



SEMINAR REPORT

PES NETWORK SEMINAR ON PILOTING AND EVALUATION

18 JANUARY 2018
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



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ON PILOTING AND EVALUATION**

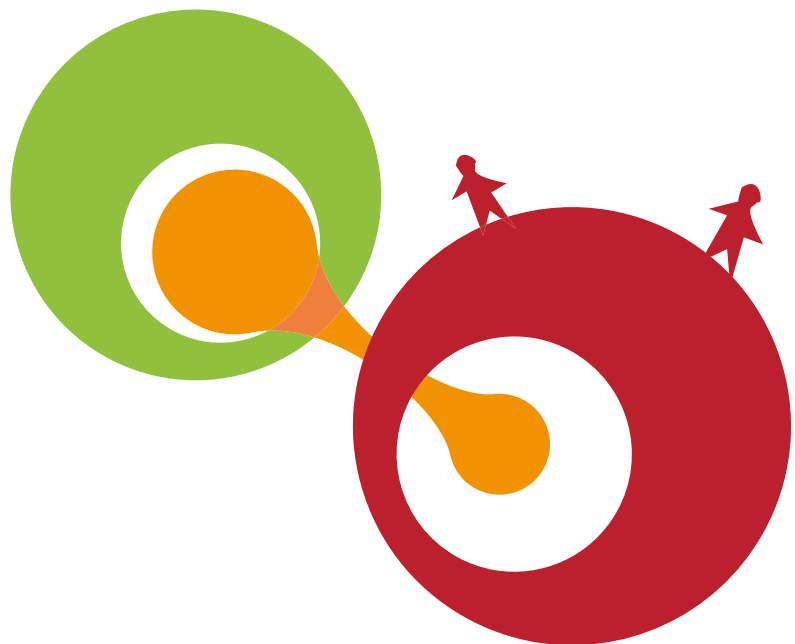
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The PES Network Seminar aimed to provide participating PES with an opportunity to share their current piloting and evaluation practices, proven approaches and lessons learnt and also looking into the prerequisites for developing a successful piloting and evaluation strategy. The seminar built on the work of the PES Network Working Group on Piloting and Evaluation, which met twice in 2017 to exchange the best practices between the most advanced PES in the area of piloting and evaluation.¹

Over the course of the day, the seminar addressed the following topics:

- The importance of piloting and evaluation and how it links to the PES Benchlearning exercise;
- The use of big data and data warehousing in the context of evidence-based decision-making;
- The pros, cons and lessons learnt from applying piloting activities, in particular randomised control trials (RCTs) and other methods; and
- The dissemination of the evidence.

The Network Seminar was attended by the representatives of the PES from 24 countries, the European Commission, the independent expert and the PES Mutual Learning Support Team.

Piloting and Evaluation – What can it offer and what are the key prerequisites for successful piloting and evaluation strategy in the PES?

The PES Network has formally recognised the evaluation and assessment of active labour market initiatives and their effective and efficient implementation as one of the objectives of the PES Network.² Furthermore, piloting and evaluation have been formally reflected in the Benchlearning exercise and the Change reports, emphasising and supporting the development of robust piloting and evaluation systems in the PES. In the Benchlearning exercise, Section E assesses, for each PES, the evidence based design and implementation of PES services across several dimensions, which helped to capture the PES maturity in piloting. Thomas Gross Havsager (STAR-DK) presented an overview of the importance of piloting and evaluation in the context of PES operations. Discussions between Working Group members and participants focused on their different approaches to evaluation and piloting, including how

PES can further develop their approaches following input and potential ideas from other PES. Working Group discussions also showed how important it is to have a systematic approach in place as this can form a continuous circle of evidence, which can help develop/improve the overall PES system. **Denmark** has developed a systematic approach to reviewing a vast pool of national and international literature on what piloting and evaluation methods that work well, and how available evidence can be best used to inform strategic and operational PES decisions³.

The discussion also focussed on the key prerequisites which need to be in place for establishing a successful piloting and evaluation strategy in the PES, centring around the following questions:

- What do we want to know about PES services?
- How can we build up such knowledge?
- What is the ultimate purpose of this knowledge?
- What conclusions can we draw to inform the PES strategic and operational decisions?

It was noted that there are differences in the data available across the different areas of PES services and there may also be differences in the methodological know-how of piloting and evaluation across the different countries. In some PES there may be a large base of researchers and in others there may be a greater focus on conducting research rather than creating a knowledge bank on the effects. The Working Group members then provided reflections on their views on key prerequisites:

In **Denmark**, the political willingness of PES management and policymakers in the government along with data awareness as well as the building practical know-how and knowledge on methods such as RCTs are considered as key prerequisites. Evidence has been gathered over the last 10 years, allowing the Danish PES to demonstrate to policy

1 The participating PES scored highest in Section E within the Benchlearning exercise; Evidence-based design and implementation of PES Services. The meetings took place in June 2017 in Denmark and in October 2017 in Estonia, with participating PES from Belgium-VDAB, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany and the Netherlands. The third and final meeting took place after the Network Seminar on 19 January 2018 in Belgium.

2 Article 3 (h) of the Decision on Enhanced Co-Operation between PES.

3 <https://www.jobeffekter.dk/>



makes the effectiveness of their measures and underlining areas of improvement. A similar situation was also noted in **the Netherlands**, where the emphasis lies on the importance of having good quality data in place and the awareness of the importance of piloting and evaluation, both internally within the PES as well as externally. Decision makers have demanded hard evidence to show what is working in the PES services – what works for whom at what point in time. This approach is helping to equip the PES to become future proof in their delivery.

The **German PES** felt that a prerequisite is having a PES learning culture in place, meaning that management and staff are willing to learn from the past and able to make changes based on the results. In addition, good data warehousing is key to enabling well-thought through studies to be developed. Staff need to be motivated and skilled to do conduct studies, and the dissemination of the results of piloting and evaluation needs to be carefully considered as this can be difficult within a large organisation. Similarly, the experience from **France** shows how important it is to build the expertise within the organisation and establish links with academics and private research organisations to produce well written evaluations. They also stressed the importance of having a skilled team of practitioners, economists and social scientists. In France, information is disseminated but this is communicated in a way that is appropriate for the target group. The French PES aims to in the future improve the information for frontline PES counsellors – exploring the questions of what works and why. In the same manner, in **Estonia**, having motivated and skilled staff is important and it helps to build a learning culture within the PES. Data warehousing is an important part of the Estonian approach, they have skilled staff within the PES and are building links with universities and IT firms, which are more specialist in data analysis and datamining. In **Hungary**, they also perceive a learning culture to be important along with the political support to piloting and evaluation.

In **Belgium-VDAB**, piloting and evaluation is an ongoing process that is anchored in their approach. Timing of piloting and evaluation activities is perceived as key by VDAB so that evidence can be built accordingly, and it can be presented in a timely manner to help shaping the political discourse.

The wider discussion in this session then focussed on different types of piloting:

- In **Denmark**, the PES attracts municipalities to become involved in piloting by having extra funding available and are not over-prescriptive about how the piloting is undertaken; in this way municipalities may take slightly different approaches.
- In **Austria**, nearly all PES activities are measured and evaluated internally via their data warehouse and external evaluations. For every training measure, the PES captures feedback about the effects, its efficiency and customer satisfaction, which helps to influence future work. They also evaluate the work of training institutions and partners' work as part of their commitment to improve the PES performance. Managers and staff are open to change and have the skills to manage the process. This willingness to take part in piloting and evaluation from all PES levels is really important.
- In **Malta**, the PES collects large amounts of data but they do not have the skills to access it (as they have ICT staff issues) they have therefor brought in external experts to develop management scoreboards. These will soon be improved to be updated automatically on a daily basis.
- The **Swedish** PES has recently started to undertake the RCTs and found that understanding about RCTs and their usefulness varies depending on the level of staff. Spreading awareness and understanding among staff has been a challenge in terms of understanding what impact evaluation is and how it can contribute. In addition, clarity on who owns the results (and is therefore responsible for sharing the results) needs to be further developed.
- In the **Danish** case of implementing RCTs, they have explored different ways to capture what really works. They have provided clearer information to municipalities on how RCTs should be delivered (e.g. stating that there should be 15 minutes of preparation before each meeting with a client, three themes should be addressed and specifying the follow-up actions afterwards). Trust is a key part of the Danish system. Communicating what is evidence and what the strengths and weakness are is important but no one size fits

all. In Denmark, they moved from having speculative knowledge to hard evidence and being clear on how outcomes can be used for what purpose.

Session I – Building data warehouses and making use of big data

This was an area many seminar participants identified as a learning area in their pre-event questionnaire and previous discussions already showed how vital good quality data and robust data warehouses are to the piloting and evaluation. Data warehouses are important elements for piloting and evaluation activities, but they require time, investment and resources in order to develop them. Using data collected by other parties can be beneficial but this can also often be problematic due to legislation and data protection issues. The session included two examples of PES data warehouses from **Belgium-VDAB and Denmark**, followed by an open discussion.

The **Belgium-VDAB** example showed how their big data approach via their internal 'Innovation Lab' has provided VDAB with an opportunity to explore whether it is possible to predict the length of unemployment for current jobseekers. The PES took the data for jobseekers from the last three to four years (around 40 000 clients) to build a model to predict the length of unemployment. Between 300 and 400 variables have been inbuilt into the model. These include their studies, experience, languages, activity on the online PES portal, location, age, job searches and if they have a drivers' license. The model can provide counsellors with insights into customers and their chances of finding a job (as a%) in a certain number of days. The model is updated with live data. It is built around specific job searches that the PES clients use and can provide some information on how the chances of finding a job can be improved e.g. uploading a CV, looking for different types of jobs. This data can be used in the jobseeker and counsellor sessions and help to focus the jobseekers' search into the right areas. At a higher level, team leaders can look at the spread of jobseekers across each counsellor via a heat map and this can help to focus the counsellors' efforts on those clients most in need. The data will be used to help team leaders and counsellors to prioritise their caseload, as some clients have a caseload of over 1 000 clients.

A feedback loop will be integrated so that counsellors can say whether the model recommendations are relevant. The model is refined every two to three months. The key idea is that the model can be complemented with a self-evaluation and be implemented by the counsellors. At the moment, the model has a 76% success rate (and is in fact more successful than counsellor judgements), however VDAB knows that the model alone will not be sufficient in providing services to jobseekers. VDAB worked together with counsellors during the pilot stage to ensure that they were on board and had tested the approach.

In the future, VDAB would like to refine the model to take account of new emerging labour market needs and to take account of age and regional differences in addition to health and family issues.

The PES data warehouse / dashboard in **Denmark** is based solely on administrative data from all municipalities, bringing together data from other registers, such as those from health history and personal information.⁴ In Denmark, there is legislation in place to ensure that data from municipalities is collected automatically and is also publicly available. All parties have a clear understanding on what data is collected, in what form, whom it will be shared with and what it will be used for. Such shared understanding has taken time to develop this but it is an important investment. The data in the PES data warehouse is updated on a daily basis and they can look at specific data around gender, age, ethnicity, employment benefit status and the length of unemployment. Data protection laws are in place and strictly followed. There is a demand for this information from politicians and therefore there are resources, time and energy built into this process. The Danish PES works closely with the Danish Agency for Statistics to collect this data and the Agency handles all of the personal and confidential data. The data warehouse began in its current form in 2005-2006, but much data was collected before this time. External help was used. Municipalities have their own IT contractors and they are clear on what data is registered, in what format and over what time frames. Within the Danish PES, they have an external company who is responsible for the

⁴ The public version is available at <http://www.jobindsats.dk/jobindsats/>

management, validation processes, correction and distribution of data and presentation of data. This is due to staff turn-over, lack of knowledge and specialist experience.

Other PES also shared their experiences of developing and running data warehouses.

The Estonian PES is currently building a data warehouse. Beforehand, data was stored in different databases on an ad hoc basis. The data warehouse project was started in June 2017, working with an external partner. Data protection issues are proving (proven?) to be tricky, for example around who can access which types of data. IT specialists are important in this process but it is also very important that all parties speak the same language.

Session II – RCTs

The session focussed on exchanging experiences in undertaking the RCTs in the PES context, as they are considered by some evaluators to be the golden standard in evaluation. RCTs can provide really valuable results in terms of identifying what specifically works, for whom and when. However, they require very careful planning and consideration, particularly around ethical questions. The session included reflections on RCTs from **Denmark, Estonia, Netherlands and Austria**, followed by an open discussion.

In **Denmark**, RCTs are considered as the golden standard and most reliable way to conduct studies. They are more and more the primary chosen methodology. The Danish PES found that it is important to invest time in working out what PES measures are to be evaluated in RCTs, what they are supposed to be compared to, what are the control and treatment groups. There is a need to be very specific on describing what the method is supposed to contribute to and what will happen with the RCT results.

In **Estonia**, an RCT has been used to look at the counselling effects on the job search process, using a quasi-experimental approach to analyse the impact of counselling frequency and quality on the exit rates to employment / inactivity. In Estonia, all registered unemployed people are required to take part in job search counselling and counsellors are allowed to ask the individual jobseekers to come in more often than the regular intervals of 30 days.

The counselling was structured around seven building blocks and there was monitoring to make sure that the counselling took place in a uniform way. The study was conducted between September 2014 and August 2015 in three (out of 28) offices in regions that had different social conditions with general counsellors. All jobseekers in the region were randomly assigned. The control group received counselling on every 14 or 30 days. Clients were selected randomly using their unique ID number. In parallel, the PES also developed an IT solution to help counsellors to improve their sessions. This included a profile page for each client and notifications for each counsellor e.g. when jobseekers should come into the office. No ethical concerns were raised within PES staff or participants.

The results showed that on average, the higher the counselling frequency, the higher the exits from inactivity. Some groups reacted better from the greater impact than others e.g. women exited into employment more frequently.

The Estonian PES has learnt that the design of RCTs needs proper thought and they need to be timed correctly. In this case, it was really important that the individual had the same counsellor throughout the process. Participants and counsellors were informed that there was an experiment running but not necessarily that they were taking part. The RCT led to an increased workload for counsellors and there was some reluctance from them (particularly when having to explain to clients why they had a greater frequency of counselling).

In **the Dutch PES**, an RCT was started in 2017 to explore whether face to face and additional services are cost effective and if they contribute to a faster return to work compared to the standard online services. The RCT will look at an inflow of 33 000 people and those dependent on unemployment benefit. It will exclude 20% of all categories from additional services including face to face services (they will only receive online services); the other 80% will receive the total package of services. It will calculate the opportunities to find the way back to the labour market within one year. This experience showed how important it is to undertake a thorough risk and impact assessment for the RCT beforehand. Another important lesson learnt related to the need to explain the RCT and its methodology across all levels of the PES organisation, to explain the aims of the work and to raise awareness.



The **Austrian example** related to the RCT of the personal pilot in 2015 where they tried to find out whether there were changes in results when they reduced the number of jobseekers per advisor, and whether this would deliver better results in terms of labour market re-integration. They found that only few studies exist in this area in Germany or Denmark, but no such studies were undertaken in Austria. They used the RCT method and split the customers randomly and some customers got more time for counselling, others got the same service. It took place in one local office and one region where the staff were increased to accommodate this work. The groups were similar, grouped according to their position in the social security system; job offers; training, sanctions and sign offs, ongoing internal and external support. The project had a steering group in place made up of internal and external experts.

The RCT results showed that more job search activities and positive effects was the outcome in the treatment group. This was stronger in the group of LTU and older jobseekers and weaker in those with health issues. Men also experienced a stronger effect than women in job placement, and it was interesting to see that more women than men exited to the labour market. Via the customer satisfaction survey, it was interesting to see that there were better results in those who knew that they were receiving additional support. In the treatment group, the caseload was one counsellor to 100 individuals, rather than the usual caseload of 1 to 250. Counsellors involved had similar competences and they didn't use those who were new in their jobs or being lower qualified.

Other country examples of RCTs were also discussed in the session. In **Sweden**, the PES has recently started to do RCTs. Labour market researchers have started with this before PES as an external research. The new RCT undertaken in the PES intends to measure the effect of the intensity of meeting with jobseekers and there is an additional RCT on young jobseekers. Ethical issues are a major concern in Sweden. They have an ethical review board and all public institutions refer to the ethical review board their RCT plans. Similarly, in **Belgium-VDAB** they receive significant ethical objections from trade unions so they do not use RCTs but there is a changing attitude at the moment. In this respect, the Netherlands

experience shows that informing stakeholders is important in the RCT planning stages.

Session III – Piloting with other methods other than RCTs

The session discussed PES experiences of using other methods of evaluation and piloting, including more qualitative methods. This is important as RCTs are not always possible, or feasible or desirable due to methodological concerns, ethical objections, resource constraints or the lack of methodological expertise. The session discussed two examples of evaluations from France and Hungary, followed by an open discussion.

In **France**, a recent evaluation of support to young jobseekers was undertaken. This was an intensive support project for young jobseekers within the Youth Guarantee framework. The objective of the support was to provide access to employment for young people in key target areas, who were experiencing difficulties with integration into the labour market. 800 counsellors were dedicated to this support which lasted for six months.

The evaluation covered 150 000 programme entries between 2014 and 2016. An impact assessment was conducted using the propensity score matching method, in order to reduce the statistical bias between the participants and non-participants and hence statistical twins were identified. This method complemented another evaluation on the pilot for young people and the results of a previous evaluation helped to define the results for this evaluation. The evaluation took place 18 months after the new scheme was put in place. The qualitative approach was important too, with a web survey for counsellors and managers, and a telephone survey between the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. They also used administrative data about the profile of individuals and different services delivered. The actors involved included research specialists and economists, and a regular working group was established to oversee the evaluation internally in the PES.

The evaluation results showed a positive impact on access to employment especially with young people who had many difficulties. They had a 10-percentage point higher probability of leaving unemployment after three months of support.

Participants were also more satisfied with their support than those in the control group and were more motivated in their job search. A new evaluation will be launched on the same programme but the objective will be to measure the displacement effects.

In **Hungary**, a recent evaluation applied a method of social return on investment in the context of a small-scale pilot, developed by an NGO, to provide outreach activity with young Roma people who are not engaged with the PES.

The pilot was carried out in a small village a short distance away from Budapest with a population of 2 000 including 400 Roma (the majority of which had not completed their compulsory education). The NGO worked with volunteers, and no professional counsellors or social workers were involved. The evaluation found that the effects of the project were very positive. The method used was the social return on investment to identify costs and benefits at the social level, including involvement in labour market, health and wellbeing sub-indicators and the intervention's added value in the long term. The outcome was that in 10 years' time the benefit was 3.6 times more than the costs, whilst noting that some elements such as crime and drug abuse hard to calculate so it is therefore slightly theoretical in parts. It also found that the cost of working with Roma young people at the age of 16 would remain the same for two years but the benefit would increase significantly after this. The mainstreaming of results is a challenge as the pilot's success was based on the quality of volunteers, engagement and level of trust which is not easily reproduced elsewhere.

The following discussion highlighted the experiences of other countries with using other piloting and evaluation methods.

In **Lithuania**, the PES previously had different piloting and evaluation approaches, based on separate initiatives or the availability of the ESF funding (e.g. measuring effectiveness of ALMPs) and now the aim is to evaluate the PES labour market services. At present, they have only customer satisfaction questionnaires in place, but they are preparing a new project to increase the use of evaluation and statistical approaches. The key pilot at the moment is happening in the local offices, they are piloting a mentoring system where career counsellors pick those most disadvantaged and the PES cooperate with municipality (specifically in cases of those

inactive those in rural areas with alcohol issues). They found that they can try to engage with person on individual level, but it is much better to influence groups rather than individuals. This work started in 2017 and it has not been formally introduced throughout, but the PES will look at the results before mainstreaming across Lithuania.

In **Iceland**, the PES has comprehensive data and statistics in place, but no formal evaluations as such have been undertaken hence the PES is to learn and improve in the future. At the moment, the evaluations of PES results and methods are more informal and they are planning to carry out an evaluation on the PES customer service and use it results to improve services. Data warehouse has existed in the PES since 2000 but there are few experts who are able to produce statistics and provide direct information to staff.

In **Romania**, evaluations in the PES undertaken so far were based on specific projects as funding evaluations is a challenge. At the moment, the PES is planning to have an evaluation of employer services funded via the ESF. They will work with national external researchers to evaluate employer services and the precise choice of methods is going to be discussed.

In **Slovenia**, the PES is facing a turning point and trying to make steps forward in terms of digitalisation and evaluation plans, in order to have regular monitoring, customer satisfaction and a more thorough evaluation approach. They still have some important issues to overcome, including the possibility of having other data as the PES currently only have unemployment records and no possibility to collect and have access to other data.

In **Cyprus**, the agenda on piloting and evaluation is also being taken forward and an action plan is to be submitted in the near future. In particular, an evaluation is planned on employer services as a dedicated employers unit is being set up (with one employment office to concentrate on this). Ten enterprises will be identified in all sectors, and a PES employer officer will follow up with HR issues in enterprises to attract good quality job vacancies and work with counsellors to match with jobseekers. The evaluation will look at the differences between the participating and non-participating enterprises and assess whether it best to set up employer services within each office or centrally.

In **Malta**, the labour market is performing very well with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the EU, possibly also influenced by good-quality ALMPs. Evaluation and piloting in the country faces particular challenges due to its small size. Piloting in one area and then extending to the whole country does not really work due to its small size. They did undertake a pilot for some Youth Guarantee schemes for disadvantaged young people, and based on these findings the schemes were rolled out at the national level. The pilot explored how best to address the needs of such people, who have complex support needs and hence cannot access immediately the labour market. Overall, evaluations are typically based on the existing database for unemployed as employers need to record new employees (their nature, age, gender) by law. In the past, most evaluations were based on the administrative PES data supplemented with field research. Current RCT undertaken found that more face to face contact with jobseekers is more effective than other methods of correspondence / counselling. Overall, they found that evaluation is time consuming and resource intensive but will seek to continue to do this.

Session IV – Dissemination of evaluation findings

Exchanges in the Working Group already showed that the dissemination of evaluation and piloting results is critical, but at the same time, difficult and challenging. Key lessons included being able to tailor evaluation findings to the target groups, being pro-active in dissemination and using the technological solutions in better dissemination.

Hence, a session was dedicated to discussing how to best use results to inform future policy and development of services in the PES context. The session showed two different approaches to dissemination, data driven in **Germany** and literature-based approach in **Denmark**.

In **Germany**, the TrEffeR system was developed over time to use the data on the performance of different PES measures and inform the development of PES services. The role of TrEffeR is to employ the microanalysis of PES individual measures (at regional, local levels, available by a set of characteristics of programmes and jobseekers) on an ongoing basis to identify the labour market effects of ALMPs. The system uses biographical

data to construct control group and try to find participant and non-participant statistical twins to answer the question on how participation in programme has improved the employment prospective of participant. The next step is the regression analysis to analyse the causal effects.

The system was developed between 2005 and 2007 by experts at the German PES. Its results are provided to PES management, subcontractors and counsellors in the form of data warehouse analysis cubes. It is used by regional and local PES managers to:

- Plan and purchase ALMP measures
- Communication with training providers
- Develop products
- Optimise allocation strategies
- Control costs
- Ensure the quality of PES services.

The users can look at different results and tailor information for specific target groups. The system also publishes standardised reports on national level for specific measures and for specific regions. The results can be tailored to the local agencies results. So far, there has been one external dissemination in the catalogue of programmes where the system results were transferred into the rating of training providers, which can help participants to make decisions about training providers. This approach has started in December 2017 and the PES will review how it works in practice.

In **Denmark**, the PES has developed a knowledge bank on what works, containing all known studies on the quantitative causal effects of active labour market policies (ALMPs)⁵. The 'bank' is developed and revised in a collaboration with leading researches/scientists in the field of Labour Market Policies. The knowledge database is web-based, providing public access to the information held. The users can choose specific ALMP and the review database provides summary results on the availability and strength of evidence in the field.

The bank was developed between 2011 and 2013 and it is planned to launch new version of the site in 2018, also available in English. Most users so far are researchers and the knowledge bank shows that having this continuous overview of the

5 <https://www.jobeffekter.dk/>

literature ensures a more systematic access to evidence based knowledge, which in turn results in a more systematic use of this knowledge in relevant situations. The knowledge bank provides a useful way of keeping track of evidence in the field and can be a powerful tool in supporting political decision makers on new measures/approaches.

Other countries also shared their experiences with dissemination of evaluation and piloting results.

Belgium-VDAB translated results of evaluations into 1-page document for counsellors; policy briefs for managers and are considering the idea of infographics. Their experience shows a dissemination challenge in so much that not all researchers are good communicators whilst good communications skills are required when planning disseminations.

In **Iceland**, similarly, large series of statistics and reports are available but are not used as much in the organisation. The new promotion strategy focusses on developing results which would be useful for different actors and promote them to different actors within PES and outside, including ministry.

In **Norway**, the PES has put a significant amount effort in research and now have over 50 evaluation and research projects ongoing. So, the PES has established a firm knowledge base in some areas; but are some issues for dissemination and implementation of results. They tried and started to use infographics, have a Facebook page with report highlights, run targeted conferences and workshops. The most important action has been to establish a firmer bridge between research activities and competence building activities within organisation. In collaboration with universities, the PES has developed ECTS credit courses to increase formal competence of counsellors. This means they have a process for competence building so that actions can be taken on research results and such results can be implemented.

The dissemination and evaluation is also a challenge in **Poland**, as the PES is organised at three levels (regional, local and central level) which are fully independent. The central level determines the PES measures, which are then implemented independently at the regional and local levels. In terms of evaluation, statistical data are aggregated and assessed on a monthly basis, analysing two types

of effectiveness – the cost effectiveness and the reintegration to employment effectiveness. The latest studies related to the effectiveness of the labour market reform in 2014 and there are a few pilots in place.

In **Latvia**, a pilot project was implemented in 2013 on the effective cooperation in relation to the long-term unemployed between the PES, social services and municipalities. This showed that cooperation with social services was highly efficient, as well as effectiveness of other measures such as job search diaries and regional events. On the basis of the pilot, this approach is being implemented in every local office where one PES expert is dealing with LTU specifically and providing various support measures including those with addiction issues.

Closing session

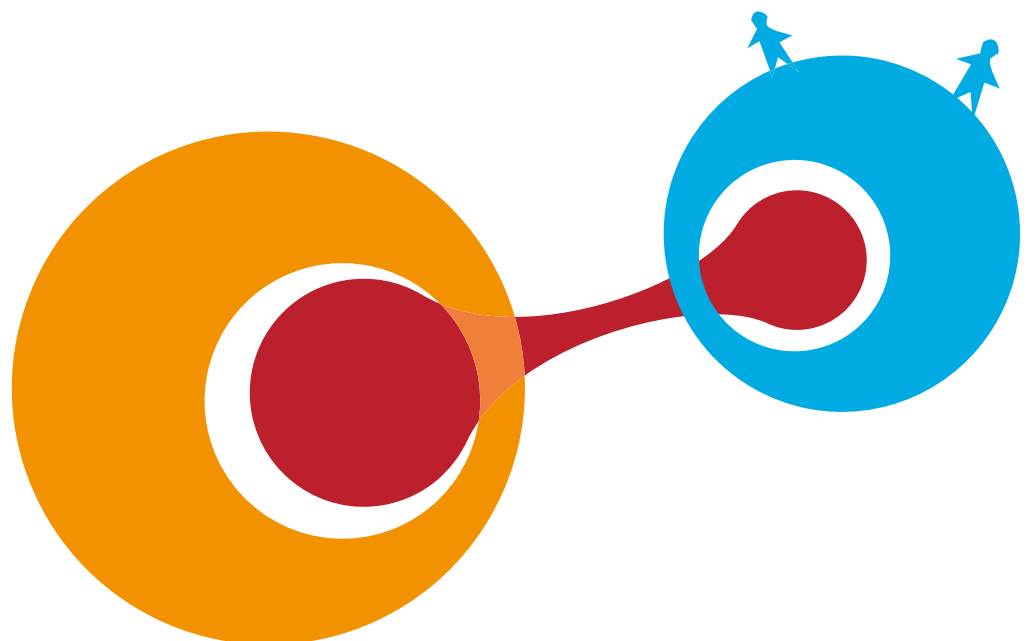
Conclusions were drawn at the end of the seminar with respect to the experiences shared between the participating PES. The seminar demonstrated that there is a rich diversity in experiences conducting piloting and evaluations across the PES and important learning and sharing of ideas took place.

Not all PES have a rigorous piloting and evaluation system in place but all are undertaking activities to expand their piloting and evaluation activities. Setting up a piloting and evaluation system requires several prerequisites, including appropriate legislative basis, demand for evaluation results from decision-makers, good quality data and data warehouses and the methodological know-how. The impact of piloting and evaluation results might not be immediate visible, as they take time to be reflected in the PES development cycle.

Different PES use a variety of methods in the evaluation, including RCTs, quantitative and qualitative methods. RCTs can provide powerful measurement of impact of PES measures, but they do require a careful approach, monitoring, planning and interpretation of results, as well as awareness-raising within the PES. There are also credible alternatives to RCTs including qualitative methods which are used throughout the PES.

In many PES there are good databases already existing which use can be further expanded for the purposes of evaluation and piloting. Having good data warehouses is an absolute must for piloting and evaluation. Such warehouses need time and effort in their development and push boundaries within the legal framework and institutional cooperation but do deliver results for doing evaluation.

The European Commission urged PES to consider that at the moment less than 25% of PES have a systematic approach to using piloting and evaluation approach before the full implementation. Hence, it is hoped that the different examples explored during the seminar can have positive impact on the PES to take steps forward, in terms of knowledge sharing and open discussions on how to embed evaluation and piloting systems in the PES work.



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