



Portugal

Partnerships of the Social Networks Programme

Framework and setting

- Geographic scale** Partnerships established under the Social Network Programme (SNP) are constituted within the territories of municipalities. The SNP is being implemented in 275 of 278 Portuguese continental municipalities (population: approx. 9,000,000).
- Policy framework** A whole new generation of social policies aimed specifically at reinforcing the dynamics of inclusion in Portuguese society has been developed. Partnerships were established as part of the SNP (a new generation of active social policies aimed at the activation of individuals and institutions) and promote integrated responses to the multi-dimensional nature of disadvantage, poverty and exclusion.

Partnerships at work

- Rationale** The policy development process in Portugal is rather centralised and the most frequently used level of consultation is national. Partnerships between public and private institutions, at local and national level, are very common and partnership working is well established. This experience has created the conditions for the incorporation of the partnership principle in current management of social policies and increased the participation of representative national organisations in policy development. The underlying principles are integration, co-ordination, subsidiarity, innovation and participation.
- Objectives** The general objectives of partnerships are to combat poverty and social exclusion and to promote local social development through the introduction of joint strategic planning dynamics. Partnerships, in which the local authorities play a central role, give greater priority to the discussion of local social development problems and improving social interventions. The specific objectives include the implementation of joint planning processes on the basis of reviewable diagnoses of the social situation, the promotion of co-ordinated intervention in municipalities and parishes, the search for solutions to problems/needs of families and persons in situations of poverty and social exclusion and the promotion and dissemination of information regarding the situation in municipalities.
- Functions** The Social Networks are formal discussion fora or structures. In these fora the social problems of the local territories are discussed, partners define the priorities of the intervention and approve both “Social Diagnosis” (see “Policy tools”) and at a later stage “Social Development Plans”, for a three-year period, by consensus, thus creating conditions for subsequent activities by public and private partners. The partnerships’ multiple functions include developing and implementing programmes and projects, strategic planning and practical co-ordination at the local level and leveraging additional funds from multiple sources.
- Policy areas** Labour market policy and social policy (social integration and action)
- Policy tools/ Instruments** Partnerships’ tools include e.g. “Social Diagnosis” (identifying the principal problems at a local level and the priorities for intervention) and “Social Development Plans” (including the principal areas of intervention, such as employment, social action, health, access to the services and education access).
- Timeframe** Ongoing
- Partners** Partners include local governments (municipalities), local public services, private non-profit solidarity organisations, representatives of social groups, Local Social Work Councils and the Parish Welfare Boards.

- Contracts** All partnerships have internal or functional rules which govern the establishment of agreements between the partners.
- Legal status** The SNP partnerships legal status is based on the new Law No. 115/ 2006, which came into force on 14 June 2006.
- Sources of Financing** The main sources of financing are the Annual State Budget and the Support Programme for Implementation of the Social Network within the scope of area 5 of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Social Development.
- Results**
- _ increased inter-institutional contacts, recognition and interaction between partners;
 - _ streamlining of social work;
 - _ testing of co-ordination models between partners at local levels, encouraging a more transparent and open attitude on the part of institutions;
 - _ introduction of joint strategic planning processes for specific territories in the area;
 - _ better and more systematic knowledge regarding the municipalities; and
 - _ 180 Social Diagnosis completed by CLAS and 138 Development Plans prepared and therefore at the execution/implementation stage.

Partnerships' highlight

- Programme/Project** Montijo Social Network
- Timeframe** Ongoing (initiated in 2001)
- Objectives** The main objectives of the Montijo Social Network are: the implementation of joint planning processes on the basis of social diagnoses; the promotion of co-ordinated intervention in municipalities and parishes; the search for solutions to problems/needs of families and persons in situations of poverty and social exclusion; the promotion of adequate coverage in terms of services and equipment in the respective municipalities and the promotion and dissemination of knowledge on the situation in the municipalities.
- Activities** The partners in the Health and Social Development Plan approve the implementation of the activities for the Montijo Council (2003-2005). The Health and Social Development Plan is produced by the Montijo Health City Network and the Social Network Project and the plan is a strong source of guidance and an innovative document, which combines and articulates a vast number of branches of intervention in areas of strategic development. The areas have been subdivided into 31 different branches.
- Results** Creation of the Health and Social Development Plan of Montijo Council representing an important contribution for Montijo's application to the International Healthy Cities Network of the World Health Organisation (WHO); creation of partnerships between different programmes in different intervention areas (social and health); dissemination and exchange of information between institutions.

Contacts **Partnership co-ordination at national / sub-regional level**

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