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**Riga City Society Integration Programme  
for 2012–2017**

**Riga 2012**

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## **List of Abbreviations Used in the Document**

ECSD – Education, Culture and Sports Department of the Riga City Council

EISRC – Education and Information Centre of Riga City

ESM – Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

EU – the European Union

HED – Housing and Environment Department of the Riga City Council

LLA – State Agency „The Latvian Language Agency”

NGO – non-governmental organization

OCMA – Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

PD – Property Department of the Riga City Council

PRD – Public Relations Division of the Riga City Council

RCC – Riga City Council

RCC institutions – structural units and subordinate institutions of Riga City Council

RCL – Riga Central Library

RSS – Riga Social Service

SCDS – Marketing and Public Opinion Research Centre “Socially Correlative Data Systems” Ltd.

SRI – social rehabilitation institutions for adults

TD – Traffic Department of the Riga City Council

VRC – Visitors’ Reception Centre of the Riga City Council

WD – Welfare Department of the Riga City Council

## Introduction

Society integration issues have been topical in Europe for a number of decades already, and since the 1990s numerous discussions about these issues have taken place also in Latvia. Taking into consideration both geopolitical changes and the fact that the mobility of people has increased, adaptation to the new situation is topical for many countries.

In 2001 the state programme “Society Integration in Latvia” was elaborated, over the last decade society integration programs have been prepared in several municipalities, taking into consideration the situation of these municipalities in the area of society integration. However, since the coming into force of the programme “Society Integration in Latvia” new priorities at international level have been advanced, directed at respecting the human rights standards, prohibition of discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities, protection of rights of minorities, fostering inter-cultural dialogue and integration of newcomers.

Until 2010 separate activities aimed at uniting society have taken place in different areas of work of Riga municipality, but society integration issues haven't been targeted as the a line of actions within the municipal policy. In order to implement targeted society integration policy in Riga and to strengthen inhabitants' sense of belonging to their city, consistent and targeted coordination process of society integration policy at Riga City municipality level should be ensured. Thus, the situation in Riga City municipality would be taken into consideration and at the same time the demands of international organizations would be met.

Intolerant attitude towards the “different” is encountered in society, inhabitants are not informed about their rights in cases of discrimination, there are no support measures established for the inclusion of newcomers – these are just some of the issues, which would have to be addressed also in the Riga City municipality.

In order to promote society integration process – positive and tolerant relations among different social and ethnic groups, measures for educating society should be implemented, especially civic education measures, and this work should start at institutions of education. At the same time common educational, development and creative activities should be organised, involving different society groups, thus emphasizing that **society integration is a dynamic, society uniting two-way process of mutual understanding among inhabitants**, in which all members of society participate as equal partners and have been ensured possibilities of constructive collaboration, inter-cultural contacts are encouraged and equality promoted. This process includes all spheres of life – economic, social, cultural, civic and political and is ongoing. The diversity of society – cooperation between different ethnic, religious, social, age and other groups – is being emphasized as richness, not as a threat.

The **objective** of society integration in Riga is to promote formation of a united society, in which values of a democratic state are respected and a long-lasting sense of belonging to Riga is developed, thus securing high level of participation and co-operation among members of society.

Society integration programme and plan of action of the City of Riga is based upon the following fundamental principles: **participation, co-operation, belonging, unity**.

In view of the objectives put forward in the Long-Term Development Strategy of the City of Riga till 2025, priorities set in the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia till 2030, activities in the Plan of Action of National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines for Years 2012-2018, as well as documents in the field of integration of the

European Union and the Council of Europe, Riga City Society Integration Programme for years 2012-2017 contains **directions for the development of society integration policy**:

- promotion of accessibility of educational, cultural, sports and leisure facilities;
- promotion of social inclusion;
- promotion of participation and information availability in the municipality.

**New integration policy development directions**, which have to be included in the agenda of municipality, are proposed:

- fostering inter-cultural dialogue;
- promoting tolerance;
- combatting discrimination;
- promoting integration of newcomers.

In order to promote the development of society integration process in the municipality, inter-institutional cooperation on the level of the Riga City council must be established, non-governmental organizations, which actively work in the field of society integration, must be involved, and cooperation between municipalities of Latvia and other states for the experience sharing should be promoted. In addition, training for those municipality employees, who work with the representatives of different social groups, is necessary.

The model of co-operation between municipal institutions, non-governmental organizations and inhabitants has to be orientated towards regular, long-term work. In-depth research of the possibilities to involve non-governmental organizations in the process of society integration by creating municipality support system for this purpose should be conducted, thus facilitating the development of strong civil society.

For several years already activities and events have been organised and held at the level of the Riga City municipality aimed at promoting society integration in education, culture, sports and other areas of work; however, as the results of studies show, more attention should be paid to targeted planning and coordination of the integration process directly at the Riga City municipality level, by elaborating policy planning document in the area of society integration and including directions of development of society integration policy included in this document in the policy planning and implementation at the structural units of the Riga City Council.

Integration program of the City of Riga includes functions falling within the competence of a local government, according to the law "On Local Governments"; this programme does not comprise those issues, which are within the competence of ministries, other institutions of public administration or other local governments.

## General Profile of Society Integration Area

### Normative and institutional basis

#### National documents

National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines for years 2012-2018 and Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia till 2030 define aspects of society integration on the national level.

The first policy planning document in the field of society integration on the national level was the **State Programme “Society Integration in Latvia”**, elaborated in 2001, which proposed the following lines of action: civic participation and political integration; social and regional integration of society; education, language and culture. The programme defined the objective to form democratic, civil society united by common values. Society integration embraces processes that take place in political, legal, social, educational, cultural and other areas of life. Social integration, alongside political integration, plays a very important role.

While updating the State Programme “Society Integration in Latvia”, on 11 October 2011 a new policy planning document in the field of society integration was passed – **National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines for years 2012 – 2018**. This document defines that integration of society means inclusion into society of all people living in Latvia, regardless of their ethnic affiliation and self-identification. Society integration encourages civic participation, which is directed towards democratic and rational solution of society problems, strengthening of mutual cooperation and loyalty of individuals. Society integration also has the task to include immigrants into society, offering motivating measures and opportunities for acquire common principles of a united society.

The **Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia till 2030** defines the following objectives:

- in 2030 Latvia will be a prosperous country of active and responsible citizens. Everyone will be feeling secure and belonging to Latvia, everyone will be able to reach their aims. The strength of a nation will be based upon inherited, known and newly created cultural and spiritual values, richness of the Latvian language and knowledge of other languages. It will unite society in creating new, diverse and unique values in economics, science and culture, which will be appraised, known and honoured also outside of Latvia;
- Riga will be a significant cultural, tourist and business centre in Europe. Partnership of cities and countryside will foster high quality of life throughout the territory of Latvia.

Strategic principles: creativity, tolerance<sup>1</sup>, co-operation and participation are emphasized in this document and successful development of Latvia will depend on fulfilment of these principles.

The first priority of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia till 2030 is preservation, interaction and enrichment of cultural space, and its objectives are to preserve and develop cultural capital of Latvia and encourage sense of belonging to the cultural space of Latvia, developing competitive national identity based on society’s creativity and forming high quality cultural environment in Latvia<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Principle of tolerance includes openness and respect towards different cultures and lifestyles. Tolerance expects reduction of all kinds of social exclusion and discrimination, including inequality due to income, age and gender in the labour market, ethnic prejudices and linguistic institutional barriers.

<sup>2</sup> One of the possible solutions for reaching the priority targets is development of the civic nation – the political nation, which includes all of inhabitants of Latvia, who have a sense of belonging to cultural space of Latvia and recognize it as their own. Preservation of the Latvian language and usage of the potential of language variety is a development resource for the country.

The second priority of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia till 2030 is long term investment in human resources and its objectives are to preserve basic value of the human resources of Latvia and raise labour productivity, reaching the average EU level, to develop skills contributing to creativity, flexibility and participation in the labour market, as well as to encourage social inclusion, reduce risks of poverty, promote formation of socially and economically stable middle class in the society<sup>3</sup>.

Society integration issues on the level of the Riga City municipality are included in the **Long-Term Development Strategy of Riga City till 2025**. The strategy is built upon interlinking of people's wishes, where the important factors are: possibility to gain income, support oneself and one's family, possibility to live in a comfortable, safe and healthy environment, possibility to study, develop, self-realisation, and sense of belonging. According to this strategy the mission of Riga is: Riga – the city of opportunities for everyone. It is a possibility for every inhabitant and visitor of the city regardless of his/her national, social or religious affiliation to realize oneself, embody one's ideas, which do not infringe upon the interests of society. There are three pillars at the foundation of development of the city: economy, urban environment and society with the local inhabitant – Rigan – at the centre of this interaction.

Social inclusion and accessibility issues are included also in **Social Services and Social Assistance System Development Strategy of Riga City for 2008-2013**.

The strategy of society integration is elaborated taking into consideration **all the aforementioned documents and** the autonomous functions prescribed by Section 15 of the law "On Local Governments":

- to provide for the education of inhabitants;
- to maintain culture and facilitate the preservation of traditional cultural values and the development of creative folk activity;
- to ensure social assistance for residents (social care).

### **Institutions in Latvia**

For several years there have been institutions in the country directly responsible for solving society integration issues. The Society Integration Fund was established in 2001. The Secretariat of Special Assignments Minister for Society Integration worked from 2002 till 2008, the functions of which in the result of reorganization were divided between several state institutions: in 2009 primarily they were taken over by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, later by the Ministry of Justice, but since the beginning of 2011 these functions have come within the competence of Ministry of Culture. Other institutions of public administration have the responsibility for integration issues in Latvia within the scope of their functions.

Local governments play important role in the promotion of the process of society integration. Taking into consideration peculiarities and needs of each municipality, within the last ten years several local governments have elaborated society integration programmes. The first society integration programme at municipal level was worked out in Ventspils in 2000<sup>4</sup>. In 2002 – 2004 with the support of Society Integration Fund<sup>5</sup> society integration programs were

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<sup>3</sup> One of the possible solutions for achieving the aim is ensuring accessibility of labour market and reduction of discrimination, because discrimination decreases the work and income safety of separate groups. In order to use Latvia's human capital to full extent, all kinds of discrimination in the labour market – on the basis of ethnicity, gender (both women and men) and age, as well as discrimination of people with functional disorders has to be reduced. In order to reach this objective support has to be provided to companies and NGOs, which implement discrimination prevention measures and society should be informed about social diversity, using formal and informal education programmes.

<sup>4</sup> "The Role of Municipalities in Society Integration Process", Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2004, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> State Budget Programmes 2002–2011,

[http://sif.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=section&id=13&doc=1&Itemid=166&lang=lv](http://sif.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=13&doc=1&Itemid=166&lang=lv) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

elaborated by several municipalities. Six municipal society integration programmes are still in force<sup>6</sup>. Numerous municipalities are elaborating local development programmes, which are going to include society integration issues.

### **International documents and institutions**

On the level of the European Union society integration policy is directed towards integration of third-country nationals<sup>7</sup>. Each person, who has a citizenship of a Member State, is a citizen of the European Union<sup>8</sup>. Stateless persons are considered as third-country nationals<sup>9</sup>. The European Union implements a common immigration policy aimed at ensuring, at all stages, efficient management of migration flow, fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States, and the prevention of, and enhanced measures to combat, illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings<sup>10</sup>.

The term *immigrant* does not exist in legal acts of Latvia; therefore, there are several interpretations of this term in Latvia. The term *foreigner* is defined in the Immigration Law – a person who is neither a citizen of Latvia, nor a non-citizen of Latvia. There are other groups of inhabitants defined in legal acts of Latvia, which are connected with immigration – a citizen of the European Union<sup>11</sup>, an asylum seeker<sup>12</sup>, a third-country national or a stateless person,<sup>13</sup> and a repatriant.

All inhabitants of Latvia need integration measures – both those members of society, who have lived in Latvia for a long time, and the recent newcomers to Latvia. The newcomers from the third countries and the European Union countries encounter different problems connected with their legal status, conditions of their stay and reason of arrival, as well as shared problems, such as the lack of knowledge of the official language and insufficiency of support measures.

Immigrant integration policy is being developed on international level, defining the basic immigrant integration principles and the rights and the duties of the inhabitants of the European Union and newcomers. For example, the Board of Justice and Home Affairs of the European Commission on 19.11.2004 adopted guidelines<sup>14</sup> establishing common basic principles of **third-country nationals' integration policy in the European Union**<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Society Integration Programme of Balvi City for years 2009–2013; Daugavpils City Development Programme “My Castle Daugavpils” for years 2008–2014; Society Integration Plan of Jekabpils for years 2009–2012; Society Integration Programme of Jelgava City for years 2008–2013; Society Integration Programme for Encouragement of Civil Society Development in Preiļi Area for years 2009–2015; Society Integration Programme of Riebiņi area for years 2009–2014.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Chapter 1, Section 1, Para 14.<sup>1</sup> of the Immigration Law, third country is any country, except the European Union, European Economic Area and Swiss Confederation.

<sup>8</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the first part of Article 20; accessible at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>.

<sup>9</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the second part of Article 67; accessible at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>.

<sup>10</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the first part of Article 79; accessible at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>.

<sup>11</sup> Immigration Law, 20.11.2002.; Ziņotājs, No. 24, (with amendments) accessible on: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68522>.

<sup>12</sup> Asylum Law, 15.06.2009.; Ziņotājs, No. 15, accessible on: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=194029>.

<sup>13</sup> Asylum Law, 15.06.2009.; Ziņotājs, No. 15, accessible: in the same place; Law on the Status of a Long-term Resident of the European Community in the Republic of Latvia, 22.06.2006., Ziņotājs, No 15, accessible on: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=139372>.

<sup>14</sup> It is emphasized in the document that integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States. The following components of integration are foregrounded: employment; basic knowledge of the local language, history and institutions; education; non-discrimination; promotion of intercultural dialogue; frequent interaction between immigrants and Member States citizens; participation in democratic processes and in the formulation of integration policies and measures.

<sup>15</sup> Communication COM(2005)389 from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “A Common Agenda for Integration –

This document determines that society integration takes place on local level as a part of everyday life, in which each member of society has his or her own role<sup>16</sup>.

The **European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals**,<sup>17</sup> adopted in June 2011, emphasizes three key areas of integration: integration through participation, more action at local level and involvement of countries of origin.

The role of municipalities was also discussed at the **European Ministerial Conference on Integration** in 2008, stressing that local authorities often have primary responsibility for dealing with the intercultural challenges<sup>18</sup>.

Elaboration and implementation of immigration policy at the level of the European Union falls within the competence of governments of the Member States (immigration services, police and other state institutions). Whereas providing the support and integration of the immigrants, which includes language courses, access to education, solving the housing issues and providing other support measures, mainly fall within the competence of municipalities.

The role of municipalities in society integration processes is emphasized also on the level of the Council of Europe. **European Charter of Local Self-Government** emphasizes that “the local authorities are one of the main foundations of any democratic regime ” and “the existence of local authorities with real responsibilities can provide an administration, which is both effective and close to the citizen”.

**Vienna Declaration** (1993) determines that the creation of a tolerant and prosperous Europe does not depend only on co-operation between States. It also requires transfrontier co-operation between local and regional authorities<sup>19</sup>.

Principles of integration<sup>20</sup> are also emphasized in the **Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue**<sup>21</sup>.

In 2006 the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the **city of Stuttgart** and Eurofound established a **European Network of Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants** – **CLIP**, in which approximately 30 city municipalities are engaged. The objective of the organization is to support social and economic integration of immigrants<sup>22</sup>.

Since 1986 a co-operation network of big cities of Europe **EUROCITIES**<sup>23</sup> exists, involving more than 140 member cities from 30 European countries. Riga joined the network

Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union”, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0389:FIN:LV:PDF> (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>16</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/doc1\\_988\\_125093084.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/doc1_988_125093084.pdf) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>17</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/110720/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v10.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/110720/1_EN_ACT_part1_v10.pdf) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>18</sup> Draft conclusions which reproduce the text of the Declaration approved by the Ministers at the European Ministerial Conference on Integration (Vichy, 3 and 4 November 2008). <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st15/st15251.en08.pdf> (14 lp.) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>19</sup> <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=621771&Site=COE> (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>20</sup> Term “integration” (social integration, inclusion) is understood as a two-sided process and as the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life. It encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies. It requires the protection of the weak, as well as the right to differ, to create and to innovate. Effective integration policies are needed to allow immigrants to participate fully in the life of the host country. Immigrants should, as everybody else, abide by the laws and respect the basic values of the European societies and their cultural heritage. Strategies for integration must necessary cover all areas of society, and include social, political and cultural aspects. They should respect immigrants’ dignity and distinct identity and to take them into account when elaborating policies.

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Publication\\_WhitePaper\\_ID\\_en.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Publication_WhitePaper_ID_en.asp#TopOfPage) (p. 11) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/clipabout.htm> (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>23</sup> EUROCITIES distinguishes three main aspects connected with immigration and integration at city level: integration of newcomers (immigrants and asylum seekers - who obtain permission to settle), the situation concerning immigrants and asylum seekers, who are refused permission, including the undocumented; and the

in 2002. EUROCITIES network was established with the aim to develop co-operation among the cities in the areas of economics, social, environment, transport, culture, education and information, encouraging the protection of interests of the cities in the EU and forming a vision about sustainable future. The Social Forum of the Working Group on Migration and Integration of the EUROCITIES network examines the issues of migration and integration processes in EUROCITIES member cities.

In 2010 representatives of 16 big cities of Europe signed the **Integrating Cities Charter**. This charter renews and activates the determination of the cities to focus upon integration of immigrants and encourages a well-coordinated migration in diverse European cities, as well as promotes implementation of the EU's common integration principles at the local level<sup>24</sup>. Riga joined this Charter in March 2012, and currently it has been signed by 27 cities.

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position of established ethnic minorities. It is considered that policies directed towards any of these population categories affect the other groups and society in general.

<sup>24</sup> In accordance with the Charter on Integrating Cities “integration is a two-way process, built on positive engagement by both newcomers and established residents. The process takes in all spheres of life: economic, social, cultural, civic and political, and continues a long time after arrival. Learning and speaking the official language of the city is crucial to this process and essential to interaction.”

## The Analysis of the City of Riga Situation in the Area of Society Integration

### The general profile of the inhabitants of Riga

The socially demographic indicators of the inhabitants of Riga reveal a vast and diverse spectrum. According to the data from the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs there were 699 203 inhabitants living in Riga<sup>25</sup> as on 01.01.2012. 452 604 of them are of working age, 91 583 of them are children below the age of 15, whereas 155 016 of people are post-employment age<sup>26</sup>. The largest ethnic groups in Riga are: Latvians – 296 719; Russians – 282 082; Belarusians – 25 278; Ukrainians – 26 577; Poles – 13 630; Jews – 7 246; representatives of other ethnic groups – 25 278 people<sup>27</sup>. There are 508 157 citizens of Latvia registered in Riga, 159 999 non-citizens of Latvia, 30 912 other inhabitants<sup>28</sup>. More detailed information on the number of people in municipalities according to their national affiliation is not being aggregated.

In January 2012 there were 44 328 foreigners registered in Latvia (including citizens of the EU) with permanent residence permits and 15 957 with temporary residence permits<sup>29</sup>. Major part of the third-country nationals are from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The biggest number of the newcomers comes to Latvia with the purpose of family unification, work, as well as study<sup>30</sup>.

According to the data provided by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs there have been 702 asylum seekers since 1998, 38 persons were granted the refugee status, whereas 63 persons – the alternative status<sup>31</sup>.

There are 15 362 non-governmental organizations registered in Latvia, i.e. associations and foundations, 7016 of them are registered in Riga<sup>32</sup>. There are 213 religious organizations and institutions registered in Riga<sup>33</sup>.

In 2010 Riga City Council initiated research “Society Integration in Riga” in order to find out the attitude of the population towards different aspects of society integration process in Riga and to find out the views of the experts on what should be done to improve the situation. Within the framework of the research 800 inhabitants of Riga were polled. 41% of the respondents were ethnic Latvians, 43.3% – Russians and 14.4% – representatives of other ethnic groups. As the results of the research<sup>34</sup> show, the sense of belonging to Riga is very high – 80% of respondents feel the sense of belonging to Riga, feeling “very close” or “close”

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<sup>25</sup> Data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs as of 01.01.2012.  
[http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISPV\\_Pasvaldibas\\_iedziotovotaju\\_skaitis.pdf](http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISPV_Pasvaldibas_iedziotovotaju_skaitis.pdf) (viewed on 22.03.2012.).

<sup>26</sup> Data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs as of 01.01.2012.  
[http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISDG\\_Pasvaldibas\\_darbaspeja.pdf](http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISDG_Pasvaldibas_darbaspeja.pdf) (viewed on 22.03.2012.).

<sup>27</sup> Data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs as of 01.01.2012.  
[http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISPN\\_Pasvaldibas\\_pec\\_TTB.pdf](http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISPN_Pasvaldibas_pec_TTB.pdf) (viewed on 22.03.2012.).

<sup>28</sup> Data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs as of 01.01.2012.  
[http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISPP\\_Pasvaldibas\\_pec\\_VPD.pdf](http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/dokuments/2012/ISPP_Pasvaldibas_pec_VPD.pdf) (viewed on 22.03.2012.).

<sup>29</sup> Data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs as of 01.01.2012.  
<http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/uzturesanas.html> (viewed on 22.03.2012.).

<sup>30</sup> „Immigrants in Latvia: Opportunities and Conditions for Inclusion”, Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2009, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs as of 01.01.2010.  
<http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/patveruma.html> (viewed on 22.03.2012.).

<sup>32</sup> Lursoft data: <http://www.lursoft.lv/lursoft-statistika/Sabiedrisko-organizaciju-biedribu-un-nodibinajumu-sadalijums-pa-Latvijas-novadiem-pilsetam&id=50> (viewed on 24.01.2012.).

<sup>33</sup> According to the data from the Ministry of Justice as on 01.01.2012.

<sup>34</sup> Research “Society Integration in Riga”, experts and public opinion poll, TNS Latvia, 2010, available on: [http://riga.lv/LV/Channels/Riga\\_today/petijums-sabiedribas-integracija.htm](http://riga.lv/LV/Channels/Riga_today/petijums-sabiedribas-integracija.htm) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

(Rigans of both Latvian and Russian ethnic groups)<sup>35</sup>. Sense of belonging to Riga and Latvia is higher than sense of belonging to the closest neighbourhood<sup>36</sup>. Rigans feel belonging to Riga predominantly because they have grown up/spent their childhood here, live and work, have started family, acquired education in Riga. According to the opinion of the experts, belonging to Riga is closely connected with economic security – the more economically secure and socially active the person is, the closer is the link he/she feels with the city<sup>37</sup>.

The results of the polling done by the research centre SCDS in May 2010 show that in total 53% of inhabitants of Latvia consider life in Riga to be better than in other places in Latvia, moreover, 25% think that it is considerably better, but 28% admit it to be slightly better. Only 18% of inhabitants hold a different opinion – that life in Riga is worse than in other places in Latvia, but 22% consider life in Riga to be the same as elsewhere<sup>38</sup>.

Research about satisfaction of inhabitants of Riga with their municipality conducted in 2010<sup>39</sup> shows that the highest approval was given to the cultural sphere, emphasizing cultural events in Riga and opportunities for children and adults to participate in hobby groups and organizations as well as municipal artistic groups. The most critical evaluation was given to the index of “Well-provided society”, comprising questions about availability of jobs in municipality. The quality of social assistance and social service was also evaluated critically. The low evaluation of both these areas is closely linked with the situation of crisis in the country.

People living in Riga trust media (69%) and church (67%) the most. Trust in the agencies of the Riga City Council is also quite high, for example, 65% of the respondents trust Riga Social Services, 60% – Riga Municipal Police, and the Riga City Council as such is trusted by 57% of the respondents<sup>40</sup>.

The experts consider that people know their rights better than their responsibilities towards the state and municipality (for example, participation in local election) and the level of participation of the inhabitants of Riga is considered by the experts to be low<sup>41</sup>.

Involvement of Rigans into non-governmental organizations can be described as insufficient. As the experts point out, there are opportunities to get involved into the work of NGOs, but the inhabitants do not make sufficient use of this possibility, many Rigans have no information about the existence of a particular NGO<sup>42</sup>. 86% of polled inhabitants of Riga have not got involved in any NGO, including voluntary work, during the last three years<sup>43</sup>. The main reasons for not getting involved in the NGO could be the following: disbelief in their ability to influence processes and to change anything, lack of time, financial reasons (inhabitants work a lot in order to earn their living) and passivity of people<sup>44</sup>.

The volunteer movement in Riga is at its development stage. The main obstacles for development of voluntary work are insufficient legal regulation, lack of employees, who would coordinate voluntary work, and lack of experience and knowledge about working with volunteers and organising voluntary work<sup>45</sup>.

Two thirds of the respondents think that society integration has to be managed and controlled by the governmental authorities, whereas 31% of respondents think that society integration happens on its own and is does not need special management<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), p. 21

<sup>36</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), p. 22

<sup>37</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (experts poll), pp. 31-32

<sup>38</sup> Polling done by Marketing and Public Opinion Research Centre in 2010

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.sus.lv/files/RD\\_PAD\\_ataskaite\\_05\\_0610.pdf](http://www.sus.lv/files/RD_PAD_ataskaite_05_0610.pdf) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>40</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), p. 41

<sup>41</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (experts poll), pp. 17-18

<sup>42</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (experts poll), pp. 25-26

<sup>43</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), p. 37

<sup>44</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (experts poll), pp. 26-27

<sup>45</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (experts poll), pp. 28-30

<sup>46</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), p. 50

The Latvian language is used by Rigans mainly to communicate with governmental or municipal institutions (72% of respondents); half of the respondents speak Latvian on the street/in the shop, at work Latvian is used by 53% of employees. 39% speak mostly Latvian at home, whereas 38% use it to communicate with friends and acquaintances. Half of the inhabitants of Riga (49%), who do not speak Latvian fluently, admit that they would use an opportunity to improve their knowledge of Latvian, if Riga City municipality would offer such opportunity (for example, free courses), 29% of the respondents would rather use such opportunity. Half of the inhabitants of Riga (52%) evaluate their ability to speak Latvian as good, approximately one fourth of the respondents (23%) admits that with insignificant difficulties they can communicate about any subject. 21% of the respondents “speak a little, can talk only about simple subjects”, but only 5% of Rigans “can not speak any or almost any Latvian”<sup>47</sup>.

When polling the Rigans, social distance was investigated too. It was stated that it is evaluated as the smallest one on the basis of ethnicity, namely between the ethnic Latvians and Russians, as well as between the representatives of other ethnic groups. In terms of the social distance, other aspects are more important, for instance, the most negative attitude is towards drug addicts, people from sects or some unregistered religious organizations, alcoholics and homosexuals<sup>48</sup>.

Most of the respondents (87%) do not plan to move away from Riga to another place in Latvia or abroad in the nearest year’s time<sup>49</sup>. Experts, on their part, forecast that the growth of economy will be the reason for the influx of immigrants in Riga, and therefore it is necessary to create the environment, which would foster the inclusion of immigrants into society<sup>50</sup>.

### **Accomplishments at the level of municipality in the area of society integration**

Until 2010 society integration issues were not viewed as part of the policy development of the Riga City Council. Separate activities fostering the society integration process took place in the areas of education, culture and welfare.

Since the beginning of 2010 the ECSD has the following functions: to promote society integration process, inter alia, to ensure the participation of NGOs in the planning and implementation processes in the areas within the competence of the ECSD. The ECSD Division of Projects and Society Integration was established in 2010 and is responsible for coordination and promotion of society integration process on the level of the City of Riga.

A research “Society Integration in Riga” was carried out in Riga for the first time from May till August 2010, with the objective to reveal problems of society integration in Riga.

The following tasks were put forward as the result of the research:

- development of institutional mechanism for coordination of society integration process;
- situation analysis of society integration issues in Riga;
- provision of support to non-governmental and religious organizations working with society integration issues;
- promotion of participation of inhabitants in different areas of municipality work.

In order to implement the tasks set, new measures and activities were introduced and planned.

A new way of cooperation with inhabitants was initiated in 2010 – a forum “Riga Resounds – People Speak!” This activity was held also in 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), pp. 51-56

<sup>48</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), p. 46

<sup>49</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (public opinion poll), p. 57

<sup>50</sup> Research “Society integration in Riga” (experts poll), pp. 67-68

The forum of 2010 identified the possible models of co-operation between the inhabitants, NGOs and the municipality, analysed problems that hinder successful cooperation, and looked for solutions ensuring future collaboration in the alignment of urban environment and discussing and adopting decisions of the local government, in organising public events and improving the social environment. The participants agreed on the need of regular dialogue between the municipality and inhabitants.

Most significant agreements reached by the forum of 2011 are:

- Riga needs an NGO house;
- the concept of a Citizen Day has to be developed;
- inhabitants have to take part in solving particular problems as active promoters of the process and not as passive observers;
- different activities have to be expanded to neighbourhoods outside the centre of Riga.

At the end of 2010 a Consultative Council at the RCC on the Issues of Society Integration was founded in order to ensure participation of non-governmental sector in planning, implementation and evaluation of Riga City society integration policy. The Consultative Council consists of representatives from different structural units of the Riga City Council, the RCC deputies and representatives of NGOs.

Activities fostering processes of social cohesion are carried out regularly. Since 2010 annual project competitions for non-governmental and religious organizations are launched, and thus far 85 projects<sup>51</sup> have been supported. Society integration project competition was launched in 2011 for the subordinate institutions of the ECSD and the WD, in which schools, pre-schools, culture centres, children and youth centres, day centres and other subordinate institutions participated. Thus far 21 projects have been supported in the competition. The projects are implemented in the area of promotion of civic participation and development of mutual co-operation and social integration, promotion of tolerance and fight against discrimination.

In order to encourage extension of the Latvian language environment and promote more successful inclusion of people into city life, project competition “Organization of Courses to Acquire the Latvian Language for the inhabitants of Riga” was launched in 2011. As a result more than 500 Rigans have had the opportunity to learn Latvian. In 2012 at least 2000 Rigans will have an opportunity to improve their knowledge of Latvian.

In order to promote voluntary work and to involve pupils from Riga comprehensive schools in this movement, in 2011 a competition for promoting pupils’ voluntary work and a project competition for the RCC institutions to implement voluntary work programmes was launched.

Riga City municipality not only supports the society integration activities, but also actively participates in the implementation of such activities and projects. Thus, for example, within the framework of the program “Europe for Citizens” in 2011 and in 2012 a project “Training of Voluntary Work Skills – Europe’s Voluntary Work School” was carried out. During the project voluntary work experience from Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and Spain was examined and e-learning courses for volunteers and voluntary work organizers were prepared.

European Union’s project “Friendship. “Awareness on Migration, development and human rights through local partnerships”” is implemented from 2011 till 2013. Several activities in this project are organized in co-operation with municipalities and non-governmental organizations from Italy, Spain, Brazil and Latvia, which work in the area of society integration, education and awareness raising about such interlinked aspects as migration, human rights and development.

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<sup>51</sup> Till 22.03.2012.

## Opportunities for Participation in Municipality

### Participation in the processes of taking and implementing decisions, involvement of NGOs and inhabitants in the work of municipality

Various means of participation in the processes of the Riga City Council work are available for the inhabitants of Riga. .

The meetings of the Riga City Council and its committees are open and anyone can participate in them.

Public discussions about territorial spatial planning, detailed planning and public discussions about construction intentions in Riga are held regularly; information about public discussions is published in the press, on the municipal portal of Riga and on the home page of RC Development Department, at the Visitors' Reception Centre of Riga City Building Construction Directorate, in the executive boards of Riga City, in the branches of RCL, press releases are being sent to approximately 50 mass media each week. Procedure of public participation in social and public discussions is prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation<sup>52</sup>.

In order to increase the level of participation of the inhabitants in addressing issues connected with city development, the project of Riga Neighbourhoods continued in 2010, and in co-operation with the British Council *Future City Game* was organized to seek creative solutions to collaboration possibilities of people living in the municipality and its neighbourhoods for development of city environment<sup>53</sup>. An Internet homepage [www.apkaimes.lv](http://www.apkaimes.lv) was created. The aim of the idea of neighbourhood is to create preconditions for implementation of balanced socially economical and spatial policy within the administrative territory of the City of Riga.

There are sections "Society participation" and "Cooperation with NGO" on the Municipal portal of Riga. In 2010 technologically new Internet website [www.eriga.lv](http://www.eriga.lv) was launched, providing Riga City Council e-services. There is information published in the section "Society participation" of this website, which contains information to all visitors, who are interested in electronic participation in public discussions in the municipal portal.

Several advisory boards and working groups operate in the Riga City Council and one of their objectives is to encourage the inhabitants to participate in solving the topical problems: **Advisory Board of NGOs for Persons with Disability** in Riga City Council has been active since its foundation by resolution of RCC in 2007<sup>54</sup>;

- **Christian Congregations Board of Riga City** was founded in 2009<sup>55</sup>;
- **Advisory Board of Riga's Youth Organizations** was founded in 2009<sup>56</sup>;

<sup>52</sup> Regulations No. 970 issued by the Cabinet of Ministers "Society Participation Procedure in the Process of Development Planning", Regulations No. 1148 issued by the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations regarding Territorial Local Government Spatial Planning" un Regulations No. 331 issued by the Cabinet of Ministers "Procedures for Public Discussion in an Intended Construction"(available in Latvian only).

<sup>53</sup> Riga City municipality public report, 2010, [http://www.riga.lv/NR/rdonlyres/B6734810-A3C0-40BF-866C-D0205CBA0079/34690/RD\\_Parskats\\_2010.pdf](http://www.riga.lv/NR/rdonlyres/B6734810-A3C0-40BF-866C-D0205CBA0079/34690/RD_Parskats_2010.pdf) page 13.lp. (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>54</sup> Its objective is to encourage persons with disability for civic participation in decision-making processes, as well as collaboration among the NGOs representing persons with disability and the Riga City municipality. There are representatives from RCC, WD and 20 NGOs representing person's disability. The Council is headed by the chairman of Social Issues Committee of the RCC.

<sup>55</sup> Work groups collaborated with religious congregations in solving different topical problems on the basis of Christian values and the experience of religious congregations in their work with society.

<sup>56</sup> It was founded with the aim to ensure youth participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Riga City youth policy. There are representatives of 7 youth organizations on its board, who are chosen in a competition and confirmed for 2 years by Riga youth NGOs.

- Advisory Board on Society Integration Issues of Riga City Council was founded in 2010<sup>57</sup>.

Special attention is focused upon youth participation and involvement in activities taking place in the municipality. Youth organizations have an important role in creating positive participation experience and also in stimulating their competitiveness, however, according to different sources, only about 3% of young people are involved in the activities of youth organizations. Considerable number of youth organizations has limited capacity; therefore, the organizations are not able to work with young people on regular basis and work only during separate projects. At the same time, a significant part of young people is not sufficiently informed about opportunities that youth organizations and informal education can offer.

In order to simplify the work of youth organisations, youth centre “Kanieris” was opened in May 2011<sup>58</sup>. Both premises and the contents, starting from ideas till their implementation in life was all created together with the young people. Youth organizations can use the premises and other resources both for their activities and for implementation of informal education programmes, as well as for administrative needs. At the same time the centre is the place where young people, not involved in the work of an NGO, can find out about non-governmental sector, become acquainted personally with representatives of different NGOs and find the most appropriate form of participation.

In every municipal school there is a School Board consisting of delegated representatives of pupils, pupils’ parents and school employees. The competence of the School Boards includes defining the strategically significant lines of work.

Whereas pupils’ self-governments, in which delegated representatives of the pupils are engaged, influence decisions concerning pupils’ rights and responsibilities at school and also organization of educational process. ECSD supports the work of pupils’ self-governments in the education institutions subordinate to ECSD by offering its leaders more than 20 different educational events and individual counselling during the school year. In 2011 these personality development opportunities were used by 1750 young people.

The Riga Pupils’ Council, which has ECSD advisory board’s status since 2002, significantly supports working with the pupils’ self-governments. Since one of its aims is to unite youth from Riga schools, young people both from ethnic Latvian and national minority schools participate in the events organized by the Riga Pupils’ Council.

In many places parents’ boards are active; school support foundation work is also of great importance. Support foundations, which work more and more actively in securing the educative process, for example, applying for financing from the European Union funds and implementing different projects at schools, have been founded in almost half of the schools in the school year of 2011/2012.

**Project competitions** for implementation of NGO activities promoting society participation and helping to solve different problems are held annually. RCC institutions organize project competitions in fields like society integration, acquisition of the Latvian language, supporting voluntary work, activities for children and youth, children and youth camps, cultural, sports, social, health promotion and other activities<sup>59</sup>.

In order to encourage participation of the inhabitants in decision-making process and to improve the quality of municipal decisions, NGO “Civic Alliance – Latvia” and 23 other non-

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<sup>57</sup> Its aim is to provide participation of the non-governmental sector in planning, implementation and evaluation of the Riga City society integration policy. There are RCC employees, deputies and representatives of NGO on the advisory board.

<sup>58</sup> Youth centre is located in Kengarags and was founded within the framework of INTERREG IV A project “Youth Space”.

<sup>59</sup> In 2011 RCC concluded more than 600 contracts with NGOs on the implementation of different services and activities in the fields of social assistance, society integration, education, sports, culture and other fields.

governmental organizations signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Riga City Council on 24.10.2008. In this memorandum municipality resolves to ensure involvement of the inhabitants and representatives from non-governmental organizations in elaboration and implementation of documents or projects. In the beginning of 2012, while evaluating the provisions foreseen by the memorandum, municipality and non-governmental organizations came to a conclusion that its present edition does not reflect the current situation and decided that the document should be revised according to the actual situation to facilitate more successful co-operation.

**Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** At present the provisions of RCC and NGOs co-operation memorandum are only partially implemented.

**Possible solution:** Reviewing the operational principles of the memorandum and finding an optimal solution for the cooperation between the Riga City Council and NGOs.

**Problem:** Insufficient involvement of inhabitants and NGOs in the work of municipality. Inhabitants are not sufficiently informed about their responsibilities towards municipality.

**Possible solutions:** Implementation of activities aimed at promoting cooperation with non-governmental organizations, including national minority non-governmental organizations and the rest of society, fostering the provision of opinion on topical issues, involvement of inhabitants and NGOs in the work of working groups and advisory boards, organization of inhabitants' forums.

**Problem:** Comparatively low capacity of non-governmental organizations registered in Riga, insufficient cooperation among them, and lack of information on the activities of non-governmental organizations and their existence.

**Possible solutions:** Offering support in implementation of organizations' activities (projects), in promoting co-operation and building their capacity, actively informing society about the activities of non-governmental organizations in Riga.

**Problem:** Insufficient participation of youth organizations working with young people in the City of Riga due to their limited administrative capacity and resources.

**Possible solutions:** Implementation of supportive events for strengthening youth organizations, development of more youth centres like Youth Centre "Kanieris" in other parts of Riga, providing premises and resources for the youth organizations, development and implementation of mutual projects of structural funds in collaboration with RCC and youth organizations.

**Problem:** Insufficient support from the administration of some education establishments and lack of interest among pupils in participation in pupils' self-government activities.

**Possible solutions:** Encouragement of dialogue among representatives of education establishments' administration about the role of pupils' self-governments at schools; organizing trainings for the pupils involved in self-government, promotion of good self-government practice examples.

**Problem:** Insufficient knowledge of the state language as one of the obstacles for participation.

**Possible solutions:** Organizing learning of Latvian language for the inhabitants of Riga, including newcomers, and organizing activities fostering the use of the language, development of a network or Latvian language teachers-volunteers.

**Problem:** Insufficient information about possibilities of participation in municipality, including availability of information only in the state language.

**Possible solution:** Elaboration of informative materials in several languages (Latvian, English and Russian) about participation opportunities at a state and municipal level, as well as about possibilities to influence the decision-making processes.

**Problem:** One of the obstacles for political participation is the fact that a part of population lacks Latvia's citizenship.

**Possible solutions:** Creation of informative materials and organization of informative events about the process for obtaining citizenship for different target groups, providing assistance for implementing promotional activities (projects) regarding acquisition of citizenship.

### **Voluntary work in municipality**

Voluntary work is essential form of participation for people and at the same time it is a resource that can give a remarkable contribution to the development of society. Voluntary work offers a chance for people to fulfil their ideas, reveal their skills, and give support to those who need it and to improve their own quality of life. Voluntary work can offer vast opportunities of inclusion in society for groups at risk of social exclusion, improving their skills and encouraging personal development.

Voluntary work movement has only recently started to evolve in the Riga City municipality and at present is not yet widely developed. In order to involve wider part of the society and in order to be able to use the resource of voluntary work, a voluntary work support system should be developed in municipality.

A manual "Organization of Voluntary Work in Municipality", containing both theoretical materials and practical information, was prepared and published in 2011. The manual is intended for municipality employees; however, it can be useful to anyone interested in voluntary work.

A competition "Our Class Voluntarily..." for 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> form pupils from the comprehensive schools of Riga City municipality was held in 2011. In order to popularize and encourage voluntary work, pupils were asked to implement activities for the benefit of society and share their experience with others. The voluntary work done by pupils and their classmates or friends from other schools was evaluated at the competition.

Within the framework of the project carried out in 2011 and 2012 "Training in Volunteering – European School of Volunteering", in which 6 countries collaborated (Spain, Italy, Greece, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia), an e-learning platform with 23 training courses on voluntary work was created, and it is available to anyone from the project participating countries.

Since 2011 project competitions are organized for the support of voluntary work for institutions subordinated to ECSD and WD. The objective of the project competition is to give financial support to the activities in the institutions of Riga City municipality, thus encouraging active participation of the inhabitants and promoting social inclusion, as well as providing wider range of services to inhabitants in the situation of limited financing.

**Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** Insufficient development of voluntary work movement – insufficient information about volunteering, no experience in working with volunteers and in organising voluntary work.

**Possible solutions:** Awareness raising campaigns on voluntary work, such as popularizing positive examples, motivating activities for volunteers, creation of unified voluntary work organization system in institutions of RCC, support of volunteering activities in the RCC institutions and municipality, in particular, encouraging different social groups to get involved in volunteering.

**Inclusion of newcomers<sup>60</sup>**

In the contemporary world migration is a natural process, typical of both developed and of less developed countries. Considering the tendencies of immigration and experts' evaluation, an environment providing opportunity for newcomers to adapt faster and more successfully to the local society has to be created in Latvia and especially in Riga. The establishment of special integration programmes and centres, where newcomers can acquire the state language and learn about the history, structure and traditions of the particular country are practiced by many countries. The City of Riga should adopt this positive practice of establishing support system for newcomers.

Municipality has not yet focused on the inclusion of newcomers into the society; this issue was mostly tackled while implementing international projects. For example, within the framework of the European Union's project "Awareness on Migration, development and human rights through local partnerships" several educational activities were organized aimed at informing municipality employees and the broader society on the contribution of migration to the development of the state, despite of the negative attitude of the society. The negative attitude is connected with the opinion that the newcomers would take away jobs from the local people, would not learn Latvian, and would destroy local culture and traditions.

One of the most important aspects of inclusion of newcomers is the acquisition of the Latvian language. The Riga City municipality offers opportunities for learning the Latvian language, though, at present the demand exceeds the offer of such courses, therefore additional financial resources were allocated in 2012 so that more inhabitants were given opportunity to learn and improve their knowledge of the Latvian language.

NGOs should become mediators between the newcomers, the state and the municipality. They can become partners both to the state and municipal institutions, helping newcomers to integrate into society and labour market. There are only a couple of organizations in Latvia, which work with newcomers, but they do not receive regular financial support, and all the activities for newcomers are irregular and dependent upon particular projects. Minority organizations are more focused on maintaining their ethnic identity and cultural activities and less oriented towards integration activities aimed at inclusion of people of the same ethnic group, who have just arrived in Latvia.

**Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** Limited opportunities for newcomers to acquire Latvian language.

**Possible solutions:** To create opportunity to learn Latvian within the territory of Riga.

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<sup>60</sup> The term "newcomers" in this document is used to describe persons, who have arrived to live in Latvia after the restoration of independence of the Republic of Latvia.

**Problem:** Support and information activities for the inclusion of newcomers into the society of Latvia are fragmentary.

**Possible solutions:** Organization of explanatory, information and support activities for newcomers, organization of activities providing information about newcomers and cultural diversity to the population of Riga.

**Problem:** Insufficient newcomers' participation in the work of NGOs.

**Possible solutions:** Acquainting newcomers with the work of NGOs in Latvia; supporting the NGOs, which involve or work with newcomers; providing information about NGOs working with national minorities and newcomers.

## **Availability of Information within Municipality**

### **Disseminating information about the developments within the municipality**

Considering the vast target audience and the specific target groups and their information obtaining habits, information about the services provided and events organized and supported by the Riga City municipality is available to the inhabitants via different information channels, including mass media, free informative materials, advertisements, social networks, etc.

Information is available on the municipal portal of Riga [www.riga.lv](http://www.riga.lv), also on the Internet sites of responsible institutions (RCC structural units). There is an e-service platform, where inhabitants of the city can solve different questions electronically.

The Riga City municipality has Visitors' Reception Centre (VRC) with 10 visitor's reception points throughout Riga and a free informative phone line. In addition, several institutions have their own visitors' reception centres. Inhabitants can get free information about questions, which are within the competence of the Riga City municipality, in these centres; free informative materials on particular events and services are made available.

Mass media, including press, television, the Internet media, radio are also an instrument for informing inhabitants. Historically a situation with two information spaces (mass media in Latvian and Russian languages) has been established, thus the Riga City municipality works with both of these information spaces.

Big information stands, stops of the public transportation, billboards and poster poles, columns and pylons, as well as advertisement stands on bridges and overpasses are used to inform population of Riga about actions and significant activities organized by the Riga City municipality.

RCC and municipal institutions inform people also by using social networks, which have become very popular lately – user accounts are opened and profiles created for publishing the relevant information of a particular sector.

Once a year RCC organizes open-days, when Rigans can get information both about RCC work and municipal institutions and issues, which are within their competence.

#### **Key directions for action:**

**Problems:** There are groups of people, who are unable to receive information with the help of the Internet web sites.

**Possible solutions:** To offer computer literacy courses for senior inhabitants within the framework of life-long education, as well as to inform inhabitants about sites, where the Internet is available free of charge.

**Problem:** On the Internet sites of the RCC institutions information is mostly available in Latvian, thus, for those residents, who are not proficient in Latvian, it is difficult to find topical municipal information. Furthermore, not all Internet sites of institutions are available for people with special needs, for example, blind people.

**Possible solutions:** Basic information (contact information and competence spheres) on the Internet sites of RCC institutions should be available in several languages (for example, Latvian, Russian, English), the Internet sites should be adjusted for the needs of people with special needs, for example, blind people.

**Problem:** Spreading information with the help of mass media requires large financial resources, especially, if a campaign or public mass event has to be advertised; it is even more expensive because of the divided information space.

**Possible solutions:** Fostering information exchange among RCC structural units, ensuring possibility for the departments of different sectors to find out the topical information on their Internet sites or on Riga municipal portal; publishing topical information from co-operation partners (NGOs, independent producers, etc.) on the Internet sites of municipal institutions; creating and publishing of Riga City newspaper, involving population and NGO in the process of making the contents of this newspaper; developing institutions' possibility to communicate fast in social networks, ensuring feedback opportunities.

## Civic education

The information and understanding of social political processes in municipality, its services and opportunities is one of the conditions for active participation. In order to participate actively, inhabitants need to have an insight on how to influence developments within the municipality. Unfortunately, both everyday experience and results of different polls indicate that people know little about their opportunities to influence processes within the municipality, often they do not believe in their powers to influence municipal decisions, they also have no trust in power. The elements of consumer culture are comparatively strong in the society, there is an explicit standpoint on what is due from the state and municipality, yet there is poor understanding and wish to fulfil one's duties towards the state and municipality. Standpoints prevailing in the mass media and social networks justify intolerance and discrimination towards different social groups; justify tax evasion, ignoring normative acts. There is lack of empathy even when accidents happen and explicitly negative attitude towards politicians and employees of the state and municipal sector.

In order to encourage sense of belonging to the country, city and neighbourhood, as well as to inform and educate Rigans about the society cohesion issues, project competitions are organized for non-governmental organizations and the institutions of RCC, involving also the inhabitants of Riga . Within the frameworks of these projects informative and educational activities of the society about civic participation, non-discrimination and promotion of tolerance, cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue take place. The society in Latvia wants newcomers to know Latvian language, to accept the local culture and traditions, yet it does not want the state to allocate funding and help these people to acquire the necessary knowledge. Mass media have limited discussions on this subject, mainly creating inadequate visual image for the situation in Latvia.

The urban environment is constituted not only by the infrastructure and services provided by the municipality, particular activities, designs and improvements, but also by active participation of each individual and different groups, particular action and mutual attitude towards each other. Considering that civil society is the foundation and support of a democratic society, education and involvement of the inhabitants should be encouraged by providing equal opportunities and achieving the situation, in which inhabitants not only

criticize and demand particular services and benefits, but also share the responsibility about the processes taking place in municipality.

Another essential aspect of civic education is participation in the national and municipal political life, beginning with participation in the election. There is still great number of non-citizens in Latvia (also in Riga), even though the naturalization process has been on-going already for 18 years. During the recent years following Latvia's accession to the European Union, the pace of naturalization has been very slow. At the same time reproaches are heard about the fact that a large part of society is unable to participate in political processes due to the lack of citizenship.

**Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** There is intolerant attitude towards the “different” – different social and ethnic groups, including newcomers.

**Possible solution:** More extensive information and education of society about the non-discrimination and promotion of tolerance, as well as about the cultural diversity.

**Problem:** Inhabitants are poorly informed about their rights in cases of discrimination.

**Possible solutions:** Informing society about the available consultations and actions in cases of discrimination, support of the activities and projects aimed at prevention of discrimination and defending one's interests implemented by the NGOs and RCC.

**Problem:** Inhabitants are not sufficiently informed and interested in duties towards the state and municipality.

**Possible solutions:** Organization of educational activities promoting patriotism in different target groups, including young people, seniors, young parents etc., informing about the rights and responsibilities of a citizen; development of a Citizen Day concept.

## **Education**

Education is an important part in the life of society. Riga plays an important role in the education system of Latvia, because it offers everything from the preschool till acquisition of higher education and it also offers to continue with the lifelong learning. There are vast possibilities of choice on every level of education, wide range of general education programmes and a range of professions. Alongside this offer of education programmes children and young people are offered a wide range of interest related and professionally orientated education, encouraging acquisition of knowledge and skills, learning of social and ethic norms, improvement of work and cooperation skills and also development of positive personal qualities. The challenge for the pedagogues is to improve and develop abilities, talents and interests of children and young people, ensuring useful leisure time activities, strengthening health, mental and physical development and encouraging the choice of the future occupation.

Education and educational institutions are one of the key elements of society integration because they are associated both with acquiring and usage of the state language and civic education, as well as with inclusion of people with special needs into the education system and society in general and also with the lifelong learning.

The target audience of the Riga City municipal educational institutions is numerically big, at least 200 thousand people, which constitute more than 1/4 of the inhabitants of Riga (approximately 91 thousand students and, thus, at least the same number of parents, 11 thousand pedagogues and 7 thousand of other employees).

The majority of the higher educational establishments founded by the state of Latvia and also higher educational establishments founded by legal entities are located in Riga.

### **Characteristics of educational institutions**

In compliance with the competence set for local governments, there are institutions of general education (preschool educational institutions and general educational institutions; hereafter – preschools and schools), institutions of interest related education and professionally orientated educational institutions (music, art and sports schools) subordinated to the Riga City municipality.

#### **1. Preschools**

There are 153 preschool educational institutions in Riga City municipality (including 12 special preschool educational institutions), which in the school year of 2011/ 2012 were attended by 26 240<sup>61</sup> children.

In order to provide acquisition of preschool educational programme for different target groups (Latvian, national minority and children with special needs), there are 105 programmes licensed for children with Latvian as the language of instruction, 75 programmes for children, who speak other languages, and 51 programmes for children with special needs. 50 preschools in the Riga City municipality implement national minority preschool educational programme, 30 institutions have both national minority preschool educational programmes and preschool educational programmes, whereas 73 preschool educational institutions implement preschool educational programme.

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<sup>61</sup> 26 240 children attended preschool educational institutions, 840 children attended groups working at schools and in institutions of interest related education.

Alongside general preschool educational programme in institutions and schools there are 41 special preschool educational programmes. These educational institutions organize common activities and celebration of festivities for children. Communication takes place also in everyday life, for example, during walks and during lunch. The number of institutions and groups for children with special needs has grown during the recent years. In 2009 Riga Special Preschool Educational Institution No. 8 was opened, having 8 groups with 106 children, Riga Special Boarding School No. 2 with 2 groups for 10 children and Riga Special Lower Secondary School No. 3 has opened 4 groups for 32 children.

There are 4 child-care centres for preschool children, which have been opened in the institutions of interest related education. The services of these centres are available for children from the age of three and the child-care up till four hours a day is free of charge.

## **2. Schools**

There were 121 schools in the school year 2011/1012 subordinated to ECSD with 65 762 pupils and 7191 pedagogues.

The number of schools grew significantly during the years 1990 –1994, but during the recent ten years it has been shrinking. The decrease in the number of pupils and society's demand for education of good quality has influenced the school network of the Riga City municipality. Since year 2000 the total number of pupils in the city has decreased by 35%, 30 schools have been closed. Greatest decrease was observed in secondary schools in Riga, whereas the number of special schools, evening schools and boarding schools has remained practically constant.

In 61 schools of Riga City municipality children acquire educational programmes in Latvian language (henceforth – Latvian schools), in 51 schools national minority educational programmes are implemented, in which school subjects are acquired in Latvian and in the relevant minority language (henceforth – national minority schools). Linguistic separation is a legacy from the educational system existing both in the time of the first Republic of Latvia and the period of the Soviet Union.

9 schools in Riga offer both aforementioned educational programmes, mostly those are evening schools and schools implementing special educational programmes.

Division of the pupils among educational programmes which are being acquired in Latvian language and national minority educational programmes is the reflection of the ethnic structure of society in the capital of Latvia; it has remained constant during the recent years – proportionally equal. Basically pupils in minority educational programmes acquire subjects in Latvian alongside Russian, only less than 2% of pupils – in Belorussian, Polish and Ukrainian languages.

When characterizing the school network of the Riga City municipality, a particularity has to be mentioned that the school network for schools with Latvian language of instruction and national minority schools in Riga has formed differently. Division according to the levels of general education in schools with Latvian language of instruction form the following structures: primary schools (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> form), lower secondary schools (1<sup>st</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> form), secondary schools (1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> form) and gymnasiums (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> form), whereas national minority schools are divided into lower secondary schools and secondary schools. This division has appeared as the result of the policy implemented in the development of the gymnasium network, the wish of the employees and school leavers of schools with Latvian language of instruction to renew the historical status of a gymnasium and the wish of minority schools to keep the secondary education level.

## **3. Interest related education**

The basic activity forms for hobby education are interest related educational programmes implemented in different educational institutions.

In 2011 interest related education in the Riga City municipality was provided by 13 interest related educational institutions<sup>62</sup>, 11 sports educational institutions, 9 art and music schools, 121 schools, 51 preschools and other legal entities and individuals. Children and young people in the age from 3 till 25 are involved in the hobby education.

The offer of the interest related educational programmes is defined by the demand from children, young people and their parents, the offer of educational institutions, cultural heritage and traditions of the country. New programmes and lines of work are created depending on wishes and possibilities. An in-depth study of the interests of children and young people is needed to improve the network of offered programmes.

Despite of the worsening demographic situation in the country and also in Riga, the number of people involved in interest related education during the recent years has been growing. In school year 2010/2011 interest related educational programmes were acquired by – 76 300 pupils<sup>63</sup>. 28 178 of them are engaged at the interest related education institutions, 493 – at children and youth sports schools, 732 – at music and art schools, 42 224 – at schools un 4673 – in preschools. It acknowledges the importance and topicality of the interest related education.

Similarly to the general education programmes also the interest related educational programmes are being acquired in Latvian and corresponding national minority languages. Regardless of the language of instruction pupils successfully participate in common city events (contests, shows, exhibitions, competitions, concerts, etc.). Groups of national minorities participate in Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebrations and they successfully master the repertoire in Latvian.

Natural integration process takes place in the interest related education groups because pupils are brought together by common interests in a particular field independent of their gender, ethnic origin, religious or social affiliation.

The most embracing and widespread celebration for children and youth in cultural education is Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebration. During the recent years in addition to the traditional choir music and folk dances the following elements have been added: modern dance, visual and visual plastic art, theatre, project for the pupils of the special schools, as well as the concert of national minority art groups. By participating in this celebration, pupils develop a deeper understanding of Latvian cultural values, which is an integral part of society integration process<sup>64</sup>.

In general the offer of interest related educational programmes in Riga is extensive, but unevenly distributed. Various interest related educational programmes are implemented in cultural education (dances, folklore, visual, visual plastic art, theatre art), in sports education, in technical creativity (technical modelling, different forms of modelling, programming and in-depth acquisition of computer programmes), in environmental education and in other areas (languages, astronomy, journalism, etc.). Language acquisition programmes are popular: both foreign (English, German, Italian, Spanish, and other languages – 1767 pupils) and Latvian language acquisition with the help of music and art (857 pupils)<sup>65</sup>. It also encourages the inclusion of children and young people into the society by participating in activities in Latvia and implementing different projects abroad. In addition to the already existing interest related

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<sup>62</sup> 9 children and youth centres, Children and Youth Environmental Education Centre, Riga Centre of Young Technicians, Artistic Creation Centre, Technical Innovation House.

<sup>63</sup> 37% (28 178 students) in interest related education institutions; 55% (42 224) in schools; ~ 1% (732) in art and music schools; 0,6% (493) sports schools and 6% (4673) preschools.

<sup>64</sup> X Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebration took place in 2010 with more than 30 000 children and youth from all around Latvia participating in it, including children from the Latvian schools and schools, which implement national minority educational programmes, youth from special schools and children and youth with special needs. Riga was represented by 7243 participants. According to the statistical data from Sports and Youth Board of ECSD from 78 educational establishments 6 special and 11 minority educational establishments which accordingly constitute to 8% and 14% from all the participants from Riga.

<sup>65</sup> Statistical data on school year 2011/2012.

educational programmes, there is a need for programmes for children and young people targeted at acquisition of practical work skills for everyday life.

#### **4. Professional education institutions**

In Riga professional education is implemented in the following areas:

- sports – sports educational institutions founded by the municipality (sports schools) and other sports educational institutions founded by other legal entities or individuals (sports clubs);
- art and music – municipal art and music education (art and music schools) and art and music schools founded by other legal entities or individuals.

##### **4.1. Institutions of sports education**

There were 11 Riga City municipality founded sports schools orientated towards reaching high results and long-term focused training system operated in the school year 2011/2012 in Riga. 529 training groups comprised 7039 students and 243 qualified coaches were involved. The objective of the sports schools is to create sports educational environment, to organize and implement achieving of objectives set by the professional sports educational programme, namely, forming of healthy, physically, mentally and emotionally developed personality which is motivated to lead active lifestyle and is aware of the positive influence of sports in the process of personality development.

Teaching process in sports schools takes place in Latvian, as well as in other languages or bilingually. A natural integration process occurs during the trainings, because students are united by interest in particular sport, irrespective of their nationality, religious or social affiliation.

##### **4.2. Music and art schools**

5000 students are involved in 9 professional cultural education institutions and interest related educational programmes of Riga City municipality. In the music and art schools interest related education groups are established and up till 1000 pupils master music and art basics or learn to play a particular instrument, and 50 pupils participate in music educational programme for children with special needs.

The increase of number of potential applicants for music and art schools is observed. Riga City municipality music and art schools' programmes are very popular both among Rigans and among the inhabitants living in the areas around Riga, that is why there is a competition of 2 to 4 pupils (for one place) in professional educational programmes each year.

Alongside with acquisition of professional educational programme, schools implement different educational programmes: basic training classes in which children acquire basics of playing a particular music instrument and music theory; preschool music training, enrolling 3 to 6 year old children with the aim to encourage joy of playing music in every child; hobby educational programmes without the age limit.

#### **5. Lifelong learning**

Diverse lifelong educational process that ensures development of personality and competitiveness in the labour market is called lifelong learning, it also promotes social integration of the inhabitants.

Lifelong learning on the municipal level is provided by EISRC (Education and Information Services of Riga City)<sup>66</sup>. Since 2011 EISRC offers lifelong learning services not only to pedagogues, but also to other inhabitants in different areas, which are directed towards acquiring new knowledge and skills, thus encouraging their competitiveness in the labour market and lifelong learning. Mastering of and working with information technologies, creative self-expression (making jewellery, basics of floristic, photography, etc.), starting a business, project management and other courses are available to all inhabitants of Riga, including persons at risk of social exclusion – the unemployed, young mothers, retired people and others.

### **Civic education**

Civic education is one of the most important elements of educated society and foundation of state's development.

One of the main objectives of preschool is to encourage development of positive attitude of the child towards oneself, towards other people, towards environment and Latvia as a state. Children at the preschool age are open to everything new, and their self-confidence is in the development stage. This is the time when a preschool teacher starts to develop child's understanding about the state, culture, helps to start the acquisition of the state language, which ensures child's positive integration into society and inter-cultural communication.

Requirements for acquisition of school subjects' content are unified and compulsory for all general education schools in the country. The basic education state standard and school subject standards define the requirements. Civic education issues are included within the contents of different school subjects of social studies. Nevertheless, education work, educative activities and projects not directly linked with the school subjects and educational programmes with professional orientation, work of pupils and parents self-governments, school environment, microclimate, common civic culture at school, etc. are of great importance in the development of pupils' knowledge and formation of their awareness about the issues and processes important to the country and society. Pedagogues play the most important role in formation of pupil's personality.

Essential work area of civic education is enabling the sense of belonging to one's country, city, environment and unified cultural space.

Festive events in which pedagogues, children and youth participate and which are organized by the Riga City municipality are important contribution to the development of civic awareness. Pride in one's institution, school, Riga and patriotic attitude towards the state in general can be achieved also during the process of education. For example, Riga is getting ready to become the Cultural Capital of Europe in 2014. It is an event uniting population of the city. Therefore, it is considered to be as one of the activities encouraging sense of belonging to Riga, in which education institutions have to be involved. There are activities in every education institution, in which patriotism of the students can be encouraged. Role plays is one of the forms of works used within civic education at school. For example, children acquire knowledge of a life in a democratic country by getting involved in school's self-government institutions.

#### **Key directions for action:**

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<sup>66</sup> EISRC leads and organizes professional development of pedagogues from educational establishments subordinate to ECSD, Riga private schools and private preschools, methodological work of pedagogues of comprehensive schools, competitions and contests in school subjects and coordinates lifelong education process in Riga City.

**Problem:** As the results of a research on civic education and identity of pupils in Latvia indicate<sup>67</sup>, the attitude towards their country among the pupils in Latvia is comparatively negative. Pupils trust government and municipalities very little; they almost do not trust the Parliament at all. Furthermore, the results of Latvian pupils in the international civic education test were among the worst in Europe.

**Possible solutions:** To organize activities encouraging sense of belonging and positive attitude towards one's country, city and neighbourhood.

### **Promotion of inter-cultural dialogue and tolerance**

School is one of the most important stages in life of a person when child's attitude is formed and tolerance towards the "different" is encouraged, knowledge and understanding is instilled about values of their own and other cultures. Taking into consideration that there are people of different ethnic groups living in Riga, it is essential to promote the inter-cultural dialogue also at school level by organizing interactive activities, involving pupils of different ethnic groups.

The promotion of inter-cultural dialogue between national minority and schools with Latvian language of instruction mostly takes place during activities unconnected with the school subjects and during the interest related education activities. Learning the history of Latvia, the Latvian language and literature at school lessons also puts a foundation for understanding the cultural diversity of Latvia and its values.

In national minority schools children with great enthusiasm learn Latvian traditions and celebrate festivities, learn Latvian songs and dances. There are some minority schools, which very successfully participate in school shows taking place prior to the Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebrations. The most democratic of all the extracurricular activities are sports activities and contests which, although, are not directly linked with the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue, but pupils of different ethnic groups participate in them on equal conditions and rules, which creates the sense of unity among the pupils. The evidence shows that the schools with Latvian language of instruction are less open towards cultural diversity. There isn't any special cooperation established in Riga between different education institutions, including schools with Latvian language of instruction and national minority schools.

EISRC launched an educational programme "Inter-Cultural Dialogue and Value Education" in 2011. It is targeted at improvement cultural competence of pedagogues by getting acquainted with the culture as value system and emphasizing the importance of development of inter-cultural dialogue in modern society and interaction of society's system of cultural values and education field, which would help pedagogues prepare for work with young people.

#### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** There is a lack of common integrating activities, involving children and pedagogues both from educational institutions with Latvian language of instruction and national minority educational institutions both at preschool and at general education stage.

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<sup>67</sup> "Civic Education and Identity of Latvian Pupils in Europe. The first European Module Research IEA ICCS 2009 results on international civic education", Education Research Institute of the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art of the University of Latvia, 2010. Accessible at: <http://www.ppf.lu.lv/v.3/eduinf/files/2010/CIVIC.pdf> (viewed on 20.04.1012.).

**Possible solutions:** Common integrating activities for children and pedagogues from several preschools and general education institutions, thus encouraging inter-cultural communication and enabling experience sharing among pedagogues on the issues of society integration and cooperation.

**Problem:** Pedagogues, pupils and their parents lack understanding about the substance of society integration process, as well as about activities aimed at promoting inter-cultural dialogue and integration.

**Possible solutions:** To organize educational events for pedagogues and parents of the pupils, encourage pupils' participation in pupils' self-government initiatives, in informal educational activities and in implementation of schools' projects on civic education, on development of inter-cultural dialogue, on promotion of tolerance and fight against discrimination.

**Problem:** Pedagogues do not have enough possibilities for improving their professional competence in promotion of inter-cultural dialogue and tolerance in educational institutions, as well as to teaching bilingually.

**Possible solution:** Facilitate education of pedagogues and improvement of their competences, fostering ability of pedagogues to teach bilingually, to organize seminars, master classes and experience sharing activities on promotion of inter-cultural dialogue and tolerance in educational institutions.

**Problem** (identified in the research)<sup>68</sup>: A number of the pedagogues in schools with Latvian language of instruction is not ready to work with national minority children, and they consider that children of other ethnic groups should attend schools with Russian language of instruction.

**Possible solutions:** To improve the teachers' professional qualification for working with ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous class, to encourage teachers from schools with Latvian language of instruction to attend inter-cultural education courses.

**Problem:** There is no multicultural celebration or mutual integration festival for the children and youth of different ethnic groups living in Riga.

**Possible solutions:** To organize and coordinate a festival once within 4 years (in between Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebration) for folk groups of different ethnic groups living in Riga and propose this idea on a state's level.

## **The Latvian language**

Knowledge of languages is one of the main pre-conditions for the process of society integration.

The analyses of applications for preschools has shown that the number of applications for preschools with Latvian language of instruction is twice as big as for national minority preschools. There is also a tendency to register applications for both programmes – both Latvian and Russian. When inquiring parents about such choice they motivate it by a desire to secure acquisition of the other language. Mostly those are families with Russian as everyday language in the family or with both languages – Russian and Latvian.

National minority preschool programmes provide acquisition of Latvian for children from the age of 2. From the age of 3 the Latvian language is taught by the Latvian language teacher, yet until the age of 3 it is done by the preschool education teacher. The activities are

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<sup>68</sup> Research "Diversity Comes to Latvian Schools. Children of Minorities Integration into the Forms of Latvian Secondary School", available at <http://www.politika.lv/index.php?id=10067> (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

organized in the form of games, creating interest in the Latvian language, developing grammatically correct speech, broadening and activating the vocabulary. In the minority preschool educational programme for the children from 2 years of age the activities in Latvian are planned twice a week, whereas in order to consolidate the acquired content and to develop everyday speech there is a preschool education teacher in a group daily<sup>69</sup>.

Since 2004, when education reform has been launched in national minority schools at secondary education level, in order to make a transition from learning in minority language to learning in the official language, the study results indicate that with the implementation of the reform pupils' knowledge of Latvian has improved substantially and that learning in Latvian language does not hinder successful acquisition of school subjects.

Results of the research<sup>70</sup> indicate that the results at the centralized exams in Latvian and national minority schools are similar. A research<sup>71</sup> conducted in 2009 about the results of centralized exams indicates that in some school subjects pupils from national minority schools have even slightly better results than pupils from schools with Latvian language of instruction. Minority schools have slightly better exam results in such subjects as chemistry, German and history. Whereas in English and biology exam results in national minority and schools with Latvian language of instruction do not differ substantially.

Data of a study called "Language" indicates that 73% of youth respondents have learned Latvian at school, yet other age groups have learned language at school considerably less often (age group from 35 till 49 years – 48%, from 50 till 74 years even less – 34%)<sup>72</sup>. According to the opinion poll conducted by LLA from 51% minority school pupils who have proved their knowledge of the Latvian language taking the exam at the official language proficiency, 48% have passed the exam at the highest level<sup>73</sup>. The current situation shows that the school-age young people in Riga are more proficient in Latvian compared to the representatives of other generations.

A number of schools in Riga have already had positive experience with organization of Latvian language classes for pupils' parents.

Pedagogues with good Latvian language proficiency are the most important condition for the use of bilingual education methods.

### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** Pedagogues of preschool education institutions have insufficient knowledge on the application bilingual education methods in order to enable in-depth acquisition of the Latvian language. Pedagogues, who use bilingual education methodology in their work, are experiencing lack of activities aimed at the sharing of experience on the topic and as well as other educational activities.

**Possible solutions:** To continue development of the bilingual education methodology by using contemporary pedagogical methods in education process and ensure education of pedagogues for bilingual work.

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<sup>69</sup> Riga City municipality preschool education programme provides 0.2 Latvian language teacher positions in one minority group of children from the age of 3. In school year 2010/2011 the total number of Latvian language teacher positions was 81.1; but starting with 01.09.2011. – 88.8 Latvian language teacher positions were assigned.

<sup>70</sup> *How Integrated is Latvian Society? An Audit of achievements, Failures and Challenges*. Edited by N.Muižnieks, Riga, University of Latvia Publishing house, 2010, pp. 197 – 198, available on [http://szf.lu.lv/files/petnieciba/publikacijas/Integrac\\_aud\\_latv\\_val\\_jpg.pdf](http://szf.lu.lv/files/petnieciba/publikacijas/Integrac_aud_latv_val_jpg.pdf) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>71</sup> Analysis of the last three year results of the centralized exams and research of the readiness of transition to unified Latvian Language Exam in 2012, Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2009.

<sup>72</sup> Research "Language", Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2008, p. 10, accessible at [http://www.valoda.lv/downloadDoc\\_435/mid\\_510](http://www.valoda.lv/downloadDoc_435/mid_510) (viewed on 17.01.2012.).

<sup>73</sup> Informative report "On Official Language Policy Guidelines for Years 2005-2014 Implementation from October 4, 2006 till December 31, 2009", Riga, ESM, 2010, p. 14.

**Problem:** Teachers of national minority schools do not have sufficient opportunities for improving their knowledge of the Latvian language in order to be able to work with bilingual education methods.

**Possible solution:** To organize professional competence development courses for national minority education programme teachers in order to implement education contents in Latvian language.

**Problem:** Part of pupils' parents and people of older age have insufficient knowledge of Latvian language.

**Possible solutions:** It is necessary to stimulate development of schools into cultural and education centres offering the inhabitants, especially parents of the pupils, an opportunity to learn Latvian language and to give support in organization of other activities promoting improvement of the knowledge of Latvian.

### **Accessibility of education**

The accessibility of services ensures the society integration and satisfaction of population with the services provided, therefore it is important to ensure accessibility of education for different groups of the society and individuals. The Riga City municipality ensures that all inhabitants of Riga acquire general education by physical accessibility of educational institutions, differentiated offer of educational programmes (including special education, pedagogical and social correction educational programmes) and new forms of teaching.

Three Riga City municipality schools ensure implementation of social correction educational programmes for children with deviant behaviour or behavioural problems. In ten schools pedagogical correction programmes for children with need of supportive measures in acquisition of the educational contents are implemented.

There are 13 schools in Riga with evening (shift) and/or part time educational programmes. These programmes are in demand, because 4307 pupils, i.e. approximately a quarter of total number of pupils in forms 10 – 12 (16 855 pupils) attend them. Evening schools help to find solution and acquire education to people who due to different reasons haven't attended an educational institution for a long period of time. Therefore, these schools often carry out the task of necessary pedagogical and social correction activities of the students. Four Riga City municipality schools provide organization of educational process in Riga's places of imprisonment.

The number of school children, whose parents have gone abroad, constantly grows: from 396 pupils (school year 2009/2010) to 519 (school year 2011/2012). Although such under-age students are looked after by their grandparents or other adults, school needs to pay more attention to them and in case of necessity should give support in acquisition of the learning content and support from the school staff should be provided.

Distance education as a form of study becomes more relevant. It allows the students to acquire general secondary education virtually without actually attending school every day. This aspect is especially topical in securing education for children with long-lasting illness.

Evening schools, provision of education in places of imprisonment, social and pedagogical correction programmes in schools and distance education solve not only issues connected with the acquisition of educational programmes, but also perform the function of social inclusion.

Centres providing education for children with long-lasting illnesses at home and in medical institutions are established in nine Riga schools. In the school year 2011/2012 in Riga

home education is appointed to 175 children with long-lasting illnesses. The largest number of such children (105 pupils) is in forms 5 to 9.

During the recent years number of children with language development disorders and mixed development disorders has been growing, that is why in 2009 one more special preschool educational establishment for children with language development disorders was opened and in 2011 – 6 additional groups in preschools for children with development disorders were opened. Opening of special institutions and groups for children provides appropriate care and education, which both are essential preconditions for successful integration into society. A positive example of integration of children with special needs and diminishing of discrimination are preschool educational establishments offering both special preschool educational and preschool educational programmes. The number of children with special needs grows, that is why provision of places for acquisition of special preschool educational programme is insufficient. Pedagogues in general preschool education institutions lack knowledge about the needs of such children and possibilities of their integration. Negative attitude towards “the different” is encountered among the parents too.

There are 12 special schools in Riga, in addition 11 general education schools in Riga offer special education programmes to pupils with various disorders. In the school year 2011/2012 such programmes were acquired by 2799 pupils, which constitutes 4.26% of the total number of pupils. Whereas 335 pupils with special needs are integrated in general education schools and acquire special education programme there. It is a significant increase compared to the school year 2010/2011, when such an opportunity was used by 97 pupils.

In every Riga neighbourhood there is at least one school, which is adjusted for children with movement disorders. In some schools municipality provides special means of transportation for children, for example, for pupils of Riga Secondary School No. 71 and Riga Special Lower Secondary Boarding School No. 2.

Children with special needs<sup>74</sup> study at interest related education programmes and, depending on the demand, are integrated in the existing hobby groups or separate groups are organized for them. Activities take place mostly at schools because institutions of hobby education are not adjusted for children with special needs. Many hobby education teachers have experience in work with children with special needs and this work is done in the institutions attended by these children. Involvement of children with special needs in the activities of hobby education institutions would encourage integration of these children into society and would develop understanding in other pupils about the problems of their peers with special needs. Many teachers are not yet ready to work with children, who have special needs, because they lack knowledge and experience, thus children with special needs are denied participation in these interest related education groups.

### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** The provision of education in the city for different target groups is not evenly ensured, young pedagogues lack knowledge and experience in work with children with deviant behaviour, special needs, learning difficulties etc.

**Possible solutions:** It is necessary to develop and improve provision of general education and to increase mobility of the pedagogues in their work with different audiences; promote possibilities to acquire simultaneously general and professional education for the persons, who have had interrupted their education; to organize experience sharing and educative activities for pedagogues of evening and other schools, as well as to provide internship opportunities for the students of educational sciences in different schools of Riga.

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<sup>74</sup> 482 pupils in interest related education institutions in school year 2011/2012.

**Problem:** The integration of children with special needs into the general education preschool groups or schools is not always successful because of the negative attitude of other children and their parents towards the “different”.

**Possible solutions:** Organization of educational activities for pedagogues and pupils’ parents about the integration opportunities and particularities of children with special needs, as well as about the possibilities to create inclusive environment in the institution; provision of teacher’s assistant position in general education schools in which children with special needs are integrated.

**Problem:** Only a few educational institutions and their premises are adjusted for the needs of children with movement disorders, pedagogues are not sufficiently educated for working with children with special needs.

**Possible solutions:** Gradually adjust educational establishments for the children with special needs; to organize courses on improvement of professional skills of pedagogues, to organize seminars and experience exchange activities about the skills necessary for work with children with special needs.

**Problem:** Only some sports educational institutions and sports facilities are adjusted to work with the children with special needs, no programme has been elaborated on how to work with such children, sports centres of the institutions are not adjusted for people with movement disorders and the instructors lack education and skills to work with pupils with special needs.

**Possible solutions:** Education of pedagogues and experience sharing activities about skills and possibilities to work with pupils with special needs; elaboration of sports programmes needed for work with children with special needs; adjustment of sports objects for people with special needs.

**Problem:** Uneven availability of hobby institutions and hobby educational programmes in different parts of the city.

**Possible solutions:** To encourage usage of premises of RCC institutions and municipality owned premises for implementation of hobby educational programmes and organization of activities in neighbourhoods, where they are at present unavailable.

**Problem:** There is a lack of educational programmes preparing for practical life, developing children’s skills doing domestic and housekeeping works which are needed by inhabitants with low income, children with special needs, left-handers etc. It is impossible to start implementation of new programmes keeping the existing ones due to the limited financial resources.

**Possible solution:** To increase financial resources for interest related education, so that it would be possible to start new interest-related educational programmes, providing the material and technical resources and remuneration for pedagogues.

**Problem:** When attending life-long educational programme courses people have to take into consideration the participation fee, which is problematic for the socially vulnerable groups.

**Possible solution:** To foresee the financial resources of co-payment in the budget of Riga City municipality to people with low income who want to acquire life-long educational programmes in the area of society integration.

### **Inclusion of the newcomer children into the educational process**

Two Riga City municipality schools (Riga Secondary School No. 15 and Riga Plavnieki Gymnasium) provide education for the children – asylum seekers; refugees and

persons with alternative status. During the last five years 20 children representing these groups were involved in the education process. In school year 2011/2012 13 such pupils attended two (both national minority) Riga City municipality schools, whereas 145 pupils with the status of third-country nationals attend 21 schools, 3 of them with Latvian language of instruction.

**Key directions for action:**

**Problems:** No support system has been developed in Latvia for the inclusion of the children of the newcomers into general education institutions, pedagogues lack experience and up to date methodological materials in different school subjects, especially if the children do not know any of the languages available in the Riga City municipality schools or the language of instruction of the particular school.

**Possible solutions:** To provide free extra Latvian lessons and other support for the children of the newcomers, to promote examples of good practice, to organize educative and experience sharing activities for teachers about the inclusion of these children into the general education institutions.

## Culture. Sports. Productive Leisure Time

### Characteristics of culture establishments

Every inhabitant of Riga and its guest irrespective of one's national, social, religious identity and gender has opportunities for self-realisation, for developing and implementing one's ideas and dreams that are not incompatible with the interests of society, to acquire and improve cultural education during all one's life, to receive services in cultural education, lifelong education and to have access to culture.

One of the most important segments of the unified Riga cultural space are 4 cultural centres with their structural units<sup>75</sup> and one professional municipal artistic group. The average number of events annually organized by the Riga City municipality cultural centres and their structural units are 3000, of which 1500 are free of charge events organized both for adults and children, for young people and seniors, including people with special needs. Different folk art groups participate in these events, the annual number of visitors is close to a million.

Other cultural segment of the Riga City municipality is 9 music and art schools (see chapter on Education).

The third segment of the Riga cultural space is the public library of the Riga City municipality – Riga Central Library with 26 branch libraries and 3 external service centres.

A specific feature of Riga is that while implementing state and municipal cultural policy, municipality collaborates with state, private and non-governmental cultural and cultural education institutions.

### Accessibility of Culture

Society integration process takes place in all cultural establishments of Riga.

Riga Central Library (RCL) is one of such cultural institutions. Its network consists of 26 branch libraries and 3 RCL external service centres – “Library of Sunny Days” at the Children's Clinical University Hospital, service centre in Day Care Centre for Homeless and inhabitants with low income, as well as a book service centre at Brasa Prison.

Services to readers are provided in Latvian and in foreign languages. The offer of library services is extensive and aimed at various target groups:

- *persons with need of support and help* – book reviews and handing out of the books once a month in social homes, old people's homes etc., free of charge consultations about Latvian and English languages;
- *the unemployed* – consultations and instructions on job search opportunities on the Internet; bibliographical lists for “Jobseekers”; theme room “Work. Career” in RCL branch library “Pardaugava”;
- *the homeless* – information about social services and about work of RCL external service centre “Day Care Centre” (Katolu street 57), in which regular Latvian language and basic computer literacy lessons, thematic events, meetings with representatives of different professions are organised;

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<sup>75</sup> VEF Culture Palace, Riga Culture and Arts Centre “Maza gilde”, Culture and Folk Art Centre “Ritums” with “Craftsman House”, Riga municipality Association of Cultural Institutions – Culture and Recreation Centre “Imanta”, Culture Centre “Ilguciems” with “Trades House”, Culture Palace “Ziemeļblazma”, Concert Organization “Ave Sol”, Administration of St. Peter's Church –13th century national monument of architecture, Riga Porcelain Museum, Riga Art Nouveau Centre, Aleksandrs Caks memorial apartment – museum and Professional Brass Band “Riga”.

- *seniors* – computer literacy basics both individually and in group classes; participation in readers' hobby club activities;
- *people with special needs* – computer set with text enlargement, magnifiers, opportunity to make money transfers (pay bills) with the help of assisting persons; availability of library services at place of living for people with movement disorders according to the facilities; cooperation with organizations for the disabled (exhibitions, common events); special section in RCL home page "Availability to all"; number of RCL branch libraries are accessible for people in wheelchairs and with movement disorders;
- *children with special needs* – thematic events, library lessons, book delivery and exchange for children of particular special schools and rehabilitation centres.

Different amateur art groups with participants of different age groups work at the culture centres. In VEF Culture Palace, in society of cultural institutions of Riga City municipality alongside Latvian amateur art groups, which participate in the Song and Dance Celebration process, there are national minority choirs and folklore groups working there too. There are 275 folk art groups supported by the Riga City municipality with under 10 000 participants including 25 children folk art groups, 16 senior folk art groups, 31 national minority (Russian, Belorussian, Ukrainian, Polish, Lithuanian, Estonian, German, Jewish) folk art groups. Participants of all ages and different ethnic groups take part in amateur theatres, fine and applied arts workshops, photo, cinema workshops and folklore groups. Part of the mentioned folk art groups works in municipal cultural establishments, part of them is founded by 47 cooperation partners of ECSD. ECSD supports operation of eight amateur Strazdumuiza club folk art group from Latvian Society of the Blind and amateur theatre and dance groups from Latvian Association of the Deaf, thus encouraging people with special needs to get involved in amateur art movement.

### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** Culture events mostly take place in the centre of Riga and involvement of districts and suburbs of Riga in organization of cultural activities is insufficient.

**Possible solutions:** To promote and develop activities in the neighbourhoods of Riga, moving the action out of the city centre.

**Problem:** Insufficient accessibility of cultural establishments for people with movement disorders – elevators and specially equipped toilets are only in Culture and Recreation Centre "Imanta", in Jazeps Medins Music School No. 1 and in a number of libraries.

**Possible solution:** To plan and to install lifts or elevators in existing cultural centres during their renovation process, taking into account particularities of the buildings.

## **Preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of inter-cultural dialogue**

The Riga City municipality regularly organizes national celebrations, commemoration and remembrance day events on state and city level, traditional and annual events and international projects, festivals according to the priorities and available financial resources, for example, the day of the Restoration of the Independence of the Republic of Latvia, Europe's Day event in Vermanes Park on 9 May, International Children's Day events in the city on 1 June, Ligo Summer Solstice Celebration in Riga on the 11<sup>th</sup> November Embankment and in Dzeguzkalns, Riga Festival, events for commemoration of the Proclamation of the Republic of

Latvia, Festival of Light “Staro Riga” etc. These events have the largest target audience – they are organized in the city, they are free of charge and always well attended, which is proven by the statistical data. Great importance is devoted to implementation of projects and activities of events, which are targeted at active participation and cooperation of the inhabitants..

In order to encourage the diversity of the cultural processes, availability of cultural programmes and society’s involvement in development of cultural events, ECSD organizes 7 different cultural project and events competitions, in which any non-governmental organization registered in the Enterprise Register, municipal or state’s authority or institution, businessman or individual, who has reached the age of 18, can participate and apply for funding. Competition rules do not foresee division of competitors according to their ethnic origin, age, gender or any other grounds.

National minority culture organizations and folk art groups participating in competitions were given the support to implement different culture projects and events, for example, within the framework of programme of Riga festivals the following festivals were supported: Jewish Music and Culture Days in Riga, Festival “5772”, “Tatiana Day – Russian Culture and Education Celebration in Latvia”, International Children Choreography festival “Zadorinka Invites Friends” etc. Regular support is also given to the activities organized by the non-governmental organizations and associations for people with special needs, for example, Latvian Association of the Deaf, Strazdumuiza Club of Latvian Society of the Blind, children and youth art festival “Come Along!”

### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** Insufficient contacts among different ethnic and social groups hinder development of inter-cultural dialogue.

**Possible solutions:** To organize educative, creative, art and cultural events and festivities for Rigans and city guests with the participation of ethnic and social groups; to encourage accessibility of cultural events for the inhabitants of Riga; to support activities promoting maintenance of ethnic identity of people living in Latvia and inter-cultural dialogue; to encourage participation of all society in the movement of folk art and the process of Song and Dance Celebration.

## **Sports**

The Riga City municipality provides the opportunity for city inhabitants to get involved in sports events and contests, as well as to improve their achievements in sports, abiding by the ideals of sports, Olympic principles of competition without any kind of discrimination. State, municipality and non-governmental organizations organize sports contests, events and education programmes in Riga.

Such social aspects of the sports as integration, accessibility and inclusion are taken into consideration in organizing sports activities in the city. Sports activities in different kinds of sports for all target audiences – children, youth, adults, veterans and people with disability are planned annually. There are contests both for athletes with definite rankings and for the general public, open to the inhabitants of the city. In 2011 in Riga there were 48 Riga Championships and Youth and Junior Championships in 37 different sports, in which more than 5000 athletes participated. Almost all contests are open and without participation fee.

In order to contribute to the Riga Sports calendar and to support sports NGO initiative, an annual project competition is held in Riga, in which it is possible to apply for funding for organizing of important sports projects and contests. The priority areas of the competition are implementation of activities for children and young people from risk groups and people with

special needs, the public sports and mass sports contests and organizing of events in the most popular means of sports in the city.

There is a new project competition planned, open to organizations of children with disabilities and young people.

Every year ECSD plans competitions for people with special needs, involving them in different sports activities. In 2010 there were 11 competitions in different sports: chess, power lifting, athletics, darts, and table tennis. The biggest complex annual sports event is Sports day for people with disability “Come and Enjoy Sports”, which gathers participants of all age groups. Approximately 150 people participate in this event each year. Swimming, cross-country racing and orienteering competitions are organized each year for pupils with special needs, and on average 60-70 children participate in these contests and with each year the number of participants grows. In order to enlarge the number of people with special needs, who get involved in the sports activities, non-governmental sports organizations of people with disabilities are given financial support for organization of competitions.

In 2012 ECSD concluded a cooperation agreement with Latvian Sports Veteran association about sports activities for former athletes – sports veterans, thus encouraging involvement of the retired population of Riga in the sports life of the city.

Special attention in implementation and involvement of different sports events and activities is targeted at each and every sportive Rigan and towards families with children. Unfortunately, greatest part of the mentioned activities take place in the centre of Riga or in sports centres close to the city centre, because the venue is determined by the geographical location of the sports centres. Taking into consideration everything above mentioned, the people from the neighbourhoods have lower opportunities to participate in sports contests close to their place of residence.

In order to successfully secure sporting opportunities for the neighbourhood inhabitants, it is necessary to develop sports centres in the regional educational establishments.

Development of sports infrastructure will ensure the increase of **inter-school** sports contests for pupils, the increase of Riga sports school contests, and will provide opportunity for the **inhabitants of** the relevant neighbourhood to go in for sports and physical activities in appropriate and safe environment. In 2007 as the first of regional sports centres, sports centre “Sarkandaugava” was opened within the Children and Youth Centre “Laimite”, in 2011 a renovation of a stadium next to Riga Daugavgriva Secondary School was started, which will secure sporting opportunities for inhabitants of Bolderaja and the building of multifunctional stadium is planned in Riga Latgale neighbourhood next to Riga Universal Secondary School.

### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** Existing sports infrastructure in many places is not suitable for people with special needs.

**Possible solution:** To arrange city’s sports infrastructure so that it would become accessible for people with special needs.

**Problem:** City environment in separate city neighbourhoods is not suited for leading a healthy, sportive lifestyle on daily basis. Availability of sports grounds should be provided not only for children and young people, but also for every Rigan.

**Possible solution:** To establish publicly accessible sports grounds in the city neighbourhoods next to the educational institutions.

## **Productive leisure time**

In order to provide Riga's children and young people with additional free of charge opportunities for spending their leisure time productively, a network of leisure time centres has been created in the city. 22 centres have been opened in the premises of general education schools and interest related education institutions, and they are operating both during the school year and during the holidays. Considering the available resources in the centres and their material and technical supply, pupils from primary schools and pupils from younger forms of lower secondary schools make up the main target audience. Now that the number of visits exceeds 110 000, pedagogues working in the centres are overloaded with work, and the facilities are subject to greater depreciation.

In order to reduce the isolation of children and youth, who have come to the attention of Riga Social Service, and to broaden their circle of everyday communication, in 2012 ECSD and WD started establishment of unified network of leisure time/day centres. It is planned that children and young people, who are not in need of specific services of day centres, will be directed to leisure time centres.

One of traditional leisure time organization forms during school holidays is camps. They not only engage children and youth, while their parents are at work, but also open facilities to broaden the mental outlook, to improve social skills, to develop one's talents. With municipal financial support educational establishments, non-governmental and religious organizations arrange more than 350 day and 24 hours per day camps every year and approximately 13 000 participants get involved in them. Thus, camps in a way can be considered as an exclusive service – only approximately 20% of the total number of pupils are able to go to these camps. Whereas at present it is impossible to increase the number of camps organized on the basis of educational establishments (there are repairs being done in the institutions during the summer months, pedagogues need to use their annual holiday and there is a limited number of pedagogues, who have received a certificate allowing them to manage camps).

Within the framework of traditional "Youth Month" ECSD in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and youth organisations, commercial structures and educational establishments, various free of charge events for young people are organized each year in September and these events are orientated towards motivating of young people for spending the leisure time interestingly and productively. Visitors of the Youth Month events have opportunity to participate in creative workshops, to get acquainted with the work of different youth organizations, to attend seminars and forums, to get involved in sports activities. At the same time since 2011 non-governmental organizations get support within the project competition for organization of leisure time activities for children and young people during the summer months. In the projects evaluation process the preference is given to activities taking place outside the city centre and to activities securing possibilities for children to engage in activities with their peers, who are not within their everyday communication circle.

Leisure time opportunities for people with special needs and seniors are provided in different day and care centres (more information included in the chapter "Social inclusion").

### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** Geographical location of interest related education institutions is not even. Limited capacity of the centres denies opportunity to attend them, especially for teenagers and secondary school youth.

**Possible solutions:** In cooperation with educational institutions to find ways to establish new leisure centres in neighbourhoods, where options for spending the leisure time are limited, provide opportunities to spend the leisure time productively to all age groups, to

increase the number of leisure time pedagogues and advance growth of their professional competence.

**Problem:** Insufficient inclusive aspect in the children and youth camps co-financed by municipality. Frequently organizers favour even greater segregation among children and youth, when organizing separate camps for different social groups.

**Possible solutions:** To increase municipality's financial support in organization of the camps, to encourage greater involvement of non-governmental and religious organization in organization of children and youth camps, to increase the number of camps of integrative character, to promote cooperation of RCC institutions in organization of the camps.

**Problem:** Small number of national minority young people gets involved in the youth activities; when arranging activities organizations work with known, numerically small target groups, limiting possibilities of children and youth to communicate outside of their ethnic and social group.

**Possible solutions:** Encourage participation of national minority young people in the youth events, gather information about operating national minority youth organizations and develop co-operation with them, to use social networks for spreading information for the young people more actively, promote inter-institutional collaboration (also among different RCC institutions) in organization of events for children and young people, breaking the habit of arranging events for one target group.

## Social Inclusion

### Characteristics of social assistance institutions

WD is the leading institution of the Riga City municipality, within the established competence for Riga City municipality in the field of social services, social assistance<sup>76</sup>, provision and healthcare, health promotion and prevention, including curbing the spread of addiction and issues linked to promoting employment of inhabitants.

WD has 6 subordinated institutions<sup>77</sup>. To secure optimum social service provision, WD collaborates with approximately 50 contract organizations (institutions of other municipalities, state institutions, capital companies and non-governmental organizations).

The objective of WD is to establish a stable and responsible social security system, facilitating the increase of the standard of living, material provision on minimal level, would ensure availability of healthcare and implement health promotion measures.

### Social assistance and accessibility of social services

Social allowances are municipality's material support to the people in situations of crisis. Inhabitants of municipality are granted both means-tested allowances/benefits (evaluating person's income and material situation), and un-tested allowances/benefits (in particular life situations, without evaluation of person's income and material situation). Social benefits for the inhabitants of the Riga City municipality are granted according to the Social Services and Social Assistance Law, Regulations issued by the Cabinet of Ministers and regulations of RCC<sup>78</sup>.

In 2011 RSS received and examined 224 411 applications for social benefits, social services and issuing of statements.

Social services in the Riga City municipality are provided for elderly persons, as well as for families and children. The provision of social services is needs-based, funded upon needs and resources assessment conducted by a specialist in social work.

Municipality provides social care and social rehabilitation services at a person's place of residence, material support for individual so that he/she would be able to pay for social services, social care and social rehabilitation services in institutions, as well as social work service (within the framework of receiving social care and/or social rehabilitation services in Riga Social Service and medical institutions, in which social worker(s) work(s)).

Social services are provided to various target groups:

#### ***Services for families with children:***

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<sup>76</sup> Social assistance – cash or material benefit, granting of which is based on evaluation of material resources of the person (family), who lack means to satisfy basic needs.

<sup>77</sup> Three social care centres (“Gailezers”, “Mezciems”, “Stella maris”), 1 shelter (Riga shelter), 1 child care institution (Riga municipality child and youth centre) and 1 social service (RSS).

<sup>78</sup> There are following social benefits in Riga municipality: guaranteed minimum income (hereafter – GMI benefit), housing benefit, health care allowance, extraordinary allowance in extraordinary situations, fostering allowance, foster family allowance for buying clothes and soft inventory, allowance for orphan of age to buy household objects and soft inventory, allowance for orphans of age starting independent life, allowance for orphans of age for monthly expenses, allowance for orphan of age for housing rent, benefit for the politically repressed, benefit for persons who have reached 100 and more years of age, school aid allowance, benefit for reaching of social rehabilitation aims, extraordinary allowance for buying food, additional payment to the allowance to secure GMI level, child birth benefit for newborn Rigans, benefit to custodian, benefit to guardians and allowance for performing foster family duties.

- When providing social services to families with children, social workers most often work with families, which have problems in raising children, families in conflict situations, children who do not attend school, neglected children or when the family has got into crisis situation (divorce of parents, serious disease or death of a family member). Total number of clients in 2011 was 11 878 persons, which is by 1040 more than in 2010<sup>79</sup>.
- Social psychology services help to provide psychological counselling in situations of crisis to groups at risk of social exclusion, counselling to improve parents' understanding of child raising and to reduce possible risks of domestic violence and to provide psychological and emotional support to the family.
- Day centres for children and youth provide improvement and development of their social functionality skills, give professional individualized psychological and social assistance, organize problem solving groups for work with children, provide opportunities for productive leisure activities, improve and develop social skills and motivate children to learn. 1181 child received day centre services in 2011.
- Day care centres secure social care and social rehabilitation services, development of social skills, education and productive spending of leisure time for children of Riga City municipality and their parents in daytime. 219 children received day care centre services in 2011.
- Advisory Crisis Centre<sup>80</sup> provides help of professional psychologists, social work specialists and, if necessary, also other specialists in the situation of crisis. 5649 phone consultations (5588 crisis situation counselling and 861 informative counselling) were given in 2011.
- Care, which is provided to orphans or to abandoned children, is implemented by guardians, in foster families or child-care institutions. As of 31 December, 2011 142 Riga City municipality children are in foster family care, 39 of them in 22 foster families in Riga, 103 children in 51 foster families outside Riga.
- Long-term social care and social rehabilitation institutions ensure basic needs of orphans and abandoned children, versatile education and personal development. Institutions secure social and medical care, support, encourage and facilitate children's efforts to become independent and encourage children to return to the family and support in giving children to adoption, to foster family or to the guardian. In 2011 long-term social care and social rehabilitation institution services for orphans and abandoned children were provided by six children and youth centre structural units (257 places) and 8 contract organization institutions (240 places).

***The following services are provided to children with disabilities:***

- Day care centre for children with mental and physical development disorders provides *social care and social rehabilitation service* to children and their parents during the day.
- *Short-term social care service for children* with disability can be received for up to 30 days a year, its objective is to secure recreation for parents while their children receive professional care and consultations of different specialists – speech therapist, defectologist, physiotherapist, ergo therapist, doctor of rehabilitation.
- *Portage early correction programme service* for children with mental and physical development disorders, early education and upbringing system for children with special needs and their families.
- *Paediatric palliative care service* provides support to terminally and seriously ill children and their families, as well as to families in mourning after losing their child.

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<sup>79</sup> RSS social work service for families with children was provided by 66 social workers in 2011.

<sup>80</sup> Crisis centre is a social institution which provides short term social, psychological and other support to persons in crisis situations.

- Social care, social rehabilitation and education service for children with movement disorders; children are provided with rehabilitation services and their parents are offered a training course in the care for the disabled child, as well as psychological support.

In 2011 208 families with children with disabilities received social services in 6 organizations, 1503 children with disabilities were in the range of attention of social workers, including 44 children with disabilities, who received social care and social rehabilitation services in 3 day care centres for children with functional disorders.

### ***Services for adults:***

- *Social worker* in working with adults gives support, consultations, information, inspects client in the place of living, evaluates social situations, provides incentives, based on person's needs and available resources, organizes provision of appropriate social services, grants material support so that the client would be able to pay for the necessary social services, cooperates with different institutions, non-governmental organizations, organizes support and self-help groups etc.<sup>81</sup>
- Long-term social care and social rehabilitation institutions for adults, within the range of their service for retired persons and persons with disability, provide for *home, social care and social rehabilitation*, if the amount of social care exceeds the amount defined for home care or day care in the institution<sup>82</sup>.
- *Social care service at the place of residence* is a complex of services to ensure the basic needs of a person:
  - 1) assistance in doing domestic work and personal care for a person, who has objective difficulties in taking care of oneself due to age or functional disorders (home care service including allowance for home care provision);
  - 2) assistance, if person has difficulties in moving outside the house when visiting state or municipal institutions and organizations in order to settle household problems (assistant service);
  - 3) communication facilities, informative support and help (24 hours a day) if due to age or functional disorders person is in danger of coming into helpless situation (service „safety button”);
  - 4) hot lunch home delivery, if a person has physical or other kind of disorders or person cannot prepare food at home due to household conditions (hot lunch home delivery service).

These services are provided to persons, if they live alone or the family members of the person due to their age, health situation or employment are unable to provide the necessary care<sup>83</sup>.

- Day centres provide *social rehabilitation services in person's place of residence* to particular target groups during the day, continuity of the rehabilitation process, development of the social skills, education and opportunities for spending leisure time, involvement of the client and his/her family members in solving particular social problems, work of the support and self-help groups, helping to attract resources for solving a particular social problems<sup>84</sup>.
- Day care centres provide *personal social care and social rehabilitation* to a particular target group during the day, continuity of the rehabilitation process, development of the

<sup>81</sup> 105 social workers of RSS were working on average with 4798 clients a month including social service assignments for on average 1319 clients and on average 3806 consultations a month in 2011.

<sup>82</sup> In 2011 SRI started to provide services for 530 persons, but in total the support was given to 1795 persons.

<sup>83</sup> 3175 persons received social care services at the place of residence in 2011 at a total cost of 1 978 423 LVL.

<sup>84</sup> There were 12 day/support centres working in Riga in and their services were used by 2176 persons.

social skills, education and opportunities for spending leisure time, involvement of the client and one's family members in solving particular social problems, work of the support and self-help groups, psychological and social assistance for family members of the client and helping to attract resources for solving a particular social problems<sup>85</sup>.

- *Social services* for persons with mental disorders:
  - 1) day care centres provide full work day stay, catering, as well as organize educative activities for acquisition of social and work skills<sup>86</sup>;
  - 2) specialized workshops provide social rehabilitation services, i.e. acquisition of joinery, sewing and clothes washing skills under the supervision of qualified specialists<sup>87</sup>;
  - 3) group houses (flats) provide home, support in solving social problems and an opportunity to develop independent life skills for persons with mental functional disorders and those having objective difficulties living independently, but who are not in need of long-term social care and social rehabilitation in institution<sup>88</sup>.
- In order to promote social integration opportunities for persons with disability, who have movement disorders and who are unable to use public transportation Riga City municipality grants *financial resources for transportation service pay*<sup>89</sup>.
- *Instalment of lifts and adjustment of homes* for persons with movement disorders is implemented following the assessment of the client's individual functional abilities and needs, taking into consideration the technical complexity of particular adjustment. This is essential support provided by the Riga City municipality for persons in wheelchairs helping them to ensure independent life and to improve the quality of their life<sup>90</sup>.
- *Social work in medical institutions* is done with the aim to provide social assistance to persons, who are in medical institutions, in order to provide the continuity of social care for them and to give support in solving other social problems<sup>91</sup>.

#### ***Services for homeless persons and persons with low-income:***

- Shelter/night shelter provides *opportunity of short-term stay, food, personal hygiene facilities and services of social work specialist* for the homeless or persons in a crisis situation<sup>92</sup>.
- Social rehabilitation centre provides services for the unemployed, which include a *complex of social skills and work skills development activities* encouraging recovery of person's social status, inclusion into labour market and society, as well as preventing negative consequences in person's life in accordance with individually worked out plan of social rehabilitation of each client<sup>93</sup>.
- Day centre for the homeless and low-income inhabitants of Riga provides opportunities for acquisition of social skills, educational, social rehabilitation, including support and self-help group activities, consultations of social work specialists, sanitary hygiene and other services<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> There were 3 such centres open in Riga in 2011 and their services were used by 94 persons with dementia.

<sup>86</sup> In 2011 the service was received by 307 persons.

<sup>87</sup> In 2011 the service was received by 33 persons.

<sup>88</sup> In 2011 the service was received by 108 persons.

<sup>89</sup> 3930 persons received pay for transportation services at a total sum of 630 802 LVL.

<sup>90</sup> 11 lifts in the houses of persons with movement disorders were installed in 2011 and 33 persons were granted benefits for adjustment of homes in the total amount of 43 473 LVL.

<sup>91</sup> 15 social workers subordinated to RSS worked with clients in 8 medical institutions of Riga in 2011. 7132 clients have received social services in medical institutions in 2011.

<sup>92</sup> 3289 persons received services in 2011.

<sup>93</sup> 57 persons received service in 2011.

<sup>94</sup> Day centre services for the unemployed in 2011 were received by 805 persons, on average 124 people a day. On average 15 persons a day used general practitioners' consultations and shower services, laundry services – on average 3 persons a day and on average 60 persons a day visited library.

- Mobile team for social work with the homeless in the streets provides information and support to the homeless. Its main tasks are to study and regularly inspect places, where the homeless gather, also, after receiving operational data, to establish the situation, needs and problems of each client, to inform them about the possibilities of receiving social services and social assistance, motivate clients to solve their social problems. During the cold time of the year mobile team serves hot tea and hands out warm clothes, takes the homeless to the night shelter or medical institutions<sup>95</sup>.
- *Soup kitchens* operate in number of places in Riga. The homeless and also other poor people living in Riga can get food there<sup>96</sup>.
- *Food delivery and its distribution* to persons, who receive support within the framework of Social Security Network Strategy in the areas of welfare and health. It is being provided as a service since 27.09.2010. (1000 portions of food are distributed in two places of Riga during the work days) for disadvantaged groups of population, including retired people, the unemployed and families with children, taking into consideration the social and economical situation in the country and that the number of persons (families) of low-income continues to grow, as does the demand for the soup kitchen service<sup>97</sup>.

### **Key directions for action:**

#### ***Social allowances and benefits:***

**Problem:** Decrease of income of Rigans in 2010 caused by unemployment lead to rapid increase of jobless inhabitants of working age, who turned to RSS for social assistance; constantly growing number of the long-term unemployed.

**Possible solutions:** Measures for employment stimulation – creation of new jobs, assistance in founding new enterprises, support for the existing businesses, formation of the support groups for the unemployed with the aim to support them, to give motivation to acquire new skills and to help in inclusion into the labour market, help in solving different social problems; activities for improvement of the Latvian language knowledge for the unemployed inhabitants of working age.

#### ***Services for families with children:***

**Problem:** The most frequent social problems are domestic violence, situations of crisis, communication problems, lack of social skills, employment and addiction problems.

**Possible solution:** Attraction of financial resources in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and implementation of common projects for strengthening and supporting families, developing social psychology services for families with children (for example, educative and support groups, individual counselling).

**Problem:** Part of children lack social skills, have interaction and interpersonal communication problems, behavioural problems, non-attendance of school and learning difficulties, situation of crisis in a family, psychological problems.

**Possible solutions:** Increase the number of day and care centres in Riga City municipality, increase the number of staff at the existing day centres, providing regular staff trainings, encourage collaboration among RCC institutions in dealing with similar problems and securing services for the people.

**Problems:** Insufficient integration of children with disabilities into the general education processes, lack of qualified specialists and supporting staff, lack of appropriate

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<sup>95</sup> Mobile team has given consultations to 1402 persons, received 784 phone calls, 1897 persons were taken to the night shelters or medical care institutions in 2011.

<sup>96</sup> 141 032 portions were co-financed by Riga City municipality in 2011.

<sup>97</sup> 551 362 portions distributed in 2011.

education, social and health promotion programmes, insufficiency of appropriate vocational training programmes, difficulties in moving around outside of the house, unadjusted premises for persons with functional disorders, inaccessibility of information and communication technologies for the persons with disability.

**Possible solutions:** Gradually secure accessible environment at education institutions and institutions providing social assistance; provide wider availability of professional training and life-long education for people with disability, implement work skills improvement and motivational programmes in special education establishments with the aim to advance responsibility of the persons with disability and motivate them to get involved in the labour market; encourage elimination of stereotypes about the persons with disability.

**Problem:** Abandonment of children, physical, emotional and sexual violence, conflicts in the family, vagrancy of children, domicile problem, lack of child-care skills.

**Possible solutions:** To secure service of twenty-four hours hotline, provide psychological help for persons in a crisis situation; develop services in Riga City municipality for families with children to improve parents/guardians understanding of child upbringing and reduce the risks of possible domestic violence.

**Problem:** Children placed in children's homes as adolescents often have already adopted the behavioural norms of the adverse social environment – deviant or delinquent behaviour, bad habits and addictions.

**Possible solutions:** Staff training; development of long-term social correction programme for adolescents with social behavioural disorders; popularization of foster families within the population, including Christian congregations.

#### *Services for adults:*

**Problem:** Recipients of SRI service become more dependent of care and supervision, i.e. number of immobile clients and clients with dementia grows.

**Possible solution:** Attraction of resources in collaboration with NGO, higher education institutions and other institutions to organize different activities for activation of the clients of social care centres.

**Problem:** Worsening of self-care skills of persons, who receive social care service in their place of residence.

**Possible solutions:** To provide social services in the person's place of residence according to the needs of each individual, for example, adjustment of environment in person's home and in the building so that the person would be able enter and leave the house; open day care centres for persons with dementia, day centres for adults; provide transportation services for persons with disability; secure accessibility of public transportation.

**Problem:** Low activity and interest of socially disadvantaged and other social groups in solving common problems.

**Possible solution:** To provide organized assistance to socially disadvantaged population groups and non-governmental organizations in implementation of social activities by using community work methods.

**Problem:** Part of the clients of group houses have cooperation problems with the specialists in solving their social problems (frequently these are problems of addiction) and in improvement of social situation, difficulties to acquire budgeting skills, including making payments for the dwelling, which is mentioned in the normative acts, part of the group house clients often have no wish to do a salary work, which is an essential factor for starting an independent life.

**Possible solutions:** Give professional support to the clients of the group houses attracting necessary resources and social services to solve clients' addiction, communication and other problems and to develop social skills in order to encourage clients' independence, ability to take responsibility for one's decisions and actions, as well as to start an independent life outside the institution; to foresee in the regulations of RCC that the payment for the housing for the recipients of the group house services, who study or work, is determined according to the cost of the mentioned services, but does not exceed certain amount per month.

**Problem:** Unadjusted transport stops as well as the attitude of the vehicle drivers (lack of interest to provide transportation services according to the needs of the disabled persons) hinder the provision of public transportation services for people with movement disorders.

**Possible solutions:** To improve accessibility of the public transportation, to increase interest of the public transportation service providers in ensuring high quality service for the persons with disability.

**Problem:** Partially inappropriate street infrastructure for people with movement disorders, part of the state and municipal institutions and other public places are not accessible or are partially accessible for people with disability, the provision of technical aids is insufficient and does not cover the needs of persons with disability, for example, lifts, digitally controllable functional beds etc. and other aids necessary to encourage person's independence.

**Possible solutions:** Levelling of pavement edges when performing yearly repairs; improving of accessibility of state and municipal institutions and other public premises; providing the necessary technical aids for the needs of the persons with disability, thus encouraging the ability of these people to be independent and reducing the need of self-care assistance.

#### ***Measures for the homeless and persons with low-income:***

**Problem:** The lack of social functioning skills among the homeless, insufficient qualification and motivation to be able to work, addiction problems, poor health and other problems, which become obstacles for integration into society of the mentioned persons; insufficiency of affordable (cheap) housing; stereotypes of society foster marginalisation of the homeless.

**Possible solutions:** To develop social services for the needs of the homeless, including social rehabilitation and social work services; secure short-term accommodation service (housing and opportunity to take care of the basic needs, including cooking, maintaining household etc.) as an intermediate stage towards independent housing for motivated homeless persons (families), who carry out activities to change their living conditions; to educate and inform society about the assistance provided to the homeless, asking people not to be indifferent towards their fellow citizens.

## **Employment problems**

WD, performing the municipal functions defined in the Support for Unemployed Persons and Persons Seeking Employment Law, in collaboration with the State Employment Agency and other municipal institutions and structural units, elaborated the Riga City Employment Promotion Plan for 2011. The plan was prepared in collaboration with NGOs, ECSD, Housing and Environment Department, Riga Austrumi District Executive Board and RSS specialists. The activities of the abovementioned municipal institutions and structural units for 2011 were summarized and incorporated in the new plan in order to stimulate employment of the inhabitants of Riga.

WD is the responsible institution for introduction and implementation of the project of the European Social Fund “Securing the Work Practising Activities for Acquisition and Maintenance of Work Skills in Municipalities” in Riga City.

During the implementation of the project from September 2009 till December 2011 in eight municipal institutions, structural units and agencies 6209 work practice positions were created with the remuneration of 100 LVL (since July 2011 – 80 LVL) and 10 467 unemployed persons who did not receive unemployment benefits, but were registered in State Employment Agency could work.

*Support groups for the unemployed* are organized with the aim to motivate the unemployed to acquire new skills, to help solve different domestic situations<sup>98</sup>, to participate in activities promoting employment and to return to the labour market.

### **Key directions for action:**

**Problem:** The number of unemployed, who turn to RSS for social assistance and services in the age group from 15 to 29, has considerably grown during the recent years. If these young people do not receive appropriate support, they become the potential long term unemployed.

**Possible solutions:** Implement interdisciplinary approach in solving social and employment problems of young people, organize Youth Employment Centre, integrating services provided by State Employment Agency, RSS, ECSD, NGOs and other organizations would; provide psychological counselling to the long-term unemployed.

**Problem:** Long-term unemployed have insufficient professional support in reducing psychosocial consequences of long-term unemployment.

**Possible solution:** To expand availability of support groups for the unemployed in Riga both by opening municipal day centres in Pardaugava and Bolderaja and purchasing services from NGOs.

## **Accessibility of health care, health promotion and illness prevention**

Healthcare board of the WD is the only and leading structural unit of healthcare sector in Riga City municipality. Its main tasks are to ensure access to healthcare and promote healthy lifestyle policy in the city in accordance with the functions determined by the regulations.

Healthcare services at the place of residence are provided from the state budget to the patients after operation, illness or trauma or after any medical manipulations, which do not require staying at an in-patient facility<sup>99</sup>. There is significant number of persons, who have no permanent place of residence; therefore municipality ensures medical and social care in short-term social care beds. The service is intended for persons with low-income who have declared their residence in Riga and who need short-term social care, rehabilitation and medical assistance at minimum level 24 hours a day.

Health promotion is a set of measures encouraging the society to improve and maintain health and to fight against unfavourable factors influencing health (including use of addictive substances).

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<sup>98</sup> In 2011 support groups for the unemployed were led by 18 specialists in 11 places in Riga. 38 support groups for 706 unemployed people were organized too.

<sup>99</sup> Healthcare of the people is provided in accordance with the organization and financing principles of Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 1046 from 19.12.2006 “Healthcare Organization and Financing Rules”. Whereas it is determined in the 15th paragraph of Law on Local Governments that autonomous function of municipality is to provide availability of healthcare and to promote healthy lifestyle among the population.

NGO “DIA+LOGS”, with the funding from WD, provides services to drug addicts and HIV infected persons and their family members or relatives. Clients of this organization can receive services both in the organization’s premises and from the mobile team, which drives on the established route every workday evening. NGO “DIA+LOGS” organizes various activities, for example, common cooking, celebrating holidays together, needlework workshops on regular basis and as a result drug addicts and HIV infected persons acquire new skills, socialize, and learn about possibilities to find a job or to start treatment.

Persons at risk of social exclusion can receive counselling on healthy lifestyle and illness prevention free of charge at four health rooms of Latvian Red Cross in Riga. Their work is financed by Riga City municipality. Each visitor of the health room can have his or her blood pressure taken, find the body mass index and receive advice about the basic principles of healthy diet, physical activities, availability of medical care services, etc. It allows receiving consultations of a medical person free of charge to people, who due to different reasons are unable to receive it on regular basis.

In order to improve public health and give knowledge about a healthy lifestyle, WD organizes different public activities involving NGO and other cooperation partners on regular basis, as well as gives information and interviews to the mass media.

**Key courses of action:**

**Problem:** In a number of medical institutions located in municipal premises getting from one floor to another for the people with movement disorders is restricted, because the elevators have become obsolete or are too small and it is not possible to get inside them, in some buildings there are no elevators at all.

**Possible solution:** In institutions with the restricted accessibility of such services, the service could be provided on the ground floor or home visits could be offered, while the premises are gradually adjusted for the people with special needs.

**Problem:** There is only one addiction prevention centre in Riga, therefore services are mostly available only to the clients residing in its vicinity.

**Possible solution:** To provide basic mobile team services also to those clients, who reside in further areas of Riga, to involve NGO in provision of different services.

**Problem:** At present limited number of inhabitants knows about the Health Rooms of the Latvian Red Cross.

**Possible solution:** To use different information channels to pass on information to potential clients about the health rooms.

**Problem:** The health situation of Rigans is worse than health situation of people from other European Union member states,

**Possible solution:** To provide targeted and understandable information about healthy lifestyle to people and to improve their life and social skills.

## SWOT<sup>100</sup> Analysis of the Riga City Society Integration Programme

### Strengths

- Diverse and free accessibility of RCC resources and availability of services for the promotion of integration process of the inhabitants of Riga (cultural, sports activities, libraries, network of RCC institutions, human resources etc.)
- Support to NGO and RCC institutions for implementation of measures and activities in the area of society integration
- Many non-governmental organizations, cooperation of RCC and NGO
- Multicultural society
- Population's positive attitude towards acquisition of the official language
- High sense of belonging to the city within the population

### Opportunities

- Development of cooperation among RCC institutions in order to implement projects and measures of society integration
- Promotion of co-operation with non-governmental organizations – motivation of organizations to more actively work at the city level
- Development of volunteering in RCC institutions
- Study of experience and taking over of the good practice from other cities
- Implementation of international projects in the field of society integration

### Weaknesses

- Low level of interest in the work of municipality; insufficient awareness of the inhabitants about their opportunities in the city
- Insufficient information exchange (both among the RCC institutions and among NGO and population)
- Low capacity of non-governmental organizations
- Insufficiently developed culture of volunteering
- Society is not ready to accept the newcomers
- Shared comprehension of the essence of integration process is lacking, and inter-cultural competence is insufficiently developed both in municipality and in society in general
- Irregular offer of the Latvian language courses, including free courses

### Threats

- Lack of the support for consistent integration policy
- Cutting financial resources for implementation of coordinated integration measures and activities
- Manipulations with public opinion about integration issues

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<sup>100</sup>SWOT – analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

## **Supervision and Evaluation of the Implementation of the Riga City Society Integration Programme**

The supervision of Riga City Society Integration Programme will be performed by the Riga City Council Advisory Board on Society Integration Issues.

ECSD shall prepare information about the implementation of the programme twice: a mid-term informative assessment report on the strategy in 2014 and final report on implementation of the programme in 2017.

The Chairman of the Riga City Council

N.Ušakovs