

The OECD LEED International Conference on “The Social Economy in Central, East and South-East Europe: Emerging trends of social innovation and local development”, Trento, Italy, 22-23 September 2005

INTRODUCTION OF INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT TOOLS IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN RUSSIA: PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED

*Mr. Kirill Chagin, Project Manager, Social Policy Division,
Institute for Urban Economics (Moscow, Russia)*

Current Status of Social Assistance and Social Service Delivery Networks

- Most social assistance programs are not outcome-based.
- Targeting of social assistance is rather poor.
- Social service delivery is non-flexible, monopolistic and is mostly “provider-orientated” than “service- or client-orientated”.

Reforms through Pilot Projects

❑ Social Assistance Tools

- Target cash benefits for lunches in school
- Active labour social assistance to low-income families with children “From Benefits to Wages” (urban areas) and “Self-provision” (rural areas)

❑ Social Service Delivery Tools

- Competitive procurement of social services
- Single source procurement of social services
- Provision of low-income elderly people with hot lunches through voucher model

❑ Measurement Tools

- Performance measurement of in-home social service delivery for elderly people

❑ Administrative Tools

- Definition of administrative costs on the social assistance program “From Benefits to Wages”

Positive Lessons

- Lesson 1. New tools make clients' lives better.
- Lesson 2. Competition among social service providers is realistic.
- Lesson 3. The users of new tools find them proper and convenient.

Negative Lessons

- Lesson 1. Introduction of new tools is much restrained by conservative contexts.
- Lesson 2. Introduction of new tools is restrained by poor competence of governments' administrators and lack of administrative resources.
- Lesson 3. Introduction of new tools may be put at risk of failure by centralization of power responsibilities.

Policy Recommendations for Further Introduction of New Tools

- Gradual conversion of government's social service agencies into NGOs accompanied with taxation and budgeting adjustments.
- Extensive and high-quality training programs for governments based on existing Russian experience. Financial incentives for provision of better governments' staff and supplying reforms with other required administrative resources.
- Eligibility of municipalities to create and run social assistance and social service delivery programs. Waiver mechanisms in regional programs providing possibilities for municipalities to meet specific needs and conditions of local areas.