

## REACHING OUT TO TARGET GROUPS AND EMPLOYERS (DEVELOPMENT)

The [DevelopmENt DP](#) operated in the Ennepe-Ruhr district of North Rhine-Westphalia, which has the abbreviation: "EN" and hence the strange spelling of the DP's title, to open up new access routes to work for long-term unemployed who were suffering from mental health problems and/or drug and alcohol abuse.

Many of the people that the DP was trying to help were caught in a vicious circle where their lack of qualifications and severe personal problems coincided with the disappearance of simple, structured jobs that could have offered low threshold access to the local labour market. The situation of these individuals was characterised by the fact that public support for social and labour market integration reached them only to a very limited extent or not at all and, in turn, they hardly ever sought such support.

Reaching the target groups and motivating them to make active use of the opportunities that the project offered was a common concern of all partners in the DP. Potential participants were contacted or informed in different ways. It could have been through the local social assistance offices and advice centres, by information activities (leaflets, brochures, press and events) and/or via direct contacts established by social workers. Based on individual interviews and assessments, those who responded and had the potential for (re)-integration into employment received a "tailored" recommendation on the type of steps that they could take and practical help and support for their participation in the appropriate project or activities.

However, through a step by step process, the DevelopmENt DP aimed to bring the most disadvantaged and "hard to place" groups closer to the labour market, by:

- Supplying individualised advice and support to help them stabilise their personality and structure their daily life;
- Offering training and personal assistance leading to placement in paid employment;
- Providing structured work experience or work in the secondary labour market, as an induction to the requirements of working life.

Particular efforts were devoted to coordinating outreach activities aimed at contacting and informing the target groups, assessing their needs, and encouraging and advising them to make use of the services and pilot projects of the DP that appeared to be best placed to offer effective help. This process was facilitated through personal mentoring/tutoring and case management, provision of childcare and the development of an integrated system to document needs and opportunities. These flanking activities were also backed up by specialised staff training.

Another important element of the DP's approach involved special action aimed at convincing employers, and especially SMEs, to provide job opportunities for such disadvantaged groups. DevelopmENt has worked out a set of arguments that draws on the expertise of, and is validated by, key institutions and actors in the business world. It uses these arguments to explain to employers the benefits that diversity based recruitment practices could produce for their companies. The DP has also established standards to improve the quality and procedures of the placement process. These arguments and standards were communicated to employers using face-to-face contact, information materials (leaflets, posters, manuals and reports), lectures, exhibitions and events and e-mail campaigns.

### Contact

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