Connect the Dots

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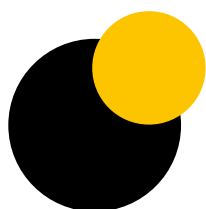
Connect the Dots
About the Power of Social Innovation in the area of Social Inclusion

Regional Centre for Social Policy in Krakow
Jerzy Regulski Foundation for the Development of Local Democracy
Centre for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies of the Jagiellonian University

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Spis treści

INTRODUCTION

Social inclusion has been the focus of our intensive work for the past 3 years. We have been collecting data and reports to identify critical areas and 'white spaces'. We have also staged hundreds of hours of individual and group social consultations, which helped us understand the entire spectrum of challenges, difficulties and latent social problems faced by those living in Poland. We have not been acting alone – hundreds of innovators shared their knowledge and came up with ideas for innovations and explained their individual and unique perspective to shed more light on the social problems that have been kept out of sight.

This analysis was a necessary step before we selected 60 innovations to be awarded with a grant to help build a prototype of an innovative solution and test it in a real-world setting. At this stage, we have consistently learned from our innovators and testers, broadened our perspective, and offered our advice and knowledge, if needed.

Having done all of that, we were able to select the best 9 innovations that we want to describe to promote their implementation and use.

Please feel free to read this short publication reflecting 3 years of our hard work – we invite you to embark on a journey along the paths of social inclusion and innovations promoting social inclusion. On the following pages, you will learn about the "Social Inclusion Incubator" project that we have been implementing and about the extraordinary solutions designed by the talented and unique innovators from all over Poland. Stay with us!

Team of the Social Inclusion Incubator

PART I: SOCIAL INCLUSION

Have you ever wondered why working towards social inclusion matters so much? We have asked ourselves this question again and again, and even ventured to answer it.

To answer this question, we have compiled a non-exclusive list of arguments, and you are very welcome to supplement it with new categories and items. The issues listed below are considered crucial from our unique perspective, which is based on our experience of working with 60 innovations in the area of social inclusion. Before we invite you to reflect on this topic, please take a moment to learn more about the definition of social inclusion. What does social inclusion involve, what does it focus on and why do we find social inclusion so important?

Chapter 1

What is social inclusion?

For many years now, social inclusion has been at the core of social policies. It inherently implies that the contemporary world is changing at an unprecedented pace, and involves a multitude of individual, family, social, political and global factors. These changes compel us to revise the definition of social inclusion and expand it to new areas to cover new groups of vulnerable people in need. In recent years, seniors and people with disabilities, individuals with mental conditions or those excluded from the labour market, young unemployed people and independent parents with children have been joined by extraordinary large numbers by refugees, ethnic and national minorities, as well as people socially excluded due to the lack of local transport, or people who are already affected by the climate change.

Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis Schinas, said: "Inclusion is the embodiment of the European way of life. Integration and inclusion policies are vital for newcomers and local communities and contribute to cohesive societies and strong economies"[1].

The well-being of each person is important for improving their individual quality of life, and it is crucial to create conditions in which people can take hold of and make the most of their potential, which shapes the way the entire societies operate, including at the economic, social and cultural levels.

Therefore, social integration and ensuring equal access to public services and spaces, which are inherent to social inclusion, are not only desirable, but also indispensable for the development of social capital.

For us, social inclusion means the existence of a society in which all individuals, whatever their origin, life circumstances or the level of ability, have the opportunity to fully participate in social, cultural and economic life. Creating solutions to facilitate this access has been our main task in recent years.

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1. https://um.warszawa.pl/waw/europa/-/wlaczenie-spoleczne-dla-wszystkich-komisja-przedstawia-plan-dzialania-na-rzecz-integracji-i-wlaczenia-spolecznego-na-lata-2021-2027

Chapter 2

Why does social inclusion matter?

It creates solutions for the benefit of the community

The Social Inclusion Incubator seeks to bridge inequalities, eliminate stereotypes and manifestations of social discrimination at the level of groups, local communities – **including at the individuals level – in order to develop and strengthen the well-being** of all people living in a particular region, state and community. From the very beginning, our goal has been to create a comfortable and safe space in which life experts who know how to best respond to social needs will be able to implement their ideas with our support, thus contributing more resources to the public administration bodies. As soon as we started our work, we have been guided by the idea that we should reach out to people, organizations and institutions that are brave and creative, and drive social changes – it's in their DNA.

It supports growth underpinned by solidarity and the social economy

Social inclusion means better access to social services, education, the labour market and other resources for all members of society, whatever their origin, social background or special needs. These developments underpin the social economy in all of its aspects, including the operation of social economy enterprises.

According to the National Project for the Development of the Social and Solidarity Economy, social economy enterprises are forecasted to be solidly embedded in the economy and consolidated by 2030, both in terms of their socio-economic activities and public policies. To create solid growth and corporate social responsibility, the social economy and a number of initiatives must work towards the wider inclusion of people who are usually very distant from any type of business activities in their day-to-day life. This often requires measures to be taken at the interface between business, administration and non-governmental organizations, but with these cross-functional activities, we can shape processes that help solve social issues at the local level, strengthen the sense of empowerment, and make activities more meaningful. The activities that are carried out in this area strengthen access to valuable information and knowledge, provide better educational opportunities, and help develop the skills most sought after on the labour market. **A better educated society that is conscious of its inherent rights and opportunities is more productive and creates more innovations in professional life and business, which translates into a more robust economic growth.**

For many years now, we have been advocating for social inclusion at the Regional Centre for Social Policy in Krakow. We identify trends, analyse data, follow changes in the overall approach, and witness the positive consequences of promoting social inclusion. The past years have shown that facilitating cooperation between local government, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs and researchers is an important aspect of creating a strong social capital. Today, as the results of our joint effort became apparent, I can proudly say that we have created a perfect space for the development of innovations and social start-ups.

Wioletta Wilimska, Head of the Regional Centre for Social Policy in Krakow

An inclusive society promotes social change

Following many years of hard work to promote social inclusion, we can confidently say that social inclusion also leads to greater involvement of various groups of citizens in the decision-making processes, in the activities of civic organizations, advocacy, the processes of establishing standards and rules. All of this is the key to democracy and a strong civil society. These activities also trigger the processes of co-creation and co-design of social change.

Social awareness determines both the quality and pace of changes that are being introduced. That is why it is so important to share information, teach and ask questions from the bottom up. When needs are defined directly by the future beneficiaries, tailor-made solutions are developed, and the future user becomes empowered and co-responsible for the proposed and implemented solutions. Social inclusion can therefore be defined across many different angles, but being included in the creative process always means active involvement and shared responsibility. **The growing sense of empowerment and agency brings with them changes in perception and, in the long term, creates a source of grass-root energy which, initially at the level of individuals and groups, can transform itself into a lasting process of social change.**

Social inclusion is a difficult, complex and multidimensional process. On the one hand, it requires a lot of determination, good will, commitment and involvement of people who need support (participants of the social inclusion process). On the other hand, it requires appropriate tools, instruments, products and services that respond in a non-standard way to the needs of individuals or groups of people who are undergoing the process of social inclusion.

At the same time, social inclusion is underpinned by empathy, readiness to help, willingness to right the wrong, creativity, cooperation and trust – this is the basis for developing social capital for the benefit of us all.

Wojciech Odzimek, Head of FRDL MISTiA

It builds the overall societal well-being and health

Social inclusion efforts help ensure that everyone has access to health care, social services and social support, which contributes to the overall physical and mental health of society, social inclusion and, ultimately, societal well-being at large.

The 1948 constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) defines well-being as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'[2].

The WHO definition recognizes that the absence of a disease is not equivalent to the desired quality of life, and accordingly, attempts were made to identify and define the factors that affect a person's well-being. These include the need to belong and not feel excluded, which an individual may experience within a family, but also more broadly – within a local community or society as a whole. There are factors that shape and consolidate the process of social exclusion, such as isolation from family (e.g. geographical), technologies that suppress the need for integration and social contacts (communications, shopping, online activities), deepening intergenerational differences – the processes that promote social inclusion can increase the well-being of individuals and entire communities.

2.   World Health Organization (1948). Constitution of the World Health Organization. From: http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitu- tion_en.pdf

It makes us learn and let go

Today, we witness and experience changes in almost every area of our personal and social life, which prompts us to expand knowledge and learn new things, but also let go of outdated approaches that no longer apply to the contemporary world. Stigmatization, stereotypes and prejudices are still deeply ingrained in our way of perceiving the world; we still need to deepen our knowledge and awareness of the social issues. According to the report "Competencies of the future. How to shape them in a flexible educational ecosystem?"[3] , what we need is a radical change in education. The authors of this report argue we need skills and attitudes such as the ability to **discover problems**, or the ability to seek and understand challenges, **empathy**, or the ability to change the perspective, and **experimenting skills**, or the skills to build prototypes and learn through mistakes.

Bearing this in mind, we were looking for solutions, working grassroots and in workshops – identifying needs and looking for solutions, trying to approach those who suffer from exclusion, but also searching, inspiring and advising those with ideas. We were attentive and open. We have been listening to everyone because every sentence can inspire a solution.

We believe that social inclusion also means a change that takes place at various levels over time and fuels engagement. We shared this commitment – both during the incubation process and when drawing up this paper, in which we present not only ready-made solutions, but also an idea on how to implement the process of social learning.

It strengthens independence in areas that were once fully taken care of by institutions

The current social transformations are heading towards greater deinstitutionalization and greater empowerment of individuals to allow them to decide about their life and enjoy more independence. This process has been defined as a transition from institutional care to community-based services and is currently taking place across Europe. It inherently involves prevention, which avoids having to place individuals in institutional care and facilitates their independent functioning in society. This was the area of concern in a large part of the Incubator's activities.

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3. Kompetencje przyszłości. Jak je kształtować w elastycznym ekosystemie edukacyjnym, https://stsw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Kompetencje_przyszlosci_Raport.pdf

**It provides us
with data**

For a social policy to effectively respond to the emerging needs and challenges, it must be based on evidence: scientific research, data, statistics and well-conducted qualitative research. In recent years, social inclusion has been the new hot issue among the general public and a multitude of organizations. We need to feel that we have a tangible impact on the reality around us, and that we belong to a community, organization or a workplace that helps us get involved and 'connect' with others.

The enormity of these activities and projects implemented in the area of social inclusion also provides a vast body of data, including reports, studies and analyses that we were able to use as part of our work.

Through our work, we also supported innovators by providing them with access to reports, analyses and summaries that helped determine the essence of a social problem they attempted to solve. Even though knowledge is now within easy reach, we do not always consciously make use of it, or we have concerns about the validly or reliability of the data. It is a great challenge to collect knowledge and critically process it; it is equally important to rely on proven and reliable sources of data.

Being involved in social activities should be something we can experience naturally, regardless of our life circumstances and the limitations we have. However, the "inclusion" must be implemented in response to well-defined needs, which often seem unimportant or trivial to a large part of society. This makes it all the more important to jointly implement the innovative activities promoting social inclusion.

Jolanta Perek-Biłas, Head of CEAPP UJ

PART II: The Social Inclusion Incubator
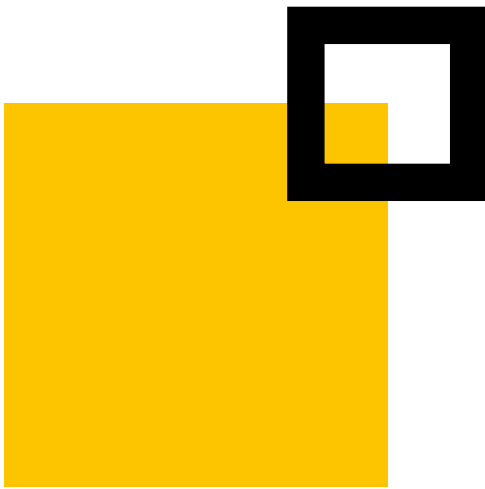
Chapter 1

How does the incubator for innovations operate and why do we need to create social innovations?

What is the Incubator and how does it work?

To support social inclusion, it is often necessary to take a step back and take a fresh look at the existing solutions. You also need to embrace different tools or resources, often used by different sectors. The participants also need to be involved in this process – the people who have the potential and recognize challenges in this area, because, for example, their loved one or a family member experiences social exclusion; or people who want to share their personal experience and knowledge in this field.

The prospective users need to be included in the process to jointly design solutions supporting social innovation – this is the precondition of co-creation, a process that has been increasingly recognized in both business and public policies. The title of this paper reflects the idea of collecting many different dots of various origin, size, colour and meaning, so that a new, unique image is created.

Co-creation has become a common term to describe a shift in perception from an organization as an actor that defines values and solutions (an organization that 'knows better') to a more participatory process in which people and organizations jointly generate and develop meaning and solve new and complex problems (a system in which everyone learns from each other).

As a result, the Social Inclusion Incubator was based on both the intersectoral dimension, and the processes of co-creation and joint participation.

The Incubator – what is it? This is a cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary team of 3 institutions: the Regional Centre for Social Policy in Krakow, Jerzy Regulski Foundation for the Development of Local Democracy and the Centre for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies of the Jagiellonian University. In 2020, these institutions decided to join forces to work together and design activities to promote social inclusion. It combines the experience of 3 large institutions operating in the area of social policy, research and evaluation, and activities directed at communities and local governments throughout Poland. Thus, the Incubator is able to operate in a creative and innovative way to break the patterns existing within a given organization

Our goal was to increase the effectiveness of solving problems in this area all across the country. We have applied for funding to be able to cooperate with innovators from all over Poland. In this process, we focused on incubating new seed ideas that would allow more effective and efficient solutions to social problems related to social exclusion to be designed more rapidly.

The "Social Inclusion Incubator" project was implemented under priority axis IV of the Operational Programme: Knowledge Education Development (Measure 4.1: Social Innovations), commissioned by the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, and financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

We carried out our activities from 1st October 2020 to 31st December 2023 in Poland. The project was worth PLN 6,176,022.00 (including PLN 5,823,371.14 contributed by the EU).

The innovators we have worked with over the last 3 years represented non-governmental, private and public sectors. In order to design socially inclusive innovations, it is necessary to go beyond the conventional everyday patterns of work, take advantage of the experiences of other people, and, above all, tailor the solutions on the real needs of the target social group. You also need tenacity and commitment.

Our innovators include:

- **13 individuals**
- **27 NGOs**
- **10 informal groups**
- **4 Social Welfare Centres as local government units**
- **5 business operators, including a social enterprise**

Apart from being based on co-creation and an inter-sectoral team, the Incubator also operated in accordance with the **4 X Human** principle, which places people at the Centre of the overall incubation process and at the central axis of 4 processes:

inspiration

because human needs create the framework and the limitations of the innovation being created;

testing

because an innovation tester brings their own point of view and practical knowledge, otherwise no new solutions could be created;

creation

because a person who creates innovations is closely familiar with a given problem, which makes them able to create an innovative solution;
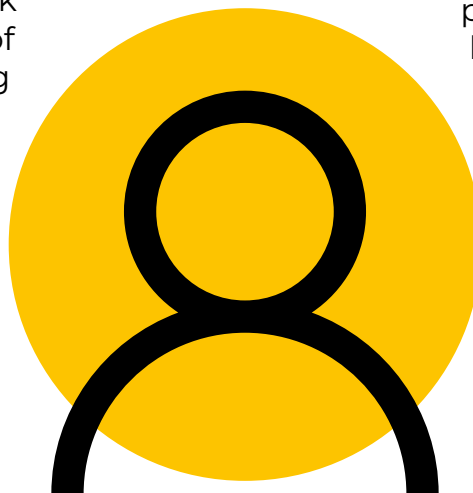
decision-making

because a practical decision about whether to use the solution is made by the end user, who is also the final decision-maker.

The Incubator provides the innovators with a safe space for cooperation and the flexibility they need to design innovative solutions that perfectly respond to social needs and have wide, cross-sectoral applications. This clearly demonstrates that innovation is not the domain of just one environment, and that innovative solutions are often based on cooperation, joint use of various resources and broad social participation. Such solutions create a set of ready-made and proven tools that can be widely used to combat social exclusion[4].

Why do we need to create social innovations?

Social innovation has been a buzz word that has been discussed extensively. This paper is not intended to provide yet another theoretical analysis on how to define this term. Its goal is to reflect and recap 3 years of work dedicated to creating new, innovative social solutions.

The Incubator has adopted the following definition as our guiding principle: social innovation is about building common social capital, which, through cooperation, allows us to define and discover latent social challenges and to build solutions that have not existed before, which are new and ground-breaking. This definition also stipulates that the tried-and-tested, traditional solutions may also be used to solve social problems, but they are now presented in a new, inspiring way, or refer to new areas of intervention.

The number of challenges in the social policy, or the area of social inclusion, can be truly overwhelming. Likewise, social innovations are usually associated with large-scale activities, wide ranging social impact or something that is difficult to access by an ordinary person. Hardly anyone perceives oneself as an innovator whose idea is so ground-breaking that it would change the world.

The key here is to practice small-scale thinking and try to solve one challenge at a time. It is easier to approach one small problem and try to find a solution to it in an unconventional way. Any other approach is simply impossible to implement in a complex labyrinth of social challenges of the modern world.

That is why we invite you to adopt a small-scale perspective with a huge impact – the perspective of people who tested the innovations. These people are in the best position to answer the question: Why do we need social innovation?

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4. If you are interested in the idea of incubating innovations and the operation of the Social Innovation Incubator itself, please refer to "Guide to Social Innovations", in which we described the process of incubating innovations in more detail. This paper can be downloaded via the QR code posted on the last page or at: https://rops.krakow.pl/pliki/ID/materia__y_o_dost__pno__ci/InnMalopolska_PRZEWODNIK_online_1.pdf

Get to know the stories and statements of social innovation testers who have experienced solutions that promote social inclusion.

Why do we need to create social innovations?

To enjoy life – about pursuing your passions

"I went on holiday to the beach for the first time in 20 years thanks to a waterproof protective cover for my electronic prosthesis."

- ■ (a waterproof protective cover for a lower limb prosthesis)

Innovations respond to people's needs, whether it comes to mobility, pursuing hobbies or interests. The innovativeness of an idea may be rooted in a small, almost imperceptible improvement introduced to a specific mechanism, operation or service, which can be scarcely perceptible to others. Even small modifications can bring about a huge change in the social life of the beneficiaries as they provide them with a sense that they can live and function on equal terms with other people. A small thing equals a big change!

How to cope on your own– about independence

"My 20-year-old son went to a confectionery shop alone for the first time and ordered a cream roll!"

- ■ (a manual and a plan of activities in public spaces for children and adolescents with ASD, to boost their independence)

Social innovations are designed to improve the quality of life of people who depend on others by increasing their independence, self-reliance and the ability to better respond to various circumstances. Thanks to innovative ideas, they can engage in many activities of daily life without any third-party assistance.

Aby poczuć się sobą – o samoakceptacji

> *"With this aesthetic leg prosthesis, I could put on a skirt and show my legs for the first time in 30 years – at my daughter's wedding!"*

■ (an aesthetic leg prostheses for people who had both limbs amputated)

Innovations can change attitudes that trigger a positive perception of oneself. Innovative solutions help cope with trauma and eliminate stereotypes, they boost self-acceptance and help individuals come to terms with their limitations, and no longer worry about what others might think.

To live with dignity – about primary commodities and essential services

> *"After all, we won't go to that basement any more, we don't have to wash in a washbasin."*

■ (a modular bathroom with a toilet, shower, washbasin and a radiator for rooms too small to have a standard bathroom installed)

Innovations respond to the needs of people who may be at risk of social exclusion as they are unable to use the products or services they need. This idea is innovative as it reflects a creative and inventive approach to the widespread problems that lacked any systemic solutions. A small thing equals a big change!

To get to like yourself – about self-esteem

> *"I will prove to my daughter that I can do something else!"*

■ (designing a manipulation board for adults with dementia)

Many of the innovations tested by the Incubator also contribute to increasing self-esteem, in addition to facilitating greater independence or the ability to take up new activities.

To learn more about innovations developed within the Social Inclusion Incubator, go to the Social Inclusion Incubator tab at **www.rops.krakow.pl**.
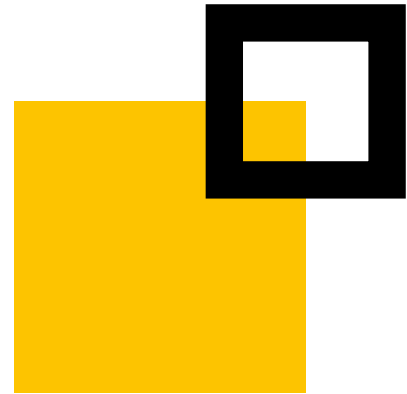
Chapter 2

What are the ideas developed under the SII umbrella?

The Incubator focuses its activities on social inclusion, which is a multidimensional concept. During the recruitment period, we were approached by originators who wanted to design solutions for many different environments that struggle with barriers in their daily social life. They presented ideas dedicated to seniors, foreigners, people with disabilities, families with special needs, homeless people and many, many other vulnerable groups.

The form of the innovation also varied considerably: from innovative tools dedicated to working with a particular social group, online platforms and applications, to prototypes of products or social services that were designed to improve the quality of life of people at risk of social exclusion.

Once these innovations have been tested, we have discovered many examples of ready-to-use tools: workshop scenarios for young people and seniors; guides for parents of children with disabilities, worksheets, and various publications. Some of the tested products were accompanied by ready-made specifications: from modular bathrooms for poor families, prosthetic leg covers, to crayons for children with upper limb spasticity.

The military attack of the Republic of the Russian Federation on Ukraine in February 2022 proved to be an unprecedented challenge for the innovators. The focus and resources of non-governmental organizations, aid centres and counselling centres supported by the Incubators were redirected to providing help to refugees seeking safe shelter in Poland. The war also resulted in limiting access to some of the products used to develop the prototypes of innovations. The innovators were forced to introduce changes to the originally designed solutions. The innovators extended the target beneficiaries of their innovations to address the needs of the refugees. For example, additional language versions of the designed tools were prepared.

The Incubator also collected ideas that responded to the global challenges and trends, such as climate change and the need to come up with new environmentally friendly economic solutions and social services.

There was also a strong digital and technological trend in the incubated and tested innovations. Many innovators have proposed innovative uses of digital solutions in the designed social services, products and social inclusion tools, such as a digital language translator for refugees from Afghanistan, or a multi-disciplinary dictionary of specialized terms for deaf people, which operates as a mobile application featuring suggestions for special signs to translate specialized terms into Polish Sign Language.

The social innovations tested at the Incubator also responded to the needs of a changing society and the dissemination of products of culture and science among various social beneficiaries. For example, works of fiction were created for children and young people with intellectual disabilities in the ETR (Easy to Read) language. This is of particular importance as ETR had so far been designed to help create documents and pieces of information rather than works of fiction.

The innovations we have dealt with not only contribute to the social inclusion of social groups with special needs and excluded groups, but also create new services, products and goods that are important for the well-being of society as a whole.

Innovators grouped in the Social Inclusion Incubator have developed:

12
IT solutions

11
physical products

4
games and one work of fiction

12
technical and engineering solutions

18
work models and service models

The solutions were tested by almost 500 testers, and the final versions of the solutions were analysed by 230 social consultants.

Chapter 3

How and when does a social change occur?

The evaluation of innovations to verify their outcomes is an essential stage of incubating the innovations.

How and when does a social change occur?

The idea for a social innovation often originates from observations of the world around or own personal experience. A change occurs when there is a commitment and willingness to support a certain idea or community, which translates into a specific idea and action. The benefits that a change is expected to bring are the driving forces of innovations.

The process of creating social innovations can be approached using Anthony Giddens's structuration theory. According to Giddens, a change is a continuous process that arises from the actions of "change agents" – people who, by changing their actions and patterns of behaviour, lead to changes in their environment. As a result, the change in the immediate environment forces change on a larger scale (this is the so-called 'ripple effect' in which a small change can spread out in circles).

A change in perception leads to changes in the actions of individuals, which lead to changes in the environment, which in turn change the awareness of individuals on a much larger scale.

However, a change is additionally promoted by group action – a single voice can be more easily ignored and go unnoticed. Establishing alliances, cooperation, support groups and expanding target groups may prove effective even without any institutional and formal support. This is where the Incubator steps in.

How to examine a change when evaluating social innovations?

The Incubator has designed a unique approach to evaluating incubated innovations to make sure that the analysed innovation has delivered the expected results.

What did we investigate?

The Social Inclusion Incubator used a theory-based evaluation approach in which every public benefit project was approached as a theory that necessitated empirical validation. In other words, the innovators assume that specific results will be delivered, and the planned outcomes will be achieved if some activities are carried out. This modus operandi was developed for each tested innovation and was the starting point for evaluations based on the pre-defined evaluation criteria.
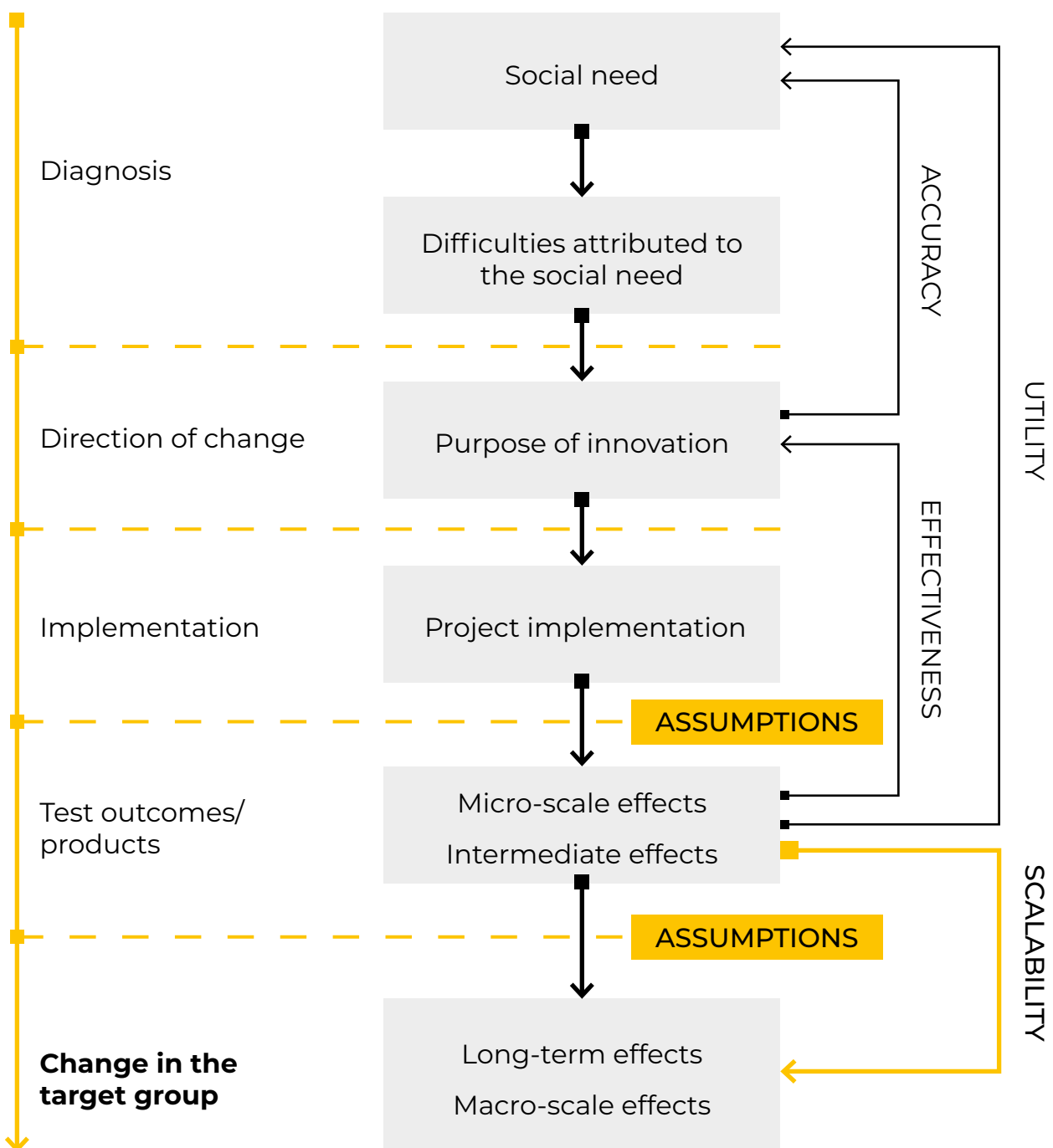
Due to the innovative nature of the projects being evaluated, we supplemented the theory-based approach with a usefulness criterion. It draws attention to the entire range of outcomes achieved by a given design, including those that were not intended by the innovators, referred to as 'unexpected outcomes'. These may be either positive changes that add value to the design, or undesirable outcomes that you should be aware of and accounted for when implementing the solution on a larger scale. Some designs fail to deliver any outcomes, which may also be the case when evaluating innovations – after all, we are testing an innovative solution, which is completely new, and it is difficult to predict the final outcome before it is fully implemented. Innovators deserve due recognition for their ingenuity, the ability to pursue their goals and their great courage, even though not everything always goes as planned.

How did we investigate?

To properly assess the results of innovations, the innovations must first be properly defined so that they can be fully understandable and properly identified. All information available about the innovation (whether planned, implemented or completed) are reviewed.

1. **We analyse** – We analyse the available data, including design documentation, testing reports, and other records produced throughout the documentation process.

2. **We consult** – We consult selected cases with experts in the given area of expertise who help us evaluate the potential value of the idea in the given field.

3. **We talk** – We conduct interviews with innovators, users, end recipients and other people in their environment – we talk to all people who can help us assess the innovations.

4. **We advise** – We consult with the originators of the ideas on an ongoing basis – we discuss, reflect, and modify the ideas if necessary.

5. **We recap** – We discuss the information collected among a wider group of experts involved in the activities of the Incubator.

Thanks to this process and the activities carried out, we are in a position to evaluate the test results and to select solutions that should become a part of social inclusion today.

Part III: Selected social innovations

The next section presents the selected 9 innovations that, as evaluated by our experts, best respond to the challenges of social inclusion and have the greatest potential to propagate and introduce social change.

Explore, touch and use them!
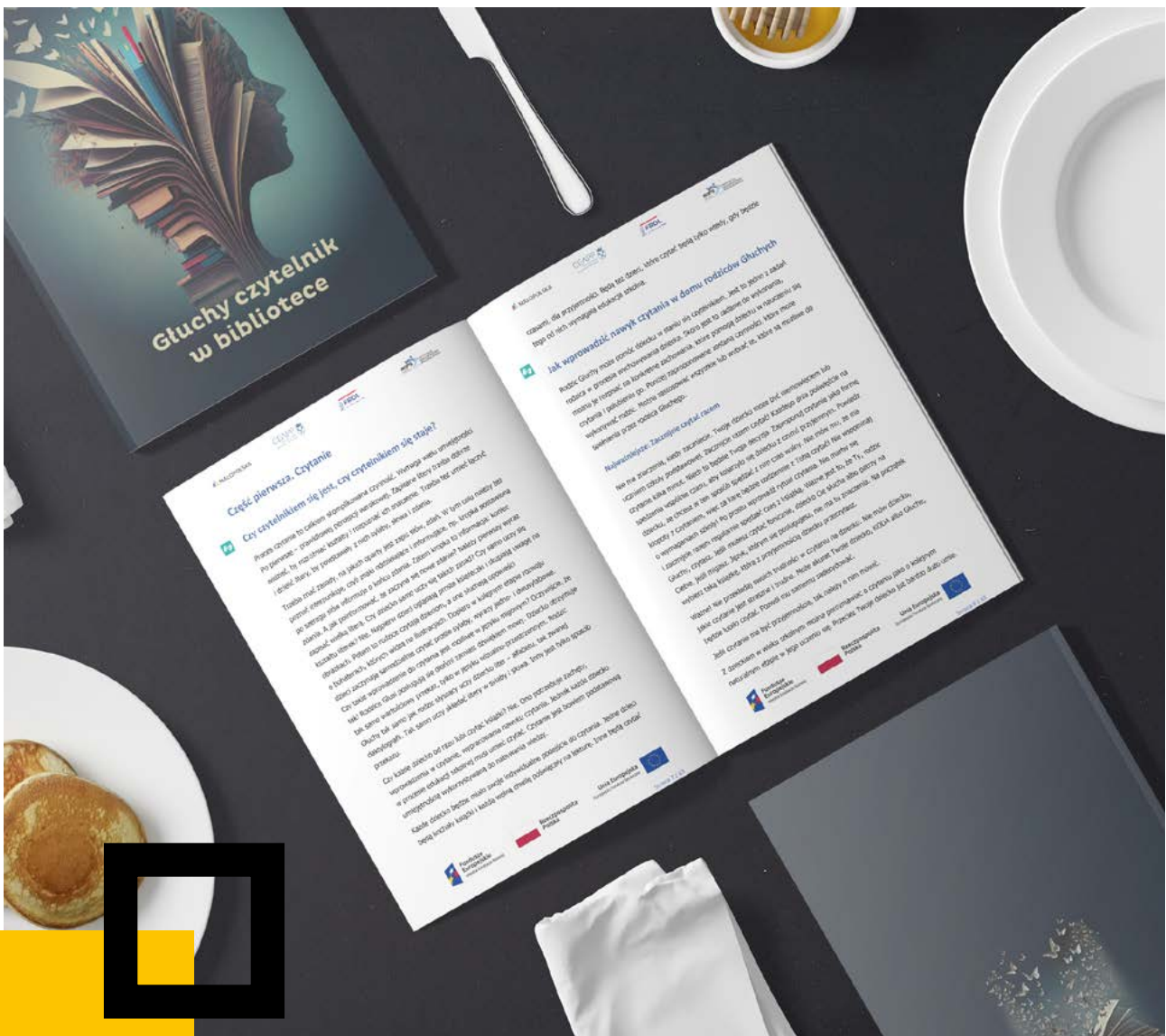
Chapter 1

Portable modular bathrooms

OK NON-PROFIT Sp. z o.o.

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

This innovation responds to the lack of access to private bathroom facilities. Residents can comfortably use a bathroom and maintain body hygiene without feeling ashamed. This innovation also reduces social isolation.

Brief description of the innovation

A portable bathroom made of modules that can be brought in and installed in rooms that are not intended for standard sanitary purposes (e.g. attics, basements, halls). This modular bathroom includes basic equipment, including a shower, washbasin, toilet, ventilation, and provides independent bathroom facilities for families that do not have a regular bathroom.

Target group

Poor and underprivileged people; individuals living in apartments without any bathroom facilities or legally unauthorized to have a permanent bathroom installed in their premises.

**Innovative element**

- assembly and installation manual
- structural design, hydraulic and electrical installation design, automation design featuring technical drawings, descriptions and a list of materials

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Municipalities, social welfare centres, district family support centres, non-governmental organizations supporting the poor and underprivileged people.
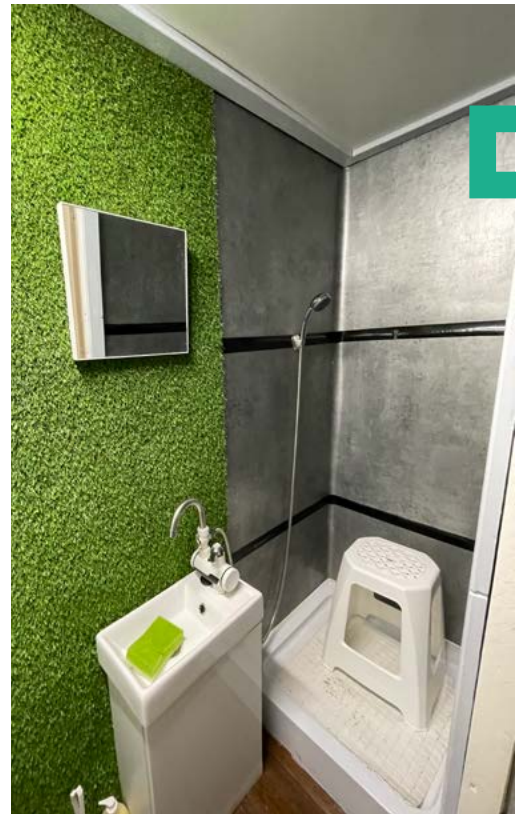
How does it work?

Modular bathrooms increase the comfort of life and mental well-being of users. They are a great option to cover the basic physiological needs of people in their current place of residence. Importantly, the operating costs (e.g. electricity and water consumption) are fixed, which is important from the point of view of the beneficiaries.

> "Researcher: How did you cope with the lack of a bathroom? Tester: Every day we used to bathe my mother in a washbowl filled with pre-heated water, and I had a bathtub under a roof and I used to bathe in it." Tester 2

About the authors

Tomasz Orliński

Computer scientist, physicist and entrepreneur. Holder of the Bell Laboratories scholarship and many awards for innovations; advocate of social economy.

Paweł Krępski

Administrativist and social innovator. Active member of councils dedicated to the development of the social economy. Co-author of award-winning innovations.

Chapter 2

Therapeutic crayons for children with upper limb spasticity

Aleksandra Satława

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

The innovation is addressed to children with hand spasticity to help them participate in artistic and creative activities while maintaining the correct therapeutic movement pattern of opening the hand and straightening the wrist.

Brief description of the innovation

A set of therapeutic crayons for children suffering from upper limb spasticity. The crayons are designed to mobilize and activate the hand, fingers, wrist and elbow, to promote extension rather than closing movements, and support active play therapy.

Target group

Children suffering from upper limb spasticity.

Innovative element

- Instruction on how to make the crayons
- Crayon design to make a casting mould
- Templates for creative activities using the crayons

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Physiotherapists, parents and guardians of children with upper limb spasticity; pre-school, early school and school teachers.

How does it work?

Crayons effectively support physiotherapy for hand spasticity, enable children to engage in creative activities, increase their sense of agency and independence, and teach the correct writing grip as part of active play therapy.

> "When a child with spasticity takes hold of this tool, they are more easily involved in all sorts of activities." Caregiver.

About the authors

Aleksandra Satława

Designer and lecturer at the Institute of Art and Design, University of the National Education Commission, Krakow. Aleksandra delivers classes on universal design and runs an accessibility lab. She collaborates with the Children's University and ZHUA – Zhengzhou University of Aeronautics in China.

She studied at the Faculty of Industrial Design of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow and at the Academy of Art and Design in Bratislava. She completed her PhD in 2022, dedicated to designs for children. She is passionate about designing solutions for children. She co-created social innovations at the Regional Centre for Social Policy in Krakow. Her designs were awarded the must have award, were shortlisted for the make me! design awards and were shown at exhibitions in Warsaw, Helsinki, Bratislava, Prague and Copenhagen.

Chapter 3

Hear–IT

Association of Non-Formal Education "Meritum"

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

The innovation addresses the lack of self-learning materials in programming and the scarcity of opportunities for deaf people to learn programming basics.

Brief description of the innovation

An online educational platform developed in Polish Sign Language for deaf people who want to pursue career in the IT sector. It contains a video dictionary explaining the main programming concepts, programming language manuals, including Python, Java, JavaScript, e-learning courses and gaming etudes, providing access to the basic programming skills in the PJM language.

Target group

Deaf people who want to pursue education in IT.

Innovative element

- Source code of the platform

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Post-secondary schools, universities, technical schools, high schools, non-governmental organizations operating in the field of professional activation of deaf people.

How does it work?

This innovation provides an introduction to the basic concepts of programming and helps acquire new skills and knowledge that might have been considered too difficult to master by the recipients. Innovation is the first step that deaf people can take to increase their prospects on the labour market.

> "I used to think that deaf people couldn't learn programming. A lot of people didn't study, but here you don't need a university degree, you don't need a baccalaureate exam or a diploma, you just need programming skills." Tester

About the authors

Bartosz Kosiński

In addition to his career as a teacher, he has been developing models for teaching digital literacy using various tools for over 15 years. Designer of educational games (digital and board games). Author of educational innovations dedicated to the development of digital literacy.

Mirosław Bohatkiewicz

Software developer; a free-time teacher of Java programming classes for young people. Graduate of Mechatronic Manufacturing at the AGH University of Science and Technology, he currently studies Game Design at the Tischner European University.

Kamila Chęcińska

Robotics instructor, digital skills trainer. A graduate of biomedical engineering studies at the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków, a PhD student at AGH. He voluntarily promotes the idea of learning programming for more equal educational opportunities.

Chapter 4

BaWita - a manipulation board serving as an adult therapeutic toy for the elderly

Maria Lorenc, Maciej Parol

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

This innovation addresses the problem of dementia syndromes in the elderly and is a valuable addition to the limited range of rehabilitation tools dedicated to adults.

Brief description of the innovation

A wooden board with seven movable elements used as a rehabilitation tool for multi-level stimulation and improvement of memory, manual functions and daily organization for people with dementia.

Target group

Adults suffering from early-stage dementia and people undergoing post-stroke memory rehabilitation.
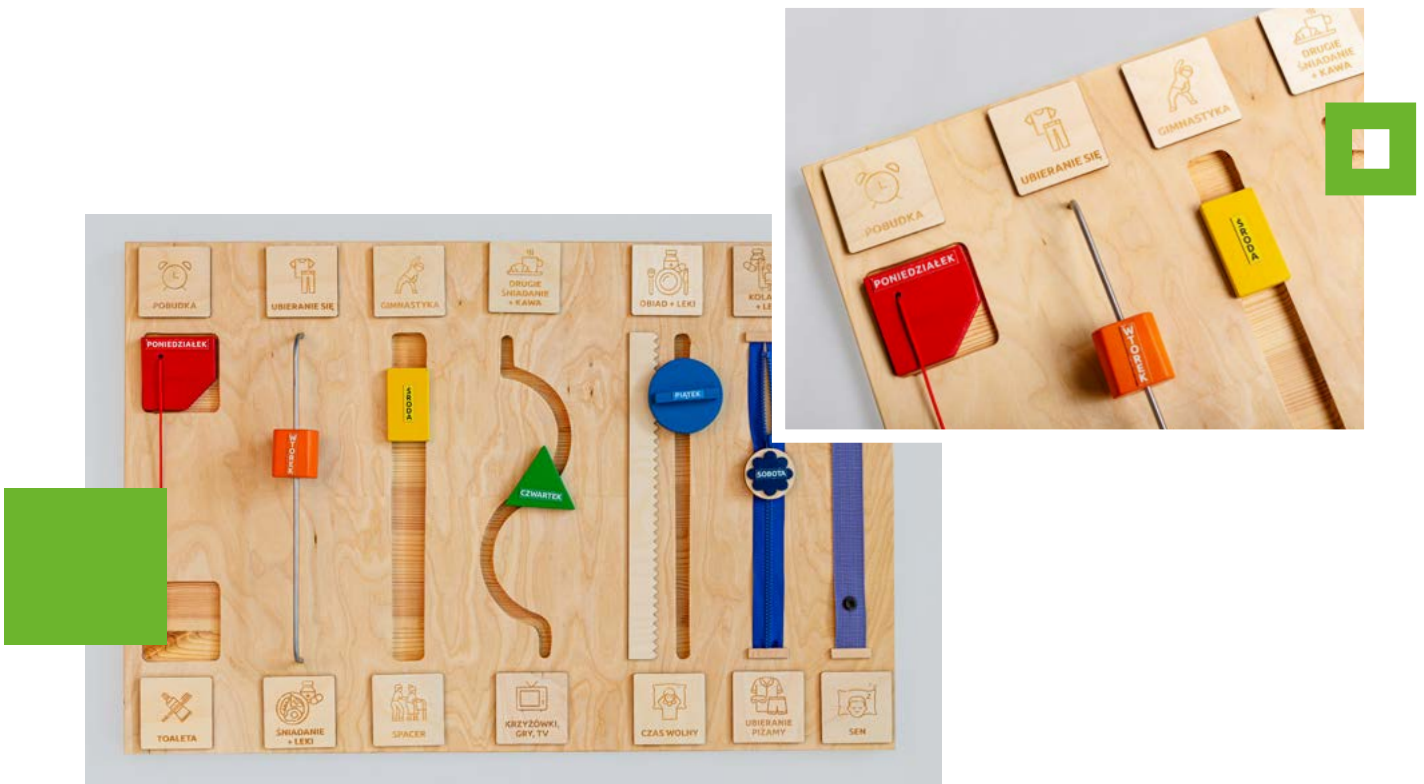
Innovative element

- A board design featuring replaceable elements
- Workshop scenarios for caregivers/physiotherapists

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Day care centres for the elderly, social welfare homes, municipal day care homes, occupational therapy workshops, individuals.

How does it work?

Effective in improving procedural memory as confirmed in innovation tests. This tool was also found to offer a number of additional benefits important for the rehabilitation of the elderly: improvement of fine motor skills, development of imagination, associations, improvement of fluency and development of verbal memory, as well as improvement of social functioning and integration.

> "I did everything well, only the snaps were difficult, but I remembered a lot. (…) When my daughter comes, when this board is still there, I will show her what I can do with it." Tester 1

About the authors

Maria Lorenc

I am a social educator by training who has always been fascinated with cultural diversity. In my professional life I specialize in workforce development and do research on the work environment. For the past several years, I have been supporting and engaging in various socially activation projects.

Maciej Parol

My passion is creating functional and natural everyday items made of wood, from toys to furniture. I also volunteered to support the elderly. When designing the board, I used the experience acquired in contacts with the students and my passion for crafting wooden objects.

koMIX
życiowy

Chapter 5

Life CoMIX – a therapeutic game for children at foster and social care centres

"Mam Dom" (I Have a Home) Foundation

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

This innovation helps children and adolescents at education & care centres and correctional institutions understand and cope with difficult emotions, and the lack of tools supporting caregivers in the emotional education of young people from these institutions.

Brief description of the innovation

A therapeutic board game dedicated to teenagers at education & care centres and correctional institutions. It addresses problems typical for this age group and the issues related to adolescence, supporting proper emotional development, teaching the adolescents to identify, manage and come to terms with their emotions.

Target group

Adolescents at education & care centres and correctional institutions.

Innovative element

- A board game design
- Instruction
- Video tutorial

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Family-based and institutional educational & care facilities, public and private schools, psychologists, educators.

How does it work?

This tool supports the emotional development of young people who can learn new skills and share their struggles in a safe environment. Moreover, the game integrates the peer group and builds a sense of trust among the players. In the game, the leaders can expand their skills and knowledge concerning specific topics addressed in the game (e.g. sexuality, assistance centres) and skills in a conducive environment (e.g. motivating socially withdrawn people, setting the boundaries, support in difficult moments).

> "I realised there are other people who experience the same problems."
> "Maybe I will be ready to tell you more about myself."
> Young people residing at an education & care centre

About the authors

The foundation represents a holistic approach to relationships in the family – it organizes training and workshops for children, teenagers, adults and whole families. It creates a variety of therapeutic tools. Every effort is made to open up the most broken or wounded hearts to make #myfamilymystrength.

Joanna Kawałko

Head of the Mam Dom (I Have a Home) Foundation, head of the Diagnostic and Therapeutic Centre, educator, social skills trainer for children and adolescents, evaluator of family ties for children and adolescents, expert in Structural Family Therapy.

Anna Zając

Special educational needs teacher, expert in Munich Functional Diagnostics, head of a School for Parents and classes dedicated to developing mindfulness and concentration in children, social skills trainer for children and adolescents.

Maria Engler

Expert in family therapy, educator, story therapist, specializes in the stimulation of children's development according to Weronika Sherborne's developing movement method, social skills trainer for children and adolescents.

Chapter 6

Patryk and Kropka – stories in ETR

Maria Tkaczyk, Maria Mazińska

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

This innovation responds to the lack of works of literature adapted to the needs and capabilities of young people with moderate and mild intellectual disability.

Brief description of the innovation

A piece of literature written in ETR (i.e. Easy To Read) language describing the adventures of two protagonists, Patryk and Kropka, who struggle with problems typically experienced by teenagers. This book is dedicated to school age young people with intellectual disabilities. It is intended to support these teenagers in building the proper patterns of social interactions and the ability to cope with difficulties typical of their age.

Target group
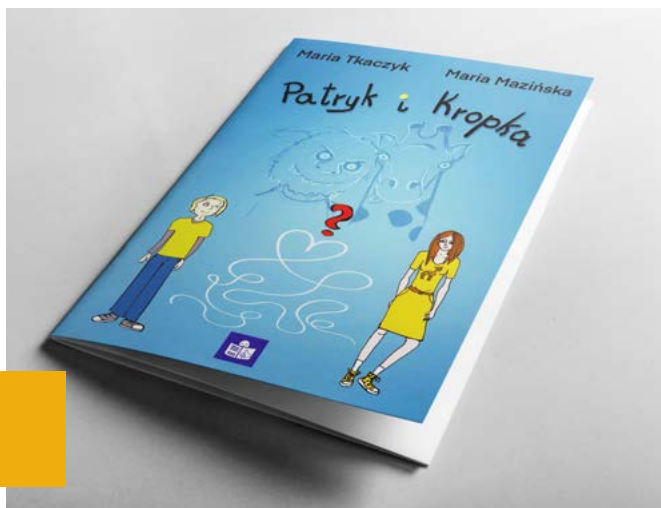
Young people with moderate intellectual disabilities.

Innovative element

■ A book project

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Support teachers, public libraries, school libraries, integrated schools, therapists for people with intellectual disabilities, occupational therapy workshops.

How does it work?

This piece of literature aptly responds to the needs of young people with intellectual disabilities as it seeks to shape many aspects of their behaviour: developing reading skills, spending free time in an engaging way, learning more about online safety, proper behaviour in public places or recognizing and understanding other people's emotions.

> "I am now an educator and I teach Polish to a class of 13 students, about half of whom can hardly read or write, or only know individual letters. They find it extremely difficult to discuss any works of literature. They are unable to read multi-volume novels, this task is way beyond their reach."
> Polish language teacher for people with mild intellectual disabilities

About the authors

Maria Tkaczyk

Teacher at a vocational training school, sociologist and psychologist. She loves books and the world in general. She engages in solutions that help other people enjoy life more. She is a researcher, inventor, activist and inspires others. She also created a scout programme for people with disabilities and the first "barrier-free" tourist guides. Originator of stories for people with intellectual disabilities; she developed the concept of 'accessible literature'.

Maria Mazińska

Author of poems and rhymes for children and teenagers. An enthusiast of magical realism in fine arts and literature. Originator and co-author of the ETR literature. She loves nature and cycling. She likes going into the wild with binoculars, and loves drawing in her free time. She has a collection of 87 pencils from around the world.

**Głuchy czytelnik
w bibliotece**

Chapter 7

A deaf reader
in a library

Dominika Wiśniewska, Anna Antos

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

This innovation responds to the need to include deaf people in the community of readers who visit libraries.

Brief description of the innovation

A publication introducing deaf people to the world of libraries to convince them that reading is important.

The publication was first written in Polish Sign Language and then translated into an easy text in Polish. It provides practical guidance on how to encourage children to read and how to use the library services.

Target group

Deaf individuals, especially parents of school-age children, including CODA, deaf and hard of hearing children.

Innovative element

A publication in PDF format features videos with each section rendered in Polish Sign Language.

The topics included in the publication:

- ■ how to encourage children to read (especially CODA)
- ■ description of the role of libraries
- ■ instructions on how to set up a library account
- ■ dictionary of definitions/concepts

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Public libraries, school libraries, integrated schools.

How does it work?

The publication makes it easier for deaf people to access libraries, explains how libraries work and motivates people with hearing impairments to use library services. It can have a real impact on the quality of life of deaf parents and their children.

> "Even parents who don't speak Polish could see the translation and sit down to read the book with their children. Parents who don't know the language can be reluctant to get anywhere near a book." Tester

About the authors

Dominika Wiśniewska, PhD

Deaf psychologist, psychotherapist, academic lecturer at the Maria Grzegorzewska University of Special Education, member of the Team of Experts for Deaf People at the Citizens' Rights Ombudsman, author of psychoeducational programmes for deaf children, workshops for parents of children with hearing impairments, and designer of social innovations.

Anna Antos

Teacher of the deaf, teacher-librarian at the Educational Centre for the Deaf in Warsaw. Author of the books "Life and scientific achievements of Prof. Włodzimierz Pietrzak" and "Maria Góralówna", as well as articles on the work of teachers for the deaf. She also works as an animal protection inspector to help animals in need.

Rodzina adopcyjna dorasta

Chapter 8

An adoptive family grows up

Agnieszka Sokołowska, Anna Leśnikowska-Jaros

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

This innovation supports adoptive parents who experience frustration and stress related to specific parenting challenges during their children's adolescence. It addresses the problem of limited access to psychological counselling for this group of recipients.

Brief description of the innovation

A self-help tool for adoptive parents whose children are entering their teens. This innovation helps parents understand the situations, behaviours and emotions of teenagers, as well as their own reactions attributable to the specific family history. The game is interactive, so its contents and exercises can be used freely at the user's discretion and convenience.

Target group

Adoptive families raising teenagers.

Innovative element

- ■ 'Areas of change' cards are intended to direct parents' attention to areas key to making a positive change and to work through specific topics that are particularly important for a given family.

- ■ 'Knowledge pill' contains information, explanations and advice on a given issue.

- ■ Observation and reflection – questions that deepen the understanding and interpretation of a particular situation.

- ■ Application – your own thoughts on what to do and examples of practical uses.
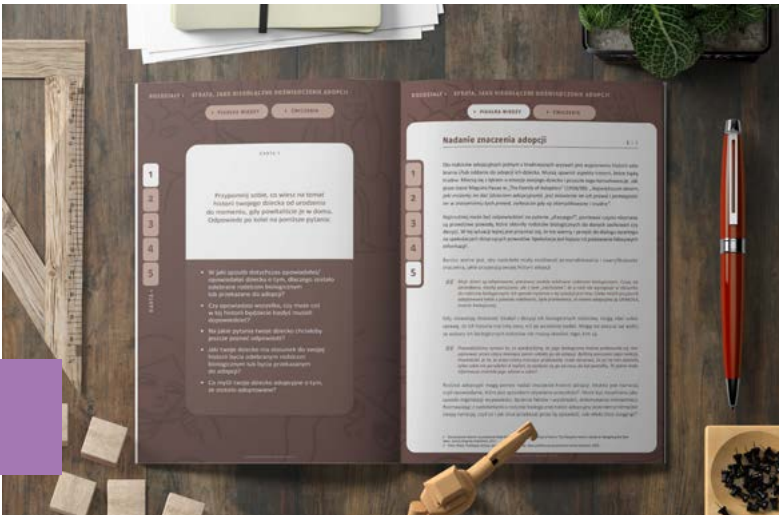
Who can benefit from this innovation?

Adoptive families whose children are entering their teens, organizations and entities supporting adoptive families, adoption centres, psychologists, therapists.

How does it work?

The tool is a valuable source of information for adoptive parents of teenagers and other people working with children and parents of adopted children. The knowledge about the difficulties, problems and emotions faced by parents and children in adoptive families, especially teenagers, makes it easier to understand the emotions they may experience.

> "…Based on my own experience, there are a lot of parents who […] asked the adoption centre for assistance and were left in the dark: "There is nothing we can do here, it's your child. Seek therapy, take care of it on your own" – the centre responded. Tester

About the authors

Anna Leśnikowska-Jaros

A psychologist with 25 years of professional experience. A graduate of psychotherapeutic training and an art therapy course at the Erickson Institute in Łódź. A certified trainer, an expert in training, learning and development. Specialized in the development of communication skills, cooperation, relationships and mental resilience.

Agnieszka Sokołowska

Originator and coordinator of innovative projects. Consultant, mentor and manager with many years of experience. Graduate of social psychology, coaching and management courses. Initiator of corporate social responsibility programmes, including individual support for children at the Children's Home in Kraków.

Chapter 9

Merkury - a self-service kiosk simulator

Association of Non-Formal Education "Meritum"

What problems does social innovation address and what problems does it solve?

This innovation responds to the low digital literacy among the elderly and their inability to use technological solutions; it seeks to address their reluctance to use self-service kiosks (e.g. parcel lockers, ATMs).

Brief description of the innovation

An online platform that provides access to a simulator of four self-service devices (ATM, parking meter, parcel locker and self-service checkout) to practice their use in a safe home-based environment. It supports the elderly in mastering these devices in public spaces and increases their digital literacy.

Target group

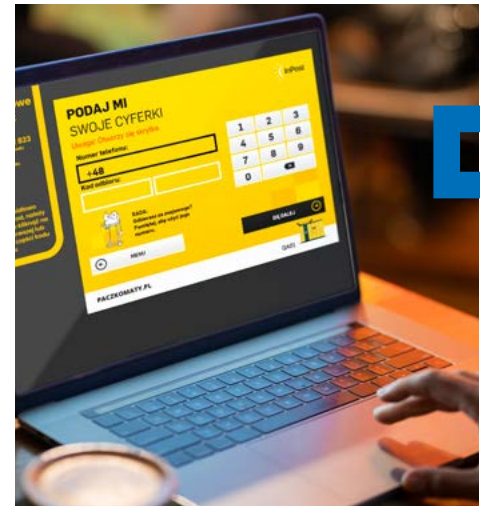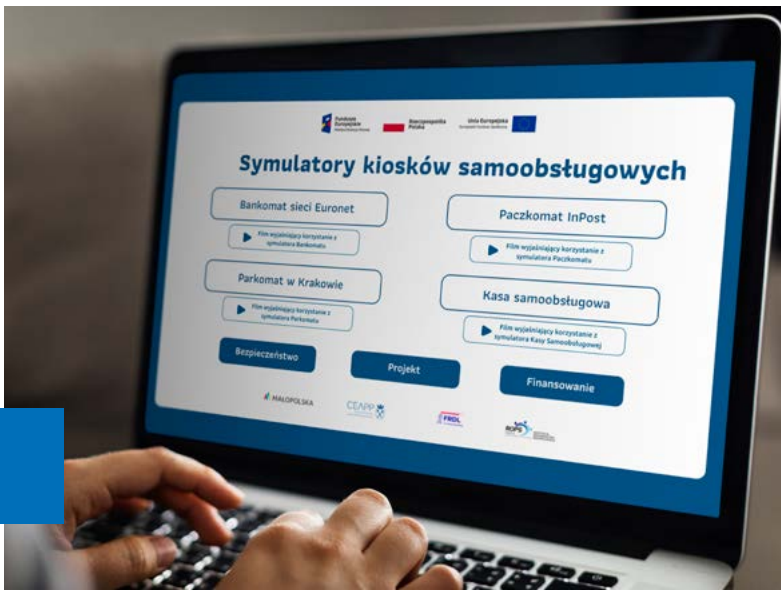Elderly who are afraid and uncertain when using self-service devices.

Innovative element

■ Source code of the platform

Who can benefit from this innovation?

Non-governmental organizations supporting activity of seniors, day care homes, senior clubs.

How does it work?

The tool teaches seniors to better adapt to new electronic devices used in the public space. It teaches them how to operate the devices and reduce their fear of using self-service kiosks in everyday life.

> "Unfortunately, the problem is still widespread. It would seem that ATMs and parcel lockers have been in use for many years now and young people are embracing them without the slightest difficulty. Seniors are still reluctant to master new skills, they are afraid ATMs will gobble up their card and can be oversensitive to new technological developments. Until they get to know these devices, they are unwilling to use them unassisted."
> Trainer of digital literary conducting classes for seniors

About the authors

Bartosz Kosiński

In addition to his career as a teacher, he has been developing models for teaching digital literacy using various tools for over 15 years. Designer of educational games (digital and board games). Author of educational innovations dedicated to the development of digital literacy.

Mirosław Bohatkiewicz

Software developer; a free-time teacher of Java programming classes for young people. Graduate of Mechatronic Manufacturing at the AGH University of Science and Technology, he currently studies Game Design at the Tischner European University.

Part IV: Innovations of the Social Inclusion Incubator

This section presents all ready-made solutions – the innovations that increase the social inclusion of very diversified social groups.

To learn more, refer to the innovation models, go to the Social Inclusion Incubator tab at **www.rops.krakow.pl.**

Solutions to support deaf and blind people

1. Hear IT
    Author: Association of Non-Formal Education "Meritum"

2. Application available for the deaf
    Author: Institute for Deaf People

3. Multi-disciplinary dictionary of specialist PL-Polish Sign Language terms
    Author: Institute for Deaf People

4. A deaf reader in the library – a guide in the Polish sign language
    Authors: Dominika Wiśniewska, Anna Antos

5. Czytamoda
    Author: Arete Foundation

6. Blind and visually impaired people as Polish language teachers
    Author: Jobian Poland Sp. z o.o.

Solutions supporting people with physical disabilities

1. Beauty templates
    Author: Agnieszka Wyrwał

2. ChlapPro
    Author: Klaudia Kaniewska

3. BiustSpinka
    Author: Karpatia Sp. z o.o.

4. Cloudleg
    Author: Bartłomiej Stroiński

5. Puzzle' s Ramp
    Author: Knowledge Sp. z o.o.
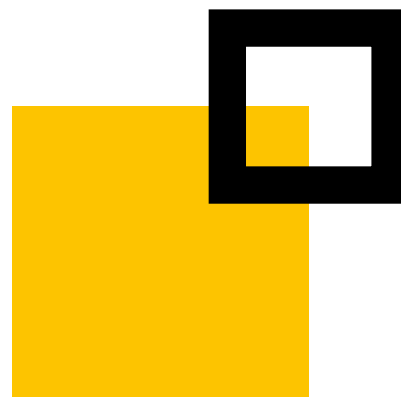
6. Dostępna Szermierka
Author: Fundacja Centrum Inicjatyw Sportowych / Sports Initiatives Centre Foundation

7. Fencing wheelchair
Author: Fundacja Centrum Inicjatyw Sportowych / Sports Initiatives Centre Foundation

8. Light-weight active wheelchair
Author: Fundacja Centrum Inicjatyw Sportowych / Sports Initiatives Centre Foundation

9. EV wheelchair module
Author: Volodymyr Atamanchuk Ivan Atamanchuk

Solutions supporting the elderly and sick persons

1. Mercury
Author: Association of Non-Formal Education "Meritum"

2. Elderly consumer ombudsman for e-commerce
Author: Aquila Association

3. QR codes to help the elderly
Author: Internationaler Bund Polska Foundation

4. BaWita – a manipulation board as an adult therapeutic toy for seniors
Authors: Maria Lorenc, Maciej Parol

5. Intelligent medicine organizer
Authors: Krzysztof Lingo, Wojciech Sójka

6. Virtual Memory Chambers
Author: Stowarzyszenie Czas Przestrzeń Tożsamość / Time Space Identity Association

7. A memory lane – an audiovisual system for recalling memories....
Author: Fundacja Jesień na Letniej / Autumn in the Summer Street Foundation

8. AJKUM signposts
Author: Fundacja Ajkum im. Anny i Józefa Kumorek / Anna and Józef Kumorek Ajkum Foundation

9. Marina pai
Author: CRSG P

10. MOBILE THERAPEUTIC AID
Author: Proszowice Municipality - Municipal Social Welfare Centre in Proszowice

11. Market Table
Author: Dębica Municipality

Solutions supporting children and young people

1. AR and VR mix for motor coordination
    Author: Stowarzyszenie Edukacja Praktyczna TKK / TKK Practical Education Association

2. Therapeutic crayons for children suffering from upper limb spasticity
    Author: Aleksandra Satława

3. Brzuszek zostaje w przedszkolu/Brzuszkolu [The Belly stays in the Kindergarten]
    Author: Justyna Laskowska

4. mPatyk
    Authors: Dawid Górny, Dariusz Drezno

5. Life CoMIX – a therapeutic game for children at educational & care centres
    Author: "Mam Dom" (I Have a Home) Foundation

6. Patyk i Kropka (Stick and Dot) – short stories easy to read and understand for young people with intellectual disabilities
    Authors: Maria Tkaczyk, Maria Mazińska

7. Bez presji z depresji / No pressure from depression
    Author: Ewa Gordziej-Niewczyk

8. MarimBaza!
    Author: Mikołaj Wielecki

Solutions supporting neurodivergent people

1. A guide for people with ASD "My needs – where and how to meet them?"
    Author: ASDreamer Foundation

2. Mobile teaching and sensory aid for pupils/students with ASD
    Author: ASDreamer Foundation

Solutions supporting people with intellectual disabilities

1. Pełna wokanda / Full Agenda
    Authors: Sylwia Ciszewska, Marta Wiśniewska - Żygo

2. NIEwypaleni / NOT-burntout
    Author: Bartosz Józefowicz

3. OSA I ECO PUZZLE
    Author: "Silentio" Foundation for people with ASD and their families

4. ETR consultant as a new measure to promote professional activation
    Author: "Rainbow" Association of Parents and Friends of People with the Down Syndrome in Krakow

Solutions supporting families

1. It's not the end of the world – it's the beginning of the world
   Author: Fundacja Początek Świata / The Beginning of the World Foundation

2. Attentive siblings
   Author: Fundacja Początek Świata / The Beginning of the World Foundation

3. RODZINA ADOPCYJNA DORASTA / MATURING ADOPTIVE FAMILY - A support
   model for adoptive parents raising children in their teens
   Authors: Agnieszka Sokołowska, Anna Leśnikowska-Jaros

4. Our common, family world – I explore, feel and react
   Author: Pro Psyche Association

5. Dialogue across cultures – a model of cross-border mediation in the event of
   a threat of parental kidnapping
   Author: Małgorzata Chachaj

6. Family occupational therapy workshop
   Author: Agnieszka Wrońska- Ryś

Solutions supporting refugees

1. My helpful Virtual World
   Author: Stowarzyszenie Edukacja Praktyczna TKK / TKK Practical Education
   Association

2. Information portal dedicated to Afghans staying in Poland
   Author: Human Doc Foundation

3. Dialog – an application facilitating communication dedicated to Afghans
   staying in Poland
   Author: Human Doc Foundation

4. Health care in Poland - In_Health
   Author: Justyna Laskowska

5. Understand my culture, understand me
   Author: Stowarzyszenie Czas Przestrzeń Tożsamość / Time Space Identity
   Association

6. Bajkala – a lamp for cultural inclusion of the Chechen children
   Authors: Maria Lorenc, Maciej Parol
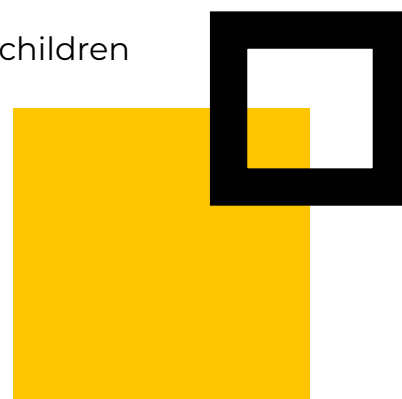
Solutions supporting the poor, homeless and unemployed

1. Portable, modular bathrooms for the poor
   Author: OK Non-Profit

2. The path of homeless people
   Author: MOPS Stalowa Wola

3. Precedens Pracy – Incidental Work Agency
   Author: Pestka Foundation

4. "Path of the Phoenix" programme for the homeless people
   Author: Stowarzyszenie Ku Dobrej Nadziei / Good Hope Association

5. Mobile Job Exchange
   Author: GOPS Charsznica

6. Oddawacze
   Authors: Konrad Szczukiewicz, Miłosz Peć
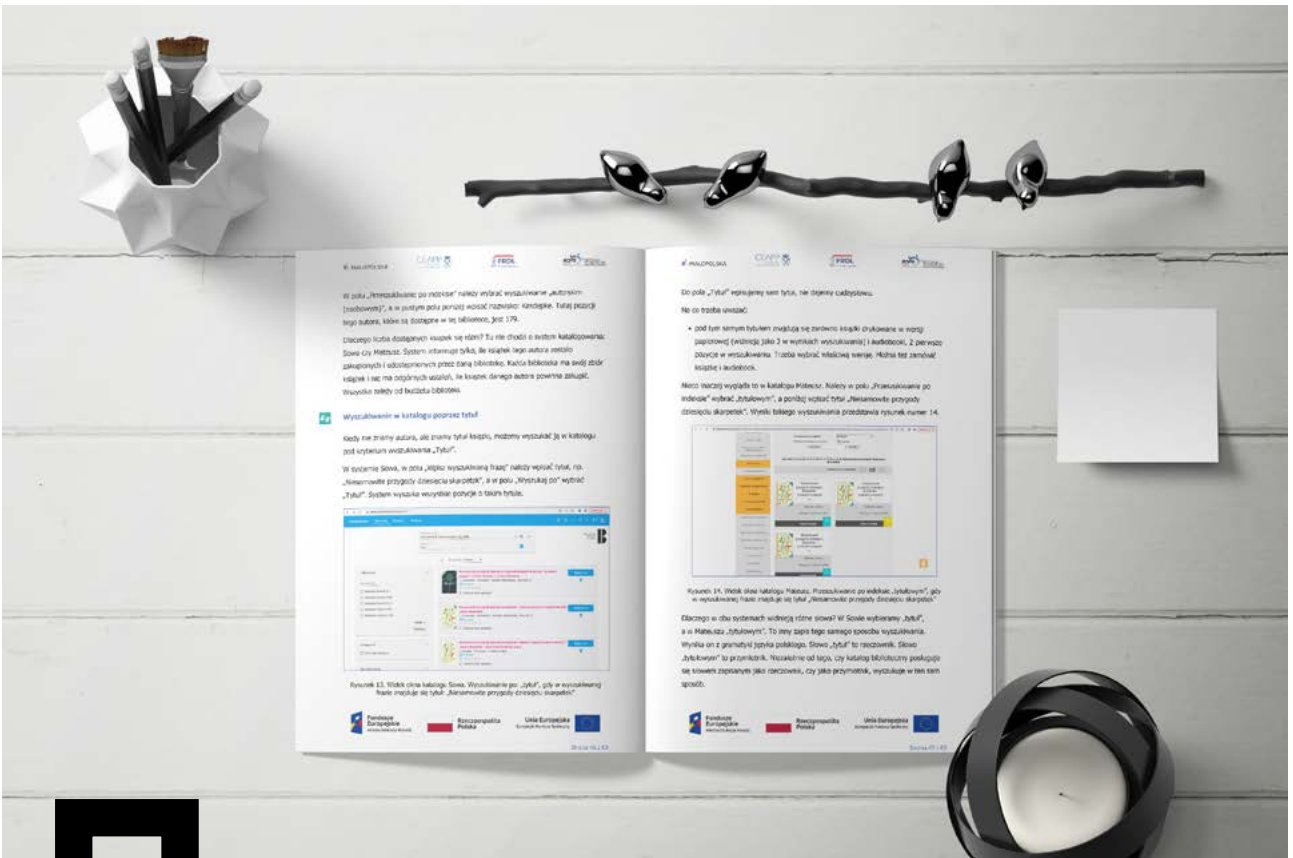
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Consultant, FRDL

Agnieszka Zańczak

Consultant, FRDL

Our library

To learn more about our previous experience with incubating social innovations, please go to the Social Innovation tab at: **www.rops.krakow.pl.**

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