



SPECIAL PROGRAMMES WERE A SET OF MEASURES TO OFFER AD-HOC SUPPORT TO UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE, TAILORED AROUND CURRENT AND FUTURE LABOUR MARKET NEEDS.

## Special Programmes For Ad-hoc Support To Unemployed People

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### POLAND

Special Programmes were a set of measures covering labour market services and instruments supporting employability, including a 'specific element'<sup>1</sup>. The objective was to develop the current qualifications of unemployed people or provide them with opportunities to gain new qualifications, in order to help meet current skill shortages within the current and future labour market.

Special Programmes used a flexible, individual-centered approach. They combined basic labour market services and instruments with specific elements supporting employability. Each participant was supported by an ad-hoc personalised programme based on an assessment. The Special Programmes supported 479 people in total, using 10 different measures. 80 % of participants found employment afterwards. The involvement of employers and the ad-hoc support offered to jobseekers were two major success factors of the Special Programmes measure.

Name of the PES

Polish PES - Opoczno Local Labour Office (Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Opocznie)

Scope of measure

Regional

When was the practice implemented?

2013–15

What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?

Unemployed people who need help to access or re-enter the job market have diverse needs. It emerged that there was a need to develop a programme created around individuals' specific requirements.

Special Programmes were developed via joint collaboration between the local PES office of Opoczno and employers.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The following organisations were involved in the implementation:

- ▶ Small and medium employers across different sectors, who were selected on the results of a survey where they declared their willingness to cooperate in the programme implementation;
- ▶ Municipal offices and its entities from Opoczno county.

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

The target group was individuals who were unemployed and at risk of social exclusion. This included:

- ▶ Long-term unemployed people;
- ▶ Unemployed people over 50 years old;
- ▶ Unemployed people with disability 'degree certificates';
- ▶ Young people (aged between 18 and 30 years old);
- ▶ Unemployed people who were experiencing difficulties in the labour market, including low-skilled individuals, those without work experience etc.;
- ▶ People for whom III aid profile<sup>2</sup> was selected.

<sup>1</sup> The 'specific element' refers to funds, up to 20 % of the value of a project, designated to fulfil specific needs of the beneficiaries (e.g. reasonable expenditures different from labour market services and instruments).

<sup>2</sup> In the Polish system, the III aid profile 'Activation and Integration Programmes' refers to activation measures delegated by the Labour Office to other institutions. These Activation and Integration Programmes include: special programmes, subsidised employment in a workplace or undertaking employment in a social cooperative or, when applicable, vocational counselling.

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|  | <p>Participants were selected based on an analysis of the local labour market, registration list data on the unemployed, and interviews with job counsellors. As part of the selection process, individuals' predispositions, qualifications, work experience and skills were considered.</p> <p>Based on the analysis the following programmes were developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Four programmes for young people (aged 30 or below);</li> <li>▶ Two programmes for people in a particular situation in the labour market<sup>3</sup> and two others for people that are the furthest from the labour market (III aid profile);</li> <li>▶ One programme for the long-term unemployed; and</li> <li>▶ One programme for people aged 50 years old and over.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>What were the practice's main objectives?</p>                               | <p>The objective of the Special Programmes was to improve the labour market access of unemployed people through a package of comprehensive aid in terms of services provided by the job centre, as well as provision of individualised support. Special Programmes also aimed to increase participants' motivation and self-esteem.</p>   |
| <p>What activities were carried out?</p>                                       | <p>The following services were provided to unemployed people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employment services and career guidance: to support participants' motivation and attitudes, encourage them to change and start activities aimed to change their labour market situation;</li> <li>▶ Social and pedagogical advice, psychological advice: to increase motivation, life skills and social skills that sought to help the individual to return to the labour market;</li> <li>▶ Active job seeking workshops and group lecture sessions, which provided a job seeking method;</li> <li>▶ Training sessions on handling cash registers, adapted to the specific needs of individuals;</li> <li>▶ Referral for employment as part of intervention works;</li> <li>▶ Referral for internships;</li> <li>▶ Reimbursement for the cost of equipping or retrofitting a workplace for an unemployed person;</li> <li>▶ Supporting employment adapted to the needs of individuals, such as books related to the labour market, landscaping, fully equipped tool boxes, gardening tools, and other job-related tools.</li> </ul> |
| <p>What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?</p> | <p>The Opoczno local PES office supervised the implementation of the Special Programmes. It was in charge of the following specific activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Recruitment of the participants and the analysis of their employment background;</li> <li>▶ Selection of the employers and local governments to be involved;</li> <li>▶ Monitoring and financing the activities; and</li> <li>▶ Follow-up with jobseekers.</li> </ul> <p>The employers involved in the initiative were responsible for implementing specific activities, as agreed with the Opoczno local PES office.</p>  |
| <p>What were the source(s) of funding?</p>                                     | <p>The total amount spent on the implementation of the Special Programmes was about EUR 840 600 (PLN 3 513 721.21). The programme was funded by the Labour Fund.</p>  |

<sup>3</sup> As per Article 49 of the Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions, people in a 'special situation' in the labour market are: unemployed people up to 30 years of age, long-term unemployed, unemployed people over 50 years of age, unemployed people applying for social assistance benefits, unemployed people with at least one child under the age of 6, or at least one disabled child under the age of 18, and unemployed people with disabilities.

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

The Opoczno local PES office implemented 10 Special Programmes delivered in the period 2012-16. 479 people in total were supported by the 10 different Special Programmes. The breakdown of participants per Special Programme measure is as follows:

- ▶ 43 young people (aged between 18 and 30 years old) participated in the 'The Active Youth' Special Programme;
- ▶ 59 people in a special situation in the labour market<sup>4</sup> participated on 'The Way to Activity' Special Programme;
- ▶ 4 people received the III aid profile<sup>5</sup> of support;
- ▶ 3 people with disabilities received the III aid profile of support;
- ▶ 104 unemployed in a special situation on the labour market participated on the 'From Inactivity to Activity' Special Programme;
- ▶ 68 long-term unemployed participated on 'The Return to the Labour Market' Special Programme;
- ▶ 10 young unemployed people (aged between 18 and 30 years old) took part on 'Time for the Work' Special Programme;
- ▶ 81 young unemployed people (aged between 18 and 30 years old) were involved on the 'We are the Initiative' Special Programme;
- ▶ 11 young people (aged between 18 and 30 years old) joined the 'Direction: Work' Special Programme;
- ▶ 96 participants, who were aged over 50 years old and unemployed, took part in the 'Still Active' Special Programme.

What outcomes have been identified?

Monitoring and evaluation was carried out by the Opoczno local PES office to determine the change to participants' motivation to find a job, levels of self-esteem, and job search skills. It also covered the durability of employment following participation on the support programme. The monitoring and evaluation found that:

- ▶ Over 90 % of those participating in an internship found a job afterwards;
- ▶ Approximately 80 % of all Special Programme participants started a job afterwards;
- ▶ Most participants agreed that participating in Special Programmes met their expectations. Participants felt that they gained practical skills required for the workplace which helped to increase their chances of finding work;
- ▶ Participants also noted that taking part in Special Programmes increased their self-confidence, motivation and self-esteem.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 3 for the definition of a 'special situation'

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2 for what the III profile is

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The success factors included:

- ▶ Tailoring services to the specific needs of each target group had a positive impact on participants;
- ▶ Ad-hoc support for each unemployed person also had a positive impact on unemployed people;
- ▶ The employers who participated in the programme offered a job to participants and, consequently, offered an opportunity to be in permanent employment.

The main challenges included the drop out of participants, who had signed up for activities. In addition, employers were sometimes reluctant to offer employment. The employees of the local PES office faced those challenges and, where needed, participants were replaced and new job offers were made.

One specific aspect of the Special Programme, titled 'Still Active', was awarded a prize by the Regional Social Policy Centre in Łódź.



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