



# Changing the Culture

## The Nordic Alternative

### TOOLBOX

*SUBPROJECT: COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF RECRUITING*

*Transnational project manager:*

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*Participating partners:*

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Iceland, Bodø Norway*



**Northern  
Periphery  
Programme**

2007–2013

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## Background

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Social Services in our municipalities will be facing new challenges in the future. The proportions of elderly in our municipalities are forecast to increase in the coming years. Researches show that fewer will be able to provide service and social care.

Within the EU project OLE1, subproject Competence Development and Staff Recruiting was one of the areas highlighted, the need to promote health and social care professions in new areas and with new techniques to attract potential employees.

The aim is to attract young people to educate themselves and work with elderly in the future. It can also be used to reach people who want to change profession.

Based on this reality, a course has been developed together with the Unemployment Office, where we educate and enable new jobseekers to work in the caretaking sector for elderly.

The Faroe Island and Iceland have implemented the Eden Alternative theory in some of the newest nursing homes in these countries.

### **The Eden ideology is an arrangement created by Dr. William Thomas**

- ✓ More or less by chance and partly by necessity he as a newly qualified medical doctor, he started to work at a nursing home . In this work area he was put into situations where he as a doctor could not cure by “field observations” he started to research how the elderly residents did live their life's at the nursing home.
- ✓ He came to the conclusion that there are three torments' which are characteristics' the life of the elderly
- ✓ Who live in a traditional institution. These are:
  - ✓ Loneliness
  - ✓ Helplessness
  - ✓ Boredom
- ✓ From this research he developed a overall plan , “ The Eden Alternative”



## Methods and implementation

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### TRANSNATIONALE PRODUCTS AND PRODUCT PACKAGING

#### Changing the culture - The Nordic Alternative

##### Organizational frame

1. Changing the Culture - The Nordic Alternative concept, can be used by leadership and staff, who want to change the culture in nursing homes and in day cares centres for elderly. This concept can also be used for marketing and recruiting (PR).

2. **Area of responsibilities**

The persons in responsible are, the Project team OLE2, leaders of the elderly care sectors, employees, representatives and leadership of nursing homes and municipalities.

Function in relation to current procedures should be an alternative way of working within the nursing homes and in daycares centres for elderly.

3. **Product specification in general as the first step for product packaging**

The product, changing the Culture – The Nordic Alternative, is based on various methods and ideologies combined with staff experience and ideas to create a good and caring environment. A way to make this change is to select a foundation in a known ideology that fits our nursing homes or day care centres. In our work we express the ways which we have used in a national level.

##### **Mission:**

##### **The Goal for the Nursing homes**

The purpose with Changing the Culture - The Nordic Alternative ideology is to give residents in nursing homes and daycares centres for elderly, a meaningful daily life, by changing the culture from the institutionalized culture, to a home with the vision,

***“Making the life worth living”.***

1. **Competence development**



Changing the culture by “Competence Development” is a way to attract new job seekers and retain present employees. According to staff experiences, the employees do see positive benefits working with the elderly; this is a new way of working in connection with Changing the Culture - the Nordic Alternative ideology. This project gives the involved staff, a new opportunity to increase their competence.

The main vision is that the new Culture is to be implemented in each and every individual employee and the employees have the chance to express their desires and are a part of the implementation of the vision.

## **2. Marketing and communication**

Building the bridge between children/youngsters and old people is one way to change the culture. To introduce Nursing homes, as a home for elderly, but also as an interesting future working and career area for jobseekers to work in daycares centres for elderly.

To make this kind of work attractive, provides the elderly with a sense of importance and brings joy into everyday life and direct connection with young people. This cooperation gives the employees a new and different approach to the job, which provides a greater job satisfaction and increases competence.

### **Content of intended implementation**

In order to create a concept product as Changing the Culture – The Nordic Alternative, deals with multiple products which will change the culture in “institutionalized” nursing homes and daycares centres for elderly people.

### **The Eden ideology:**

This is became a worldwide ideology, instructions on how to change the culture in nursing homes and other care centres for elderly.

The 10 Eden principles are focused on that the elderly and employees enjoy life learn and develop in their environment.

Researches have shown that residents, employees and relatives are more pleased, when this ideology is used.



### **Evaluation from the research**

Researches have shown that after two years from the start of implementing of the Eden philosophy in a nursing home, this is the result:

- 60 % less routine
- 57 % less bedsore
- 25 % less bedridden
- 18 % less tied to chair/bed
- 48 % less staff absence
- 11 % less work related accidents

(Sandy Ransom, RN, MSHP 1996-1998, 734 Residents in five nursing homes in Texas, USA.)



## Toolbox

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### **New Cultures in Nursing Homes**

Based on the work with Changing the Culture, which has been implemented in nursing homes, we have prepared a Toolbox which can be used for any nursing homes who wish to Change the Culture – The Nordic Alternative idea.

There are different ways to reach a set goal in the project, Changing the Culture and to attract employees.

- ✓ Take focus from medication, treatment and nursing and place focus on care and attention and a **“life worth living”**.
- ✓ Steady improvements for the employees, both on the educational and environmental level
- ✓ Involving employees and residents in the daily decisions
- ✓ Giving the employees challenges and professional developments (education)
- ✓ Using methods and ideologies that work and adapt the suitable part to our circumstances
- ✓ Making School projects in cooperation with nursing homes
- ✓ Being ambassadors for certain projects
- ✓ Starting up Recruiting projects
- ✓ Create Webb -places for Competence Development
- ✓ Children visiting nursing homes, create a children friendly environment
- ✓ Keeping pets and plants in nursing homes

## How to do - step by step

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### **Detailed descriptions**

#### **Step 1. Preparation.**

#### **A wish from the leadership to Change the Culture**

In order to Change the Culture, there needs to be a vision for the nursing home.

#### **Vision for the new culture/focus areas:**

The Vision is to implement this new culture by creating an attractive and homely environment for the elderly people. The goal can be to create a good work environment for employees, to create a good co-operation/relation with family and

relatives. It is important that the home is a place where all thrive and be a role model for others.

By moving from the “old culture” which for the residents’ often is connected with loneliness, boredom and helplessness. For the employees it can mean less interest in the work, lack of energy and lack of positivity.

On figure 1 we can see a model of how we leave the old culture to the new culture.

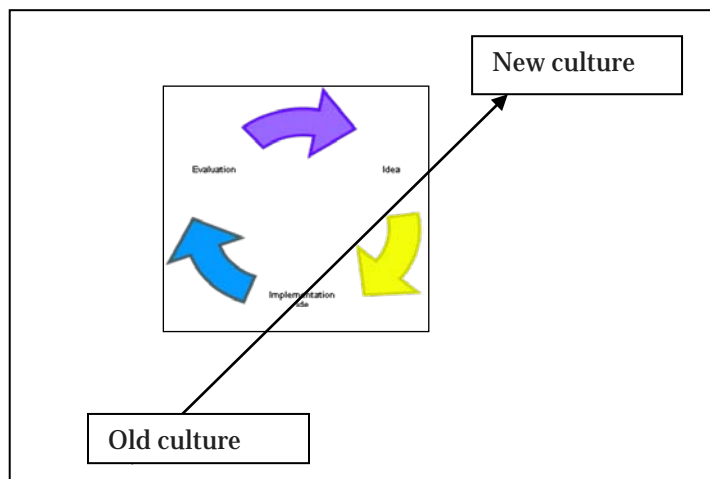


Figure 1.

## Step 2. Implement the vision

### Vision, goal and validity from the Eden Alternative

- ✓ **Vision:**
  - To eliminate loneliness, helplessness and boredom
- ✓ **Goal:**
  - To increase the wellbeing of the residents and the employees who work in this field with changing the culture of the traditional rules and where respect and care is shown for all living creatures.
- ✓ **Validity:**
  - The 10 principals of the Eden ideology.

### The 10 Principles in order to eliminate Helplessness, Boredom and Loneliness:

1. The three plagues of loneliness, helplessness, and boredom account for the bulk of suffering among our Elders.
2. An Elder-centred community commits to creating a human habitat



where life revolves around close and continuing contact with plants, animals, and children. It is these relationships that provide the young and old alike with a pathway to a life worth living.

3. Loving companionship is the antidote to loneliness. Elders deserve easy access to human and animal companionship.
4. An Elder-centered community creates opportunity to give as well as receive care. This is the antidote to helplessness.
5. An Elder-centered community imbues daily life with variety and spontaneity by creating an environment in which unexpected and unpredictable interactions and happenings can take place. This is the antidote to boredom.
6. Meaningless activity corrodes the human spirit. The opportunity to do things that we find meaningful is essential to human health.
7. Medical treatment should be the servant of genuine human caring, never its master.
8. An Elder-centered community honours its Elders by de-emphasizing top-down bureaucratic authority, seeking instead to place the maximum possible decision-making authority into the hands of the Elders or into the hands of those closest to them.
9. Creating an Elder-centered community is a never-ending process. Human growth must never be separated from human life.
10. Wise leadership is the lifeblood of any struggle against the three plagues. For it, there can be no substitute.

### **Step.2.2. Implement the vision - Staff education / staff competence**

Our method in order to implement the vision is first of all to send all employees on a 3-day course so that all employees have a united attitude to the task. The employees have the chance to take part in creating the vision to the new culture.



**Step. 2.3. – Implement the vision - An ongoing process.**

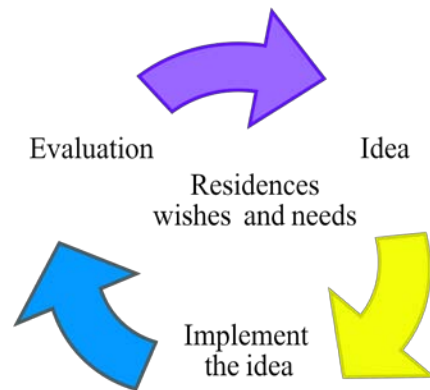


Figure 3.

**How to keep the ongoing process?**

- ✓ Changed roll of leadership
- ✓ Move the decisions making to the residences' and employees.
- ✓ Vision work
- ✓ Reflect on:
  - What do we want?
- ✓ Strategy in work :
  - Choose a focus area and set new goals
- ✓ Professional input
- ✓ Reap the fruit
  - Documentation

**Step 3. New Structure**

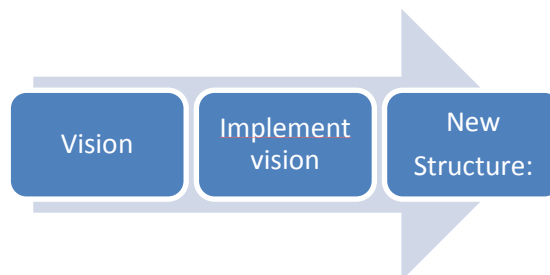


Figure 2



In order to keep an ongoing process we need to change the roll of traditional leadership.

Move the decisions making to the residences' and employees.

Being focused on the Vision and work accordingly, in the spirit of the chosen vision. Regularly reflecting on, what we want and working on a set strategy, by choosing a focus area and new goals

### **Step 3.1.Teams/employees**

In order to change the structure is to be based on teams. Teams will be responsible for units and each team is building on the competence, interest and ideas of the employees. Earlier experience in these matters, show that these teams are able to implement the best projects.

The task of every individual employee in central functions:

- The staff is connected to the team
- To make an effort in regards to the work with Eden
- To sense the requests and ideas, from the residents and to secure that they are heard, valued and dealt with
- Follow team decisions
- To understand the meaning of being a part of a teamunit, where all work together.

#### **Step 3.1.1. Team leader**

The task of the team leader as following:

- To sense the requests and ideas, from the residents and to secure that they are heard, valued and dealt with
- Solve problems and name the problems/challenges
- Manage all team meetings
- Responsible for the documentation



### **Step 3.2.. Leaders**

The task of the leadership is as following:

- To give strength and support
- To be in charge of keeping the agreed ideology
- To be the driving force and to stand guard for criticism that might occur
- Direct the team and individuals
- Be a roll model and have the ability to listen

### **Step 4. Regular meetings**

Regular meetings with the procedures of the Eden “***Listen and Learn Circle***”:

- The procedures are in order to secure and create respect between individuals
- Encourage reserved and persons who are quiet to speak openly and the talkative to listen.
- Encourage all to participate when decisions are made.
- To secure that all are involved in the preparations, are involved in making solutions and take new paths in life.

We both observe, translate and experience not only feelings, but we broaden our horizon when we listen to each others their experiences in life and their point of view. This way will enable us to develop professionally and personally.

### **Step 5.The Eden test**

All suggestions regarding activities need to pass the Eden test.

Every time we start new activity, we need to assure following:

- What do we do?
- Is this according to the residence wishes? Or is it the employee wishes?
- Does this help the residences to bond?



- Does it help for personal growth of the residences?
- Does it cure loneliness, boredom, and helplessness?

### **Step 6. Activity groups for residents**

According to the residences interests and wishes, activity groups are formed as following by this procedure:

*The example in this case is a knitting group.*

#### **a) Description of the problem/challenge?**

- The residents keep for them selves
- Are indifferent about one another
- Lacking meaningful, skilful work
- Do not take initiative

#### **b) Solution:**

- Knitting group.

#### **c) Goals**

- Strengthen the social bond between the female residents
- Have fun
- The hostess feels responsibility, has the opportunity to host her own party

#### **Activity groups can be as following:**

Knitting, Sawing, Craftwork, Storytelling, Planting, Building and ship models, Music.

### **Step 7. Documentation**

**A Handbook accessible to the staff at the nursing home containing information and inspiration.**

It is important that all happenings are documented and evaluated.



Each team make their own Eden handbook, where all notes, important sheets and meetings are being kept. All meetings need to be documented.

In the handbook there shall be an “Idea bank” where ideas, wishes and requests are gathered before the next meeting.

The Eden-handbook needs to be visually placed on the ward, for all to see what is happening in the home. The handbook can also be placed on the nursing home webpage.

### **Partners**

The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway

### **Project coordinators**

**The Faroe Islands:** Nærverkið , Mørkin

**Iceland:** Akureyri

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### **Participants**

**Elderly:** Residents in nursing homes and day cares centres.

**Employees:** Employees working in nursing homes, day care centres and in connection and care of elderly.

**Relatives:** Relatives are a part of the project in Changing the Culture – The Nordic Alternative.

## Appendix 1

### The wild birds outside.

#### Changing the Culture (Eden)

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##### **Description of the problem:**

1. Lack to see something enjoyable outside
  - a. Something unexpected which inspires to talk



##### **Suggestion to solution:**

1. Food board
2. Look after a seagull

##### **The goal is:**

1. It is the responsibility of the staff to look after the wild birds
2. At least once on each shift keep an eye on what is happening outside and talk with the residences about what we see.

##### **Procedure:**

1. A elderly handyman makes and sets up the food board
2. To make sure :
  - a. It is the tasks of the residents to feed the wild birds
  - b. The residents reserve food for the birds
  - c. together with one of the staff once a month to check and clean the birds food board
3. Every day we have a subject to talk about regarding the birds



## Appendix 2

### Kinder garden children on visit.

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#### *Description of the problem:*

2. Why do we want the children to relate to the Eden test
  - a. Does it help the residents to connect to the children?
  - b. Does it provoke personal growth for the residents?
  - c. Does it prevent loneliness, boredom and helplessness?

#### *Solutions:*

3. Kinder garden on visit every 14th day

#### *The goal is:*

3. make the residents to connect
4. something spontaneous and funny happens when the children arrive
5. the children look forward to the visit



#### *Procedures:*

1. Make a deal that the children arrive every 2nd Tuesday for about 2 hours each time.
2. Talk to the kinder garden the Friday before the schedule visit and decide a topic for the visit
3. Write in the "activity book" when they arrive and what the topic is
4. The staff on duty arrange and prepare the visit together with the residents
  - a. Prepare a meal
  - b. Prepare various material to use during the visit
  - c. Together with one of the residents, the children are greeted when they arrive at the nursing home.

#### *Evaluation:*

5. Leader of the nursing home talks to the nursing home staff in order to receive feedback from the visits, the children and the residents
  - a. What was good
  - b. What was not good
  - c. What to do better next time