

Mentoring: An innovative approach for jobseekers

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LITHUANIA

The mentoring programme aims to provide young jobseekers, long-term unemployed, and jobseekers aged over 55 with a tailored service provision which allows for intensified counselling to address the personal and professional barriers that inhibit their re-integration into labour market.

One important outcome that has been generated by the programme relates to improved coordination skills of job counsellors and the refinement of their job search skills, as well as an increased employment rate for the target group in question.

Name of the PES

Lithuanian PES

Scope of measure
(a pilot project or a national reform)

Nationwide

When was the practice
implemented?

The mentoring programme was implemented in 2014, initially as a pilot project for one year in the region of Kaunas. It has now been implemented nationwide.

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

PES identified the need to develop mentoring programmes for specific target groups. They noticed that special target groups, i.e. young job seekers and jobseekers aged over 55, required additional help and assistance with job searching.

Which organisation was involved
in its implementation?

Organisations involved in the implementation of the mentoring programme include:

- ▶ the PES
- ▶ a network of psychologists
- ▶ academic training institutions (universities and colleges)

Which groups were targeted
by the practice?

While the pilot project primarily focused on targeting unemployed youth and long-term unemployed, the nationwide rollout of the programme also focuses on unemployed jobseekers over 55.

What were the practice's
main objectives?

The main objective of the practice is to increase job opportunities for unemployed youth, long-term unemployed and jobseekers aged over 55. Against this backdrop, the programme seeks to establish a network of mentors that can improve the services provided to the target groups.

What activities were carried out?

During the pilot phase of the project, mentors were selected on a voluntary basis from a pool of specialised job counsellors located within PES. Job counsellors received individual training to prepare for their mentor role and responsibilities. This approach has been reviewed, following the nationwide rollout of the programme. Mentors are no longer chosen on a voluntary basis, but formally apply to become a mentor. Mentors receive training (40 hours) via academic training institutions (universities) to prepare them for their role. The clients are selected by mentors on the basis of their personal and employment history (e.g. length of unemployment), qualification and skills. The mentoring programme lasts a total of six months. Clients are divided into two target groups: clients who are highly motivated, but face continued difficulties in finding employment, and clients who lack motivation, qualifications or experience. Counselling for the former target group focuses on providing assistance with interview preparation and job search, while counselling for the latter group focuses on vocational guidance and psychological support. Mentors work with no more than five to ten clients at the same time, meeting them once or twice per week. Clients continue to receive support from their mentors even after having found a job. Mentors stay in touch with their clients either through email, phone calls or face-to-face meetings at least once a month. Former mentees have the opportunity to share their experience with the programme through workshops, which are held on a regular basis once per month with current and former participants.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?	Apart from the PES, the network of psychologists and academic training institutions, employers are also directly involved in the delivery of the programme. Employers prepare special training programmes, take part in the workshops, and keep in touch with mentors after jobseekers have found employment.
What were the source(s) of funding?	PES national budget
What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	The employment rate of young jobseekers increased by more than 25 % and by more than 15 % amongst older jobseekers in 2015. In addition, 120 job counsellors increased their qualifications by taking part in the training provided by the programme.
What outcomes have been identified?	The mentoring programme has resulted in the establishment of a network of mentors across the country. The network allows for the exchange of knowledge/information and best practices.
What are the lessons learnt and success factors?	The success of the programme depends on the quality of mentoring services that can be provided to each programme participant. This requires a lower number of mentees per mentor as well as a flexible work schedule for each mentor to allow for intensified counselling.



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