



SUMMARY REPORT

CITÉ DES MÉTIERS – BEROEPENPUNT.BRUSSEL: A TRANSFERABLE MODEL?

STUDY VISIT REPORT



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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018

ISBN 978-92-79-93673-9

doi:10.2767/232648

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The European Network of Public Employment Services was created following a Decision of the European Parliament and Council in June 2014 (DECISION No 573/2014/EU). Its objective is to reinforce PES capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. This activity has been developed within the work programme of the European PES Network. For further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>.

This activity has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>

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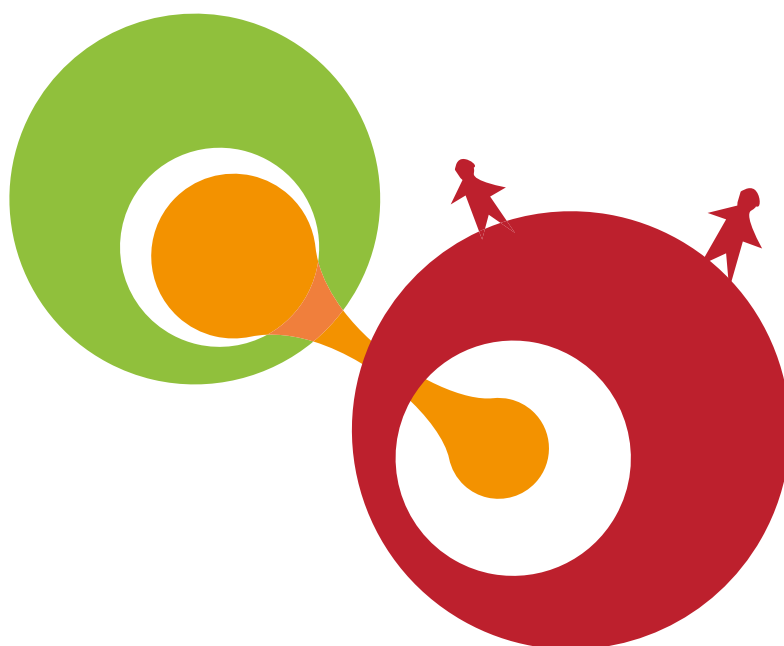
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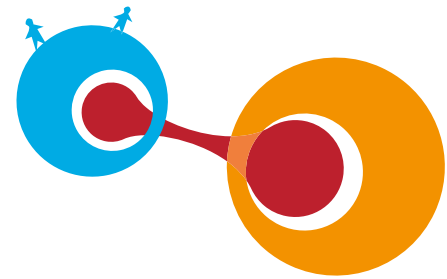
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1 Introduction

The Study Visit aimed to provide participating PES with an opportunity to learn about the new Cité des Métiers in Brussels, which was established in early 2018. The Study Visit took place within the 2018 PES Network Work Programme, in particular the holistic support strand of activities¹. The Study Visit took place over a day and a half and it looked in detail at the following topic areas:

- Stakeholder engagement;
- Coordination, management and knowledge sharing;
- Skills, competences and training;
- Promoting and raising awareness; and
- Transferability to other PES contexts.

The Study Visit was attended by 31 participants in two days. This included 18 PES participants from 7 countries, the European Commission, representatives from the Cité des Métiers Network, the independent expert and the PES Mutual Learning Support Team.

2 The Cité des Métiers Model and the context in Brussels

In this section we will introduce how Cité des Métiers, as a labelled service works, and then go on to introduce the specificities of the CDM – Beroepenpunt Brussels.

2.1 Cité des Métiers: the concept

The Cité des Métiers (henceforth CDM) which was initially conceived in 1993 in France, and it aims to facilitate for individuals to access information on careers in order to empower citizens to build their own professional future. In essence, the CDM provides different career counselling services in one space. This career counselling is concentrated around the following topics:

- Guidance on which professions to choose
- Information on how to access trainings
- Counselling on how to enhance skills and change jobs
- Help with job searches
- Information on how to set up a business

Career counselling can be accessed at CDMs in three main forms. First, free, self-service access to paper and IT based information. Second, through face-to-face consultations with counsellors, or through small-group workshops. Finally, through larger-scale information sessions or symposia.

A crucial element of the CDM is that it is a project managed by a large number of stakeholders who associate and pool their resources to deliver career counselling services. While in general the project leaders are public bodies such as regional authorities, a large number of actors can co-operate ranging from public employment services through training provider associations, schools and universities to chambers of commerce and NGOs. Thus, the CDMs are integrated workspaces where organisations working in the fields of education, training, employment and career guidance can pool resources and expertise. Furthermore, the CDM can become a laboratory for experimenting innovative practices in lifelong career guidance.

Launching a CDM also means adherence to a specific charter, which ensures that the CDM focuses on audiences' needs and not on institutions and their service offer. The main principles of the charter are the following:

- The CDM is open to all seeking guidance and host clients without appointment, free of charge and anonymous basis.
- The CDM is to foster listening by a welcoming and gratifying space.
- The CDM is to provide information in a neutral way, and is to offer a plurality of points of view.
- The CDM needs to be pro-active and propose actions that can be adapted to needs of inhabitants of the specific region.

2.2 The local context in Brussels

To understand the setup of the CDM in Brussels, it is important be aware of the state architecture of the Belgium. Since Belgium is a federal state, each region has its own Public Employment Service (PES), and employment policy is a regional competence. Furthermore, Brussels is a separate region (within Belgium), with its own PES, but, at the same time it is a bilingual city. This latter fact that career counselling, vocational training is done by at least two organisations. At the level of PES, Actiris is the main (bi-lingual) organisation serving jobseekers in Brussels, but at the same time, VDAB

¹ The 2018 PES Network Work Programme can be found here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18875&langId=en>

(the Belgian-Flanders PES) also delivers services to the Dutch-speaking community in Brussels. This complicated and multi-lingual administrative setup means that there was a need for a partnership involving a large number of organisations. It also entails that all services at the CDM have to be delivered both in French and in Dutch (hence the double name: Cité des Métiers; Beroepenpunt).

Turning to the labour market context, this has been improving over the last five years. In May 2018, the Brussels Capital Region had an unemployment rate of 15.7%, which represents the lowest unemployment rate in the region since 15 years ago. The youth unemployment rate, has been falling steadily for 60 consecutive months. In May 2018, it reached a rate of 21.7% which is the lowest youth unemployment rate registered since May 1990. Nevertheless, over 60% of jobseekers have been registered for over a year, and the Brussels-Capital Region has significantly more pronounced unemployment rates than Flanders or Wallonia. Regarding the educational composition of jobseekers in Brussels, according to the Brussels Observatory of Employment and Vocational Training (May 2018), 66% have a low level of education (up to a secondary education degree); 20.5% have medium and 13.5% have a high level of education.

3 The Cité des Métiers/ Beroepenpunt Brussels: forming partnerships

The Brussels CDM was created by three main partners: Actiris (the PES in the Brussels Region), Bruxelles Formation (the agency in charge of professional training for French speaking jobseekers in the Brussels Regions) and VDAB Brussel (the subsidiary of the PES of the Flanders Region, in charge of career services and professional training for Dutch speaking citizens in the Brussels Region). These three institutions were chosen to lead the Brussels CDM project, as they are the three main institutional actors in the field of career counselling and vocational training in the Brussels Region. A convention between partners has been signed with regards to the establishment and functioning of the CDM Brussels. Next to these three main partners, there are further twelve smaller organisations who are contributing partners at CDM Brussels, by devoting human resources (counsellors) to the CDM.

The motivation of these different partners varied. The main initiating partners have had long-standing relationships. For instance, Actiris and Bruxelles Formation have had a long-standing co-operation, which culminated in having joint management meetings since June 2017. Similarly, Leerwinkel, an NGO providing career counselling to Dutch-speaking Brussels inhabitants, has been working with Actiris for more than 25 years. For organisations such as Leerwinkel, joining the CDM is a direct consequence of their mission – they need to give voice and support to Dutch-speaking jobseekers. Other organisations, such as 1819.Brussels (and information service for potential entrepreneurs) are new partners, and see joining the CDM as a way to promote their services to a wider clientele, by becoming more ‘visible’ to the public.



Roles and activities of Actiris and Bruxelles Formation

ACTIRIS is the PES of the Brussels-Capital Region and provides services in two languages. It cooperates with the other three PES operating in Belgium within the interregional platform SYNERJOB. Actiris has two key responsibilities: the provision of employment services; registration and monitoring of continued eligibility for unemployment and social benefits. It operates 18 local offices in Brussels. In 2016, Actiris had 491 staff directly serving on average 98,000 registered jobseekers, whilst its total staff was 1,154.

Bruxelles Formation is the French-speaking public vocational training service of Brussels. Bruxelles Formation’s mission is to enhance the skills of Brussels’ citizens, and it serves this goal with a staff of over 500 people. In 2017, it provided training to 16,000 jobseekers, and has shown improving performance. In 2017, 76.5% of jobseekers found a job following a training; and the impact of trainings has been a 22% increase in re-employment rates – relative to similar jobseekers who did not participate in a training*.

* Presentation by Olivia Ptitto on 5 July 2018
‘The Contribution of the French-speaking Public Vocational Training Service to the success of the Cité des Métiers.’



The different levels of CDM and CDM in Wallonia, Belgium

The CDM International Network* is currently comprised of 33 'labelled' integrated spaces covering 9 countries, of which four are situated in Belgium (Brussels and Namur already opened, Charleroi and Liège in project). These projects were labelled respectively in 2015, 2014 and 2013. It needs to be noted that CDM in Brussels is the largest in the world and in Belgium regarding the number of staff involved in the Centre. Indeed, CDMs in the Wallonia region are much smaller than the one situated in Brussels, with a total of 44 people including around 20 counsellors working in the CDM in Namur, that is to say 4 counsellors every day in the space.

* For more information please see www.reseaucitesdesmetiers.com/eng/index.php

The mission of the CDM of Brussels is slightly broader than that of most other CDMs: next to career guidance, providing information on vocational training and job search counselling, it also includes help for those wanting to start a business as well as supporting (inter)-national mobility. The first of these additional topics stems naturally from the place of Brussels in Belgium and in Europe. The second topic is due to the availability of partners who can advise clients on entrepreneurship.

The setup of the CDM was financed primarily by the Brussels Capital Region (and in a smaller part by the French Community Commission of the Brussels-Capital Region). This meant mainly the refurbishment of two levels of a building which is the headquarters of Actiris.² The budget foreseen for the running costs of the CDM in 2018 is 4 million EUR. This cost is borne primarily by Actiris and Bruxelles Formation (contributing roughly 45% of the costs each), and a small part (10%) is covered by VDAB.

Currently, 62 counsellors work at the CDM, of which Actiris and Bruxelles Formation delegated 25 and 23 counsellors (respectively), while the

other counsellors' come from other partners (including VDAB), with each partner paying the salary for the people on their payroll. In terms of employment contracts of counsellors at CDM, there are different systems co-existing. A large number of counsellors are only working for the CDM (like the counsellors from Actiris and Bruxelles Formation), so they don't have any other activities apart from the ones carried out for the CDM. A number of counsellors only work part-time for CDM. Given its personnel and budget, the CDM Brussels is the largest of all Cité des Métiers with a label.

4 The Cité des Métiers in practice

4.1 Services and customer journeys

At the CDM individuals can have access to three main types of services and facilities. They have open access to paper-based documentation (for instance, on what skills are required for an occupation, where training courses connected to these can be accessed etc.), as well as digitalized information on roughly 60 PCs and 20 tablets. In addition, clients can receive face-to-face advice from career counsellors. Clients can attend group guidance sessions on various topics. To emphasize accessibility, much of the space of the CDM is open, such that face-to-face counselling sessions take place at small tables which are in largely the same open space as where digital and printed can be accessed. The only spaces which are cut off from this open space are the group meeting rooms.

Given this setup, there are no clearly-defined customer journeys, however, there are a few focal points. To help navigate this space, there are some staff who can help clients. At the digital stations, digital stewards can be called upon if a client needs help, and these individuals will help clients with issues related to the use of IT. In addition or alternatively, at the reception desk, clients can not only get information on where different services can be accessed, but this where clients can register to speak to a counsellor for an advisory meeting. After client's registration they are issued with a number and when their number appears on screens in the open space, they can proceed to a desk with a counsellor for a counselling session. It is important to emphasize that counselling sessions cannot be booked in advance, neither is it possible to speak to a specific counsellor.

² The cost of the refurbishment and setting up the IT system and the website cost approximately 1.4 million EUR.



4.2 Day to day work organisation and management

There are several issues related to everyday management at the CDM. First, it is important to keep in mind that there are five broad fields of expertise (topics), however, managers are not topic-specific. In practice, there is a transversal coordination committee that brings together three managers. One manager is responsible for the coordination of collective activities in Dutch, another for the coordination of collective activities in French and the remaining manager coordinates the team of advisors.

The main managerial issue, especially when it comes to counselling is to assure that on a given day, there will be one specialist of a given topic present at CDM, and that the specific bi-lingual nature of the CDM is respected. This is all the more difficult to organize, as some partner organisations only delegated 1-2 staff members to the CDM. At the same time, in practical work organisation, managers also have to keep in mind that counsellors do need variety of tasks, so a given counsellor will need to be assigned to both individual counselling sessions, and also to group meetings. This can only be achieved by involving staff in work planning, which is also useful for keeping them engaged and motivated.

Similarly, at the ground level, a lot depends on colleagues at the reception, whose task it is to guide clients towards specialized counsellors who can advise clients on their specific problems.

Finally, in principle there could be congestion or overcrowding, which needs to be adverted at a management level. This implies that there are limits to time that a client can spend at a PC, and there are some guidelines in place as to how long a counselling session is to last. However, clients are free to come as often as they need to the CDM.

4.3 Links to partners

It was emphasized that staff working at the CDM, while having different specialisations and institutional backgrounds need to work towards a common goal: to provide the best service to the client. So, while staff might be on the payroll of different organisations, at the CDM, they have to work as a team for the benefit of the client. This also implies that at a CDM, staff need to break down institutional walls and become a multi-skilled team.

The above is also reflected in the principle of neutrality: a counsellor, when providing advice, is obliged to present information in neutral way. Thus, the client needs to make decisions – for instance about which service providers to approach for more in-depth counselling or training – on their own.

In practice, the fact that CDM is anonymous (as well as the principle of neutrality) leads to work processes that are rather different from those of a PES. First, counsellors cannot enrol nor refer clients in any further services, this needs to be done by the client herself. Thus, for instance, counsellors can advise unemployed jobseeker clients to register at Actiris, but they are not in a position to undertake the registration for her, and much less refer her to a counsellor in a specific PES local office. The link between partner organisations, and specifically Actiris can only work the other way around, such that the client registers the services she received at CDM as efforts towards finding a job (but this is non-verifiable). Second, by design clients do not have access to personal counsellors, and counsellors have no way of verifying the clients' previous activities at CDM (or at Actiris).

5 The CDM staff: selection, training and motivation

It is clear that the CDM can only be successful if there are motivated and well-trained staff in place. We will explore how initial selection and training was done, and then go on to show how learning-by-doing continues to evolve.

The staff working at CDM continues to be on the payroll of the partner organisations. The partners primarily selected and delegated staff, there a smaller fraction of the staff who were specifically recruited to work on the CDM project. In terms of staff coming from partners' organisations, individuals were both free to volunteer and they were also chosen based on their skills and motivation.

The staff is comprised of two main categories: the client-facing counsellors, who comprise roughly 60% of staff (not all full time), and the back-office staff, including management. There are four 'digital stewards' who provide support and guidance to help clients' access information on the PCs and online tools. These persons were typically recruited specifically for this job, and are comprised of young and tech-savvy individuals, who

can explain IT issues in simple terms. It is clearly important to have an excellent manager, who is a good communicator with a range of partners, and is undaunted by situations or individuals and can be highly motivating.

Counsellors (as well as managers) working at CDM received training from the Cité des Métiers Network staff. The Cité des Métiers Network works with both formalised and non-formal upskilling projects. In terms of elements which are not formalized in a project, these are typically implemented at given CDMs in various ways:

- through internal and external training sessions (those delivered by training partners); and
- through interactions between professionals by sharing practices, by coaching and by active listening.

Furthermore, non-formalised learning can occur through field visits to other CDMs or to partner organisations. Different CDMs have developed these informal knowledge sharing mechanisms by writing a series of short toolkits entitled 'Memento' which provide information and answer key questions. These include contributions by the CDM of Geneva (Switzerland) related to the work of counsellors and receptionists, the CDM of Mulhouse (France) related to training workshops.

In general, the CDM Network require a formalized training to future staff before the opening of a CDM site, in order for the site to be recognized by a label. The CDM Network also has a vision of dynamic upskilling of counsellors, there is a strong willingness to formalize this in a common training programme, and it has set up a group of trainer counsellors. The CDM Network expects that different CDMs co-operating in upskilling to have differentiated and complementary approaches to upskilling. Finally, the Network is working towards an internal recognition of counsellor skills.

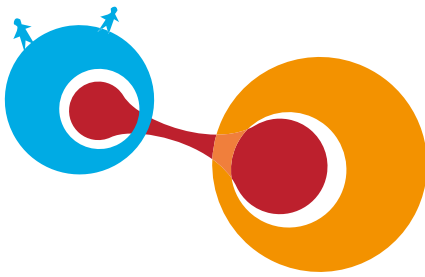
Within the process of formalising upskilling activities, throughout the year 2016, a group of counsellors from the CDM Network have drafted repositories of skills in the professions of reception and counselling in integrated workspaces; and have developed of an initial training programme for new counsellors. Furthermore, CDM and other organisations have launched an Erasmus+ project, entitled 'COCADE'. This project - running between 2017 and 2019 - has two specific objectives. First, it is to conduct the up-skilling of the profession of

career counselling in integrated spaces and support practitioners and counsellors while having an apprenticeship in CDM and similar spaces. Second, it is to strengthen the coordination of de-compartmentalised partnership in the implementation of the reception, information and career counselling offer. Within this project, a repository of skills for the profession of counsellor in integrated workspaces has been developed. Furthermore, an initial training session for the profession of a career counsellor at a CDM has been piloted in Brussels. In two pilot training sessions, in the space of a three-day intensive workshop, around 40 counsellors were trained by two experience counsellors from the CDM Network. These training occasions started by introducing the concept of a CDM and an immersion into how work at a CDM is done in practice. Then, working in smaller groups, the attitudes of clients and the optimal posture of counsellors was discussed, as well as receptionists' role. Third, the issues around identifying clients' needs and how to transmit knowledge was explored. Finally, participants explored the crucial question of how to collaborate with peers.

A large part of staff training comes through informal on-the-job learning. This is very important for upskilling staff, but also in terms of work organisation. If no counsellor is present from one of the smaller partners, counsellors from the larger partners still need to have some insight on their topics. Thus, a useful instrument is to have information sharing sessions between (outside) partners, and CDM staff, such that all staff are aware all activities. These are also helpful to ease fears that CDM does not compete with partners, and to understand how different organisations can complement each other. A further point to note that attitude is as important as formal skills for counsellors, in particular adaptability and flexibility. In order to have a common understanding of these when staff with different organisational backgrounds are working together, informal occasions (such as working breakfasts) are also noteworthy.

6 Promoting the CDM

The CDM in Brussels, given its recent launch can only provide few lessons for other organisations that would want to initiate the promotion of a multi-partnership project. One of the main challenges of communication relates to this specific aspect of the CDM: there is a diversity of target audiences (both in terms of potential clients and



partners). There are two challenges which are also specific to Brussels. First, that it is a multi-lingual city, and – more specifically – that part of the target audience might not be fluent in either of the working languages of the CDM (French or Dutch). Second, it is important to create a specific image of the CDM, which is made more difficult by the fact that it resides in a building which is known by the general public to ‘belong to Actiris’. Both of these relate to the issue of how to reach individuals who are furthest away from the labour market, who may not trust traditional institutions (such as PES) or may have language issues.

In broad terms, the communication strategy of the CDM has two main channels: first, the CDM has its own media presence and campaigns; second, partner organisations reach out to potential audience via their own network. In terms of communication, there was an initial launch campaign in March 2018 around the opening of the CDM. At that stage, there was a promotion in traditional media as well as a series of open workshops during the first opening week. In this initial stage of communications, the emphasis was on posters and flyers, which were circulated in partner organisations’ locations. At the same time, partners are promoting the CDM via information sessions, and associated partners also regularly organize group visits to the CDM for guided tours. Finally, the CDM website³ was launched in early June 2018, which currently offers information and link up with partners’ websites.

The next stage of awareness raising campaigns will be launched in October 2018. This will target a wider set of audiences, in particular young people furthest away from the labour market, by including posters on public transport, at youth organisations, at different social services. An important point of these communications will be to rely on existing local networks to reach audiences. All these campaigns are there to promote the specific image of CDM (as distinct from Actiris), and to spread information about the five main areas of activity of the CDM. It needs to be noted that guided tours for groups via partners seems to be one of the most effective ways of engaging clients who might not necessarily visit the CDM on their own initiative.

There are several long-term plans for the development of communications for the CDM. First,

a communication manager will be recruited to the CDM in the coming months. Second, to promote the CDM to more persons, a social media campaign will be launched. Third, to reach out to people who are likely not in contact with public and social services, mobile promotion teams (‘form trucks’) will be used. Fourth, the range of services which are accessible through the CDM website will need to be broadened, in order to aim for a ‘virtual’ CDM. Finally, the communication through the partner organisations needs to be strengthened.

7 The added value and transferability of CDM

It is clear that when creating a CDM, stakeholders need to be convinced of its added value. In essence, the services of the CDM need to be complementary to those of partner organisations, and ought not to compete. There are two main advantages for the CDM which can be identified from the point of view of PES. First, that clients can receive more in-depth counselling or obtain information on a wider range of services. Second, that the CDM might be successful in reaching out to clients furthest away from the labour market. It needs to be emphasized that, – given this complementarity – the existence of a CDM in a given territory is likely to raise the amount of services ‘demanded’ by clients from partner organisations. PES offer a unique set of skills, knowledge and experience to a CDM partnership as they have extensive knowledge and insights to the local labour market, have access to jobseekers and employers as well as key partners (such as training organisations) and a breadth of expertise. No other organisation is as well placed as PES to contribute in such a way to a CDM.

While there seem to be clear benefits of establishing a CDM for clients, and at the same time, measuring is not straightforward. The CDM Network does not have a universal evaluation strategy which labelled members would have to adhere to, each CDM is developing its own strategy. Indeed, the principle of anonymity prevents to a large extent data collection on the careers of clients. Currently it is only possible to administer voluntary customer satisfaction surveys to clients. It was noted at the Study Visit that while still adhering to the principle of anonymity, partners could register from clients (on a voluntary basis) whether they came to their organisations based on information obtained at a CDM.

³ <https://www.citedesmetiers.brussels/>



Lifelong Training Centres in Croatia and Slovenia

In both Croatia* and Slovenia, at the regional level, centres for career guidance have been established. These centres offer career counselling for students as well as for unemployed and employed jobseekers. All these centres use a partnership approach, as some services are delivered by NGOs or employer organisations. While the core staff of these centres are PES employees in both countries (typically two people for a centre), they are physically independent of PES regional offices.

* These are the CISOK Centres in Croatia.
Please see <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15225&langId=en> for a more detailed description.

In the discussion among the Study Visit participants, there was a strong agreement that the most important aspect of CDM to be transferred is the partnership approach, and in particular that a large number of partners are working towards a common goal. Participants however agreed that there are a number of obstacles to the adoption of this approach, and discussed potential ways to get around these obstacles. The first omnipresent issue is that potential partners have different agendas and areas where they are willing to take responsibility. To this end, participants agreed that starting with more open communication about specific steps to be taken toward operative goals can be a first step in this direction. Participants also debated whether national-level agreements between partners were needed, or whether the partnership approach could be built at the local level in smaller centres. In either case, they agreed that having managers of career counselling centres who are able to communicate complementarity between potential partners and have time for inter-institutional communication would be high on the agenda. A second issue is that often, potential partners sometimes have issues with working with PES as they may have a different perception of their activities. In some cases, there may be some risk or perceived risk of potential 'overlapping' of services, and partners might not trust PES to form up a partnership due to the above-mentioned differences in priorities. A potential solution might be to have a specific 'Partnership manager' employed by the PES, who would be in charge of inter-organisational communication, with the specific focus of building trust

across organisations. The third issue with building a full-fledged CDM in the participant countries seemed the potential lack of funds for such centres. Participants agreed that presenting evidence on the benefits of the CDM model to decision-makers will be the way forward in the longer term. However, in the shorter term, smaller-scale models can work without a need for large investment.

The attitude (and the skills) of staff is also an aspect of the CDM approach that can be transferred. Participants agreed that there is often 'restrictions' placed on counsellors as they need to balance the importance of meeting KPIs against being able to fully understand, support and meet the needs of jobseekers. There were some solutions for this proposed. First, that managers of career counselling centres need to be selected for their ability to 'think outside the box' and who are also 'change managers'. This also means that such managers are able to communicate to staff the dual objectives of being client centred while following performance objectives. Second, the training of staff in PES is likely to change in the future and it may be more towards the CDM approach of having the customer at the centre. One of the most important aspects of this approach in the CDM is that career counsellors ought to be trained to give information in a neutral way – one that empowers clients to take decisions.⁴ Participants agreed that more exchanges on the issue of staff training, in particular with the CDM Network might be the first step forward.

Finally, participants appreciated that open space offices, which are welcoming for clients are optimal, as is having an image of the career counselling centres which is distinct from PES, as to engage clients far from the labour market. However, given potential budget constraints, these can only be done on a small scale. Furthermore, other aspect of work organisation, such as extending opening hours for either face-to-face or virtual counselling meetings is a further step in this direction, which has been suggested by participants as ways to 'future proof' PES career counselling.

⁴ This will also have the added benefit of changing the image of PES in the eyes of potential partner organisations.

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