

2 Inclusive eGovernment

partners, providing training, and building a renovation centre for disabled workers. To date 23 Senegalese schools have been fully equipped, with an ultimate target of 1,500.

Supporting employability: 'Slivers of Time' (United Kingdom)

'Slivers of Time'²⁸ is a service which supports disadvantaged people in gaining employment. It brings employers with two to three hours of work together with people who are looking for work through a website and mobile phones. The project is particularly helpful to disadvantaged groups that might be able to work only for short and irregular periods of time. The first Slivers of Time marketplace was piloted in the London Borough of Newham in December 2005 using £500,000 of government funding, and is now in 2007 being rolled out over the whole of the United Kingdom by different local authorities.

Challenges and barriers

The main challenge is to create an effective and inexpensive online marketplace to match individuals who need to work odd hours around other commitments in their life (e.g. lone parents, carers, those restricted by illness, students, retirees, starting their own enterprise, and part-time workers) with organisations which need a pool of top-up workers at irregular times (e.g. commercial service providers, caterers, retailers, manufacturers, leisure industry, and local authorities). Background research has shown that 13.7 million people in the UK could work in this way at some point each year. The main barriers have been embedded notions held both by citizens and employers that full-time, or at least regular part-time, work was the desirable norm, as well as the difficulties of activating people who have the potential to work but who individually have many other responsibilities or difficulties to overcome. These challenges have been addressed through welfare-to-work and related policies, but also through small-scale but high impact initiatives using ICT such as 'Slivers of Time'.

Achievements and impacts

A recent survey revealed that 68% of the potential target groups wish to try this way of working, and that, with just 5% take up, the tax payer would save £400 million a year by creating new work, not displacing existing roles. People on incapacity benefit and income support can take on paid work for a certain number of hours each week without affecting their benefits, and Slivers of Time is a useful tool to encourage people back to work. Individual case studies show that it is also a system useful for individuals like immigrants and ethnic groups, whose

²⁸<http://www.sliversoftime.com>; <http://www.sliversoftime.info>.

²⁹<http://www.epractice.eu/cases/1004>; <http://www.kep.gov.gr>

mother tongue is not English, to gain experience in the UK job market.

For employees, the initiative has reduced much of the bureaucracy and costs associated with traditional methods of recruiting temporary staff. East Thames Housing Group, one of the main buyers in Newham, has made 329 bookings totalling 2,280 hours, and is continuing to use the service beyond its initial six month trial. It has saved over £10,000 on recruitment costs (compared to agency fees) in that time. For local authorities the initiative aligns with the UK Sustainable Communities Strategy by bringing work and spreading skills and opportunities widely in the community. For employees it offers flexibility, helps develop experience and moves workers into the mainstream jobs market by enabling them to gain useful work experience and building a CV. Overall, therefore, 'Slivers of Time' has shown its potential to tackle worklessness and increase the efficiency of the job market.

Good practice lessons

The main lesson from 'Slivers of Time' is that it is important to identify a real need arising from the common interests of different stakeholders, in this case employees wanting small amounts of work, employers wanting small amounts of work to be done, and the government wanting to save money. It shows the successful application of existing, off-the-shelf ICT to that need, so that it is not necessary to develop new technology but rather to apply existing technology in an innovative way. All this results in a win-win and sustainable business model involving numerous stakeholders but requiring only limited start up investment before delivering medium term benefits and financial savings. It also demonstrates the importance of bottom up initiatives which are tried and tested on a small scale and then rolled out and scaled up on a wider and eventually national scale.

Supporting social integration: Multi-channel Citizen Service Centres (Greece)

The Citizen Service Centre (CSC) initiative²⁹ is a national advanced multi-channel system of delivering public services to the citizens and businesses, regardless of their access to ICT, digital capabilities, social orientation or locality. The CSCs offer a number of public services by means of the Internet and telephone, as well through over 1,000 one-stop-shop offices. Citizens or businesses without access to the Internet can still engage with the administration via a clerk (intermediary), who use the electronic services on their behalf.

Challenges and barriers

The main challenges faced by the CSC initiative were the low Greek ICT penetration rates together with a