



European  
Commission

COMBATING YOUTH  
UNEMPLOYMENT BY OFFERING  
JOBS, APPRENTICESHIPS  
OR INTERNSHIPS

# Step2Work

Information review: October 2015

## THE NETHERLANDS

The practice is a joint venture of Dutch municipalities, PES and the social partners from the energy sector to prevent and counteract youth unemployment. Participants in the programme may enter a training path comparable to an apprenticeship. Nearly all participants who chose to enter the learning/training track completed the programme and obtained a qualification; 95% obtained an ISCED qualification within one year. More than two-thirds of participants are employed three months after obtaining their qualification.

Name of the PES

PES does not play a coordinating role. Case managers may direct jobseekers to the programme.

When was the practice implemented?

2007 – On-going

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

Two large energy companies, NUON and Alliander, committed themselves to the Step2Work programme. PES and municipalities raise awareness among potential participants (unemployed people, unqualified young people).  
Municipalities' co-fund components of the project.

Which social groups were targeted by the practice?

Jobseekers (above the age of 45):

- ▶ Young people
- ▶ Older jobseekers

People seeking training:

- ▶ Out of work: young people

What were the practice's main objectives?

The purpose of Step2Work is to combat youth unemployment by offering jobs, apprenticeships or internships. Unemployed people above the age of 45 have recently become eligible for the programme. Additional investments have been made in job coaching. The project specifically targets low-skilled and/or unskilled people who are considered far from the labour market.

What activities were carried out?

The energy sector provides additional jobs, apprenticeships, internships, and job coaching for the target group in return for co-funding from the municipalities (and the European Social Fund, ESF).

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

Within the energy company, a dedicated team of HR managers are involved in the management, selection, placement, and monitoring of participants. The size of the management team depends on the size of the participant group.

Source(s) of funding

National budget (tax revenue)  
Local/municipal budget (tax revenue)  
European Social Fund  
Private source(s): participating private companies and the social partners

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

**People reached:**  
The programme offers apprenticeships; 70 in 2009.

**Products:**  
Work protocols, job-coaching tools/manuals, 'entry into employment' welcome packages, training materials, website and video material.

**What outcomes have been identified?**

After nearly five years of existence, social partners are still committed to the programme and willing to continue to invest in it, both from a perspective of training potential future employees and from a corporate social responsibility perspective. However, funding from the Dutch government (municipalities and PES) has decreased, partly due to reaching the end of the ESF budget. Participants in the programme may enter a training path comparable to an apprenticeship, with the aim of obtaining an ISCED level 0-4 qualification. Among the participants choosing to follow such a training path, 95% obtained an ISCED qualification within one year. Three months after completing the training, 65-75% of these participants were in employment.

**What are the lessons learnt and success factors?**

The annual internal evaluations are used to increase efficiency in the process and effectiveness in the results. It was found that involving the 'right people' as staff and implementers of the programme was essential to increase the success rate of the practice, nominally those who were familiar with and motivated to support young people. Additionally, involving teachers from a local school to analyse which components of the existing job functions could potentially match the competencies of the participants was also considered useful. The evaluation also found that the organisation was willing to pay for the job coaching because they felt it was more valuable to use internal rather than external job coaches.

**More information on the practice**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/empl\\_portal/weesp/NL-11.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/weesp/NL-11.pdf)



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