

Job Centre North

Recognising potential - easing the way to the labour market

The North Calotte region used to be a common labour market, a region without borders but in the 19th and 20th centuries the nation states divided the region in what is today three countries. After 60 years of Nordic co-operation and 20 years of EU co-operation the region still have not yet been able to return to the common labour market, in practice.

This is the start point of this initiative, “Job Centre North”. To build capacity for transnational co-operation but also for exchange of best practice among institutions charged with responsibilities for the labour markets in the three countries. Besides institutions representing the public sector this initiative also is targeting the private sector including civil society.

An important effect of the initiative will be a closer co-operation between the people and organisations entrusted with the responsibility to easing the way to the labour market.

Besides a closer co-operation and heightened capacity for transnational co-operation in the framework of labour mobility the initiative focus on three vulnerable target groups in special need of support to enter or re-enter the labour market;

- NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training),
- Refugees, primarily newly arrived,
- Long-term unemployed.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives are to build capacity for transnational cooperation among institutions (Public Employment Services, Social Insurance Agencies, municipalities etc.) and organisations (trade unions, employers organisations, chamber of commerce etc.) charged with responsibilities for well-functioning labour markets.

At the end of the project the outcome will be that the involved institutions and organisations have established a joint platform for learning together and from each others, for development of new methods. Furthermore the platform will support labour mobility and offer joint trainings of key functions in the involved institutions and organisations.

The expected effect will be a true common labour market in the North Calotte region supported by a structure, a platform for transnational cooperation.

TARGET GROUPS

The three prioritized groups are here further introduced;

NEETs. Young people who are neither employed nor in education or training, pose a problematic issue in the context of youth unemployment and they also face a risk of not only lowering one's well-being but also minimising individual human security. This is why lowering the percentage of NEETs under 10% is one of the benchmarks in EU2020. Furthermore, NEETs is addressed by the flagship "School to Work" within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Identifying NEETs, motivating them to be enrolled in support measures and finally guiding and counselling them towards the labour market is by experience difficult and call for joint actions of institutions and organisations in a multi-level governance perspective. It's much to be gained from a structured learning between similar support structures in the three countries. Furthermore, it is proved to be helpful for NEETs to take part in mobility programmes, strengthening their self-confidence.

REFUGEES. The inflow of migrants to the European Union has dramatically increased in 2015 mostly due to the civil war in Syria but also due to other conflicts in Africa and in the Middle East. The inflow has been reduced in 2016; however, there is reason to believe this will just be a temporary pause.

The number of refugees constitutes a challenge to those member states where refugees choose to seek asylum. At the same time, many countries in the European Union struggle with demographic situations with an ageing population and a mismatch on the labour markets - a deficit of skilled workers in industry, health care and other non-academic sectors on the labour markets.

In particular, the refugees coming from Syria are young people, 90% under the age of 40 and 50% under the age of 20. Many of them are well educated and ready to take jobs.

In northern Europe, the population density is relatively low and many smaller cities suffer from effects of excessive urbanisation. These regions welcome refugees and will do what is needed in order to make them stay.

The rapid increase of migrants calls for more co-operation between the people and organisations entrusted with the responsibility of integrating refugees. A lot of initiatives have been launched lately and an effective system of collecting and making good practice available is needed. Besides learning from each other there is much to gain from developing new methods and new organisations together with others, across borders.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED. This is as well as NEETs a group in need of special support and where labour mobility can be an important help. Existing structures supporting labour mobility needs to be complemented with services also helping integration in the new country, a broader service than provided today.

ACTIONS

The project focuses on;

- Exchange of best practice for smoothening integration into the society, and
- Developing and testing methods and systems that facilitate integration.

It is acknowledged that the three target groups are in need of a holistic approach where institutions and organisations, with different competences need to be working together in order to reach a lasting result.

The project consists of three parts;

- a knowledge platform for exchange of experiences and development of new methods,
- development and testing joint trainings for key functions working with the three target groups,
- development and testing a mobility programme for NEETs and long-term unemployed.

KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM. The structured learning and development of new methods will take place in a so called knowledge platform. The platform will consist of nine thematic working groups where experts will gather for structured dialogue, learning from each others and joint development of new methods. The project will document the outcome of these processes and publish on the project website.

The proposed thematic working groups are;

- civil society involvement
- digital support (for example apps)
- language training for refugees, NEETs and long-term unemployed
- labour market integration (for example apprenticeship and job shadowing)
- validation of skills (refugees)
- health care (refugees)
- entrepreneurship for refugees, NEETs and long-term unemployed
- labour mobility programme
- training programmes

JOINT TRAININGS. In one of the thematic groups a joint training for key functions will be developed and tested. It is foreseen that key functions are marketers (NEETs), coaches and mentors. Curricula's with both theoretical parts and practical training will be developed and tested.

MOBILITY PROGRAMME. In one of the thematic groups a mobility programme for NEETs and long-term unemployed will be developed and tested.



ORGANISATION

It is foreseen that six partners, representing two municipalities in each of the three countries will join the project. The Norden Association in Norrbotten will function as Lead Partner. The partners can be municipalities but also a national agency or an NGO. In any case the partners need to secure the involvement of relevant stakeholders in each of the six municipalities.

Each partner need a project coordinator, a 20% position coordinating the project in their municipalities. Furthermore, one partner will take responsibility for coordination of the development and testing of the labour mobility programme and another partner likewise take responsibility for the coordination of the development and testing of the joint trainings. These two positions are foreseen to be 50% duties. The task to coordinate the remaining seven thematic groups as well as the function as communication officer will be distributed among the four remaining partners with two tasks each. These duties will add on another 10% duty for each partner. In total including the role as Lead Partner will give four fulltime duties over three years.

TIMETABLE

The project implementation is foreseen to start in June 2017 and finalize in May 2020. The thematic working group can start with their first meetings in September 2017 and will gather four times per year. The mobility programme and joint trainings are foreseen to be tested during one year starting in autumn 2018 and afterwards evaluated.



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