributions and solidarity contributions that flow back to the public sector. If this is deducted from public sector investments, the bottom line is that social services cost less than it initially appears - in Germany, for every 100 euros that the public budget spends on the workshops, they recoup 51 euros directly through social security contributions.

Additionally, workshop employees give a lot back to society, being active participants in the economic cycle and paying taxes and contributions themselves. For every 100 euros in transfer payments that workshop employees receive, they pay an average of 69 euros back to the public sector in Germany. Employees of social services in Germany (both beneficiaries and staff of the services) spend part of their income in the region, since they live there, use products and services, buy and rent houses and invest in the region. In this way, the local economy is stimulated, and indirect demand is created, which is estimated in around 6 billion euros of income. This situation is also applicable to other countries, forms of social services and work opportunities for beneficiaries.

[30] BAG WfbM, (2020), The results of the nationwide Social Return On Investment study, retrieved from: https://www.bagwfbm.de/page/sroi_ergebnisse
[31] ibid

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In addition, in relation to employment prospects and economic impact, the study also calculates the costs that would arise if the workshop were not available. If the employees stayed at home and did not participate in working life, there would be care costs averaging 10,390 euros per person, they would not be integrated into the labour market and community and would also not contribute to the economic development in the region. On table 3 can be seen a summary of the employment prospects and impact on local development in Germany.

Table 3 Employment prospects and impact on local development in Germany

Area of impact	Aspects
Cost for workshop services	Although workshops are financed by the state budget, they cost less than it initially appears, since they recoup around 50% of expenditure through social security contributions.
Workshop employees as active members of the community	By providing work opportunities to disadvantaged groups, workshops contribute to them becoming active members of the community and paying taxes through employment that is subject to social contributions.
Workshop companies create economic demand	By buying goods and obtaining services, workshops have an economic impact on local development. They create employment opportunities and generate income.
Cost if workshop didn't exist	If the workshops didn't exist and employees had to stay at home and not participate in working life, they would still need support through additional social services and social benefits in cash, which would have their costs. If the care had to be provided by families, they would not have the possibility to be employed, which would eliminate their taxes and contributions.

5.3. Attracting people to the local area & Community development

All the aspects of impact of social services related to the boost for the local market and employment prospects, generally impact social life in the regions where they are located, mostly

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due to the fact that they create preconditions for more people staying, coming back, remaining to live in these regions, or even coming to live from other places. This impact is especially important in rural areas, which are cheaper to live, there are better living opportunities for families, it is calmer and cosier, often closer to nature, with ecological and other advantages, which are strengthened by the presence of social services. Attracting people to live there means that the whole development of the region is boosted, not just in terms of social services, but also health, education and other sectors by, for instance, creation of schools, kindergartens, health services, , as well as different other services that could be used by the whole community - '*Most of our social activities are in rural areas, that means in a place with 5000 people we have an elderly home, people from that place work there, they don't have to move one hour to go to work'*[32]. In addition, an increase in the population means there needs to be infrastructural development in the regions, in terms of roads, buildings, transport, etc.

Another topic, which is important in terms of attracting people to the regions, is the professional development of the staff of social services. All the organisations provide opportunities for vocational trainings for their staff and consider the professional development of the people that work in the services very important, which is a factor for keeping the people that are employed and attracting people to come to the services. This is especially valid for specific groups of specialists like psychologists, speech therapists, rehabilitators, and others. Through projects and contacts with international organisations, some providers ensure opportunities for training that are even beyond the requirements, which makes the job perspectives attractive – '*when you make a vocational training in that and go in, you can stay for your lifetime, you have a rich high number of persons working 40 or 30 years for us.* [33] Additionally, NGOs provide opportunities for exchange of experience and creation of a community of people working in the social sector by organising events, studies and dissemination of knowledge. All of this means that more people would be attracted to work in the sector and stay in the regions, thus impacting local development in the aforementioned ways. '*A vital source of job both in terms of quantity and quality, is represented by the social economy sector. It includes people with poor qualifications or reduced work capacity and provides those social services not produced by the market economy.*

[32] Interview with representative of an organisation
[33] Interview with representative of an organisation

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The under-development of such a sector in rural areas is another element of difficulty of the rural labour market... Labour market policies are crucial in the fight against poverty in rural areas…' by *'providing quality social services for those in need and as an opportunity for people searching for a job'*[34]. This outlines a situation, in which social services, in some way prevent or contribute to preventing the 'desertification' of rural and remote areas across different countries in the EU and beyond, by attracting people, by providing employment opportunities and, of course, by helping local people to improve their quality of life.

At another level, the social impact could be seen in the influence on the functioning of local communities. Sometimes social services organise local markets for people to be able to buy and sell their own production and to come together to communicate and see each other. Some social services and the spaces around them in smaller regions are also used as places where people can get together, and some events could be organised there.

5.4. Quality of life

The aspects of economic impact of the social services on local development that are described above depend mainly on the service provider, the type of the service (daily, residential, sheltered workshop, etc.) and size of the municipality, while the impact on the quality of life differs significantly in relation to the different groups of users (people with disabilities, families, families with children at a young age, youth, elderly), for which services are provided. The improvement of the quality of life of people in the local community boosts local development in the region and vice versa since this is one process.

The different aspects of the impact of social services on local development, described so far, are related to, and add to their social goals and reasons for their existence. The direct impact on people's lives is related mostly to support and protection, quality of lives as well as promotion of welfare and wellbeing of children, vulnerable adults, and communities. This impact differs in scope and purpose depending on the target groups and needs assessment – '*For everybody we have to find the best treatment, the best way, when we say inclusion'*[35]. For example, for persons

[34] European Commission, 2008, Poverty and social exclusion in rural areas, Final study report, retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2087&langId=en

[35] Interview with representative of an organisation

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with disabilities, this impact varies from sheltered home, daily care, development of skills, to support for independent living and employment. *'They live independently in their private homes, and we provide ambulant care, social help. One week a worker visits them to see if everything is ok with pocket money or help with medicines and more coaching.'*[36] An essential part of this support, as it was mentioned before, for persons distant from the labour market, is related to ensuring employment and some sheltered workshops are especially targeted towards this aspect of quality of life by being an important employer for the regions. It should be noted that there is a broad diversity of sheltered workshops models in Europe, some focus more on vocational education and training, others focusing on employment, etc. In terms of quality of life, they ensure a direct way towards independence and support for living in the community, by contributing to employment, as well as economic and social independence for beneficiaries.

Additionally, an impact on people with disabilities and their families that is shared by local authority representatives, is that the social services that are provided to people with disabilities and the support for independent living in the community, provide an opportunity for their family members to be able to have an employment. In this way, the quality of life of families is increased, by providing them an opportunity to work and be included in the life of the community. There are studies that view the impact of social services on work-life balance[37] and sustainability of the family system through different aspects such as: ensuring survival of families and decreasing the probability of divorces, preventing burn-out and mental health problems of family carers, decreasing the time family carers spend on caring dependent family members and giving them more time for themselves and to work, study and have training, enabling family carers to take care of their family member better and longer, through the support offered by the staff and the professionals engaged in the service, including seeking support from other services too, targeting specifically women, including women in vulnerable situations working on their self-esteem and skills to see themselves as economically independent. This impact depends up to a high degree on the work of the different sectors, not just social, but also health and education sectors that

[36] Interview with representative of an organisation

[37] Social Services Europe, (2018), Improving work-life balance through enabling social services: From service provision to decent policies. Retrieved from: https://redcross.eu/positions-publications/improving-work-life-balance-through-enabling-social-services

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need to have a good level of cooperation in order for social services to have an impact local development and quality of life of beneficiaries and their families.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The social services are various in terms of model of provision, goals, and type. They have a significant contribution to the well-being and integration of people with disabilities who need support. In order to ensure this support, they need financing for the activities that are planned to reach their goals. This financing is provided by different sources through different funding models. In summary, financing is mostly governmental and comes through local authorities. There is also local financing, project financing, donations, and economic activity.

The social services have different levels and aspects of influence on the socio-economic development, including direct and indirect impact. The presence of social services leads to the following aspects of influence on the local communities, which wouldn't be possible without them: a boost for the local market in terms of exchange of products and services, creation of employment prospects for beneficiaries and the whole community, improvement of the quality of life of vulnerable groups, improvement of the rural area making it more vibrant by attracting people to the area and providing opportunities for local to stay in the area, which contributes to its development (figure 5).

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Figure 5 Aspects of the socio-economic impact

Following the path of the money from the country to the clients shows that, apart from 'users of financial funds', social services also have a significant socio-economic and employment impact on local development. The governmental funds are turned into different types of benefits for local communities, which could be direct and indirect.

The boost for the local market, although not as directly visible, influences social development because social services are actually social enterprises using local buildings and consuming local services and products like other companies. On the other hand, some of the services themselves produce goods and services for the local community, whose quality is at a good level and the price is competitive.

The most visible is the impact on employment, viewed in three aspects – impact in terms of staff working at the organisation and also in terms of employment of beneficiaries and social support and care for beneficiaries, thus creating possibilities for employment of their relatives. The lack

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of social services in some regions would reduce the level of employment and the perspectives they have for staying in the region. This means that the employment impact influences the whole development of the region. The fact that each employment increases the purchasing power of people means that social services are important for the local economy.

In summary, the impact of social services on the local development can be viewed through the model of social return of investment, which turns the financial investment into socio-economic impact in the following 5 steps or aspects[38] (figure 6). At the first and second level are the stately and individual investments in the social services in the form of government funding and fees paid by beneficiaries. At the third level are the opportunity costs and returns, related to the cost for the state if the social service system didn't exist versus the cost for its existence. This is connected to its socio-economic and employment impact, meaning that if the service didn't exist, there would be not enough employment opportunities for people in the region, less of an economic impact on the region's development and less social support for people in need. At the fourth level are the effects on the quality of life of the beneficiaries and communities, related to skills for independent living and overall wellbeing. The fifth step is in regard to the regional economic effects that in principle form the socio-economic impact on the region in terms of working with local companies, producing goods and services for the local community, attracting people to the region, etc.

[38] Social Return on Investment Arbeitsgemeinschaft der freien Wohlfahrtsverbände Mainz Im Fokus: Diakonie, Caritas und DPWV (exemplarisch DKSB), retrieved from: https://winquartier.de/fileadmin/user_data/Arbeitsgespraech/Reiss_SROI_Studienbeispiel.pdf

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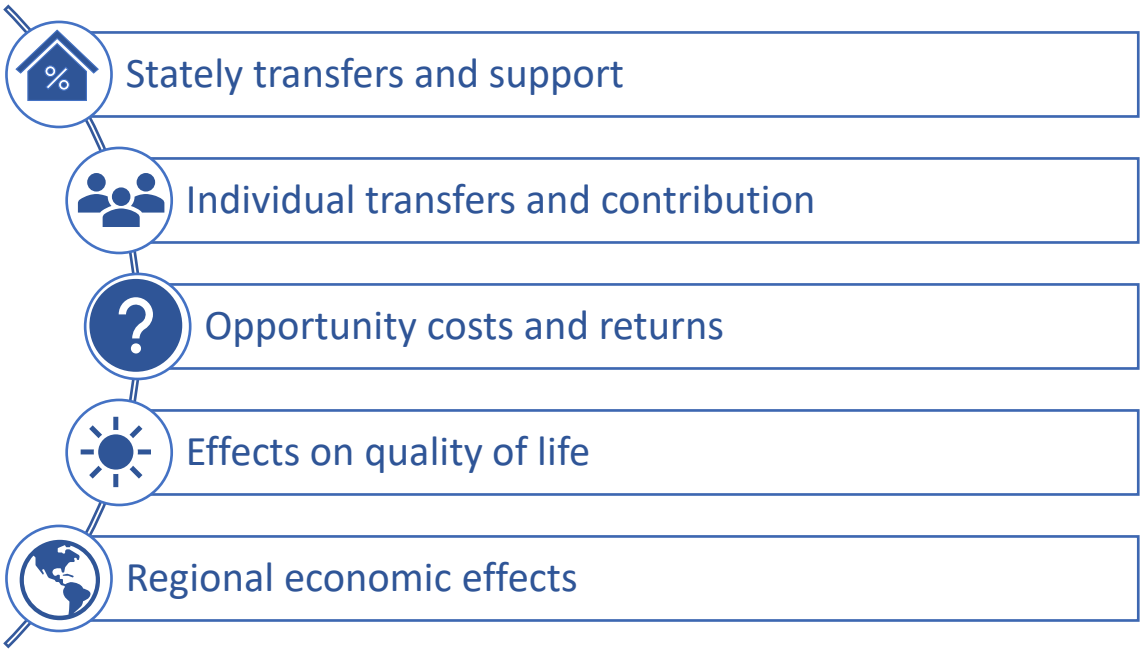
Figure 6 Social return steps



The recommendations are presented in table 4 according to the areas of impact, including examples of the impact in the different aspects. They are oriented towards regional, national and EU policy level and are recognition of the importance and socio-economic impact of the social services, which means that policy needs to recognise these services as a key partner in ensuring the quality of life of people they are for, but also to be viewed as a serious player in terms of social investment and social innovations.

Table 4 Recommendations

Area of impact	Examples	Recommendations
Boost for the local market and companies	Social services work with local companies at the different sectors like construction, catering, furnishing, equipment, transport, office supplies,	Simplification of the procedure of contracting between social services and local companies

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	maintenance of the buildings, medication, etc.	
	Social organisations produce goods and services like wooden and metal goods, food, toys and beds for children, industrial and construction materials, gardening, maintenance of buildings, restaurants, cleaning, laundry services, catering, etc.	Policy and regulations for development of support to social enterprises in terms of capacity building, networking and cooperation among social enterprises, improvement of public procurement practices and encouragement of stabilisation of income-generating resources
Employment prospects	Employment of staff	Creation of possibilities for supporting the social service workforce in terms of ensuring good working conditions
	Employment of beneficiaries	Support for development of sheltered workshops for employment of beneficiaries
	Vocational training for beneficiaries and support for working in the open labour market	Ensuring access of people with disabilities to the open labour market Raising awareness on the challenges people with disabilities face when looking for employment
Attracting people to the local area and community development	Attracting more people to stay, come back/ remain to live in these regions, or even come to live from other places due to the	Strengthening social services in terms of quality, access, and capacity

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	available social services and their socio-economic impact on the development of the regions, especially in rural areas	
	Professional development of the staff of social services, making the employment attractive	Creation of possibilities for supporting the social service workforce in terms of continuous professional development
Quality of life	Improvement of the quality of life of beneficiaries, families, and communities	Need for more research on the socio-economic impact of social services and wide dissemination of results at national and regional levels Recognition of the role of social enterprises and social services and their impact and to enhance social investment and social innovation

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Annex 1 Interview guide

I. Introduction and general information on the research

The interviewer presents themselves and the research project – goals, tasks. Junction Bulgaria is a research and consultancy company currently carrying out a study on the topic "Impact of Social Services on Local Development" for EASPD. The research will look for evidence of impact in terms of:

- economic impact on local development, meaning to what extent is the expenditure of the social services spent locally; through for instance staff costs, expenditure on products and services, etc.;
- employment impact on local development, meaning creation of employment by the social service directly (staff) or more indirectly (of the service on employment prospects for service beneficiaries and their families).

II. Introduction and general information on the interviewee

- Presenting the *organisation* – main mission, goals, regions of operation, fields of operation, service provided, main activities, number of staff, etc.;
- Presenting the *local authority* – position, region of operation, how big is the municipality, how many social services are in the region, for what types of beneficiaries, etc.
- Presenting the *beneficiary* – age, personal story, what type of service does he/she use, for how long

III. Local problems and solutions

For organisations and local authorities:

- What are the local problems and up to what degree do social services contribute to solving these local problems? In what areas is this contribution?

For beneficiaries:

- What are the main issues due to which support is needed? What are the necessary social services to solve them in the region?

IV. Financing model

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For organisations and local authorities:

- Presenting the model of financing – What are the sources of funding and share of the different sources of funding for social services in the country?
- Is there a difference between the different social services? How is it for your service? Please, specify the sources of funding: government, local, corporate social responsibility of local businesses, social entrepreneurship and socio-economic solidarity.
- If it is government funding, what are the models currently used in the country: reserved markets, public procurement, personal budgets, private investment, etc.?

For beneficiaries:

- Are social services paid for? In what amount? Do you think this is affordable and appropriate?

V. Local expenditure

For organisations and local authorities:

- Tell us about your expenditures and the share of the different types of expenditures in terms of:
  - Number of staff that is hired;
  - Local expenditures for the functioning of the social services (facilities, products, furniture, bills and current expenses);
  - Products and/or services bought.

For beneficiaries:

- Tell us about the number and type of staff working in the social service you are using.

VI. Other expenditure (services, products) and how much is spent locally

For organisations and local authorities:

- Do you think that social services support the local economy and how exactly?
- Do you benefit from financial advantages in your local community? If so, what are they exactly, e.g. reductions on taxes and bills?

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- What is your level of interest in developing social entrepreneurship initiatives? Could you tell us more about what kind of initiatives exist in the region? What are the pros and cons and their influence on the local economy?

VII. Employment impact

For local authorities:

- Do you think that social services have an influence on employment at local level? If yes, how exactly, please provide examples. How important is this type of employment for local development?
- What are the tendencies in the last years? Is employment increasing/decreasing?
- What is the number and type of jobs created by social services in your region (type of staff working at the service, external contractors, beneficiaries of the service who could receive employment)?
- What is the level of capacity development for the staff at the social services in terms of trainings, courses, seminars, conferences and other events conducted locally?

For organisations:

- Do you think that social services have an influence on employment at local level? If yes, how exactly, please provide examples. How important is this type of employment for local development?
- Could you say you have created more new jobs in the recent years, what is the trend?
- What is the level of capacity development for the staff at the social services in terms of trainings, courses, seminars, conferences and other events conducted locally?
- If applicable, what are the possibilities for professional development for beneficiaries of the social services in terms of trainings, courses, seminars and other events conducted locally?
- Do you provide services related to employment in your region? If yes, please specify what they are and how does this process happen? How many workplaces do you support?

For beneficiaries:

- Have you received support for your professional development in the social service? How exactly, in terms of trainings, courses, seminars, etc.?

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- Do you have a job? What is it? Do you like it? Do you need support and what exactly?

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