

MUTUAL LEARNING PROGRAMME:

PEER COUNTRY COMMENTS PAPER - NETHERLANDS

Decentralised targeted co-operation in Dutch employment services,
who is in control?

Peer Review on “Systematic Preventive Integration Approach (Support) for
Jobseekers and Unemployed”

Germany, 28 - 29 October

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1 LABOUR MARKET SITUATION IN THE PEER COUNTRY

This paper has been prepared for a Peer Review within the framework of the Mutual Learning Programme. It provides information on The Netherlands' comments on the policy example of the Host Country for the Peer Review. For information on the policy example, please refer to the Host Country Discussion Paper.

1.1 GDP and (un)employment in The Netherlands

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has fluctuated in the 1990s and the first period in the new millennium. Table 1 shows the highest growth in The Netherlands can be observed in the beginning of the new millennium. Two years later (2002-2003) it declined to almost zero, lower than the EU-27. Until 2007 it increased steadily, from 2006, to higher than the EU GDP's. Even in 2008, in face of the economic crisis, GDP in the country was still 1.9 %, compared to 0.5 in the EU-27. In 2009 GDP fell nearly 4%. For 2010 signs seemed more negative still, but like in the EU-15 and EU-27, GDP recovered.

Table 1, GDP in the Netherlands, EU-27 and EU-15

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
NL	3,9	1,9	0,1	0,3	2,2	2	3,4	3,9	1.9	-3.9	1.9
EU-27	3.9	2.0	1.3	1.2	2.5	2.0	3.2	3.0	0.5	-4.2	1.0
EU-15	3.9	1.9	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	3.0	2.8	0.3	-4.2	0.9

Source: CPB and Eurostat

Between 2000 and 2009 overall labour force participation in The Netherlands grew gradually; from 67% to 71%. However, during these years male labour participation decreased from 79% to 78%. Women were therefore responsible for the increase.

Table 2: Active population participation rate of persons 15 - 64 years old (in %), 2000 - 2010

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 ¹
All persons	67	67	68	68	68	68	68	89	70	71	70
Of which men	79	79	79	79	78	78	78	78	78	78	78
Of which women	54	56	56	57	57	57	59	61	62	63	63

Source: CPB, Main indicators labour market, 1969-2010, 2009

In 2008 on average 7,5 million people were in employment, about 2/3 of the population between 15 and 65. Over 2009 employment had come down to 7,469,000. In FTE's – bearing in mind that The Netherlands have a relative high percentage of part-time jobs - the decrease was substantially higher, from 5,993,000 to 5,932,000, which could reflect the fact that unemployment hit parttimers harder: official unemployment on average increased from 300,000 (2008) to 377,000 (2009), and kept increasing (albeit more slowly) during the first half of 2010 (54,000 additional unemployed). Nonetheless these rates are still moderate in view of most other countries in the EU.

The active population is on average older than before. In 2001 the group between 15 and 25 years amounted to 12.3%. In 2008, it dropped to 11%. The cohort between 40 and 55 grew from 34.6% to 39.6% in 2008. Future shortages in the labour market are to be expected, despite immigration and increasing the pension age to over 65.²

¹ Estimated

² CBS StatLine, Labour force; since 1970 by sex, age, ethnic background and education

From 2000 - 2008 employment grew in FTE's as shown in Table 3.

Table 3, Employment growth 2000-2010 in Full-Time Equivalents, broke down in three main sectors

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Employment in FTE's	1,9	1,6	-0,3	-1,1	0	0	1,6	2,3	1,2	-1,5	-3,75
Of which private sector	1,9	0,9	-1,7	-2,5	-1,3	0	1,9	2,7	1,2	-2,5	-5,25
Social service sector	2,1	5,3	6,3	4,8	1,4	1,6	2,4	1,5	1,8	2,75	2
Public sector	1,4	2,7	2,9	2	-1,9	-1,9	-0,8	0,2	0,5	0,25	0

Source: CPB 2009

Unemployment rates are still significantly lower than in the EU-15 and the EU-27, as Table 5 illustrates. In 2008 and the first months of 2009, unemployment rose moderately compared to the EU-15 and the EU 27. From April 2009 the speed of unemployment rose at comparable speed as in the EU. In the period September 2009 - August 2010 the increase rate in The Netherlands was slightly higher than in the EU, but still at less than 50%. From August 2010 the increase seems on the way back, as Table 4 shows.

Table 4, Harmonised unemployment per month in the Netherlands, EU-27 and EU-15, September 2009 - August 2010

	2009/9	2009/10	2009/11	2009/12	2010/1	2010/2	2010/3	2010/4	2010/5	2010/6	2010/7	2010/8
EU-27	9.3	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6
EU-15	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.5

Source: Eurostat

Although unemployment among women was higher than among men during the last years, women seem to have been hit slightly less than men by the economic crisis. The most vulnerable groups in the labour market were young people (net participation rate down 1.9%), older workers between 55 and 65 (-1.9) and 'non western originated migrants' (-1.8). The level of skills is an indicator for unemployment risks: between 2003 and 2008 lower skilled workers were 'overrepresented' in unemployment in a 1.44 - 1.52 rate - and this share stayed practically constant. The other two skill groups were underrepresented in unemployment: with 'middle' educated at a constant rate of 0.87 every year and higher educated at 0.75.

1.2 Organisation of employment services and job-to-job transitions

The public employment service in the country is provided by local authorities (dealing with unemployed with only certain rights on the general benefit 'Bijstand', or no benefit at all) and UWV Werkbedrijf assisting disabled individuals, people with unemployment benefit rights (based on their former employment experience and length) and labour market oriented clients from the local authorities. This division of tasks dates from 2004, when local authorities attained responsibility for delivering the general benefit system and were involved in employment services for these groups (in general the most vulnerable groups in the labour market).³

In response to the economic crisis UWV has created Werkpleinen (Working Squares), enabling employers to connect to local authorities and UWV in a one stop shop. Of the 97 existing Werkpleinen, 30 serve a region, bringing together as much of the regional and sectoral stakeholders, targeting employment demand, offers and facilities (like training,

³ Wet Werk en Bijstand (Law on Work and Assistance), see also par.2.

APL⁴, mobility services). Moreover, in 33 regions so-called Regional Mobility Centers have been created, to enable UWV Werkbedrijf, in co-operation with (sectoral) social partners and regional stakeholders, to offer assistance and some financial incentives to employers and employees threatened by redundancies (e.g. training bonuses called *scholingsbonus* for job-to-job transitions). The government aims to integrate these temporary centers in the future structure of the employment service.⁵

During the crisis another temporary measure, part-time unemployment (PTUB, *Deeltijd WW*), has been established. It offered companies in difficulties opportunities the chance to keep their employees, but place at most 50% of them in part-time unemployment for a period of at least 26 weeks. During this period employees can be trained, or posted with other employers to strengthen their labour market position in the long run. This was a second tool to promote job-to-job movements.

Social partners had already focussed strongly on job-to-job transitions before the economic crisis. From 2004 - 2006 30% of the 140 sectoral training funds, governed by employers and trade unions, financed work-to-work activities, using 15% of their budgets for these activities.⁶ The total annual budget of all funds together was about 700 million Euros. Most of them are 'connected' to a sectoral collective agreement.

The *Raad voor Werk en Inkomen* (RWI, Council for Work and Income, a tripartite consultative and network body, representing social partners and local communities in labour market policy since 2002) analysed social plans in companies and job-to-job practices. From 2004 - 2008 in 1,050 companies 1,130 social plans had been negotiated. Nearly all these companies had 100 or more employees. In 93% of the plans, job-to-job actions had been taken by social partners, following common advice in the Labour Foundation of 2005.⁷ RWI makes clear that in the future the instrument should be used as much as possible. It could however, be more adapted to the needs and possibilities of smaller companies and of special categories like older workers, lower skilled and partly handicapped. There should be, the RWI claimed, more transparency and thinking on the way employees with a temporary contract included in work-to-work practices.⁸

2 ASSESSMENT OF POLICY MEASURE

2.1 Different target groups of benefits and public employment services

Clients of the public employment service can be registered as unemployed from a diversity of benefit positions, as there are:

- unemployed without former experience in the labour market having no benefit/income rights but the obligation to look for a job (e.g. school leavers with and without

⁴ Accreditation of Prior Learning

⁵ However the new government from October 2010 has announced plans to enlarge the future role of local authorities in employment services, which could mean the regional landscape and structures, will look different in the future.

⁶ Mainly sectoral CLA's with mandatory extension are at the basis of these funds.

⁷ In the special National Pact - agreed in March 2009 between social partners and government, providing a common base for responding to the global crisis, the priority for job to job transitions has been reaffirmed, within sectors as well as territories.

⁸ RWI, *Samen werken aan werk* (Working on work together), The Hague 2008. See also: J.M.P. de Kok, C.J. van Uiter, P.A. van der Hauw, D.H. Grijpstra, *Werk op maat, Curatieve van werk naar werk-activiteiten in de praktijk* (Custom work, Curative from job to job activities in practice), EIM, The Hague 2008. In a Practical Guide RWI sets the conditions and perspectives for successful work-to-work. It stresses the need to invest in employees' employability before a threat of unemployment shows up (= preventive work-to-work policy); the results of 'curative work-to-work' (once a dismissal has been announced) are better if they can build on the base of preventive work-to-work, RWI concludes.

qualifications, women re-entering the labour market); if they have a benefit right according to the WWB⁹ or are less than 27 years of age; the level of their benefit is decided by the local authorities, who can also help 'push' people into the labour market¹⁰.

- (partly) disabled people, among them those on sick leave longer than one year.¹¹ A rapidly growing sub category is the young disabled (Wajongers).
- dismissed employees entering the unemployed benefit scheme executed by UWV, and unemployed labour market oriented guided by UWV
- (from 2009) future unemployed who have received their redundancy notification but are still employed - they are potential clients of the 33 new Regional Mobility Centers all over the country.¹²

Table 5 shows the main groups serviced in 2008, 2009 and (the first two quarters of) 2010.

Table 5, Benefits and officially unemployed 2008-2010, year averages and quarter comparisons (x 1000)

Benefit	2008, year average	2009, year average	2009/1st quarter	2009/2d quarter	2010/1st quarter	2010/2, 2d quarter
Unemployment dismissed (WW)	174	239	198	239	318	289
Disabled ¹³	833	831	832	??	840	832
WWB benefits (under 65 years)	263	270	290	??	267	269
Officially unemployed	344	370	467	436	300	377

Source: Ministry of SZW (Employment), based on data CBS and UWV

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment roughly distinguishes between three groups of clients for its employment services:

⁹ Wet Werk en Bijstand (2004), based on the assumption 'work takes precedence over income'.

¹⁰ The different national budgets for WWB (Wet Werk en Bijstand) are distributed via the local authorities. They receive one total budget for an effective re-integration policy and get a financial incentive. The local authority is thus free to spend an eventual surplus, but should provide its own means if there is a budget deficit. So it pays for a municipality to reduce inflow and promote outflow from these benefits. Until the economic crisis local authorities indeed seemed capable to save on benefit budgets. Nowadays however, the opposite situation has arrived.

¹¹ The first year of illness at work is paid by the employer, who is obliged to take actions to re-integrate the employee in the workplace or somewhere else in the organisation. From then on, sick employees enter into a disabled benefit situation. Most of them have been diagnosed as 'partly employable' and thus a client of the public employment services.

¹² These Regional Mobility Centres cover the whole country since March 2009. The various stakeholders guarantee public-private co-operation. They are always UWV (the unemployment office) and UWV Werkbedrijf (the employment office) and social partners; and mostly knowledge centers, local and provincial communities, educational institutes and their supporters like COLO (the co-operating knowledge centers for VET and industry, active in 40 branches), temp agencies, career centers and re-integration companies. In a regional mobility center the CCM (Coordination Centre Mobility) contacts employers to detect their needs, and the possibilities for training and posting of employees. Together with the individual employer CCM decides which steps to take, and which regional parties could be of help.

¹³ Many of these can be in (part-time) employment, some in official unemployment.

1. unemployed job seekers needing no support or only 'basic consultation' (basisbemiddeling) to find a job (= mostly self-supporting),
2. people with a 'distance to the labour market', who have to be guided to the labour market by 'reintegration support' in order to get a job; they can have had a complete and formal re-integration package (including training etc), but could be in this category to be coached/supervised by a structural UWV coach (= active labour market)
3. people, who at this moment are not able or capable to move to a job, first needing a 'step higher on the re-integration ladder' (= participation, skills/competences, etc.).

Category 2 should get more or less intensive labour market oriented support through an individually targeted case approach, which can start right from the moment someone is registered as unemployed at the local authority or at UWV. For category 3, the labour market is 'too far away'; they will need an individual approach directed to personal growth and a better starting position in the labour market, before actual guidance and consultation can take place.

2.2 Similarities and differences between the German and Dutch systems and activities

The differences between the two systems seem to dominate:

- The Dutch system seems more decentralised and employers and education oriented, with more freedom of movement for local and regional players
- The regional labour market is the main arena for bringing stakeholders together and regulating demand and offers of employment
- The already divided system of public employment services is more and more integrated in multi stakeholder co-operations within Werkpleinen, Regional Mobility Centers and targeted covenants (like the 30 regional covenants on dealing with youth unemployment and spending the budget provided by the Action Plan for Youth Unemployment, and the work and training guarantees in WIJ).
- A Multi stakeholder approach and distinction between self management, activation and participation (the last activity can also be outsourced), could and should lead to a lower case load of UWV consultants - but it is unclear if this has really been the case.
- However similarities can be explored:
- Within a decentralised system incentives have been created towards activation, inclusion of 'external service providers'¹⁴, and introduction of different target groups to be served in different ways - from more or less self management of groups 'near the labour market', part-time employment offers for disabled unemployed, until participation strategies - although less regulated and modeled than in Germany. Job-to-job transitions and employment options for youngsters have been priorities recently, other target groups are given less special attention and guidance.
- Activation is nowadays even a legal key element of employment services directed to youngsters (Action Plan, WIJ), since none of them is entitled benefits any more, and local authorities are obliged to offer them either a job or learning workplace, or offer alternative training (included temporary return to school).
- There is a growing need and urgency of providing evidence about the costs and results of UWV and local authority interventions - as well the HR part of the services

¹⁴ Also including regional players from temp agencies, if regional partners decide so.

as the division of financial budgets. Recently the government has asked for more and reliable data from the regional and local players, to check the return on investments.¹⁵

2.3 Evaluation of results in The Netherlands

Detailed data on the length of stay on the unemployment register, case load per employment adviser and budgets used per client are not available at the national level. The fact however, that UWV's 'integration budget 2009' was completely spent in the first half year illustrates:

- the need to have more overview on costs and results of individual cases¹⁶
- the extra constraints the crisis had on regional employment services
- the room for maneuver individual case managers had on budget decisions.

Still we have some outcomes of what happened at the macro level with UWV and local authorities.

Table 6 shows the number of people entering the unemployment register, those leaving into a job, and UWV share in vacancy filling since 2008. In 2008 still two thirds of new unemployed re-entered the labour market within a year. This performance decreased rapidly in 2009 (39%), but seems to be rising again. UWVs unemployed individuals filled around 1 of 10 vacant jobs in 2008 and 2009, but the market share seems to be rising in 2010. Eventual job-to-job transitions are only included in these data when employees have been formally unemployed, so in practice UWV's share could be higher.

Table 6, New inflow in benefits (WW and WWB), outflow within a year, vacancies filled 2008, 2009 & 2010 (x 1000)

	2008	2009	2009/1	2009/2	2010/1	2010/2 ¹⁷
New unemployed (WW) due to dismissal (UWV)	216	401	89	96	119	-
Back to a job	137 (=63%)	157 (=39%)	33 (=37%)	38 (=40%)	58 (=49%)	-
New WWB benefits (local authorities)	108	88	25	21	-	-
Vacancies filled	1090	794	221	202	177	-
Of these vacancies: filled via UWV	103 (= 9%)	92 (= 12%)	21 (10%)	23 (= 11%)	28 (16%)	-

Source: SZW, based on CBS and UWV

Since April 2009 70.000 employees have been in PTUB. More than 50% were out again in the end of July 2010. 90% of them did not face redundancy after PTUB. Of the 6,420 employees made redundant after PTUB, for 42% of individuals it was the case within a period of 13 weeks. Their employers were obliged to repay the government, unless they had gone bankrupt. UWV states one third of these redundant employees had got a new job

¹⁵ Due to the crisis, before the summer of this year, all of a sudden the 2010 re-integration budget of UWV turned out completely used. The government decided to stop local budget rights, and made sure next year better monitoring of spend and results can be performed at the national level.

¹⁶ By decentralizing more employment services to local authorities a new government could outsource risks and responsibilities for budgets and effectiveness.

¹⁷ No data available

in June 2010.¹⁸ These data suggest PTUB has been a success and has helped a lot of companies and employees survive the most difficult period of the crisis. Until now however, no data are available on the more indirect long term effects of PTUB: the market position and perspectives and innovation of restructuring companies, the labour market perspectives of trained PTUB employees, and the role of workers representatives as co-makers of management of restructuring.

Only rough results of Regional Mobility Centers' activity are available. In the first four months of 2010 4,200 people have been guided in a job-to-job transition without being unemployed. Another 4,055 were moved to a new job within 3 months of unemployment. In the 9 months the centers worked in 2009, the total of people moved was around 100,000 individuals.¹⁹ It seems the numbers of successful interventions are slowly growing, and are a substantial part of the work load of UWV.

2.4 Priorities for improvements

To review the recent changes and focus of the employment services, the Ministry of labour established a support team, which has been evaluating the main activities and results. The group, consisting of 6 labour market experts with various backgrounds (social partners, knowledge providers, other stakeholders), formulated 6 main conclusions. These focus partly on themes highlighted in the German host country paper:

The system of more regionally managed employment services seems more efficient and effective. But the new **infrastructure at the work squares** (Werkpleinen) created - established to better cope with labour market problems during the crisis - should get a chance to be developed further. Progress has been accomplished; still, too many advisers deal with one client at the work squares. In the first stage the one stop shop principle does work, but in latter stages of the guidance the WW (Unemployment Benefit) and the WWB (General Support) clients are still served separately. Improving the joint approach to employers by local authorities and UWV requires a special effort of both employment services. Integrating the work of Regional Mobility Centers with the contribution from local government could be an important driver of better performances, in regard to the positive influence these Centers had already in bringing together various service.

The new law WIJ has complicated **registration and identification** of (potential) unemployed youngsters, as they have no benefit rights and only a participation obligation. Only 25% of young job seekers know about this law and its implications. The objective to create much more internships within companies had not been as successful as intended. Most of these youngsters have to explore the labour market themselves. Special placement agents for internships, connecting employers and youngsters, could make the difference. Furthermore the bigger local authority in a region, the *centrum gemeente*, should take responsibility to co-ordinate the activities of all local authorities

There is a need for a **more transparent and targeted approach of regional employers**. Centrum gemeenten and the Regional Mobility Center (job-to-job) should take the lead in improving regional cooperation between different public organisations and businesses.

The crisis led to a focus on improving labour market transitions for young people while **neglecting labour market problems of other vulnerable target groups**, in particular lower skilled older workers, 45+ workers and disabled employees. Moreover, for low skilled youngsters, WIJ and employment services are less effective, partly because Youth Care Institutions are not yet present in the work squares.

The **promotion of intersectoral mobility** is still one of the Achilles heels of regional employment services. Interconnecting sectoral social partner initiatives and funds with

¹⁸ Letter to the Parliament from Labour Minister Donner, August 31 2010

¹⁹ Press communication SZW June 8 2010

regional and local needs and budgets (co-funding) is a tough mission. National social partners should find solutions to tackle this problem.²⁰ More **transparency on effects and results** is needed, both for the reputation and the effectiveness of regionally oriented employment services.

3 ASSESSMENT OF THE SUCCESS FACTORS AND TRANSFERABILITY

3.1 Success factors and conditions

The host paper highlights the centralised system of employment systems in Germany as one of the preconditions for results and transferability. Some elements therefore could not be transferred to the Dutch system, as the central governance of employment services - and thus: centrally governed measures - is far from the actual situation. Moreover the most successful element of Dutch employment service activities is the regional stakeholders participation, including that of employers.

Nevertheless elements of the German experience seem worth considering. The claim that local PES consultants deliver a certain minimum in direct contacts with employers (20% of their working time) and as much guarantees as possible to have a one-to-one relation with job seekers, are promising aspects for effective service delivering. The individual placement budget, and the autonomy of local advisers to deal and decide, are a second element which could be looked at. (One of the problems with job-to-job transitions in The Netherlands is still that a series of facilities are only available once an employee is officially unemployed and entitled to a benefit. Job loss however can be a big handicap in finding and qualifying for a new job. If UWV could depose on an individual budget to be used during employment, the precondition of a real job-to-job placement would be easier to reach²¹)

3.2 Transferability

Direct transferability of practices between Germany and The Netherlands is limited for the reasons set out above.

Giving more and sharper attention to governance, control and quality of the process of job transition seems nevertheless a common field of interest. The conclusions of the support group, analysing new practices at the regional levels (see 2.4) are partly in line with the ideas behind the German model. In particular:

- More attention to individual processes and quality management
- A better analysis of target groups and the various needs they have to (re)qualify for labour market participation
- Better and more qualitative micro data on effectiveness and costs of employment services

The use of high level software support for the various groups of clients will be different in a decentralised system; however the German experiences could be helpful, as the Dutch

²⁰ Invited by the government, national tripartite consulting body SER (Social Economic Council) published a unanimous outline for improvements in intersectoral mobility transitions.

²¹ Here however the discussion on "who pays?" for placements is at stake: Can the public employment subsidise in one way or another employers planning to make employees redundant, and is not in the first place the role and responsibility of social partners to cover the period of formal employment and mobility measures? In The Netherlands the approved solution is to establish co-funding and co-operation (= public private partnership), guaranteeing that no party is leaning too much on the shoulders of the other ones.

system is also considering better IT-support to direct personal guidance optimally to those needing it most.

The continuum of self management towards intense guidance of client groups is also a common point of orientation. It should be seen if the German categories can add useful experience to the Dutch regional stakeholder approach.

4 QUESTIONS

1. What is the appreciation of employers and trade unions of the new system? Are they stakeholders? Do they point at positive results, and which are they?
2. Has the share in vacancy filling by the PES improved after the introduction of the new placement system?
3. Is there discussion about 'who pays?' for people still in employment and on their way to job-to-job transition?
4. Why are the effects in Germany not really measured in detail (like equally is the case in The Netherlands)? Does the German - more centralised - system not provide the preconditions for adequate quality control, information and improvement incentives?

ANNEX 1: SUMMARY TABLE

Labour market situation in the Peer Country
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment rates comparably low, women less hit; youngsters, older workers and migrants most hit • PES regionalised, divided over UWV and local communities, directed towards multi-stakeholder approaches and more employer needs facilitations • Job-to-job transitions by social partners (social plans) and recently by PED (Regional Mobility Centres)
Assessment of the policy measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netherlands: broad groups of different servicing by PES: self managing, needing (intensive) advising/guiding, participation as a step towards the labour market • Youngsters and job-to-job transition target activities during the crisis - 'forgetting' other risk groups? • Many differences with Germany, some principles of new DE system could be common values and inspirations
Assessment of success factors and transferability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer difficult as system construction is very different • Individually targeted budgets could be improved, if in public private partnerships • Main opportunities for transfer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on individual processes and quality management -Better analysis target groups and the various needs they have -Better and more qualitative micro data • Developing and using adequate software potential learning point
Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement and opinion of employers and trade unions? • Share in vacancy filling improved by PES innovations? • 'Who pays?' for people still in employment and on their way to job-to-job transition? • Why are the effects not really measured in detail?