



ENHANCING ICT TOOLS
FOR BETTER
REINTEGRATION SERVICES

The Participation Ladder

Information review: October 2015

THE NETHERLANDS

The Participation Ladder (PL) project is an ICT tool used to measure the extent to which each person participates in society. It was introduced in 2008 as Dutch municipalities became increasingly responsible for the reintegration of unemployed and inactive people in the labour market.

The introduction of the participation budget in 2009 offered municipalities more freedom to offer tailor-made solutions for the reintegration of (jobless) people in the labour market. At the same time, it increased the need among municipalities for a comprehensive and standardised overview of clients eligible for the participation budget as well as for comparable information on results of reintegration efforts.

Name of the PES

Divosa

When was the practice implemented?

2008 – on-going.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

Aside from municipalities and their social services, the Dutch Association of Municipalities (VNG) is not the only organisation involved in the implementation of the PL. It currently operates closely with the organisation of managers of the social services (Divosa) and with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

Which social groups were targeted by the practice?

- Jobseekers
- ▶ All unemployed
 - ▶ Young people
 - ▶ Migrants
 - ▶ Recipients of social assistance

Unemployed clients of municipal social services with a participation budget; e.g. recipients of social assistance, young people (sometimes young people on unemployment benefit), and migrants.

What were the practice's main objectives?

The practice is used to identify the needs of recipients of social assistance eligible for re-integration services, adult education services, and special services for (low-/uneducated) migrants. It is also used to generate management information (how many clients have been placed in jobs, and how many still need to be placed), and to measure the results of the integration activities of municipalities, i.e. by mapping labour market transitions.

What activities were carried out?

Case managers must use the PL tool when registering clients. They categorise clients on a scale from 1 to 6 (from 'socially isolated' to 'autonomously employed') on the basis of four questions:

- ▶ What is the current level of participation?
- ▶ Is there potential for achieving a higher level of participation?
- ▶ Which societal subgroup does the client belong to?
- ▶ Does the client already utilise municipal instruments to promote participation?

In addition, the PL includes a section on the potential for reintegration of the client and several questions on client characteristics tailored to the requirements of the participation budget. Several questions on educational attainment and income can therefore be asked. Finally, the PL requires the registration of the basic characteristics of the client and internal process data.

All municipalities measure their clients at least once per year. It has become an integral part of client tracking systems to provide up-to-date information on clients.

<p>What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?</p>	<p>The PL is implemented by municipalities and their social services under the supervision of VNG, which also finances nation-wide implementation.</p> <p>Its implementation involves different actors from different organisations such as case managers, upper management, policy makers, ICT specialists, planning and control staff, and quality management.</p> <p>Since 2012, Divosa (the Dutch national association of managers within municipal services in the fields of work, participation, income, social welfare and social inclusion) has provided support for the implementation of the PL.</p>
<p>Source(s) of funding</p>	<p>National budget (tax revenue) Local/municipal budget (tax revenue)</p>
<p>What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?</p>	<p>People reached: The project initially involved six pilot municipalities. More municipalities have progressively joined and are continuously invited to participate. The PL is currently used by approximately 140 municipalities, which are structured in 96 organisations (including inter-municipal social services).</p> <p>Products: Website (www.participatieladder.nl – in Dutch), ICT tools, staff policies, and policy guidelines.</p>
<p>What outcomes have been identified?</p>	<p>Municipalities essentially use the PL as it was intended to be used. However, some municipalities deviate from the original design in certain ways. For example, some have introduced a new feature to indicate a client's potential whilst others have made changes to accommodate the different ICT environments in which municipalities operate. Despite such differences, generating comparable data on reintegration among municipalities appears to be feasible.</p> <p>The practice is also viewed by case workers as more than just a client registration and categorisation device. It is also used to support actions, the organisational structure in the social service, and choices on expenditure. The PL (potentially) supports the monitoring of clients over time and allows for collecting information on the different labour market transitions that people make during life's course.</p>
<p>What are the lessons learnt and success factors?</p>	<p>The evaluation of the practice found that implementation depends on several factors such as sufficient awareness and support within the organisation. In order to achieve smooth implementation, the services should be piloted first. Finally, lessons-learned by other (inter-) municipal social services should be shared and used to improve services.</p> <p>With regard to the application of the PL by members of staff of (inter-)municipal social services, the evaluation found that it is generally considered to be very user-friendly. It encourages users to fundamentally think differently about their clients, objectives and means. It is also viewed as more than just an instrument for registering clients; in addition to its basic features of registration and categorisation, the PL supports actions, the organisational structure in the social service, and choices on expenditure.</p> <p>In addition, the evaluation found that the PL is applied in a largely uniform way by all Dutch (inter-) municipal social services, which allows for the generation of comparable data.</p>
<p>More information on the practice</p>	<p>http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/weesp/NL-4.pdf</p>



Contact details for further information

Email: info@divosa.nl

Telephone: + 31 30 23 32 337

Website: www.divosa.nl