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www.spi.pt/stressless
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Index

1. Executive Summary ...........................................................................................................1
2. STRESSLESS Project ........................................................................................................3
3. Methodology ..................................................................................................................6
4. Selected Good Practices ..................................................................................................9
   4.1. Good Practices from Portugal ....................................................................................11
   4.2. Good Practices from Czech Republic .........................................................................18
   4.3. Good Practices from United Kingdom ..........................................................................26
   4.4. Good Practices from Greece .......................................................................................36
   4.5. Good Practices from Latvia .........................................................................................46
   4.6. Good Practices from Belgium ......................................................................................51
   4.7. Good Practices from The Netherlands ..........................................................................56
   4.8. Good Practices from Slovenia ......................................................................................59
   4.9. Good Practices from Switzerland ...............................................................................67
5. References .......................................................................................................................70
1. Executive Summary
This document is the Deliverable Stress Prevention Handbook within the project STRESSLESS – Improving Educators’ Resilience to Stress.

The aim of the handbook is to present good practices of interventions to reduce stress and build up resilience, including a description of the methodology applied, and the pedagogical techniques applied for trainers and teachers in the field of education.

The handbook includes stress interventions from a range of perspectives within the education sector. Some case studies are directed towards teachers and how they can either reduce or prevent stress at the individual level within their working sphere. Other good practices are for institutions to use within the education sector. These good practices are interventions and good policy practices which for instance a manager of a school could implement as a stress reduction policy measure.

The aim of including a range of good practices from various perspectives is to provide as much inspiration as possible for all relevant stakeholders in the education sector.

The handbook has a geographical coverage of the following countries: Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Latvia, Slovenia, Brazil, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium.
2. STRESSLESS Project
The improvement of education and training for educators has been established as a priority in the “Education and Training 2010” work programme from the European Commission. This programme highlights the relevance of attracting and retaining qualified and motivated people to the teaching profession. The quality of teaching and teacher education is viewed as a key factor for raising educational attainment levels and achieving the Lisbon goals\(^1\). Considering the new demands for the teaching and training professions, new solutions are required for the increased social pressure on the educational system as a whole and for the increase of work-related stress among educators (both with negative impact in the learning process and outcomes).

Presented by the European Agency of Safety and Health at Work as the second most frequently reported work-related health problem, stress is a major problem in the education sector, demanding a multi-faceted intervention that brings together adequate risk analysis as well as a combination of work-oriented and worker-oriented measures, using appropriate external expertise and worker involvement and sustained preventive actions. It’s impossible to ignore the findings stated in the European Risk Observatory Report (2009), showing that stress affects more than 22% of workers in the European Union and that the number of people suffering from stress-related conditions is likely to increase.

Experienced when the demands of the work environment exceed the workers’ ability to cope with or control them, work-related stress is associated with multiple risk factors and involves a response triggered off at physiological, psychological and behavioural level. Work-related stress can also have long term negative consequences on workers (causing health problems such as cardiovascular and musculoskeletal diseases and affecting mental health) and on institutions (such as increased absenteeism and impaired performance).

Considering the complexity of work-related stress, the STRESSLESS project – Improving Educators’ Resilience to Stress, aims to use an integrated approach that can provide educators with pathways to improve their knowledge and competences, creating innovative answers for old and growing problems and producing a positive effect on the quality and effectiveness of teaching and training by managing stress in schools and boosting educators’ health (improving their competences to cope with stress).

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\(^1\) When the Heads of States met at the Lisbon summit in March 2000, European Union leaders set out a new strategy, based on a consensus among Member States, to make Europe more dynamic and competitive. The initiative became known as the “Lisbon Strategy” and came to cover a very wide range of policies. The Strategy was relaunched in Spring 2005 after initially moderate results and became more focused on growth and jobs.
Hence, the STRESSLESS project, a two year initiative that began in November 2010, recognises the need to develop efficient solutions to work-related stress, especially within the education area.

Seeking to develop a practical Guidebook that will help educators and educational institutions to be resilient while dealing with psychosocial hazards, the project aims to produce effects in three key areas:

- Promoting well-being in individuals and institutions;
- Raising awareness on work-related stress management in employees and organisations;
- Improving quality in the educational context.
3. Methodology
The good practices have been identified on the basis of a set of criteria developed by the partnership. In order to be included in the handbook the good practices should focus on different types of interventions within the education sector according to best practice guidance.

The good stress prevention interventions should further address the different kinds of stakeholders that the STRESSLESS project is directed to namely teachers, trainers, and educators but also managers of education institutions and higher management.

This means that each good practice is either mainly directed towards individuals working in the education sector or at institutional level, where managers or other members of the administration would be able to implement them as part of a stress reduction policy.

The second criterion for inclusion of a good practice was driven from the project PRIMA-EF ‘Guidance on the European Framework for Psychosocial Risk Management’\(^2\) in which work-related stress is described. Within the project three types of work-related stress management interventions have been identified and are broadly defined as primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention:

- **Primary prevention approaches** seek to combat work-related stress by changing elements in the way work is organised and managed. Examples include work redesign, development of appropriate communication systems and reviewing appraisal systems.
- **Secondary prevention approaches** aim to combat work-related stress by developing individual skills in stress management through training. Examples of such training include relaxation and time management training.
- **Tertiary prevention approaches** aim to reduce the impact of work-related stress on workers’ health by developing appropriate rehabilitation and “return to work” systems and enhanced occupational health provisions. Examples include the provision of confidential counselling to employees and cognitive behavioural training.

The partnership has tried to include good practices in this handbook which represent all three intervention levels.

\(^2\) [www.prima-ef.org](http://www.prima-ef.org)
The third criterion for inclusion of a good practice is the geographical dimension. The partnership is made up of organisations from nine countries moreover partners have in some cases also identified good practices in other countries such as Brazil and Spain. The aim was to give the handbook a European and international perspective, but also considering local and national context by identifying good practices in the partners’ countries.
4. Selected Good Practices
To describe the selected good practices in a uniform way, a template was created with the following aspects:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Description of the Practice
- Results and Discussion
- Practice Lessons
- Conclusions and Recommendations

The sequence of the good practices presentation is related with the sequence of the partnership.
GOOD PRACTICES FROM PORTUGAL
4.1.1. Good Practice 1

ABSTRACT
This best practice is a research study conducted by several universities in Portugal, Brazil, and Spain. The objective of the study was to try and solve and prevent stress, de-motivation and burnout for teachers and health professionals. To fulfil this objective, a stress management course was developed for the target groups mentioned above. The course consisted of fifty hours training divided into eleven sessions, ten indoor made up from the following content: sharing professional experience with colleagues, identifying specific stress factors, and possible coping strategies to solve them, replacing irrational beliefs by more appropriate ones, and practicing assertiveness and relaxation. In addition to this, the course consists of one day of outdoor training. Comparing the beginning with the end of the training programme, the participants showed a significant increase in the self-perception of well-being.

INTRODUCTION
This research study was realized in 2004, between professors of the department and faculty at the University of Algarve, professors at the faculty of education at the Catholic University of South Rio Grande and the faculty of psychology at the University of Málaga, Spain. The objective of the study was to try and address the issues of stress, de-motivation and burnout especially among teachers and health professionals, as they are in the high-risk group for being subjected to these illnesses. The issue of stress (including burnout, depression, de-motivation etc.), is such a complex phenomenon, in which no unique solution to solve the problem exits. However, often training and continuing education are proposed solutions in this context. These types of courses and training can improve general satisfaction with work, improve the confidence of the people attending these types of courses, and contribute to personal and professional development. Within this context of tailored training to resolve personal issues, a first programme of continuing training was developed with duration of 30 hours, distributed to 10 sessions, which included various exercises. This course was a success, however the participants felt that more sessions/time were needed to explore and solve issues more in-depth. Thus, this stress management training course is based on this first elaborated course, but including more relevant thematic topics, and this training course has a longer duration, which was also demanded from the participants of the previous course.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION
The training course was structured into eleven sessions, which had duration of fifty hours in total. Each session was divided into four hours, and ten of the sessions were implemented in an indoor room, the final one took place outdoor and had duration of 10 hours (one day). The hypothesis and methodology for the course was the following: the course will be implemented to validate if the proposed content and strategies regardless of the trainer. As such, the course was implemented with two different kinds of trainers, and also included a control group and an experimental group. The course was realized with 28 professors teaching at secondary level. 21 of them were female and 7 of them were male. This was the experimental group. The control group consisted of 30 professors, 19 of them were female and 11 of them were male. They were also teaching at secondary level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The indicators used as a median to calculate the results showed that there was a difference between the preliminary evaluation that the participants performed and the post-evaluation conducted in the last session. In general the professional well-being of the participants was rated higher (the higher the ranking of well-being, the better). In general the participants felt happier, and they were more motivated to continue employment within their sector. As was also expected, the control group showed no significant changes. The impact of the training course varies accordingly to different persons, however they study was carried out under professional research conditions, and can be considered validate research for further research and study. It is worth to emphasize that even though the difference between the preliminary and post-evaluation results varies
Slightly from person to person, the results point to a unique interpretation: the participants felt less stress and much better after the completion of the course.

**PRACTICE LESSONS**

The training programme was as follows:

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<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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| 1       | • Presentation of the course, programme and the participants  
         | • Preliminary evaluation of the variables that together constitutes the difference between well being and distress at work |
| 2       | • Identification of the symptoms or indicators of distress at work  
         | • Identification of the potential factors to this distress |
| 3       | • Identification of possible ways of solving the problems and coping strategies, which the professionals can use to overcome difficulties |
| 4       | • Identification and replacement of negative and irrational thoughts about the individual and about certain aspects of the professional life  
         | • Development of competences to cope with professional responsibilities, expectations and the professional objectives in the context of the most accurate cognitive-motivation functionality |
| 5       | • Development of management competences with regard to symptoms physical associated with distress (breathing and relaxing exercises) |
| 6       | • Development of competences to manage your time at work  
         | • Development of competences to work in teams and perform meetings |
| 7       | • Identification of characteristics of helpful relationship attitudes  
         | • Development of leadership skills in interpersonal relations |
| 8       | • Identification and development of skills in assertiveness  
         | • Identification and development of competences to handle potential conflict situations in the professional working environment |
| 9       | • Identification of rules for a healthy lifestyle  
         | • Development of a individual coping strategy by each participant |
| 10      | • Dynamic group exercises and |
| 11      | • Perspectives on implementation of lifelong learning professional and personal for each participant  
         | • Post-evaluation evaluation of the variables that together constitutes the difference between well being and distress at work and utility of the course from the participants |

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The experimental group confirmed that they showed an increase in their perception of higher well-being at work and they were also motivated to continue their work. The results should be used to form discussions and debates on how to improve the well-being of professors, and health employees through continuing education on subjects regarding their well-being, as the results clearly show there is a positive impact on the people that participated.
4.1.2. Good Practice 2

**ABSTRACT**

This best practice is a comparative study, which implemented and evaluated an occupational stress management programme for a group of 74 non-academics from a private university in the state of Goiás, Brazil. 42 employees attended a multimodal intervention for stress management, while the remaining 32 attended social skills training. Both courses were conducted in 12 group sessions of 60 minutes each, during working hours. Preliminary and post measures were conducted such as, measure for immunity, blood pressure, and verbal stress responses, social skills, and coping with problems at work. The same tests were conducted with the group attending the social skills training. The tests revealed that both groups presented similar levels of stress symptoms, coping with problems at work, social skills and immunity, the only measurement which differed was the diastolic blood pressure. The participants from the stress management course showed lower mean results of this. The results do not indicate that one intervention was better than the other.

**INTRODUCTION**

The study was developed as a PhD thesis from the Institute of psychology at the University of Brásilia, Brazil. The study has been selected as a best practice, because of its nature of relevance for the thematic area of stress related to work sphere. The study hoped to obtain a general understanding of the conditions that might ultimately cause occupational illness, and the development of a methodology to prevent and control these illnesses. Stress is included in this occupational illness definition. The underlying basis for the study was that previous studies have showed that interventions such as, coping strategies can minimize the negative impact of stress and contribute to a healthy work environment. The aim of the study was then to compare two types of interventions to manage occupational stress, focusing on individual coping skills. The objectives of the study in detail were to a) implement a programme to manage occupational stress with administrative employees from a private university b) investigate the scores/results from the post-evaluation from the stress management course and if social habits differ within the various symptoms of stress, coping with problems at work, social situations, measures of immunity, and blood pressure. The hypothesis of the study was that a: intervention of management of stress would have a significant impact and create changes on the above mentioned variables, and that the intervention of the social skills would not have a significant impact on the above mentioned variables. Supposedly, the results of intervention of stress management would be better than the ones from the intervention of social skills.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION**

The interventions were implemented in a university in the of state of Goiás, Brazil in the administrative department including, the department of general services, the secretary, the financial department, the design department, Supplies department, Human Resources, and the statistical department. The human resource department already had an overall programme called: ‘The quality of work programme’ consisting of muscle stretching during work hours, the interventions were accepted by the human resource department to be part of the overall quality at work programme. To begin with around 150 employees were invited to participate in the interventions, of those 131 accepted and participated in the first session. The participants were divided between the two interventions: 68 participants in the management of stress and 63 participants in the social skills. In total 74 participants completed (management of stress 42 participants; social skills 32 participants) the two interventions and the post-test, the average age for the participants was 39.

The results from both interventions were evaluated from verbal and physical indicators. The verbal indictors used were: adult stress symptoms inventory, scale of occupational coping and social skills inventory. The objective of the adult stress symptoms inventory is to identify stress symptoms in adults, the nature of symptom (physical or psychological) and the phase of stress, in which the respondent identified the symptom. It is composed by 3 stages: the first one having15 stress symptoms described as belonging to this phase. This is the alarm (initial) phase of stress, one symptom could be muscle tensions in this phase. The second phase with 15 descriptive symptoms is an intermediate
phase of stress, where one symptom could be feeling of physical exhaustion and troubles with memory. The third phase with 23 symptoms of stress is the last and most serious of these 3 phases, one example of a symptom in this phase could be daily anxiety, and prolonged skin problems. In total there exist more than 53 symptoms for stress, where 19 of them are psychological and 34 are physical. The participants were asked to rank each symptom describing their current state and feelings experienced in the last 24 hours (at the first phase), or the last week (the second phase) or the last month (the third phase).

The scale of occupational coping aims to evaluate confrontation strategies used to deal with problems and difficulties at work. There might exist different version of this, but this version used had 46 aspects grouped in three factors: control (actions to cope with a general form of stress and revaluations of such cognitive sources such as asking for help to deal with the problem). Avoidance meaning actions or cognitive avoidance from the general source of stress, where one tries not the let the symptoms/situation affects you. The last factor is the management of symptoms (actions or cognitive solutions to cope with symptoms of stress, such as psychical exercise).

Social skills inventory: this instrument aims to evaluate habits used in social interactions through 38 grouped factors: (following a selection) confrontation and expressing positive feelings; conversations and social development; self-exposure to unknown and new situations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The results obtained are slightly contradictory concerning within the majority of the variables in both types of interventions. Participants from both group showed similar levels of stress, coping with problems at work, social habits, and immunity. These results are not surprising, when looking at similar research studies that also compared different kinds of interventions with each other. However, regarding the psychical variables measured the participants of the stress management course showed slightly lower blood pressure, compared to the other group.

From the beginning of the study it was expected that the group of stress management would show lower signs of stress compared to the other group, however as the level of lower stress was the same within both group, a question is raised: what are the mechanisms through which interventions in social skills result in reducing symptoms of stress?

PRACTICE LESSONS
The intervention regarding stress management addressed various thematic areas such as forms of coping skills to manage stress, information about stress, and strategies of relaxation, assertive training in solutions management, training in management of the time at work, and cognitive restructuring. The intervention of social skills including training aspects such as how to start and maintain a conversation, how to ask for help, to ask and answer questions, learning how to say no, defending yourself, to express and show feelings, learning how to deal with criticism and compliments, to use empathy, admit mistakes and learn how to apologise. The interventions were formed on the concept of a psycho educational approach, and were implemented with the use of written self-awareness exercises, behaviour test, and provision of instructions. The participants from both the interventions received each 12 sessions of 60 minutes duration. There was implemented one session per week for both interventions, with the 12 hours distributed over 3 months. The first and the last sessions were pre- and post-evaluations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The interventions showed positive results, namely reduction of stress, which was the objective of the study. However, the aim of the study was also the show that the individuals, who participated in the management of stress course had reduced their stress significant compared to the group, who have had interventions of social skills. The peculiar about the results is that this was not the case overall, both groups showed a reduction in stress. One might argue that implementing intervention, of either social skills or management of stress will have a positive effect of the level of stress of the employees. However, the intervention might not necessary need to be focused solely on stress aspects, but can include other issues such as social skills, coping with problems at work etc.
### 4.1.3. Good Practice 3

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<th>ABSTRACT</th>
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<td>This best practice is a study, which analyses the differences in the stress factors that are relevant in school transition, coping strategies, used and two adaptation indexes, academic and social, between three groups of students: a group that took part in a programme with sessions about Transition in the fourth year, a group that in addition to this program took part in social skills training and a control group. The results revealed that the group that participated with the social skills training and other sessions related with the Transition, made use of coping strategies more frequently, especially the cognitive-behavioural distraction ones, than the other two.</td>
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<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
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<td>The transition between school years can be an experience, which has a huge impact on the children and youngsters and be a great challenge in their development. There already exist evidence that suggest increased level of stress and emotional disturbance associated with this transition. The challenges and difficulties that young people face, when entering secondary school and in general make the transition between school years can be of great distress. Within this context, the study aims to investigate the phenomena behind stress, coping and adaptation of students in transition to secondary level compared between groups: an experimental group, and participants in the intervention, and a control group. One of the groups consisted of students, who had already participated in a programme to promote knowledge and skills of school transition called ‘Transition’, the objective of this programme was to enable the students to make this transition between schools and school years. It is expected that the young people participating in this intervention will afterwards posses a range of the most important coping strategies, having less stress and be more open to adaptation than the control group.</td>
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<th>DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION</th>
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<td>In total 209 students participated in this study, who were enrolled in the 5th grade for the first time from three different schools from public schools in Lisbon, Portugal. The selection of the particular schools was driven from the fact that these schools were part of the network that had implemented the programme ‘Transition’. Three groups were taking part of this study: the first group was the same, who participated in the previous programme ‘Transition’(83 students), the second group who besides participating in the same programme ‘Transition’ also worked to develop socio-emotional skills for a period of three years (22 students), and a control group that did not participate in anything (104 students). The division of gender was more or less fifty-fifty with a slight majority of females (50,7%), the age ranged from 9 to 15 years. The intervention was based on instruments to measure any difference in any of the experimental groups. Besides the biographies, and the questionnaire (after) the following instruments were used: Academic performance index of each student: to evaluate the academic adaptation for this study, an academic performance index was developed, which corresponded to the average of the final grades of the subjects: Portuguese, math, foreign languages, history and geography of Portugal, natural science, gym, IT (layout and design), and music. Indicator of social support: In order to evaluate the ability to adapt from a social point of view, an indicator of social support was elaborated, which basically counted the number of people, whom a child thinks, he/she can count on for help, when the child is experiencing any kind of problems, feeling sad or worried about something, and the level of satisfaction with the support offered from one of these people, evaluated at a scale from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 4 (very satisfied) for each individual person.</td>
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<th>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</th>
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<td>When comparing the two experimental groups with the control group, as such no difference in the level of stress was observed. The fact that some students have benefitted from the participation in the intervention prior to the transition between school years, does not seem to have implications on the levels of perceived stress after the transition. This result might have several explanations, for instance some of the surveyed children might have been more</td>
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vulnerable and exposed to worries about transition, because these issues were addressed during the intervention, and thus the children reacted negatively with stress towards these worries, companies to the control group that was not ‘exposed’ to the worries of transition, before it actually happened. Also the timing of the collected data might have had an influence on the results as well, because the questionnaires were completed in the second half of the school year (after the transition) allowing the students to have had a period of adjustment to the new surroundings. For instance, if the questionnaire had been applied right after the transition, the results might have been different.

The group that participated in the social skills sessions showed a higher use of all the strategies learned, and higher use of cognitive strategies of distraction and assertiveness, compared to the group that had only learned about transition, and the control group.

**PRACTICE LESSONS**

As mentioned above, this particular intervention was developed from the previous programme ‘Transition’, and the programme involving training of social skills. The programme ‘Transition’ had as objective to prepare students to the change between school years. The sessions were of play-full character, intending to inform and prepare the students in advance to the realities of their new ‘world’, for instance the different places and their function (i.e. the playground, the teaching rooms, cafeteria, etc.) and their applied rules (e.g. no running in the cafeteria), the subjects to learn, and to train the skills of organising one’s materials/book and time management.

The programme of social skills aimed to develop and foster competences such as verbal and non-verbal communication, assertiveness, problem-solving, and being able to make decisions.

The students that had participated in these sessions were the same that participated in the intervention regarding the transition to secondary school.

After the transition between school years, the instruments as previous described were applied to the groups to see if the intervention have had an impact. The two experimental groups were compared to the control group. The implementation of the instruments mainly took place during normal class hours, and was applied in class rooms. The majority of the time the instruments were applied within the class of ‘citizenship training’, between January and March 2006.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The transition between school years and to new schools and environments can have a great impact on a child, as such many children experience stress and unease, when doing the transition. However, results from this study indicate how difficult it can be to collect these data in settings that will allow clear results. The children were surveyed in a period, which might not be the most stressful for them, as most logical the first period after the transition might be the most stressful, and not after 6 months, where they were actually surveyed. However, the group that was taught about social skills, showed improvements and that they actually used the instruments and tools that they were taught, so perhaps in order to reduce stress among youngster it is necessary to apply the exact tools of which the children understand and can use in situations, where they feel stresses and exposed to difficult social situations.
GOOD PRACTICES FROM CZECH REPUBLIC
4.2.1. Good Practice 4

**ABSTRACT**

Alternative stress reduction methods – from the world of yoga

Practicing yoga is the active reaction of movement stereotypes, positives influence on muscle and mental tensions and synchronizing of breath and movement, which results in a mind in full harmony. The effects of yoga can most beneficial be used for stress reduction practice by teachers, especially the breathing techniques which lead to breathing control and breathing capacity development and as a result of this better relaxation. Relaxation can be as short or post-isometric relaxation or special relaxation yoga technique (yoganidra). The effects of breathing exercises are improvement of muscle relaxation, muscle tiredness removing, hypoxia adaptability of tissues, venous recovery improvement, establishment of correct breath rhythm, stress and tension management, including the massage of abdomen organs. Effects are a decrease in tension and stress, improvement of self esteem, and improve the concentration. Breathing exercises originating within the yoga tradition have broad value for rehabilitation of teachers.

**INTRODUCTION**

Every change in the social milieu has a psycho – somatic response in the organism with a health impact. The change of mood/situation is first “assessed” through the “psychic filter” with follow health impact (e.g. impact in the body or it manifests itself as a psychological problem), it all depends of if the situation is perceived as stressful, endangering (e.g. evoking unsafely, destruction of psychosomatic integrity or too much stimuli together) or if it is assessed as positive. Through the “psychic filter” also evaluate signals coming from inside the organism (e.g. burst of pain, palpitation). The “assessment” is of course highly subjective and depends on the individual. If the situation is understood as endangering, sympathetic division is mobilized together with noradrenalin and adrenalin mobilization. If the subjective stress repeats often or permanently, another hormone response in organism is released, especially from the adrenal cortex (glucocorticoids, mineralocorticoids) and from other glands. This has a very negative impact on the immune system, can cause or provoke allergic reactions and different diseases development. The defence and also the prevention adequate physical activity presents its intensive impact on the peripheral part, it means on the somatic system thanks the adequate movement regime is affected psychic condition and physical condition so much that can be absolved stress without any health risk. The base of health support is self-esteem. Predisposition of that is self-understanding. Predisposition for the self-understanding is the ability to relax. The conciseness becomes more objective and wider in the process of self-understanding. Self-understanding makes individuals (teachers) more open to personal experiences and has a positive influence on the level of performance and skills. It is said that Life is breathing, which implies that as long as a person breathes he/she is living. The indication of life is breathing and from this logic, “The healthy breathing implies a healthy life.” The base of this is mastering the full yoga breath including other techniques, which intend to develop breathing process, its deepness and control. The role of breathing is very important in the human and animal physiology. Normal human beings take around 12-20 breaths per minute. However under various physiological conditions, age and health factors, these parameters change. During a resting phase it may decrease and it can increase when the individual is performing exercises.

Optimal breathing is based on scientific principles of breathing in which there is optimal utilization of lung capacity. Vital capacity is measured by a so called Spiro meter, which is a small gadget to measure the inhaled air from the lungs by a person. Optimal breathing exercises focus on breathing training for complete breathing. These exercises give full stretch to lungs and thus individual mastering these techniques; they can inhale, hold and exhale in a far better way than “normal breathing” individuals. The lung volume depends upon various factors like: age, sex, smoker versus non-smoker etc. Athletes are supposed to possess bigger lung capacity in comparison to non-athletes. Spirometric studies provide evidence of athletes have bigger lung capacity and that is because of their training and other forms of exercises. Several factors effect lung volumes; some can be controlled and some cannot. Lung volumes can be measured using the following terms: Factors which influence a person’s lung capacity is the sex, the height, smoking habits, physical shape.
**Description of the Practice**

Yoga techniques are based on the awareness of mind and body. Breathing plays a very significant role in creating awareness of the body. In facts in therapy sessions, it is a common practice that the client observes his/her breathing pattern to become more self-aware.

**Abdominal breathing**

The abdominal breathing exercise is to learn how to use effectively the main breath muscle – diaphragm - which results in a gas exchange in the lower part of lungs. During the inhalation phase the diaphragm is activated, expands and the abdominal wall rises. During the exhalation the diaphragm is relaxed and the abdominal wall slopes down. Main benefits are relaxation and peace of mind and compensation and regeneration of physical and psychological stress. Very effective yoga position for abdominal breath development is for example shashanka asana or yoga mudra.

**Thoracic breathing**

In this type of breathing exercise the main function is the interaction of the intercostal muscles. During the inhalation phase these muscles are activated and thorax rising. Exhalation phase is passive, exhalation is provided thanks to the elasticity of thorax, which slopes down. Active exhalation can be provided too, when intercostal muscles are activated again and support gas exchange in the middle of the lungs. External intercostal muscles participate in inhalation phase, internal intercostal muscles participate in exhalation phase. Both phases help to blood circulation and to heart work. Deep breathing process is significantly positive in blood circulation and helps to build condition in aerobic activities. Very effective yoga positions for thoracic breathing development are for example matsja asana, dhanur asana.

**Clavicular breathing**

In clavicular breathing gas changing in the upper parts of the lungs and apexes of lungs is provided. The mechanism this realization is same as in thoracic breathing. Only to the intercostals help also musculi skaleni. Usually people are not trained to when breathing using these muscles only in the case of breathe stress (asthmatic attack, asphyxia). An important benefit of the clavicular breathing is apexes of lungs purification, which is important for stamina of cellules in alveolas. Therefore this breathing presents an asthma prevention and prevention of inflammation in this area.

**Connection of all three breathing types, full yoga breath**

For the deep breathing and vital capacity promotion all the three mentioned types of breathing are connected in a so called “full yoga breathing”. Benefits are capacity in restoring or developing relaxation effects and eliminate stress. For the training and harmonization of the full yoga breathing many yoga exercises can be used. Very effective yoga asana is here “cat” (mardjari), tiger (vjagrah asana) or yoga mudra.

Additional, different exercises using the arms (in movement) are also very useful, for instance lying, sitting or standing positions. Raising the arms in the air is inhalation; disclose arms to the body are exhalation.

Benefits:

*The observation of your own breathing is the fundamental base of relaxation and concentration techniques to reduce stress and mental tensions. Observation of Breath and full yoga breath techniques can contribute to the development of self-esteem and increase your personal satisfaction level.*

In the following we present the so called psycho-training methods on the basis of yoga techniques which can demonstrate benefits of breathing exercises and relaxation. Individual relaxation training can reduce pain, and diminishes depression from failure. Individuals (teachers) are able to recognize their own potential and aims to improve their (professional) performance:
INNER SILENCE
Each day it is recommended to perform a relaxation exercise for several minutes to observe the breathing process. Another helpful technique is the “mauna” - silence. Both techniques have a refreshing effect on teachers’ senses and reactions and provide the individual with renewed energy.

SENSES AND EMOTIONS CONTROL
The negative actions and thoughts would be restrained by practicing full yoga breathing exercise. Negative thoughts not only disturb one’s mind, but they also create stress in the body. In such cases it is recommended that teachers perform the full yoga breath technique with concentration on the breathing process.

SELF – CONFIDENCE, FAITH
Through the forces of mind, it is possible to visualise and analyse a situation, hence to change it, and to learn from it. Following this it is possible to change behaviour and habits, and thus reduce stressful situations.

DISCIPLINE, STEADFAST
It is very important when overcoming stressful situations to be determent and speak your mind, and learn how to say no and focus on yourself.

INDEPENDENCE, FREEDOM
Learn how to be independent and see things from a different perspective. Walk away from conflicts and try to be as independent as possible.

PURPOSE, AIM
It is very important that teachers develop the characteristics of determination and purpose. Whatever situation or obstacle that they might encounter, they should try and focus solely on the goal to solve the situation and not all other aspects. It is very important to be concentrated on the goal and be patience and calm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The breathing process is much more than the oxygen which people inhale, as the science of breathing is much deeper. This ideology points to the role of vital energy which exists in the universe and in the process of developing appropriate breathing technique that can be acquired inside the body.

What do we learn from all this information and techniques discussed? The message is clear that breathing exercises deliver the following advantages:

- Health benefits
- Reduce infections
- Builds better immune system
- Enhances stamina and vigour

In our previous interventions and research with yoga techniques applications oriented on mental training of sportsmen, on concentration effects, etc. (KREJČÍ et al., 2008) the breathe exercises showed positive results. In all cases they had harmonized effects on the nerve and muscle system. If muscles are in permanent contractions, the blood circulation is blocked, and this fact corresponds with psychic lability (Berger, Pargman & Weinberg, 2002, MAHEŚVARANANDA, 2006, Pišot et al., 2008). Special asanas with full yoga breath application dissolves blocks and spasms and influences positive on the actual psychic state. Additional, yoga exercises support the metabolic processes and utilization of whole breathing capacity. Breathing exercises have a revitalization effect and harmonize the psychic states.

The thinking process and breathing process are closed related. If a teacher is irritated/upset, the breath becomes irregular, loud, short and limited in the upper part of the chest. If the individual is calm and relaxed instead, the breathing process is deep, slow, and regular with the usage of the whole breathing capacity (diaphragm breath). This principle is possible to use in such a way that during the change of breathing it is possible to calm emotions of the individuals and harmonize their psyche/mind. Especially the full yoga breath and “Nadi shodhan”(breathing through left and right nostril) present special techniques to calm and balance their nervous system.

In average for individuals the heart rate is determined mainly by the back part of the heart the so called vagal activity. The basic heart rate is therefore the function of parasympathetic system. Studies have shown that there was a significant decrease in the basic heart rate for the “slow” breathing group after three months of practice of the slow breathing exercise. This indicates that the practice of slow breathing exercise improves vagal activity! No significant
change in the basic heart rate was observed in fast breathing group. It has been suggested that well-performed slow yogic breathing decreases sympathetic activity during altitude induced hypoxia, by increasing oxygenation without altering minute ventilation. In slow and deep breathing, oxygenation of blood increases without changing minute ventilation, as alveolar ventilation increases. It has been suggested earlier that slow breathing increases oxygen consumption that improves autonomic functions. Also slow type of breathing decreases sympathetic activity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that regular practice of slow breathing exercise for a minimum of three months improves autonomic functions. The practice of fast breathing exercise for the same duration does not affect the autonomic functions.

After realisation of the psycho-training programme individuals are able:

- To use separately compensatory and relaxation techniques to hinder mental fatigue and stress in their everyday life
- To be considerate to others – colleagues, students, parents, etc.
- To control rhythm of breathing and slow motion represented a wholly new quality of motional relaxation
- To use special yoga positions and exercises which promote deeper breathing, and induce brain wave patterns that are associated with relaxation and harmony states. These effects are much like those of meditation, and it is appropriate to think of yoga as a kind of meditation to the body and it is most likely that you will feel positive changes soon.
4.2.2. Good Practice 5

ABSTRACT
PACZion is the name for a project on teachers’ health and is significantly supported and promoted by the ministries of education in Czech Republic and Bavaria, also endorsed by both countries’ governments and by the universities’ boards in Passau and Ceske Budejovice. The long-term objective is thus to document the (future) proven benefit of the individual health measures taken alongside one’s job with a (currently) small number of participants and, on the basis of these scientific data, to initiate processes of administrative change for many Bavarian teachers. Although the PACZion project will be finished in 2011, the vision of a holistic support system as the “school as a workplace” will be carried on and teachers, governing bodies of schools and supervising boards should be encouraged to actively contribute to implementing and institutionalizing teachers’ health and to fully use the room provided for salutogenetic measures as far as their possibilities and situations allow.

INTRODUCTION
Research concerning teachers’ health supports that teachers’ occupation, due to complex spectrum of educative and educational tasks, leads to psychological and physical burn-out syndrome. Results of investigative survey PAllianCZ (2006) support the fact that more than 66% of Czech and Bavarian teachers have the burn-out syndrome (stress), which was the reason for their early retirement, which then lead to an increased expensive for the state. Time system measures concerning education and training of teachers’ health, as planned within a partnership network, will contribute to improvement of quality of both teachers’ work and lives.

The main aim of the project was to develop an educational training programme for teachers. During the introduction training, which was implemented in the consulting center (Bad Griesbach), groups of selected teachers (around 60 participants) were examined individually (psychologically, physically). In the 2 year duration of the course, the teachers were taught in a special programme concerning support and responsible care of their own health, minding their individual differences. Once every other 6 months, an evaluation was conducted concerning the effectiveness of care of personal health. This evaluation was carried out in the consulting center, with the opportunity to correct the conception of health care and self-control. At the end a statement about the possible changes was elaborated, in accordance with the participant’s reaction to given salutogenetic program. The network’s partners will remain the main contact persons in the internationally founded consultation center. The Center for a healthy lifestyle within the department for health education (in Faculty of Education, University of South Bohemia) serves as the special consulting center. Its aims and tasks are the same as the ones of the Bavarian side. The collaborative project consists of a partnership, coordinated by the University of Passau. With regular consultations with experts, a catalogue of preventive and curative activities leading towards responsibility of personal health, and care improvement was developed. Both “sides” are cooperating closely, as evident from current cooperation, and coordinators from Czech and Bavarian parties form the administrative side of the project. In order to minimize the language barrier, a German speaking coordinator (staying in Ceske Budejovice) is involved in the project. The technical expertise of the project lies with the responsibility of the doctors and psychologists as well as the advisory centers for healthy lifestyle on both workplaces, where the teachers – participants are supported and diagnosed. The whole project exhibits close succession in individual phases and was closely documented.

The participant was expected, with the help of medical and psychological team of experts to develop the individual Salutogenetic plan in the course of the mentioned research period. The main goal is to boost personal resources and acquire a permanent high professional satisfaction level of the teachers. It also aims at eliminating, or significant lowering, the burn-out quote in the long term. It is to be presented as best practice among teachers that it is possible to strengthen one’s health by their own care and to gain and to gain positive results by these means.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION
Being able to work in one’s profession “with passion” and with joy for as long as possible, acting in a health-conscious way for oneself and returning this positive climate of contentment to the educational work sphere and to the pupils.
However, reality shows us otherwise. Germany is in the middle of a campaign for better education - the learning success of the pupils serves as a quality criteria of a “high-wage and high-performance country” and increase the pressure that is on the educational sector to always perform at its best, including the teachers and students. As current studies on classroom teaching (cf. Hattie, 2003; Sanders/ Rivers, 1996) show that at least 30% of pupils’ success is directly connected with the personality of the teacher, it is obvious that the emphasis of educational and health politics should be put on improving the physical and mental stability of teachers, all the more so after recent statistical data on early retirement (23%; in comparison to other public officers: 17%; Federal Statistical Office 2008) or on the burnout syndrome (Schaarschmidt 2002/2007, Weber 2004, Seibert et al. 2007) provide alarming findings on the current health condition of the teaching staff. In this context, it is not only the personal fates of teachers who are at risk of burning out or have fallen ill that move us due to the consequences for the person who is affected, his or her family or social network. From a systemic or economic point of view this tendency seems to cause more and more reason for concern, as absences due to sick leave and early retirement from service put a financial burden on the school system due to transitional arrangements and covering arrangements, as well as on the government and the healthcare system as the providers of social benefits. Becoming aware of this alarming situation has been attempted for several years, offering solutions and measures on various levels of the government and the school, however, with hardly any noticeable success.

State-aided pilot projects on teachers’ health in Bavaria were abandoned after a while and the counselling service for these inquiries was transferred to the school counselling agencies of the governments. Those, however, hardly manage to cope with the great demand for autogenic support measures due to a lack of financial and human resources. On the meso level, health support within schools depends on an open-minded governing board of the school which should be able to enable implementation as part of the administrative setup. Thus it is left to those concerned to assume responsibility for participating in classes and seminars on various health disciplines, choosing from teacher specific catalogues for continuing education, from the local offers of health insurance companies or health care organisations. In reality, this usually happens in a very selective way, the choice is made according to personal preferences and often without any professional counseling or support. Due do the lack of continuous medical monitoring, there is no proof of efficiency so that the time the chosen measure will be effective might be rather limited and the commitment displayed will bring few results. The project’s basic objective is to prove the long-term efficiency of individual and, in particular, accompanied measures for professional health support, which, at the end of the project, is to manifest in the form of a stabilization of the participating teachers’ and students’ individual health condition and to prove the profitability of workplace health promotion.

The project is simultaneously implemented in both regions in four phases and contains as its core a 2-year intensive health and comfort program from five areas:

- relaxation,
- movement,
- nutrition,
- job-related salutogenesis and
- preventive medical health care and consulting.

In addition to the holistic medical component, PACZion puts a special emphasis on an atmosphere of “feeling comfortable and taken care of”. Therefore up-to-date health care and consultation centers are available in both Lower Bavaria and the Czech Republic, in Bad Griesbach (D) and Trebon (CZ) respectively; they offer the comfort and wellness setting and are additionally able to support the physical healing process with excellent doctors, state-of-the-art equipment and curative facilities.

In both regions the PACZion expert teams conduct an extensive physical and mental/emotional health check-up with all participants, which is repeated several times in the course of the project. Based on these individual holistic medical
histories, experts work out an individual health road map (PAss) for half a year. This road map suggests precise measures from the five areas mentioned above, geared to the individual situation and adaptable to changing demands. Between the half-yearly evaluations in a self-responsible way and with a free choice of places and times, the participants are required to make use of the suggested prevention and intervention measures offered by the listed network partners (e.g. medical facilities – such as medical doctors, osteopaths, physiotherapists, health resort environments, psychologists, massage therapists, but also job-related support options, e.g. supervisors, educational, psychological/social work facilities), but of course if required can always consult with PACZion experts. This will be accompanied by an offer of weekend seminars and classes on various health and job-related issues in individual consulting centres and also at the Universities of Passau and Ceske Budejovice, which is to enable a mutual exchange within the subject group and, due to the group dynamics in becoming acquainted with salutogenetic contents, could have a motivating effect. An additional objective is for the bi-national character of PACZion to be made apparent by realizing the measures in Bavarian as well as in Czech health care facilities, and for jointly held project seminars and classes in Passau and in Ceske Budejovice to document the inter-regional cooperation. After the test period, an extensive final check-up will be performed by the PACZion expert team, which should show a scientifically provable, lasting improvement of each subject’s health condition based on a detailed before-and-after comparison. Ability to cope with professional stress, to be educated towards professional satisfaction in terms of Work – life balance, to improve the quality of life, those are the foremost objectives of PACZion. Seminars offered, medical (psychological, physiological) care and examination, activities leading towards care of one’s own health, motivating teachers for their own Salutogenesis, those are the things supporting a good health in a long term. Number of sicknesses is decreased and the joy of being a teacher is boosted. From strictly economic point of view, health expenses are significantly lowered and premature retirement is reduced.

Besides desirable improvements in working field of teachers and in the quality of their lives and their performance in Czech border area, this project will lay basis for further interdisciplinary cooperation between Bavarian and Czech universities, in touristic sphere (wellness) and in educational health care (curative, preventive). Network’s cooperation will support salutogenetic education of teachers’ responsibility for personal health; it will lower the number of teachers retiring prematurely, and minimize weakening of teachers’ health. Permanency is guaranteed by the function of Department of health education, Faculty of Education in University of South Bohemia itself, which is aimed at education and health support on the Czech side, as well as founding the consulting center on the Bavarian side, which quality is guaranteed by the doctors, psychologists and other qualified workers. Institutions on both sides are determined to help solving the endangered health of teachers. In the partnership with health insurance companies, the formation and support of teachers’ health is headed towards permanent care of teachers and their health.
GOOD PRACTICES FROM UNITED KINGDOM
4.3.1. Good Practice 6

**ABSTRACT**

Norfolk County Council's Education Department manages 434 schools. Although it offers a confidential counselling service to its employees, employee surveys conducted in the mid to late 1990s – along with other data on recruitment and sickness rates – indicated that something further was needed. Consequently the Wellbeing Project was launched for the benefit of all staff in Norfolk Education in May 1999. The programme aims to reduce stress affecting staff throughout the county's education service – not just teachers – by identifying and tackling the root causes of work pressures. The key to the Well-Being Programme is that each school develops its own plan of action to meet its own needs. The employee surveys following the implementation of the programmes show that overall schools' scores have improved by 2% across the county since the project began. But this modest change is “significant”. The best performing school records a 29% rise in its score. Overall feedback on the scheme has been enthusiastic.

**INTRODUCTION**

Norfolk County Council's Education Department manages 434 schools across the Norfolk County in the United Kingdom. Although Norfolk County Council offers a confidential counselling service, employee surveys conducted in the mid to late 1990s – along with other data on recruitment and sickness rates – indicated that something further was needed. Two education working parties reached the conclusion that an initiative, complementary to counselling, should take a proactive stance on matters of wellbeing in the workplace. An outline plan was agreed by the members, and a coordinator was appointed in January 1999. The Wellbeing Project was launched for the benefit of all staff in Norfolk Education in May 1999.

The Well-Being Programme is a joint initiative launched by Norfolk county council and the national charity for teachers, the Teacher Support Network. It aims to reduce stress affecting staff throughout the county's education service – not just teachers – by identifying and tackling the root causes of work pressures. Now in its fourth year, more than 240 schools and education services – out of the county's total 434 – have joined the scheme, as well as seven educational services such as adult education.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE**

The Well-Being Programme aims to promote the health and well-being of all Children Service employees, working in partnership with existing support networks and initiatives, in order to provide a better working environment within Norfolk County Council. The programme considers staff as the most important resource in any organisation. The Well-Being Programme wants to find out:

- How staff feel about their work
- What ideas do they have for improving their own well-being and the well-being of others in the workplace
- Help staff to improve their work/life balance

The focus of the programme is on general wellbeing rather than solely on stress. This makes it relevant to all staff and helps to prevent stress happening in the first place. The key is an organisational approach – tackling the stressors embedded in the system rather than focussing on individuals. Each school or organisation appoints a facilitator – usually a teacher – to lead the work. All staff in the school complete a questionnaire answering 36 questions designed to measure stress levels and identify causes. The survey focuses on issues such as staff involvement in decision-making, communication and the teachers' workload. Results can be compared throughout the county to give schools an idea of how they are doing. The results are discussed with heads at participating schools and together they draw up an action plan. Surveys are repeated one year later to gauge improvement.

The key to the Well-Being Programme is that each school develops its own plan of action to meet its own needs. Much of the focus is on changing attitudes – persuading staff that their welfare is important, ensuring everyone is involved in initiatives and improving communications. The programme also provides training in coping with stress which covers time management, and attempts to reverse the frequently prevailing 'blame culture'. Some issues – like
communications, staff participation and training – were also addressed. Others, like teacher workload, which is commonly recognised as a major cause of teachers' stress, are fairly intractable although some steps can be taken in this direction. One school set up a bureaucracy working party which pinpointed many time-saving changes. Training in time management and stress management – rarely offered to teachers – also helped with rising workloads in some schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The surveys show that overall schools' scores have improved by 2% across the county since the project began. But this modest change is 'significant'. The best performing school records a 29% rise in its score – although the worst shows a 5% drop – but scores have generally risen across most measures. Individual schools have found recruitment also improved. One primary school had only eight applications for two posts two years ago. This year – after making a point that it was part of a scheme which valued staff well-being – there were 42 applications for one post, yielding six ideal candidates. Schools have also found that the well-being of staff on a range of fronts is improving, and that staff absences from ill-health are reducing.

Feedback on the scheme has been enthusiastic.

PRACTICE LESSONS

Providing support for schools in addressing the employer’s duty of care towards employees provided the impetus and rationale for the Wellbeing Project. The aim was to improve the wellbeing of all Norfolk Education employees and, through good managerial practice, the wellbeing of the organisations in which they work. The Project was coordinated by a multidisciplinary team within the LEA whose backgrounds spanned health, education and administration. It had a number of defined features:

- Wellbeing facilitators (volunteers) were identified in every participating organisation. The facilitators were trained and provided with a resource folder;
- A customised, confidential wellbeing questionnaire designed to be completed by the employees of each participating organisation;
- The production of wellbeing reports and face-to-face feedback for senior managers based on the anonymous data for a given organisation;
- Networking, feedback and discussion between participating organisations facilitated through termly newsletters and a website;
- Year-on-year benchmarking of progress in organisational wellbeing facilitated through the setting up of a county wide database.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Well-Being Programme is an active, preventative strategy, aimed at finding out what helps and communicating it as widely as possible, it is not intended to load even more work upon people who are already heavily burdened. The programme wants to reverse what has been called 'the culture of blame', where it exists, in which it can be seen as a sign of weakness for individuals to admit how distressed they feel, or that they can't cope with the demands being made of them. In such workplaces, mistakes tend to be highlighted while good work can go without praise or acknowledgement.

The programme is based on an approach as promoted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the UK, 'Management Standards approach'. As presented above, following such an approach leads to long term sustainable benefits for employees as well as their organisations.
4.3.2. Good Practice 7

ABSTRACT
Oxfordshire County Council manages nearly 300 schools. The Council recognised that stress was an issue in some of its schools from looking at absence data and feedback from trade unions. To address this issue the Council developed the Worklife Enhancement Scheme (WLE). The scheme is based on five steps which include preparing the organisation, gathering data, exploring problems and developing solutions, recording findings and monitoring and reviewing results. The scheme is based on a systematic approach as promoted by the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE), ‘Management Standards approach’. Following the implementation of the programme, local solutions have been put in place at individual schools which included work re-organisation, provision of support staff as well as stress management training. Results show a steady improvement in schools where the scheme has been implemented. Staff have reduced their risk of the likelihood of increased levels of stress and improved levels of well-being at work when measured against the HSE Management Standards. The Worklife Enhancement has since become an important part of Oxfordshire County Council’s well-being programme and work is taking place to expand the scheme to other divisions within the Council.

INTRODUCTION
Oxfordshire County Council has responsibility for many key local services. Each year the council manages £845 million of public money in the provision of these services on behalf of Oxfordshire’s 615,000 people. It is the largest employer in Oxfordshire with over 20,000 employees. Part of the responsibility of the council is to manage nearly 300 schools spread across the county. Oxfordshire County Council recognised that stress was an issue in some of its schools from looking at absence data and feedback from trade unions. The Council encourages schools to take action on stress and its HR department was tasked with producing a programme of work that would help reduce stress in the participating schools.

In 2004-05 it was decided to use the National Well-being Programme, a model designed by Teacher Support Network, to begin to tackle the issues. This led to the Council developing its own programme, called the Worklife Enhancement Scheme (WLE). The work at each school was self-funded and this meant that the programme was more affordable, particularly to the large number of small schools in the county. WLE is now in its fourth year. It has a full time lead and forms part of the Council’s health and safety strategy. New schools continue to become part of the scheme either where they identify that they need to take action or where this is identified as part of a health and safety audit. It is also planned to make Work life Enhancement available to other council departments to help them prevent stress affecting the health of their workers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION
There are 5 key elements of the Work life enhancement scheme that is implemented in Schools. These are presented in Table 1. The process helped staff talk more openly about stress and demonstrated the school’s commitment to tackling stress, as well as the council’s determination to improve the situation.

Key elements of the Worklife Enhancement Scheme

| PREPARE THE ORGANISATION | Briefing head teachers on the process is essential to ensure that they are prepared to commit the resources needed to complete the activity and recognise the benefits of using the scheme. It is made clear that the scheme is helping the school look after their employees and complies with the law. |
| GATHERING DATA | A member of the WLE team visits the schools to undertake a stress survey where all employee groups have the opportunity to complete a confidential questionnaire, based on HSE Management Standards, [link to The Survey] on potential work related stress issues. Facilitators based in the schools help with the process and ensure that good quality information is gathered through the questionnaire. They also ensure that all employees know the purpose of the survey. |
EXPLORING PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

A profile is made of the school, analysing the data provided in the questionnaires. This profile is discussed with the head teacher and facilitators. Feedback is given in a non-judgemental positive way by people trained in the process. The head teacher and facilitators then feedback to all employees and key actions are agreed.

Stress awareness training is delivered to employees in each school. Training in time management, communication or another area identified through the survey may also be delivered to those requiring it.

RECORDING FINDINGS

Action plans are drawn up by the facilitators following consultation involving all employees at the school. The facilitators may suggest measures that have worked in other schools, or staff may want to produce more local solutions.

MONITOR AND REVIEW

Network meetings to share best practice are held regularly both for head teachers and facilitators. The County Council’s Education Health and Safety Action Group have now taken on the role of the steering group. The survey is completed annually so that progress can be monitored, new actions identified and new solutions put in place.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the implementation of the programme, local solutions have been put in place at individual schools. Some examples are:

1. In one primary school, the results of the staff survey made the head teacher aware that some children were not being respectful to support staff. An employee suggested a system where they would use choice and consequence as a first option when pupils behaved badly, then issue yellow or red cards. These cards would then be taken to their class teachers who would decide on a consequence, leaving the support staff to carry on with their duties. This put the responsibility back on the class teacher and relieved the pressure on the Teaching Assistants. The system was discussed with all relevant employees, and then introduced to the pupils during an assembly. Behaviour has improved as result of this system.

2. One secondary school has allocated a budget for Work life Enhancement which has included the appointment of a dedicated Work life Enhancement Coordinator to help improve the well-being of all its employees. This has helped improve the profile of the all Work life Enhancement Facilitators, with employees coming to them for help/advice. The benefits of the scheme have taken a long time to come to fruition but they are now being recognised throughout the whole school.

3. Another secondary school encouraged employees to improve work-life balance, stop taking work home and to go home at a particular time. This has helped them think about their work loads and time management and helped the school address the long hour’s culture.

4. One school identified that workloads became an issue with some teachers at particular times in the year (examinations, SATS etc.) It was decided to look at how time could be freed up for teachers around examinations. The result was that staff meetings were re-arranged and the pupil’s home work schedule was adjusted (setting home work that did not have to be marked by the teacher) to reduce marking commitments. This took some of the pressure off teaching staff at a time when workloads are particularly heavy.

5. When working with an admin team a facilitator identified that their work load was a big stressor. They introduced a rota system to help stop work building up.

6. The stress management training includes recognising opportunities to take a break and how to do this effectively. This is an issue in many schools because of the nature of the work; however, employees are taught that it is essential to take breaks to keep up their energy levels throughout the day and enable them to work as effectively as possible.
Where the survey has been repeated annually in schools, results show a steady improvement; staff have reduced their risk of the likelihood of increased levels of stress and improved levels of well-being at work when measured against the HSE Management Standards, as presented in the graphic below.

Schools participating in 2006/07 and 2007/08

![Graph showing stress levels and well-being improvements](image)

### NB Ratings are 1-4 (not 1-5) where 1 is the least favourable

**PRACTICE LESSONS**

The five steps of preparing the organisation, gathering data, exploring problems and developing solutions, recording findings and monitoring and reviewing results are based on a systematic approach as promoted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the UK, ‘Management Standards approach’ as well as European Commission, ‘Psychosocial risk management – European Framework’. As presented above, following such an approach leads to long term sustainable benefits for employees as well as their organisations. Some experiences from the programme are presented below:

- "At the time of the Work life Enhancement training session I felt close to tears because all these emotions were brimming up and I was feeling so stressed. Talking about it was very difficult. The training made me examine the fact that stress was there and it gave me the tools to deal with it". Newly Qualified Teacher in an Oxfordshire Primary School
- "The impact on the school has been tangible and positive. Most school leaders consider themselves to be mindful of the needs of their team, and everyone would like to think people are happy working with them". Secondary school head teacher
- "Work life Enhancement has raised the profile of well-being for all employees. It allows people to consider themselves and gives them the opportunity to reflect on their working practices and the effect they have on the individual and the school as a whole". Primary school head teacher

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The success of the scheme has led to more schools joining the Work life Enhancement Scheme each year it has been in operation. The Head teachers, Governors and employees at participating schools can see the benefits of being involved in the process. Developing and implementing the scheme has also leaded to some schools producing their own well-being initiatives outside the original scheme. Work life Enhancement has become an important part of Oxfordshire County Council’s well-being programme and work is taking place to expand the scheme to other divisions within the Council.
4.3.3. Good Practice 8

**ABSTRACT**

Redstart Primary School decided to invest in the implementation of a Stress Management Project within the school and invited 3 neighbouring schools to participate. Through a Wellbeing Questionnaire circulated during Health Week, the Head consulted with staff as to those issues which caused them stress and asked for their suggestions of measures which could be put into place as a way of reducing this stress. This information was then collated and actions agreed of measures to be implemented, and the Head produced a paper briefly outlining these actions and associated outcomes. Following the collection of data from the survey and consultation with staff, an Extended Services Project Officer was invited for a visit to the school. The purpose of the visit was to establish in more detail any costing involved in the project, focusing on specific activities and the impact on staff. In addition, feedback was gained from a range of individual school staff who explained how the project had personally impacted upon them. To establish the impact of the implementation of this project, a follow-up questionnaire was circulated to staff. Pleasingly and unsurprisingly, there were definite indications that stress levels had reduced. Key impacts included an improved appearance of the school and facilities, both in and outside, less staff sickness, staff generally more motivated to come to work, with most having a more positive attitude and a more stable work force.

**INTRODUCTION**

Redstart Primary School, in Chard Somerset, is a large primary school serving both private and council housing. The school is managed by Somerset Education Authority. Many parents from outside the catchment area are choosing this school for their children because of the school's good reputation for special needs provision. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but increasing. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well below the national average. Children's attainment on joining Reception is broadly in line with expectations for this age group. There is an Early Years Centre on the site. The school has Healthy Schools Status, the Active mark and IIP Awards. It is working towards Dyslexia Friendly Status and the Challenge Award for provision for able pupils, and has enrolled on the Sustainable Schools Programme. The school has set up its own 'University', where one afternoon each week, pupils can study a variety of subjects not usually on the curriculum. It also has its own Forest School, where pupils can experience a range of outdoor activities.

Redstart Primary School decided to invest in the implementation of a Stress Management Project within the school and invited 3 neighbouring schools to participate. Through a Wellbeing Questionnaire circulated during Health Week, the Head consulted with staff as to those issues which caused them stress and asked for their suggestions of measures which could be put into place as a way of reducing this stress. This information was then collated and actions agreed of measures to be implemented, and the Head produced a paper briefly outlining these actions and associated outcomes. The project ran from April 2006 to March 2007.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE**

Following the collection of data from the survey and consultation with staff, an Extended Services Project Officer was invited for a visit to the school. The purpose of the visit was to establish in more detail any costing involved in the project, focusing on specific activities and the impact on staff. In addition, feedback was gained from a range of individual school staff who explained how the project had personally impacted upon them.

Key activities and areas for improvement were outlined. These included:

- **Appointment of a Project Manager:** It was vital in undertaking this Stress Management Project that personnel were not placed under undue stress in order to implement it. Therefore, from the outset, a key decision was taken to employ a Project Manager for an additional 3/4 hours per week, who was instrumental in coordinating all the elements of the project as well as working with the neighbouring schools on their ideas. This person was employed as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, was keen to take up this opportunity to expand her own skill base and personally develop. Specific tasks ranged from liaising and getting quotes from outside individuals, administrative support to the Head and office staff, and organising additional activities which although did not have a financial
cost, did have a time cost.

- **Staff Room:** With other building developments taking place at the time, it was a prime opportunity to remodel the staff room, changing its focus from a working environment to a place to ‘relax’ and chat with colleagues. Previously the room had been large and impersonal with small groups of staff ‘huddling’ in corners, but the reduction in space has created a more ‘cosy’ and friendly, non-threatening environment. The addition of new carpets and blinds has given staff greater comfort and privacy, and the addition of a television allows staff to keep in touch with worldwide affairs and events for both school and personal interest.

- **Fitness Area:** One of the key elements to emerge from staff consultation was their lack of exercise which they believed contributed to both a stressful and unhealthy lifestyle. In many cases, this was due to staff having lack of time and energy at the end of a day to then undertake a healthy pursuit, or the inability to regularly take up activities due to childcare and other family commitments. The purchase of the treadmills and exercise bike has proved universally popular with staff across the board, from the lunchtime supervisor to the Head Teacher. A light and airy room, with plastic glazed windows for privacy, houses the equipment, and a television is awaiting installation, which will further enhance the relaxed environment. As there are several pieces of exercise equipment, staffs have been encouraged to exercise as teams, which in turn is brilliant for motivation and networking. The facility is popular both at lunchtime and after school, and is of terrific benefit particularly to those staff with young children, who may not easily get out of the house in an evening. Increased interest in healthy activity has also led to the setting up of a running club for the children and any staffs who wish to participate.

- **Shower Area:** With the new fitness area in operation, it was imperative that staff had access to a pleasant shower area, particularly to encourage staff to make use of the facility during the day. For little financial outlay, a new shower curtain has transformed this area.

- **Teachers Quiet Area:** The changes to the staff room triggered the need for an area for teachers to sit during their PPA time. Within the office space, it was possible to create a dedicated space with laptop sockets, a large work surface, and on-hand resources housed on nearby shelves. Again, the area has been made private and more comfortable by the addition of new blinds. Teachers appreciate having their own space which is a pleasant environment in which to work.

- **Office Staff:** The Bursar has also benefited from changes in the office accommodation, having been given a separate office area. With the obvious pressures and attention to detail associated with a finance role, if necessary, she is now able to shut herself away from the continuous interruptions associated with a busy school office. As a way of relieving stress still further, additional office cover has been brought in at the end of a school day which is always non-stop with parental queries and distractions.

- **Air Conditioning Units:** Following the intense hot summer last year, the school is set up and ready to tackle a repeat of such extreme conditions having purchased air conditioning units for all the mobile classrooms. As yet, it is impossible to measure their impact as they have not been put to the test. However, it is anticipated that both staff and pupils will benefit from improved working conditions, making the atmosphere more conducive to teaching and learning.

- **Water Coolers:** A continuous supply of cool water is available to both staff and children from the cooler centrally located in the Reception area. Staff welcomes the accessibility of the cooler and there is obvious environmental and hygiene benefits through the lack of plastic bottles around the school.

- **Garden Area:** In finer weather, staff appreciate being able to sit out in the fresh air which is agreed as a ‘work-free’ zone. Having access to proper furniture, it is good to see staff having the opportunity to relax and enjoy the school’s beautiful grounds during lunchtime.

- **Staff Refreshments:** Parents evenings can be extremely exhausting and emotionally draining for staff, having to meet with parents on a one-to-one basis for long periods of time. The introduction of a ‘tea-time’ allowing staff to break and eat together has been greatly appreciated.

- **Promotion of Stress Management Materials:** In order to highlight the importance of dealing with and recognising
stress, useful resources including a CD and a book entitled ‘Redress the Stress’ for use by both staff and pupils, were purchased. The CD has also been shared with other local schools.

- **Joint Inset with Neighbouring Primary Schools:** To create a joint networking session and an opportunity to try out a new activity in a relaxing environment with other colleagues from neighbouring primaries, a highly successful day was spent at Cricket St Thomas. This is something was greatly valued by staff, particularly the extended invitation to teaching assistants, and will definitely be repeated.

- **Facility for Lunch Deliveries:** Through liaison with a local deli, a lunch menu has been drawn up for staff to order for a Friday lunchtime. It is an extremely popular social time which staff look forward to and it is definitely one lunch break they ensure they don’t miss!

- **Car Cleaning:** The provision of on-site car cleaning was set up whereby staff cars could be cleaned by a local valeting company. Having easy access to such a service freed up staff time at weekends or after school when they would rather be doing other leisure activities.

- **Creche Facility:** To support staff in working more flexibly, an after school ICT club has been set up for 3 nights of the week, allowing children of those staff to attend at a reasonable cost until 4.45 pm, thus allowing them to work on if they wish.

- **Early Finishes for Staff:** On a termly basis, staff are given the opportunity to finish at 2.30 to attend personal appointments, rather than always having to try and do these at a weekend when they would prefer to be relaxing. In line with workforce reform, staff have always had more than their entitled planning and preparation time, as well as additional time to prepare for presenting at meetings. The Head herself tries to take 1 day a month working at home in order to catch up on valuable reading time or a specific task which requires no interruption.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To establish the impact of the implementation of this project, a follow-up questionnaire was circulated to staff. Pleasingly and unsurprisingly, there were definite indications that stress levels had reduced.

Key impacts to emerge included:
- An improved appearance of the school and facilities, both in and outside;
- Less staff sickness;
- Staff generally more motivated to come to work, with most having a more positive attitude;
- A more stable work force.

Individual feedback was gathered from a range of staff at the school and comments were recorded as follows:

**Deputy Head Teacher**
- The fitness area is really good – definitely a perk which other schools did not have on offer.
- With the summer on the way, the outside seating area and water cooler will both come into their own.
- The joint inset day went extremely well – good to network out of school with other colleagues, particularly in such a pleasant environment. Would like to see this happen as a regular event.
- Enjoyed having on the opportunity of a Head massage during Health Week would also appreciate this as a regular activity!
- Good on a Friday to have lunch together with staff and also being able to buy organic vegetables.
- Have always appreciated the substantial amount of non-contact time given for management and planning activities.

**Higher Level Teaching Assistant**
- Have valued the opportunity to expand her role to become the Project Manager and have enjoyed the challenge and diversity of administrative work involved.
- Appreciate the chance to develop permanently and combine her HLTA role with office tasks.
- The fitness area is great and allows the chance of exercise without encroaching on home life.
• The provision of the after-school ICT club means her child can attend and allows her to work on longer.
• Enjoys the Friday lunches and the re-developed staff room has made a massive difference to the atmosphere as a whole. Staff morale seems generally good.
• As a Teaching Assistant, appreciated being asked to attend the joint inset day at Cricket St Thomas.

Teaching Assistant
• Enjoys using the fitness room during lunch time and after school. Appreciates being able to use the facility when convenient to her as in the evening she has family commitments and also membership at an outside gymnasium is expensive.
• Looking forward to the televisions being installed in both the staffroom and fitness area.
• As a consumer of cold drinks, the water cooler is greatly valued.
• Enjoys the comfort and friendly atmosphere within the staff room and the pleasant seating area in the garden.

Bursar
• Definitely will be using the fitness equipment, and with the addition of the television thinks it will be a very pleasant area to exercise within.
• Although tends to go out herself at lunchtime, feels the garden area will be well used by staff now there is adequate seating.
• Remembering the previous hot summer, the air conditioning units in the mobiles and the fitness area will be greatly appreciated by staff and children alike.
• Having her own area within the office where she can now just shut the door if she needs to concentrate on a specific task is brilliant. The additional office help at the end of the day dealing with parental queries has also been a great help.
• Feels very supported when the Head encourages her to work at home during particularly pressurised times.
• Appreciates the proactive approach from the Head in recognising the importance of implementing measures to support staff and make their life that bit easier.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
It is vital to remember when implementing new ideas that everything won’t suit everyone. However, by tackling a wide range of the staff’s suggestions, it is hoped that at least one item will please each individual. The fitness equipment appeared to create the greatest impact on staff, with wide ranging benefits associated with health, staff networking and team motivation, and a feeling of value and self-worth having provided with this unique facility which other schools would dream of.
It is also important to note that the financial outlay in implementing the majority of these measures was very little, and in some cases, amounted to zero because the cost was borne wholly by the staff and it was more about making life easier for staff so that they could easily access the activity or service if they chose to. In addition, any capital purchases made are not going to have to be repeated for some considerable time as the items will have a substantial life span. There will continue to be a pot of money set aside for investment in stress management, but in the near future there is little further expenditure required, more importantly, continuous monitoring of staff and the impact of the measures already put in place.
When investing money in a project such as this, it is key that parents are kept on board and informed about such developments and the reasons behind them otherwise all they will see is money spent on material items which they perceive aren’t necessarily directly benefiting their child’s learning. However, the indirect payoff in terms of less stressed staff and the impact on the quality of their teaching is insurmountable.
GOOD PRACTICES FROM GREECE
4.4.1. Good Practice 9

**ABSTRACT**
Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) present worksite-based multi-interventional systems used in addressing stress in the workplace. The organization implementing the good practice in Greece is “Hellas employee assistance programs LTD”. This organization is adapting and implementing internationally certified EAPs to the Greek work culture.

**INTRODUCTION**
An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is the work organization’s resource that utilizes specific core technologies to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification, and resolution of personal and productivity issues (EAPA Int. 2002.) EAPs are worksite-based systems, which integrate the knowledge and skills of business and behavioral science in order to effectively manage certain organizational challenges, such as:

- Personal & Work Stress
- Workplace conditions that cause stress such as re-organisations, mergers and acquisitions
- Behavioral hazards in the workplace such as violence, harassment, bullying, mobbing, etc
- Mental health issues
- Psychosocial risks (organizational culture, work overload, job demands, interpersonal relationships at work etc)
- Personal & family matters
- Productivity & performance aspects

The main objectives of implementing EAPs as a multi-interventional system in the workplace are to:

- Efficiently manage and decrease work-related stress
- Minimize the effects of stress factors in mental and physical health
- Promote the well-being of the human capital
- Decrease psychosocial risks in the workplace
- Prevent mental and physical illnesses
- Build a healthy work environment and a healthy workforce

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION**
Methodology of EAPs: Needs Assessment
Designing an EAP model requires collecting evidence based data from the workplace. The first step is to assess and define the human capital needs and workplace challenges of the organisation through the analysis of the following:

- Needs assessment questionnaires, tailored for the organisation’s needs while adhering to international EAP standards;
- Information that the organisation has gathered through assessments (e.g. performance appraisals, internal surveys, psychometric assessments), focus groups, sickness/absence data, productivity data and other means;
- Input collected from the HR Department and informal talks to staff.

In order to identify the causes and effects of work related stress the following additional instruments and tools may also be utilized to assess the psycho-social level and the well-being of the workers using EAP Services:

- Health Risk Assessment: An evaluation of the worker’s attitudes towards life and their mental and physical health present condition (exercise, diet, medical exams & care, use of alcohol, prescription drugs etc.)
- Stress Assessment: A questionnaire for the evaluation of stress symptoms
- Behavioral Risk Assessment: An evaluation of employees’ behavioral risks in the workplace due to factors such as violence, workload, communication issues, job insecurity etc.
- Psychosocial Assessment: Screening, intakes, questionnaires related to social, work, family and medical history.

Designing a Service Model
Based on the results of the above data, a tailor-made EAP model is designed, according to the employees’ and the organisation’s needs that have been identified.

Holistic Multi-Interventional Stress Management System for the Workplace (management, employees and their family members).

This refers to the professional support, coaching and training for the executive management team of an organization, their employees and their families, based on the CBT (Cognitive- Behavioral Treatment) model. The goal is to assist them in managing stressful work-related and personal issues and to promote psychosocial well-being in the whole organization from a management level down.

Statistics & Utilization Rates

EAP software programs are used for the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data deriving from the utilization of the program, providing a report with the following information:

- Demographics (age, gender, location, position etc);
- Utilization rate of EAP services;
- Life-stress factors (work-related, personal and family issues that trouble, affect and stress the human capital);
- Satisfaction rate regarding the program’s implementation;
- ROI (Return On Investment).

Stress Interventions – A three Action Axis

Following the needs assessment, a comprehensive stress prevention and management program should be developed and adapted in order to meet the particular requirements of the organization (3 action axes):

1st Axis: Prevention:

- Primary prevention: focuses on creating a healthy work culture that supports employees and takes an active role in managing stress while promoting employees well-being.
- Secondary prevention: includes early recognition of risks that may cause psychosocial issues in the workplace and prompts appropriate action for minimizing them.
- Tertiary prevention: focuses on those employees whose high levels of stress have affected their mental health and well-being (burn out, depression, panic attacks, addictions etc) and they require the services of a health professional for rehabilitation and successful return to work.

2nd Axis: Direct Services:

For those individuals identified in need of face to face intervention, an individual therapeutic plan is designed for the alleviation of the stress symptoms which includes:

- Addressing the problem and the symptoms
- Setting short term goals
- Setting long term goals
- Learning of new coping mechanism & skills to alleviate the symptoms of stress
- Estimated duration for the achievement of the goals was set.

3rd Axis: Follow-up and Evaluation:

Follow-up interventions: to monitor progress of each case and to evaluate the outcomes.
**EAP Services implemented at each Axis for coping with stress:**

### PREVENTION
- Development of stress and wellbeing policy and protocols for the work place.
- 24/7/365 Telephone Support Line for stress management. Short-term support, counselling and guidance to the management, employees and their family members to manage work personal and family issues which increase their stress level and affect their performance.
- Health & Wellness Coaching (for executives and/or employees).
- Training Programs for the human capital focusing on tackling stress, building resilience and optimism, problem solving skills and overall to improve their psychological immune system.
- Wellness & Health seminars and presentations to enhance knowledge and awareness, teach skills and improve well being beyond stress (topics related to mental & physical illness but also diet, fitness and relaxation programs, antismoking programs etc.).

### DIRECT SERVICES
- Face to Face counseling sessions: utilizing the Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT) model. The CBT approach aims at reconstructing the negative and stressful ways of thinking, which affect negatively the emotions and the behavior of the beneficiaries.
- Critical Incident Stress Management – CISM: Management of stress resulting from unpredictable critical incidents inside or outside the work place such as robberies, accidents, sudden loss of an employee, terrorism actions, violence, fire, natural disasters etc. CISM is a multi-component intervention system that assists the victim/witness of critical incidents within their work environment and/or their personal life.

### FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION
- Case Management: Designs and delivers a Continuity of Care Plan for each individual case. This plan consists of follow up telephone interventions provided to individuals who have utilized EAP services. In addition, case management professionals conduct an evaluation regarding the satisfaction rate of the clients and the success of the services provided, through anonymous questionnaires.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
- Results from implementing and adapting the EAP Programs in the Greek corporate culture, as a holistic anti-stress strategy:
- According to a survey conducted by Hellas EAP, during the years of 2009 and 2010 in a sample of 1,427 employees from 7 Greek and multinational companies located in Greece that have received EAP Services, the following results were reported, regarding the factors that increase their stress level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors that increased level of stress</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work-related stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>conflicts at the work place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of collaboration with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulties in balancing work and personal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  - 16% work-related stress
  - 8.50% conflicts at the work place
  - 17.50% lack of collaboration with colleagues
  - 8.50% difficulties in balancing work and personal life
  - 49.50% other problems

1. According to another survey conducted by Hellas EAP, using a sample of 1,077 employees from a large company (A) in Greece which implements the internationally certified Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program, the following results were reported regarding factors which increase employees’ level of stress:
Please note that Work-related stress includes: work overload, job insecurity, pressures to meet the deadlines and achieve the set goals, pressures from demanding clients, conflict with supervisors, unfair distribution of work among co-workers, etc.

Other problems: panic attacks, depression, mental & physical illnesses, difficulties in personal relationships, divorce, death of a loved one, chronic illness in the family, elder care issues, etc.

2. According to a third survey conducted by Hellas EAP, during the years 2007, 08 and 09, using a sample of 250 employees in the banking sector, who were exposed to a critical incident and received the Critical Incident Stress Management intervention;
   - 97% of the employees reported that they considered important or very important the support that was provided to them by Hellas EAP’s CISM interventionists;
   - 93% of them reported that the CISM intervention contributed significantly or very significantly in improving their work performance;
   - 99% of them declared that they are in need for additional and in an ongoing basis support to address work and personal stress issues;

3. According to a fourth survey conducted by Hellas EAP, using a sample of 2,870 employees and family members (Greek and local multinationals), who received EAP services regarding personal and work related stress issues, the results indicate a 98% satisfaction rate;

4. Return on Investment (R.O.I) for the organizations that have utilized EAP services, reported the following estimations:
   - Enterprise A: 1:19 (Industrial Sector)
   - Enterprise B: 1:36 (Industrial Sector)
   - Enterprise C: 1:30 (Banking Sector)
   - Enterprise D: 1:32 (Banking Sector)

5. In 2011, a client organisation (B) of Hellas EAP, employing more than 5,000 people, publically reported, a 0.6% reduction in absenteeism with the implementation of Core EAP Services (24/7/365 Telephone Support Line, Face to Face Counseling Sessions and the Critical Incident Stress Management Program –CISM). HELLAS EAP has proposed for 2012 to implement a specific EAP Absence Management Program.

PRACTICE LESSONS

Challenges during EAP Implementation in Greek organisations:

- Managing the reluctance of the company management to investigate and elaborate the benefits of such innovative methods and programs on promoting the psychosocial health and well-being which relates to the performance management of the employees.
- Working to overcome the difficulties in adjusting the International EAP models and principles so that they...
effectively apply to Greek organizational culture and its workforce.

- The need for ongoing education and development of awareness to governmental and private sector leaders and HR professionals regarding the benefits of global EAPs in assisting employees to cope effectively with work and personal challenges that increase their stress and affect their mental, physical health and well-being.
- A constant effort to promote the value of a healthy work culture by empowering human capital.
- Reduce employee misconceptions regarding the confidentiality of EAP services.
- Combat the stigma and exclusion of employees with mental illness in the workplace.
- Training management and executives to set boundaries regarding their professional role and capabilities when addressing mental health issues in the workplace and referring such cases to qualified professionals through EAPs.
- Multinational companies located in Greece are more open to the implementation of EAP services, since their parent companies have a long tradition of implementing EAPs.
- Overcoming many organizations’ (public and private) lack the necessary statistics and record keeping that can provide accurate information regarding the costs of performance and productivity issues in the workplace related to illness due to stress, such as low productivity, medical costs, presenteeism, excessive absence, etc.
- Efforts to elevate the role of the company HR department from a department whose basic activities are the recruiting and payroll procedures to a department that holds an important role in the field of management and development of the human capital.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

EAP services have been established at an International and European level in countries such as the U.S.A, Canada, Australia, China, Africa, Ireland, United Kingdom, and Finland, both in the public and private sector for more than 40 years now with proven qualitative and quantitative results. In some of the above named countries, such as Finland, pilot research was conducted prior to the institutionalization of EAPs in the public sector which was funded by the Social European Fund, the Ministry of Social Services, and the National Centre of Research & Development in Promoting Health as well as by private organizations. Additionally, EAPs have been established as an anti-stress strategy in public organizations in Europe (Cooper et al.1992a, 1992b) and are supported by the International Labor Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Today EAPs are taught on a Masters and PhD level internationally.

Hellas EAP is the groundbreaking company which first introduced EAPs in the Hellenic region. From our international and national experience in the field of EAPs, we recommend that research be implemented with respect to the introduction and implementation of EAPs through a pilot program in the Greek Public sector. The hypothesis is that EAPs, as a scientific and result proven worksite-based system, can be successful in the Greek workplace to compact stress in times of severe financial crisis. In other words, EAPs will:

- Act as an anti-stress strategy promoting a healthy work culture with direct and indirect effects on the work force, their families, the organization and the society;
- Contribute effectively to the development of a positive organizational culture;
- Enhance and promote physical, mental health and psychosocial safety in the workplaces;
- Increase resilience levels within the workforce during difficult times;
- Create healthier workplaces with increased levels of employees’ well-being;
- Increase workforce productivity;
- Enhance business competitiveness and quality of customer services.
4.4.2. Good Practice 10

ABSTRACT
The Prevenlab-Psicosocial Methodology is a good practice developed in Spain. Its field of intervention is work-related stress.

The Prevenlab-Psicosocial methodology does not have to be applied in a specific sector. The intervention can be usable with different enterprise sizes and it is equally applicable to both genders. It can be applied to organisations that are dealing with provision of services or production and it can be also applied in educational organisations. It is based on theory and the intervention approach can be easily adapted. The application of the methodology requires, as a necessary condition, the commitment of the management of the company, while the support of the company’s Board of Directors is also an important factor. Moreover, the method has been designed as a system of professional practice that permits the analysis and assessment of risks for specialised intervention by professionals. Initial investment is required to hire professional where they are not present in-house, post application the interventions derived from the methodology are self - sustaining.

INTRODUCTION
Although the Spanish Law for the Prevention of Risks at Work (Ley de Prevención de Riesgos Laborales – Ley 31 de 8/11/1995) makes no explicit reference to workers’ mental health, it does refer on various occasions to psychological and social aspects as relevant elements in the prevention of risks or as potential sources of risk. The degree “Regulations of the Preventive Services” (Reglamento de los Servicios de Prevención – 17/1/1997) recognises the relevance of ergonomics and applied psycho-sociology as two of the specialities OSH experts, and establishes the minimum training content for their work. The laws also establish the need to attend to psychosocial factors in all aspects related to the analysis and prevention of risks at work.

In order to make an organisational diagnosis that facilitates the assessment of risks deriving from psychosocial factors in the workplace, an essential prerequisite is a theoretical model that enables a systematic and comprehensive consideration of organisational phenomena at all levels, and that facilitates the identification of the most effective psychosocial interventions in each case. The AMIGO model (Análisis Multifacético para la Intervención y Gestión Organizacional – Multi-facet analysis for organisational intervention and management), serves as a foundation for the development of a methodology of risk assessment and helps to organise the different strategies and techniques of organisational intervention. It may also facilitate the selection of the most effective approaches in each case and the identification of areas in which the development of new techniques is required. The main characteristics of the AMIGO model are that it distinguishes “hard” and “soft” facets of the organisation, it employs a dynamic perspective of fit and of organisational coherence, it analyses the harmony between person (or group) and organisation not only in issues related to the work system but also in the organisation as a whole, through the consideration of the psychological contract concept. Finally, it offers a comprehensive view of the results that takes into account the demands of the supra-system, of the system itself and of the subsystems of which it is made up, leading to a multilevel approach.

The “Prevenlab-Psicosocial” methodology is a system of analysis, assessment, management and intervention with regard to psychosocial factors relevant to the prevention of occupational risks. It is based on the theoretical conception of the AMIGO model, and aims to provide a system of professional practice that permits the analysis and assessment of risks for specialised intervention by professionals.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION
The method allows for the development of a professional intervention that is suitable, efficient (using minimum resources for achieving certain results), “user-friendly”, non-invasive for the educational organisation, and involves feedback processes that contribute to improving the methodology itself and its instruments. The method is applied in several stages.

In the first stage a screening analysis is carried out, the aim of which is to identify the main facets and components that constitute sources of stress with harmful effects. This exploration can be carried out by means of the “triangulation of
informants” method, which involves seeking spontaneous responses from the respondents and then conduct a systematic analysis of facets and components. Its complementary aims are to identify the facets that may represent resources in the intervention and the principal consequences of stress.

In the second phase a detailed analysis and assessment is conducted of those facets and components that have been identified as significant sources of risk. This assessment is also conducted by means of triangulation of informants and, where applicable, of methods. This stage also includes an analysis of possible sensitising factors that increase vulnerability to a given risk for certain people or groups.

In a third stage, an analysis is carried out of significant sources of risk at a collective level (by units or for the organisation as a whole). The appropriate development of this analysis requires prior planning, before the second stage, and needs to take into account the screening analysis. Sometimes, data obtained in the second phase may be relevant for this third phase. The statistical analysis –through aggregation– is carried out at group level.

The fourth stage involves a study of the facets and components of the organisation as a system in their function as resources that may contribute to neutralising or preventing the risks identified. The analysis starts out from the organisational or developmental level and is completed at the individual level, in those cases where this is necessary.

The AMIGO model serves as the foundation for the development of a methodology of risk assessment and help to organise the different strategies and techniques of organisational intervention. It may also facilitate the selection of the most effective approaches in each case and the identification of areas in which the development of new techniques is required.

The AMIGO model describes the components of the organisation as facets, with the aim of highlighting their “gestaltic” nature and avoiding their “reification”. These facets can only be understood properly in relation to the system to which they belong.

The model starts out from the concept of mission that is central to every organisation and gives meaning to its existence. The fulfilment of this mission demands a system that is open to its environment and capable of interacting with it. The mission is supported by the organisational culture that gives the educational organisation its identity. This culture is an essential component that represents the set of beliefs shared by its members, the “paradigms” that inspire it and the values in which these manifest themselves. We understand culture as a constituent element of the organisation, and not as something it possesses (Peiró, 1990; 1996a).

The strategy of the organisation is a relevant facet, and consists in the formulation of the general lines of the relationship between mission and environment. It refers, according to Chandler (1962), to “the explicitation of the long-term objectives and goals (...), the adoption of courses of action and the distribution of resources necessary for achieving these goals”. As Mintzberg (1988) points out, strategy “may be seen as a mediating force between the organisation and the environment, so that its formulation requires the interpretation of the environment and the development of coherent approaches in the flow of organisational decisions (strategies) for dealing with it” (p. 51).

Strategic management involves a series of decisions aimed at identifying and taking advantage of the basic opportunities deriving from interaction with the environment, from a medium-term future perspective.

A fundamental element of strategy, which conditions other facets of the organisation and is partly conditioned by them, is the determination of the products or services through which the organisation will develop its mission. The strategic option of providing products or services (sometimes both) will influence the configuration of the organisation. The differences between organisations that provide services and those that provide products are increasingly clear, and these differences are crucial with regard to their functioning, management, results and effectiveness. Under this framework AMIGO Model can be applied in an educational organisation by taking into consideration all the facets that determine its function.

The environment in which this system functions and operates is an element that is central to its understanding, its design and its management. Educational organisations are open systems of a social nature in constant transaction with their environment. This environment can be defined as the set of elements external to the organisation with which it
maintains or may maintain relations and which are relevant for it. It can be described in terms of its level of complexity, its level of dynamism, its predictability, its degree of uncertainty and its greater or lesser hostility towards the organisation.

**Economic resources and infrastructure** are elements that condition the functioning of an organisation, the achievement of its mission and the interactions with its environment. Psychosocial theories of organisations have scarcely taken into account this facet; however, it is necessary to do so, since the characteristics of resources and infrastructure will affect the remaining components of the model.

**The structure of an educational organisation** is considered as the support for the working norms and administrative mechanisms that allow organisations to guide, control and co-ordinate their activities. Clarifying the concept of structure involves identifying the units making up the organisation and the relationships between them, particularly those established through the rules and regulations of the organisation.

**Technology** refers to “the techniques used (by organisations) in their work activities for transforming inputs into outputs, including not only tools and equipment, but also technical know-how.

**The work system** refers to a specific combination of tasks, technology, expert knowledge, management styles and work procedures. These elements are considered as direct determinants of the way in which work is organised and managed, and of the way employees will experience their work situation and carry out their job (Beer et al., 1989, p. 464). The central component is constituted by the work procedures and processes and the conditions demanded by the job as a consequence of the task organisation. It is becoming increasingly important to consider the relationships between individual jobs and the work team. The different forms of organising the work system (e.g., production lines, semi-autonomous teams, etc.) and strategies of co-ordination and control have important implications for other facets of the educational organisation.

**Organizational climate and communication.** These are both strongly influenced by the organisation’s culture. We can describe the climate as the set of perceptions that configure the description and representation shared by the members of the organisation (González-Romá and Peiró, 1999). This is a variable of a basically cognitive nature, though emotional and affective dimensions are becoming increasingly relevant, and hence the consideration of emotional climate (DeRivera, 1992; Páez, 1997, Peiró, 1999b). Communication is an essential subsystem of the organisation that facilitates the transmission and processing of information and the interaction between various agents, individuals and groups within the organisation and outside it.

**The policies and practices of personnel management** refer to the set of approaches and actions that regulate the relationships of the organisation with its members. These include flows of personnel (joining the organisation, assignment of jobs, promotions, retirements, sackings, etc.) and the dynamic of contributions and compensations between employees and the organisation (rating of jobs held, assessment of performance, bonus and incentive systems, quality of working life, etc.). Also included within this category are the system and conditions of labour relations, procedures for solving disputes (disciplinary measures, etc.) and mechanisms related to the growing influence of employees for confronting the organisation over possible abuse or lack of sensitivity. Organisations differ considerably in their overall conception of personnel policies and in their approach to specific personnel matters in practice (Guest, 1994).

**Functions of management:** Managing of any organisation involves a suitable combination of functions described as “management”, which are related to internal organisation and the company’s response to its environment. Various authors have made proposals with regard to the most significant of these functions. All of them consider, in one way or another, the need for a balance between flexibility and control, and between internal and external orientation in the management of the organisation. Thus, management involves achieving for the educational organisation a capacity for adaptation to its immediate environment through innovation and a capacity for making an impact on it. It is also necessary to maintain a degree of order that permits the effective achievement of objectives. Thirdly, the above functions must be made to be compatible with the co-ordination and integration of personnel and the establishment of a positive social climate. Finally, there is a need to strike a balance between authority, order, rationality and internal
co-ordination, and this means creating and maintaining appropriate structures (see Peiró, 1996a). People and teams constitute another essential facet of the educational organisation. From the organisation’s perspective, they can be considered as human capital or resources (abilities, knowledge, aptitudes, skills, energy, etc.) contributed to the organisation so that it can fulfil its mission. Organisations attempt to involve people capable of contributing in a significant way to the achievement of their objectives. The human capital available to the organisation is a fundamental element for the organisation, and its composition is an important variable (more or less professionalised, level of involvement in and commitment to the organisation, demographic characteristics, etc.). With regard to groups or teams, these shape a collective reality within the framework of the organisation that represents more than the sum of the individuals, and that introduces new processes of a psychosocial nature (Salanova, Prieto and Peiró, 1996; Zornoza, Salanova and Peiró, 1996).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Innovative aspect - the order of the stages outlined need not be strictly adhered to; nor is it necessary to carry out each one in its entirety. The stages described are for guidance, and their application must be flexible in order to respond to the needs that the expert considers priority in each case.

- Evaluation (including process issues, outcomes and sustainability): The method is also modular in structure, with each stage is not necessarily being a precursor for the next stage, this allows a flexible design of each plan of analysis and assessment according to the needs, characteristics and restrictions of the client-system. Once the interventions developed using method are implemented in an organisation they are evaluated periodically in the stages outlined above and improvements are made based on their results.

- Benefits (including cost effectiveness): The AMIGO model is useful for the identification and classification of possible preventive interventions to be carried out in an organisation and the facets on which they concentrate. It also facilitates intervention on providing a common scheme for diagnosis and interventions. Nevertheless, in using the model it should be borne in mind that the facets are independent, and that their most important feature is their relationship with one another. This point is especially relevant to the planning of the intervention. Since one of its fundamental elements must be the prior analysis of the effects that a change proposed for one facet will have on the others, and the changes that must be made in them in order to re-establish equilibrium in the system.

PRACTICE LESSONS

The method is flexible and can be implemented in any organisation in any sector with the assistance of experts. The application the methodology requires, as a necessary condition, the commitment of the management of the company and of those in charge of the hierarchical lines of all levels and departments. It is important to ensure and to define their collaboration in all of those aspects that will affect the correct and effective application of the methodology. Also important is the involvement and participation of the company’s Health and Safety representative(s); while the support of the company’s Board of Directors is also an important factor. Finally, the employees in those departments or groups that are to participate in the study should be informed of the nature of the study and the implications of their participation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The method has been designed as a system of professional practice that permits the analysis and assessment of risks for specialised intervention by professionals. Initial investment is required to hire professional where they are not present in-house, post application the interventions derived from the methodology are self sustaining.
4.5. Good Practices from Latvia
### ABSTRACT
This is a description of individual strategy to develop skills for stress reducing.

### INTRODUCTION
Woman aged 37, is a teacher in non-formal education, in the last 3 years she has came to the conclusion that she is diminishing her working capacity, because already from early morning in everyday life, she feels tired, weak, is experiencing often headaches, dizziness, feeling of discomfort. Psychologically she felt apathy; there were no interest about previous hobbies, there were no motivation to go to work and to make her feeling better. Unaided feeling of discomfort brought changes in the communication with previous friends and family members - contacts were rarer and not very positive.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION
Initially woman attended consultations of psychotherapist and there were certain improvement, but it was a short-duration. And she again and again “fell back” in the situation of discomfort. Then she started to attend individual relaxation exercise trainings and walking with sticks. Gradually she developed for her certain daily and weekly routine, where physical and mental exercises were its integral component. She started to pay more attention to her menu. She tried to eat less, but more frequently. She excluded from menu products, after which she felt discomfort (for example - chocolate, white bread, aerated soft drinks etc.).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
According to woman’s observations, during one year period due to certain daily routine, regular walking with sticks, relaxation exercises, time devoted to things she like, she felt much better, gradually disappeared headaches and dizziness, appeared bigger physical and mental endurance. But if she did not keep to this daily routine for longer time, she again felt physical and mental discomfort, although not so typical.

### PRACTICE LESSONS
The following outlines an exercise programme for walking with sticks.

1. **Warming up:** Before walking with sticks, warming up exercises are necessary. Warming up we can start with slow walking, then advisable some drawing exercises of muscles and joints. Each exercise you have to repeat 10-20 times.

2. **Walking with sticks:** Walking with sticks takes place outside, base of walking with sticks technique is proper biomechanical walking in combination with different movement techniques of hands and upper part of body in style of classical distance skiing. Walking with sticks is intensified walking, using special sticks, to create valuable training of the body. Training of walking with sticks should be rather sustained, for example, from 60-90 minutes. Speed should be even, function of the heart should increase up to 65%-85% from norm of heart functioning, according to person’s age.

- Basic elements of walking with sticks:
  - you should walk freely;
  - shoulders should be lax, handles shouldn’t be kept too tight;
  - hands with sticks should move near the body;
  - sticks should be in diagonal position;
  - in the moment, when the left leg moves forward, in the same time the right hand moves forward;
  - you should try with stick to push against after line of pelvis;
  - hand should be relieved in the last moment of pushing against stick;
  - stick should be quickly moved forward again;
  - you should remember, that body is moving forward in one line;
  - you should make sure that your foot is fully straighten.
3. **Relieve**: Relieve and drawing exercises after walking with sticks are very important for body relieve. Relieve allows to restore body more quickly and effective. Intensity of relieve and drawing you should increase steady, to feel comfortable. Drawing exercises should be statical 15-30 second each.

**RELAXATION EXERCISES**

1. Meditation with breathing exercises – 3-4 min.
2. Concentrate your attention on your breath – inspiration, expiration, ignoring ongoing activities round. Imagine, that breath glides in and out through nose like wind blow.
3. Overall relaxation with self-suggestion– 5-6 min.
4. Sit in comfortable position, imagine, that foots are opened and through them glides out from body all unwanted (needless). Imagine, that body is like a cup, which should be washed from inside. In thoughts with squirt of water wash your head, chest, pelvis, each hand and each leg. All needless water through foots runs out on soil. When whole body is washed, foots close and imagine, that surface of head and ends of fingers are opened. Then imagine that you are standing under big waterfall and clean water is fulfilling all your body, like clean cup. When water begins to flow over the edges, in thoughts we close surface of head and ends of fingers.
5. Assurance formula – 3-4 min.
6. On a moment, concentrate thoughts on the forehead, repeating by oneself - “my thoughts are balanced and purposeful”, then concentrate attention to thyroid gland, repeating by oneself - “my emotions are balanced”, then concentrate attention to solar plexus,– “I am healthy, I am going to my aim, I am strong, I am happy”, then concentrate attention to foot, repeating by oneself – “I am standing on safe basement, I believe to myself and to my strength”.
7. Working out strategy of successful behaviour – 7-8 min.
8. Imagine situation, in which you had difficulties. Then like in a film, change shots, which were unpleasant to pleasant, to make situation pleasant and friendly.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Regular physical and mental exercises, self-discipline and individually pleasant activities in certain period of time help to recover feeling of physical and mental comfort.

- Each activity and exercise, load and eating habits should be adapted individually;
- Each person should look for activities and exercises, which are pleasant for them and do not need to press oneself to do it.
4.5.2. Good Practice 12

**ABSTRACT**
This is a description of Company’s strategy to develop skills of stress reducing.

**INTRODUCTION**
Employees of accounting department of the Bank for a long time complained their manager about growth of the stress at the daily work that is the result of increasing amount of work and consultations. As the result mistakes in the accounts became more frequent, employees became more annoyed in intercommunication, the tiredness came faster, excess desire for sweets showed up and many employees started smoking. The manager of accounting department discussed about the situation with employees over and over again and decision to ask for help Personnel department for finding solution was determined.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE**
The manager of the personnel department together with manager of accounting department discussed about aspects appeared situation, desirable changes and possible action plan. The specific character of the work of accounting department was taken into account, establishing at what intervals of the month and the year typical stress situations are repeating. It was discussed as well the individual reaction to stress situations and former tactics of behaviour of every employee. As a result a special action plan was developed for the period of 3 months for preventive work of reducing the effect of stress in daily work situations. The following was resolved: 1) to organise special curriculum of developing skills of stress reducing; 2) to provide every employee with at least 3 psychological consultations; 3) at the time of 6 months 5 consultants (just of this department), to record and/or secure achieved results. To realize this plan the specialist-psychologist was invited. With help of psychologist planned curriculum and the number of required consultations were specified. Initially interviews with manager of Accounting department and every employee (approx. 45 minutes-1 h) were conducted. The curriculum, content and intervals as well as the time of consultations were specified after interviews. During the interviews understanding of the goals that every employee wants to gain during this programme was reached, as well as discussing what is reachable of the objectives.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
Curriculum and consultations for employees of accounting department were organized during 3 months. Interviews with manager of accounting department and every employee were carried out at the final stage. At their conclusions employees mentioned that after trainings and individual as well as collective consultations they feel much better, the understanding of stress causes and how to avoid or reduce influence of them grew, the microclimate at the company improved because colleges started to countenance one another and acted more tolerant. Besides, along with programme that held out, all employees started engaged in Cigun gymnastics after working hours. Like a good habit was using of “white board” for uplifting – every morning somebody wrote sentiment for others. During working hours other colleges on the board, in depends of the mood, added emotion face or pictogram, in this way giving non-verbal support to one another. “White board” came to an “informal thermometer of psychological microclimate” in collective that helped to understand better what is going on and to choose appropriate tactics of behavior, and collaboration with colleges of other departments tangible improved, because employees mentioned that if they understand their own emotions better, they can more successful understand emotions of other people as well as reciprocate emotions of other person.

**PRACTICE LESSONS**
Curriculum (a total of 16 h) was realized during 1 month, twice every week per 2 hours after working hours. Absolutely every employee of the department came to training. Description of curriculum possibilities of reducing stress at the work place
1. What is stress?
2. The negative and positive stress causes?
4. Physiological aspects of stress formation.
5. Phases of stress development.
6. Connection between labor efficiency and stress level.
7. Types of stressing people.
8. People of types A and B.
10. Strategy of positive thinking for stress coping.
11. Meditation with breathing exercises.
13. Formulas of confidence.
14. Formation of successful behavior strategy.

- **Individuel consultations:** During individual consultations there was discussed about experience and action strategy in stress situations at the workplace with every employee. Was discussed what they wants to develop in personal and collective level. Individual goals were set, what changes would be desirable at the final stage of whole program.

- **Collective consultations:** During collective consultations, involving whole Accounting department (manager and employees), was discussed what more typical stress situations they are see at weekday, as well as detailed analysis was performed, determining what changes should be introduced and how (see blank below). Was discussed responsibility of both sides (manager and employees) as well as considered ideas how to change individual situations by themselves.

- **Control discussions:** Short and individual discussion (30-40 minutes) to find out if and how the goals that were set previously were reached was held with every employee a month after the acquirement of whole program and consultations. There was held 1 final collective discussion. At the final collective discussion was discussed if and how the collective goals were reached, as well as the concrete recommendations for further work of developing skills of stress reducing were given for concrete collective.

Blank “Possibilities of effective stress coping at the workplace”

| 1. Stressor, its evaluation, in 10 point scale (1- minimal influence 10 – maximal) | 2. Solution can be found out at the personal level or level of whole company | 3. Time factor (situation was, is, will be) | 4. Frequency of recurrence (seldom, often, regular) | 5. What can be performed to change existent situation | 6. Changes can be performed by herself or help of somebody else is required |

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Essential role of consummation of effectiveness played as well individual, as collective goal identification.
- Collective took major role through the whole project (manager as well as employees).
- Inner motivation and looking for new possibilities of stress coping along with “official offer” (joint Cigun gymnastics) took major role.
- For strengthening new habits was very important that during 3 months of training within training was provided as well as consultations, that promoted acquired knowledge in every day work.
- Self-discipline and insistent search of suitable stress coping methods and use in everyday life took major role.
GOOD PRACTICES FROM BELGIUM
4.6.1. Good Practice 13

ABSTRACT
More than one in four workers is affected by work-related stress in the European Union. It is a big problem for everyone – employers, workers and our society – as it can cause health problems, increase absence and reduces business productivity and competitiveness. For this reason, the theme for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2002 is ‘Working on Stress’.

INTRODUCTION
Who is this fact sheet for? Anyone can be affected by stress at work. This fact sheet gives information and suggestions for workers on tackling work-related stress and its causes. You may be for example a manager or supervisor, a professional or technician, or a production worker. Stress at work can have a considerable impact on your home life, so this fact sheet is also to help relatives and friends give support. Details of how to find other information to help tackle stress are in the final section of this fact sheet.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE
What is work-related stress? Work-related stress is experienced when the demands of the work environment exceed the workers’ ability to cope with (or control) them. Stress isn’t a disease, but if it is intense and goes on for some time, it can lead to mental and physical ill-health (such as depression, nervous breakdown and heart disease). Working under some pressure can improve performance and give satisfaction when challenging objectives are met. But when demand and pressure become too much, they lead to stress. Stress can be caused by problems at work or away from work, or both. This fact sheet is about work-related stress – stress that is caused by or is made worse by work.

What causes stress at work? Stress can be caused by the way work is organized in your workplace and the job you do. Risk factors to watch out for are:
- Atmosphere (or ‘culture’) in your workplace and how stress is viewed;
- Demands on you, such as whether you have too much or too little work to do and are exposed to physical hazards such as dangerous chemicals or noise;
- Control – how much influence you have in how you do your job;
- Relationships in your workplace, including whether there is bullying;
- Change – how much information you get about changes and whether they seem well planned;
- Role – how clear you are on what your job is and whether there are any conflicts;
- Support from colleagues and managers; and
- Training to give you the skills to do your job.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
What should my employer be doing to reduce my work-related stress?
Your employer has a legal duty to protect your health and safety at work. Labour inspectors help to make sure that employers do this. Your employer should identify the causes of work-related stress, assess the risk and take preventive action before workers are made ill. You, or your representative, should be consulted about workplace changes that affect your health and safety, including those which might lead to stress at work. You should cooperate by following policies and helping to identify problems and solutions.

Is there a problem with work-related stress in my workplace?
Your answers to these questions will give you an idea if there is a problem:
- Atmosphere: Do you feel that you have to work long hours to keep your job or get promoted? Is suffering from stress seen as a weakness or is it taken seriously? Are your work and suggestions valued? Is there a constant feeling of pressure to do more, faster?
- Demands: Have you got too much work to do in too little time? Do you find your work too difficult? Is your work satisfying? Does your work make you bored? Is your workplace too noisy, is the temperature comfortable, and
what about ventilation and lighting? Are you worried about hazards in your workplace, such as the use of chemicals? Do you feel at risk of violence from customers, clients or members of public?

- **Control**: Can you influence the way your job is done? Are you involved in making decisions?
- **Relationships**: Is your relationship with your boss OK? How about your relationship with colleagues, or your staff if you are a manager? Are you bullied by anyone in your workplace, by for example experiencing insults, offensive behaviour or that your bosses abuse their power? Are you harassed because of your colour, sex, ethnic origin, disability etc?
- **Change**: Are you given information about changes in your workplace? Are you involved in making changes to your job?
- **Are you given support during changes? Does it feel like there is too much change, or maybe not enough?**
- **Role**: Are you clear about what your job is and your responsibilities? Do you have to do tasks which you think are not part of your job? Do you ever have conflicting roles?
- **Support**: Do you have the support of your boss and colleagues? Are you praised when you do a good job? Do you receive constructive comments or do you feel you only get criticism?
- **Training**: Do you have the right skills to do your job? Are you encouraged to develop your skills?

Remember – **work-related stress is a symptom of an organizational problem, not an individual weakness**!

**How should I help to tackle work-related stress?**

Your employer is responsible for preventing stress at work. However, for best effect, you should work together with your employer, manager and trade union or other employee representative. Some ideas include:

- **Talk to your employer and trade union or other employee representative if there are problems; if there are difficulties in going directly to your employer, your representative could raise the issue for you**;
- **Help to identify problems, their possible solutions and how they could be implemented by getting involved with your employer’s stress risk assessment; it should help to use the questions above to identify problems and then think of solutions for your workplace**;
- **Help to check that the solutions work**;
- **Discuss your situation with your organization’s occupational health service or employee assistance service, if available**;
- **If none of these options are effective, you could contact your labour inspectorate for further advice**; and
- **Go to see your doctor if you are worried about your health**. Working on life-style improvements will also help; these will not solve the problem but should help in avoiding or reducing harm. These improvements include healthier eating, taking more exercise, keeping within guidelines for alcohol consumption, trying to reduce or stop smoking and keeping up with family and friends.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**What should I do after a stress-related illness?**

Again you should talk to your employer and trade union or other employee representative about why you became ill and how to prevent further problems. Try to do this before returning to work if you have been off work, or as soon as possible when you return.

**How can I help my colleagues, family members or friends if they are suffering from stress at work?**

Support is very helpful. Encourage your colleague, relative or friend to discuss problems with their manager or trade union or other employee representative, as a first step. If the manager is part of the problem, you may be able to represent your colleague or you could suggest another manager that could help to deal with the situation. It will always be helpful to identify possible solutions to the problem, and you could help with this.
4.6.2. Good Practice 14

ABSTRACT
There are quite a number of publications from scientific research project on the stress and the resilience to stress with teachers. Out of this group we mention the publication ‘Resilient Teachers: Resisting Stress and Burnout’ by Sue Howard and Bruce Johnson (University of South Australia) published in 2004.

There a review of the literature is given and the main sources are stated. They mention: poor student-teacher relations, time pressure, role conflict, poor working conditions, lack of control and decision-making power, poor colleague relationships, feelings of personal inadequacy, and extra-organizational stressors.

INTRODUCTION
When it comes to resilience, they show that the resilience capacity of a teacher not only depends on internal factors, but to a large extent also on external factors.

- An important internal factor is Agency, the strong belief in the ability to control what happens to you.
- An important external factor is a strong support group.

Implicitly these points also are mentioned in the interviews.

The study mentions one more important support for resilience to stress: competence and a sense of achievement, the feeling that it matters what you do in your work life and that you (sometimes) really obtain results.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION
There is a 2002 publication from an official Dutch Health organization to the Minister of Education (named: Arborisico’s in de branche Onderwijs), analyzing the sources of stress and the ways to oppose or prevent stress. In that publication it is mentioned that extramural activities among the teachers are very helpful, especially activities in a sport school, or fitness training, for which the school opens the possibility.

In the interviews other possible activities are also mentioned. According to this Dutch publication and less explicitly also mentioned by Howard and Johnson, the school management has an extremely important task concerning the stress resilience of the teachers. The school management should

- know the problems of the teachers
- support the teachers
- be available for them
- support and promote all the other activities and attitudes that enhance stress resilience.

From pressure of work to pleasure of work
Pressure of work does not necessarily cause stress. It may be one of the causes employees bring forward to explain why they suffer from stress. Employers are legally bound to pursue a policy on the prevention of, among others, high pressure of work or else, if they are unable to do so, to reduce stress as much as possible. Identifying stress is vital then.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
When a colleague is suffering from strain and has to stay home because of this, this situation has nearly always been preceded by a period in which his or her social and/or personal performance and/or achievements at work gradually declined. So the cup was already running over the moment the last drop fell.

Besides this more or less insidious form of stress there is also the acute stress reaction. A fundamental, emotional event, an aggressive or violent action can badly unbalance someone. Being bullied systematically (as a victim of ‘mobbing’) may cause a (temporary) drop out from work relatively quickly.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Both manifestations of stress ask for a different policy of approach and treatment. This requires, however, a more profound tailor made approach. People are different in the way they deal with too high pressures of work or respond to shocking events. So there are no universally applicable solutions. There are though some rules of thumb for the organization of the work and the equipment of the employee.

You notice an employee is suffering from strain? Engage him/her in a conversation. Then tell him/her what you think you noticed. In the event that you are right, it is important the employee understands your role and line of approach (care for the employee and care for the work).
GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE NETHERLANDS
4.7.1. Good Practice 15

**ABSTRACT**
Prevention and reduction of stress: Stress can manifest itself in two ways: dormant and acute. Each requires a different policy approach and treatment. However, a more profound tailor made approach is needed. People are different in the way they deal with too high pressures of work or respond to shocking events. So there are no universally applicable solutions. There are though some rules of thumb for the organization of the work and the equipment of the employee.

**INTRODUCTION**
Anyhow, a policy aimed at the prevention of stress concentrates on reducing the pressure of work experienced by employees. Its measures ideally focus on the organization of the work and the employees doing the job. For the level of pressure of work that is experienced, depends on each person (competences, etcetera), the way in which the work is organized (quality of the work) or a combination of the two. In the approach it is also important to determine whether the pressure of work is connected with the amount of work (a peak load, arrears), the complexity of the work or with the quality of mutual relationships.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION**

**Measures for reducing the pressure of work**

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<tr>
<th>AIMS OF THE ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>AIMS OF THE EMPLOYEE</th>
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<td>QUANTITATIVE</td>
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<td>• reducing the working pace and amount of work</td>
<td>• time management</td>
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<td>• improving work planning</td>
<td>• job policy</td>
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<td>• preventing peak load</td>
<td>• balance between work and private life</td>
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<td>• reducing disturbances at work</td>
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<td>• policy on work load</td>
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<td>QUALITATIVE</td>
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<td>• improving regulation possibilities/independence</td>
<td>• team building/cooperation</td>
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<td>• involvement</td>
<td>• individual coaching</td>
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<td>• diversity of the work</td>
<td>• instruction and training (both subject-oriented and aimed at, among other things, dealing with stress)</td>
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<td>• reducing emotional pressure</td>
<td>• life style</td>
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<td>• management training</td>
<td>• intervension/supervision</td>
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<td>• performance and assessment interviews</td>
<td>• job policy (points version)</td>
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**Man as an indicator**
Developing adequate measures first of all requires a sound analysis of facts and circumstances causing stress according to the employees. This policy will not become effective until a combination of organizational and individual-oriented measures have been developed.

When one is only taking organizational measures, one ignores the individual perception of the work and the differences between the employees as regards their abilities to face the demands of the job. This may result in stress or the employees leave. With individual-oriented measures the employees are better equipped for dealing with problems at work.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
In order to achieve this it is important that employer and employee discuss these problems together. In the preparation of this discussion and obviously in the discussion itself it is of vital importance that the employee gets the feeling that the matter is taken seriously. That the employer really listens to him/her. Only by talking to someone about his qualities, his authenticity and commitment can one create sound developments that will enhance the pleasure of work and reduce the pressure of work.

**Observing stress**
It is important to identify stress, both for the employee and for the staff manager. Some symptoms of stress become evident in a person’s behaviour and can be observed as such.
Changes in a person's behaviour and mood:
- being irritated, more than usual
- being pessimistic, more than usual
- absence due to vague (psychological) complaints rather frequently
- poor performance both quantitatively and qualitatively
- much complaining
- bad mutual relations or fairly many conflicts
- unhealthy life style (smoking and drinking more than usual or even drugs abuse).

Complaints concerning health may indicate an underlying stress problem:
- high blood pressure
- pain in the chest
- regular headaches
- sleep disorders
- stomach/intestinal complaints

Possible indicators for stress within the organization are, among others:
- much / frequent absenteeism
- a large turnover of staff
- poor productivity

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Discussion with the employee**
You notice an employee is suffering from strain? Engage him/her in a conversation. Then tell him/her what you think you noticed. In the event that you are right, it is important the employee understands your role and line of approach (care for the employee and care for the work). In the discussion fan and the manual 'A discussion about more pleasure of work' you will find tips and advice on starting and holding a discussion about (solving) stress problems.
GOOD PRACTICES FROM SLOVENIA
### ABSTRACT
Teaching is one of the most stressful professions and requires attention. Dealing with the problem of stress in schools can lead to higher efficiency and improvement of occupational health and safety at work and also brings economic and social benefits of school, teachers and society. ETUCE - European Trade Union Committee for Education, whose member is also ESTUS (SVIZ), 2007 organized a project funded by the European Commission: “Improving expertise on teachers’ work-related stress and assisting ETUCE member organisations in implementing the European Framework Agreement on work-related stress”. Six teachers’ unions participate, including ESTUS (Education, Science and Culture Trade Union of Slovenia; Sindikat vzgoje, izobraževanja, znanosti in kulture Slovenije – SVIZ).

### INTRODUCTION
The fundamental goals of the project were: to improve the professional knowledge about teachers’ work-related stress and exchange information and good practices related to work-related stress. Specific objectives were, among others, to improve the knowledge of stress factors and their impact on teachers and make approaches to their elimination or reduction.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE
In May 2008 SVIZ sent 2000 questionnaires and has collected data from 900 teachers in primary and secondary school level. Schools returned a 45% of the questionnaires. SVIZ wanted to get feedback concerning the main sources of stress, about teachers being, job satisfaction and other responses to stress and its consequences. They developed a questionnaire and sent it to schools.

Most teachers (62,3%) evaluated their profession as stressful. Important role in this context the specific characteristics of the profession have:
1. teaching requires the active engagement of the whole person;
2. high level of concentrations requires, teachers are also emotionally laden;
3. teachers are working in noise;
4. teacher-pupil relationship is quite complex;
5. there are 30 or more students in the classroom usually, each of them has feelings to a teacher: sometimes he like him, sometimes he hate him, sometimes he is afraid of him; the teacher also has a different attitude to each student for each day.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
In the teacher’s workplace a wide variety of stressors are. From the research results we can conclude that we can’t identify the dominant cause of stress. We claim that the causes of stress are many and they are different and vary depending on the context in which they occur. Every teacher has a unique profile of the causes of stress. In the education sector undergoing changes are constantly, so investigating the causes of stress must take account of new information in this field. For different groups of teachers the causes of stress are different.

There are six factors that affect on general satisfaction related with stress:
- Harassment, rude students behavior
- Organization and management of the school
- Work with parents
- Employee relations
- Blackmail for a better evaluation
- Verbal threats and pressures of leadership

Stressors by intensity are:
1. Parents who do not cooperate. These are generally parents who make pressure on a teacher for a higher score of their children, those who want school or teacher solving their educational problems, sometimes is about lack of parental support for educational action.
Student behaviour: vandalism at school, inappropriate behaviour in the classroom.
Different forms of harassment: intentionally causing teacher’s discomfort, inconvenience and uncertainty.
Extra work: administrative duties and management of school documentation.
Inappropriate organization and management of school: progression, inability to influence on decisions of management changes that hinder the work plan at the school etc.
Inappropriate and negative relationships between staff and management.
Teaching: implementing the curriculum, the problem of evaluation of knowledge, lack of teaching devices.

The results confirm the general findings of the teacher’s work-related stress. The study has shown that stress represents a serious problem in schools. Stress is a phenomenon that can affect any teacher and has mostly negative impact on the individual's life and work.

### PRACTICE LESSONS

Practical solutions for reducing stress in educational system are in the model in 3 levels:

**Primary level** - changing demands in workplace;

**Secondary level** - changing the answers to demands of organization and workplace;

**Tertiary level** - therapeutic characteristics addressed to psychological, behavioral and health consequences of stress to individual teacher, to the group or entire school.

A strategic approach to stress management is carried out in two directions:

1. towards an employee and work
2. towards the implementation of activities in primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

#### FIRST APPROACH:

**A. Measures for individual teacher or group of teachers:**

- Seminars for efficient deal with stressors
- Control stressful experience
- To change the stress from the threat assessment to the challenge

**B. Measures aimed at work or the workplace include steps to change:**

- The working conditions,
- Work organization,
- Management to better match the needs of the teacher and the requirements of
- The work place

#### SECOND APPROACH:

We have to think primarily about prevention, measures and approaches to reducing stress among teachers:

**C. Primary measure:**

- Changing workplace demands and stressors (stress removal or reduction of their intensity),

**D. Secondary measures:**

- Changing the ways of individuals' responses and answers to the unavoidable and
- Obligatory requirements of the organization (for teachers who show signs of stress)

**E. Tertiary measures:**

- Therapeutic - treatment of the effects (psychological, behavioral and health) of stress consequences of on the individual or group (for teachers who already feel the effects of chronic stress).

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A combination of measures gives us a conceptual framework that identifies four types of measures against stress:
Modernization of organization and management:
- Increased professional autonomy;
- Feedback;
- Control over the circumstances of work;
- Interpersonal relations concern;
- Clarification of the roles.

It is important that teachers and managers upgrade their skills continuously and introduce a modern, professional approach in an appropriate way.

Participatory governance:
- Dynamic and complex management strategies, which lead to increase authorizations and autonomy, which the teacher needs to do its job;
- Strengthening the sense of teacher’s importance and responsibility.

Encouraging career development:
- Planned developing competencies relevant for the successful implementation of work;
- Providing continuous training for teachers;
- Creating career opportunities;
- Reward-oriented motivation.

Modernising physical work environment:
- taking care for quality improvement of working conditions.

**Professional training strengthens the professional autonomy of teachers.**

Support groups:
- Enabling the exchange of assistance;
- They can offer practical advice to solve or reduce stress.

Adjusted labour organisation, commitments reduction relief of certain tasks:
- measures are primarily aimed at specific groups of teachers who are more vulnerable for stress or already showing signs of stress (the elderly, beginners, disabled or chronically ill): they are not class teachers anymore, they don’t lead any additional activities, clubs, they have less obligations.
Measures to prevent stress among teachers, who show signs of stress:

- Relaxation techniques (autogenic training, muscle relaxation, meditation, etc.);
- Technique of cognitive restructuring;
- Various forms of professional psychological help (counselling, psychotherapy, etc.);
- Various forms of rehabilitation or special programs (for example after a long absence due to illness).

Past experience in solving this problem have shown that it is not enough make an action only at the individual level, action must be taken at school level. It is important to talk about stress and that we are all aware of negative consequences of stress.

Therefore it is necessary:

- To public and employees awareness about the presence of stress and its consequences;
- To promote awareness of the work-related stress phenomenon that affecting the whole institution;
- To note the attention to the possibility of occurrence of stress or the stressful situations.

It is necessary to provide a clear definition of the further development of the education system, the enhancement of teaching as a profession and promoting the development of teacher competencies. It is necessary to ensure more appropriate training regulation and teacher’s promotion, deliberate deployment systemic changes, better protection against violence, reduce school administration, establish a system for identifying and providing quality, etc.
4.8.2. Good Practice 17

**ABSTRACT**

One of the important factors known to cause stress in teachers are the so-called curricular changes – anything from a school reform to the changes in the syllabus, the textbooks, the teaching methods and more. Changes represent challenge, in other words, they are positively stressful for the teachers, but only when they have been pre-planned and introduced into the system with much consideration and proper professional support. If not, these changes can be seen by individual teachers or groups of teachers as threatening, which, according to the definition of stress, represents negative stress.

**INTRODUCTION**

Slovenia and its educational system are currently facing a number of curricular changes especially in the area of didactics, organization of work and new documentation. The introduction of these changes is not an automated process which needs no help from anyone. In the National Education Institute of Slovenia they show the way they work to help teachers cope with work-related stress. The National Education Institute of Slovenia is a public institution responsible for developing curricula and programmes for the primary and secondary school levels. The National Education Institute also coordinates the implementation of curriculum changes and work related stress management at national level.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE**

Schools must be prepared for these changes. That is why the National Education Institute (NEI) prepared an integrated model of support for the schools for the introduction and implementation of these curricular changes, which will hopefully reduce disinclination to the changes and consequently reduce the consequences of stress. The model is a multilateral and systematical support of the institution for the schools when they want to explore the quality of their own practices, with the implementation of novelties, with learning about and going into the direction of contemporary paradigms valued in the educational theoretical field.

The model was used at schools:

- as a preventing measure for the reduction of disinclination and other stress related factors;
- as a way to influence the working conditions;
- as a measure to include the entire teaching collective into the change process;

National Education Institute (NEI) decided to establish a special team of experts whose job it was to execute the model. The model was a combination of both approaches: the bottom-up and the top-down approach. The teachers were required to accept the solutions, which we at NEI assessed to be necessary and were professionally well-grounded (for example: curricular connections, active methods of teaching, etc.) but the solutions had to be offered or presented to them as not invasive or forced upon them from those in charge. At the same time we had to consider the needs, the interests, the experience and the suggestions of teachers. 15 out of 77 grammar schools participated in the model.

The starting-points of the model are:

- Cognitive and constructive theories of learning and development (teacher’s behavior and treatment of others are influenced by his or her convictions and values);
- Concepts and models of action research (effective strategy for the research of foundations of the basic beliefs and values);
- Concept of a learning organization (the teachers mutually encourage and support one another, they share their experience and learn from one another – this brings new quality to school and can be seen in the improved school environment/atmosphere);
- Support and help of external professionals (every school needs a so-called critical friend).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The model was being implemented on three different levels:

a) At the level of the entire school collective
Working with the entire collective is especially important at the beginning, at the stage of the implementation of changes, when teachers have different questions, second thoughts and dilemmas on their minds and there is still a lot of resistance present.

The aims when working with the entire collective are:

- To apply the contemporary didactical approaches in practice
- To train the teachers so they can deal with the changes
- To shape school collectives into “learning communities”
- To acquaint the teachers with the theoretical and methodical concepts of research of one’s own practice
- Direct confrontation with differences in opinions, exchange of experience, communication, perception of work environment/atmosphere/climate

b) At the level of school development team

There was a school development team established at the schools which participated in this research, the members were some of the teachers working there. The team is the key importance in the process of implementation of changes. Its primary responsibility is to encourage and direct the processes connected with the implementation of changes; mostly the assurance of conditions needed for critical reflection of teachers and encouragement of such behavior.

The following are some of the tasks or activities of the team:

- They are in continuous dialogue with the teachers, they encourage the dialogue among them
- They organize workshops about different ways of implementing changes, about professional questions, they pay attention to the occurring problems and they respond to them, they encourage self-evaluation of teachers;
- They are in charge of action and research groups for teachers in schools - they include teachers in the planning process (define priorities and aims), in the implementation process (plan and organize activities which will help them reach their aims) and evaluation process (plan and perform the evaluation);
- They are prepared to do self-evaluation; they ensure their own efficiency (self reflection,solving team conflicts);
- They cooperate with professionals from outside the team (they are a link with the outside world).

c) At the level of an individual teacher and a principal

The most intense contact between the NEI counselors and the school happen at the level of individual teachers, who is in continuous contact with his or her own subject counselor. The counselor’s job is to support the teacher in the process of researching his own practice (in action research or shaping of strategies in accordance with contemporary theories on learning, knowledge and teaching); the counselor is a teacher’s critical friend, he/she guides and educated the teacher if needed. The cooperation at this level can be done in the form of attendance at lectures, feedback through email or personal contact – but the most importantly through participation in regular meetings of teachers of the same subject.

The goals of these meetings are the exchange of information regarding teaching experience, action research and workshops, the exchange of examples of good practice and other aims determined by the counselor and the teacher together. The principal also has continuous contact with NEI. NEI also encourages cooperation between different school development teams and between teachers of different schools (for example, a meeting of teachers of the same subject from all 15 schools).

PRACTICE LESSONS

The Institute initiatives on stress management have been limited and the focus has been placed on “reducing the effects of stress, rather than reducing the presence of stressors at work”. Their approach concerns intervention, rather than primary prevention. The researcher also stressed that unfortunately the Slovenian teacher education system does not systematically deal with work-related stress.

Most of their activities are primarily aimed at the individual rather than the workplace or the organization. In other words, their worker-oriented approach aims to improve employees’ skills to manage, resist or reduce their stress. This approach is in contrast to the organization-oriented approach, which aims to redesign the organization of work or
change the corporate culture or management style.

Examples of what exactly has been achieved so far by this institution:

- In-service training for teachers on work-related stress, but also on various other issues. Each training program consists of 8-16 hours and is free of charge, focusing on individual problems specific to each teacher;
- Seminars for young teachers on working conditions, dealing with staff management, work-related stress management, etc.

The details of one of the more extensive programs created by the National Educational Institute is a model on how to conduct stress management. The Slovenian education system has faced major changes in the organization of work and curriculum documentation. The National Education Institute prepared a model to help and support the schools in coping with the implementation of these changes. A special team of experts worked on the model, and 15 out of the 77 grammar schools in Slovenia participated in its implementation. The model is part of a project entitled “Didactical lesson changes”, designed to support the use of cognitive theories and concentrating on reducing work-related stress issues.

The starting points of the model are the application of “cognitive and constructive theories” in schools, the investigation of basic beliefs and values, and encouraging teachers to exchange experiences and learn more from each other. The idea is that these exchanges should help create an improved environment/atmosphere in schools.

The model was implemented at 3 levels within the participating schools:
1. The level of the school collective (all the teachers in the school): taking into account that some teachers may resist the changes.
2. The level of the school development team: every participating school established development teams, consisting of persons working at that education institution. The team was of key importance in the process of implementing the workshops and training. The members of this team were also in continuous dialogue with the other teachers and encouraged them to undertake self-evaluation, etc.
3. The level of the headmaster/individual teacher: at this level, continuous contact was maintained with the experts from the Education Institute as well as with the other schools’ development teams. Cooperation was created between teachers of the same subject, helping each other by sharing best practices.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The model was not executed independently but was in close connection with the execution of the main project – didactical changes of lessons. It is believed that this model represents an example of good practice of how to implement changes and at the same time take preventive measures in terms of reducing teacher stress.

Unfortunately, this approach has only been used recently – among the reasons for this are:

- First and foremost a very low level of awareness regarding the connection between the implementation of changes and teacher stress,
- Secondly, school management teams are not qualified enough to deal with the changes,
- Thirdly, seeing the process of implementation of changes as an automatic, non-conflict process and lastly, minimizing the negative effects of stress.

In conclusion, headmasters cooperated well with the National Education Institute. The teachers were satisfied with the “bottom-up” approach after two years of working with the model. Consequences of the implementation of the model have not been evaluated yet, but this is in preparation. A general conclusion from the work of the Education Institute in Slovenia is that teachers do not like changes, even though massive changes have occurred in the educational system over the last 10 years and these represent a major cause of stress. There are several problems to be faced if stress reduction measures are to be successfully implemented, for example the lack of proper qualifications for head teachers and the difficulty for teachers in recognizing stress as a real problem. From future year, the Institute will be starting a major new project aiming to renew gymnasium grammar programs.
GOOD PRACTICES FROM SWITZERLAND
4.9.1. Good Practice 18

**ABSTRACT**

Opened in 1997, the HES-SO is the largest professional higher education network in Switzerland. It currently hosts around 15,000 students. Its 27 schools located in the cantons of Fribourg, Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel, Valais, Vaud and Berne, its 33 sites offer courses and other services in six major fields of study: Engineering and Architecture, Management and Services, Design and Fine Arts, Health, Social Work and Music and Theater. The HES-SO has its head office at Delémont. This is where the administration and other central departments are located. The Strategic Committees form the highest decision-making body of the HES-SO. They are supported by an external council, the Advisory Board, made up of representatives from commercial and academic environments. An interparliamentary commission is responsible for the control of the HES-SO. This commission is made up of seven cantonal delegations, each with seven members.

The Board of Directors is the higher operational body; it draws up documents on the basis of which the Strategic Committees make their decisions, and then ensures these decisions are carried out. It is responsible for the general coordination of the HES-SO, for the implementation of its missions and for the global financial management. It is made up of the directors of the HES-SO cantonal establishments and the heads of the fields of study.

**INTRODUCTION**

The missions of the HES-SO are derived from the Swiss federal law on the UAS of 6 October 1995, which determines the basic principles governing the Universities of Applied Sciences, their status and their missions.

The education provided by the HES-SO is practically-oriented, preparing students for professional careers which require the application of knowledge and scientific methods. Continuing education – postgraduate studies. In addition to studies leading to a degree, the HES-SO also offers advanced professional courses enabling students to gain more in-depth knowledge and skills, or to acquire new ones.

The HES-SO is active in the field of applied research and development, maintaining close cooperation with scientific and commercial organisations. Its own teaching also benefits from the integration of the results of this work. The HES-SO provides support for the use of this research and provides services to third parties (companies, cultural, social or health institutions). The HES-SO works together with other academic and research institutions in Switzerland and abroad.

The Well-Being Programme is an initiative launched by DIDAC, the Teacher Support Network and long life learning. It aims to reduce stress affecting staff throughout the county's education service – not just teachers – by identifying and tackling the root causes of work pressures and providing some tools to increase staff's resilience to stress.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE UCTION**

The DIDAC formation aims to promote the health at work, working in partnership with existing support networks and initiatives, in order to provide a better working environment in thses universities of applied sciences.

The programme considers educators as the most important resource in a university of Applied sciences. The DIDAC formation to increase resilience to stress consists of three aspects

- Let educators or staff evaluate their level of stress
- Provide them with individual tools during a workshop
- Help them identify and to improve their work/life balance

The focus of the programme is on stress. This makes it relevant to all staff and helps to identify and hopefully to prevent stress happening in the first place. The key is an organisational approach through numeric questionnaires or individual interviews. Each department of the school of the HES-SO may appoint a facilitator – usually a psychologist or a teacher – to lead the work. It’s not compulsory and some departments haven’t started the process yet. All teachers in the school which has decided to launch the programme have the possibility to answer and complete a questionnaire answering 26 questions designed to measure stress levels and identify causes. The survey focuses on issues such as professional motivation, lack of sleep, physical pains and tiredness, lack of concentration, social and professional...
relationships, communication with their hierarchy and workload. Results are immediately relevant as there is a visual message depending on where the answer is left. All questions are formulated in a way that the position of the answer on the extreme left indicates almost no stress while the position on the extreme right shows a critical level of stress. Thus, in a blink, we can measure the average position and determine if the answers are rather positioned on the side of high stress or not. A blank questionnaire is given to the interviewee in order to let them repeat this activity a month later, encouraging a meeting to discuss its results with a either a psychologist or a pedagogical counsellor.

The psychologist has a private practice to allow educators, students or staff have the choice to keep their stress status out of their professional background. It has been decide to provide such a private service because psychological problems linked to stress are often considered as taboo in the Swiss educational institutes, and people are more willing to start a discussion of this kind if they have the guarantee that it will kept secret. Nevertheless, if their insurances don’t cover the expenses of the psychologist, schools pay the invoices on a anonymous basis. The key to this approach is that either one or two meetings with the psychologist are sufficient to detect the causes and prevent burnout by taking some decisions, or the problem is too important and the psychologist helps them to discuss these issues with the school director or hierarchical superior.

Another approach is to offer free workshop which provide a selection of tools to help educators develop a personal resilience on an individual basis. Those workshops let delegates try and practice games, relaxation, meditation, breathing exercises and so on.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As this programme has started in September 2010, results are still purely indicative but still the surveys show a modest change in scores of the questionnaires. What is relevant is the change in the cultural approach of the institutions towards burnout and stress-related problems. Decision makers have allowed budgets and the development of workshops on stress, just by making it clear that institutions are concerned and offer resources with this matter helps the well-being of educators improve, and their absences from ill-health reduce. Feedback on workshops has been enthusiastic.

PRACTICE LESSONS

Providing support for educators and understanding stress-related problems already helps to improve communication and rationale solutions to taboo problems.

Here is a number of defined features:

- The implementation of psychologists in some departments of the HES-SO is now considered as an institutional resource
- A confidential questionnaire is now a common and accepted tool to identify potential stress-related potential issues.
- Face-to-face feedback or discussion is offered inside the institution based on confidentiality
- Workshops are now developed in all the departments of the Western University of Applied Sciences

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Swiss Programme and related workshops are detecting stress-related problems before they become too heavy. On the one hand, this preventative strategy is aimed at finding out what helps and communicating it as widely as possible, and on the other hand it helps institutions develop relevant financial and human resources.

Based on respecting educators and staff in universities, this programme is changing cultural approach to issues which used to be considered blameful or shameful not so long ago. Communicating about stress-related problems and asking educators and staff about personal aspects, shows an openness and a willingness to respect and offer solutions. As presented above, such an open and constructive approach leads to long term sustainable well-being for educators, employees and even students as well as for their institutions. This positive trend has now started and we don’t see how it could be slowed down or stopped for its results already show the positive effects on all the actors of the Swiss University of Applied Sciences educational system.
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GOOD PRACTICE 1


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GOOD PRACTICE 16


GOOD PRACTICE 17


GOOD PRACTICE 18

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