



Centre for Project Development  
and Innovation (GPI) GmbH

Final report ELLABO

'Improving the participation of the elderly on the labour market'

May 2007

Project part-financed by the European Union



North East South West



INTERREG IIIC

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## Part 1 General outcomes of ELLABO



## Introduction

ELLABO (“Improving the participation of the elderly on the labour market”) is an international exchange project within the Hanse Passage programme. The purpose of this programme (a part of the Interreg IIC fund) is for building international networks for exchanging experiences. More information about Hanse Passage can be found at [www.hanse-passage.net](http://www.hanse-passage.net)

ELLABO exchanges experiences on the theme of the labour participation of the elderly.

Participation regions in ELLABO are: Groningen (NL), Fryslân (NL), Drenthe (NL), Overijssel (NL), Bremen (D), Niedersachsen (D), Dolnoslaskie (P), Haute Normandie (F), Yorkshire and the Humber (UK), and Flevoland (NL). The latter is a leading partner; the Provincial Platform Labour Market Flevoland runs the project management.

The overall objective of the ELLABO project is to contribute to the participation of the elderly on the labour market (according to the Lisbon goals, half of the 55+ people must be working in 2010) by exchanging knowledge on support systems or measures that improve the possibilities for elderly unemployed to re-enter the labour market (as an employee or self employment).

The results of the project are to be disseminated and - where possible - incorporated into regional policies and working methods to ensure a sustainable effect. Therefore, the support and involvement of the regional key players has been sought from the onset of the project. In addition to this, the aim is to establish a lasting co-operation between the networks that have been built during the ELLABO project. The possibilities to continue this co-operation are discussed in the end of chapter 1.

During the first phase of the project, the 10 ELLABO partners collected various data with the purpose of understanding and comparing the labour market situation of the elderly in each participating region. The results of this comparison are described briefly in chapter 1.1. The entire report can be found on the Hanse Passage website.

In preparation of the best practice research, our partner Fryslân defined the criteria for successful projects aimed at promoting the labour participation of elderly people. It appeared to be rather difficult to determine the unambiguous criteria for different kinds of projects or measures. One can look at tangible facts such as the cost efficiency in relation to the results. But a project directed at awareness is completely different from a training project for elderly unemployed. So how does one compare their costs? Chapter 1.2 is dedicated to this question. The entire report on the criteria can also be found on the Hanse Passage website.

During the second phase of the ELLABO project, all of the partners searched in their region for inspiring examples of projects or measures for seniors. The original goal was to collect the best practices for unemployed elderly. However, we decided to broaden the scope, because we also found interesting projects focussed on retaining older employees. We thought they were worthwhile for diffusion to a broader public. The best practices can more or less be divided into three categories:

Supportive policy projects: these are the projects or measures that are mainly aimed at raising consciousness among different target groups (employers, policy makers, seniors). Most of these projects are carried out by an intermediary organisation and might contain different elements, such as research and training activities. Recommendations on this kind of project can be found in chapter 1.3.3.

The second category of projects is focussed on the activities to retain elderly employees. Our findings about these types of activities are described in chapter 1.4.

Thirdly, there is the type of project that is aimed at elderly unemployed for re-entering the labour market. This might include training, matching activities, self-help groups or encouraging self-employment among older job seekers. This kind of project is discussed in chapter 1.5.

The second part of this report provides a collection of the best practices.

The best practices have been divided in line with chapters 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5

Our intention was not to describe the projects in detail, but rather to put in the spotlight the idea along with practical experiences.

Websites and contact persons are mentioned in the case that more information is sought.

## 1.1 Labour market participation of the elderly in the ELLABO regions

To create a basis understanding of each others' labour market situation, the 10 ELLABO partners carried out comparative research. The entire document can be found on the Hanse Passage website. The main points are highlighted below.

### Unemployment figures

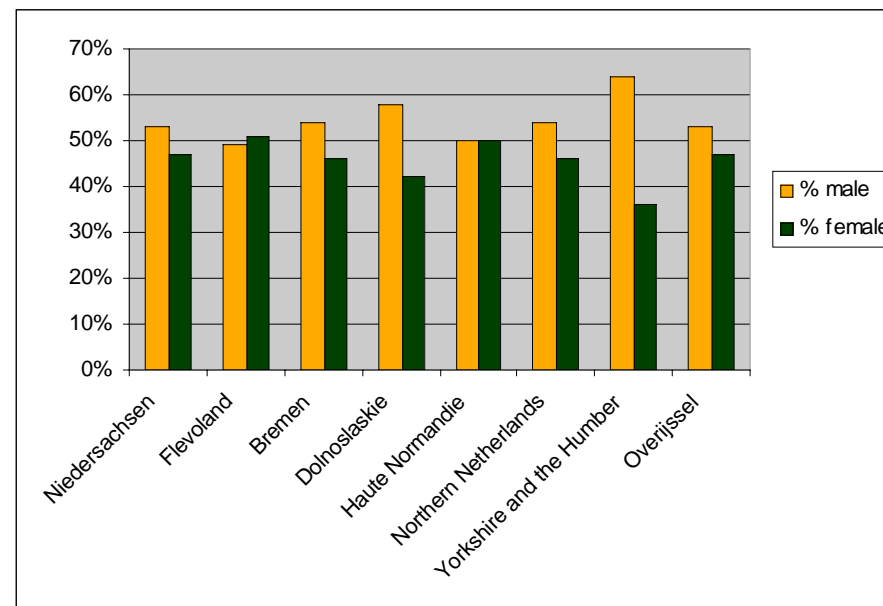
It is difficult to compare the unemployment figures on the regional level. The 5 participating countries have 8 different definitions of unemployment. Moreover, the statistics work with different age groups. Generally, it can be said that 45+ people make up 25% (Dolnoslaskie) to 45% (Fryslân) of the total unemployment.

### Characteristics of elderly unemployed

Male/female: Only Flevoland has a higher percentage of female unemployed. In Yorkshire and the Humber the difference between the genders is rather large. This is probably due to the fact that the retirement age for women is lower than for men. This is also the case for Dolnoslaskie. In both countries, measures are being taken to equalise the retirement age for men and women.

Other: Figures about ethnicity were not available in most regions. In Yorkshire and the Humber, 85% of the elderly unemployed have health problems. By far, most elderly unemployed have a lower or middle education level.

Division of male/female unemployed among elderly



### Professions and skills needed

Most partners indicate that there is a decreasing need for lower qualified jobs and a high future-oriented need for commercial, IT, and technical professions. Additionally, in most regions there will be shortages in the care and wellness sectors. Training schemes should – of course - be directed at sectors with good labour market perspectives. Value is increasingly attached to general skills or so-called competences, for example, problem solving, teamworking, communication skills, and customer handling.

## **Entrepreneurship**

Self employment is often mentioned as a solution for elderly to escape unemployment. All regions have supportive measures for people wanting to start a business. There are, however, differences per country as to how entrepreneurship is looked upon. In the Netherlands, for example, entrepreneurship is booming and highly valued, whereas in France it is considered not innovative.

Despite the supportive measures, all partners mention the complicated process as an impediment to self employment. In addition, self employment is not a solution for everyone; there can be a range of personal factors, such as a lack of entrepreneurial skills or a lack of self confidence that hinder people from becoming entrepreneurs.

## **Soft outcomes**

What are the main factors that prevent elderly unemployed from re-entering the labour market? These are the “subjective” outcomes from interviews with elderly, employers, and people from the job centres.

### **Age**

Age seems to be the main reason for a higher rate of unemployment for the elderly. Age also has to do with underlying assumptions, such as: elderly are ill more often, they don't fit in the team, they are less productive and flexible, and have higher salary/labour costs. In each region this is the conclusion. In some regions there are age-restricted jobs, but in most countries this is forbidden by law.

Niedersachsen has an interesting tribute to this item; elderly prefer early retirement from work - at 78% of all the offered jobs, there was no application of the elderly. Therefore, there is not only a problem with the prejudices of the employers, but also with the motivation of unemployed elderly themselves. In most of the regions the changing

legislation on retirement will solve a part of this problem in a demanding way.

## **Long term unemployment**

The longer someone's unemployed the harder it will be to find a job irrespective of the region! The common opinion is that unemployed people should go back to work within a half a year up to one year at most.

## **Health problems**

Officers from the job centres and employers think that the elderly are ill more often than younger colleagues. Employers don't want to take the risk that they will have to pay a penalty when the employees remain ill. In fact, research points out that the elderly are less often ill than younger employees, but when they are ill, they are ill for longer periods.

## **Education level**

We found the results regarding this item are very different for each group of respondents:

Officers from the job centres think that a lot of elderly unemployed have low qualifications. That makes it harder to get a job.

Elderly unemployed think that they have extensive experience, but that is mostly related to a specific company or profession, which is not visible on official certificates.

The common view of employers is that the qualification level is not the most important obstacle. However it's difficult for them to judge the value of the experience and job-related training of former jobs.

Over-qualification can be an obstacle, but is not a common one. Elderly unemployed sometimes lower their aspirations, so the chance of obtaining a job rises. Sometimes an overqualified employee can be a bit threatening for lower educated self made employers.



### **Mobility**

Most of the unemployed men are willing to move to a new area in order to get a job, maybe because they know that their chances on the labour market are small. A lot of the unemployed women have an employed husband, which is the reason why they don't want to move. Also, having relatives in the need of care in the neighbourhood can be a factor for not wanting to move.

### **Salary**

People don't want to get less money when they find a new job, which can be a serious obstacle. Dolnoslaskie reports that the unemployed over 50 years of age have a right to 120% of the basic unemployment benefit.

### **Other soft outcomes**

Other impediments mentioned are: limited dismissal possibilities, poor work capability, no long-term perspective, small focus on the kind of jobs elderly are looking for, inability to present themselves in a positive way, a package of problems for unemployed elderly from an ethnic minority.

In some areas rising employment and labour demands have assimilated a lot of the more easily employable over 50 years of age workers. Many of the remaining unemployed face multiple barriers such as the factors mentioned above.

A last barrier is that regional economic strategies encourage the development of 'younger' industries that the 50+ lack the skills for, and that are not perceived as 'fitting' the image of the company.

### **Changes in law, social security, and tax systems**

Facing the demographic changes, all countries are taking measures to increase the labour participation of the elderly. The measures vary from increasing the retirement age, abolishing early retirement pension schemes, changes in the social benefit rules, anti-discrimination law, tax advantages for employers when employing the elderly, etc. Most governments are also involved in

communication campaigns to influence the behaviour of employers, individuals, and service providers. More about this can be found in chapter 1.3 regarding policy measures.

### **Other observations**

In the comparative analysis, many similarities were found and a few remarkable differences. For example, Germany plans to abolish the possibility of partial retirement by the end of 2009, whereas the Netherlands considers this as an instrument to keep elderly at work longer.

We also reflected our findings on the labour market system in Denmark, where the labour market participation of the elderly is much higher. One of the differences between the ELLABO regions and Denmark is that the elderly are looked upon differently. In Denmark, it is normal to work up to 65 or longer, and the elderly aren't considered less productive and less flexible. So apparently, the elderly in the ELLABO regions are coping with an image problem. On the other hand, employers sometimes have fairly reasonable arguments as to why they should not employ the elderly. Part of the regions deal with a rather low education level among elderly unemployed, and Yorkshire and the Humber copes with enormous health problems among this group.

## 1.2 What is a good practice?

Before the selection of best practices we discussed how to select them and what criteria to use. When do we consider a project successful? Can you compare different kinds of projects and how? Our partner from Fryslân wrote a paper about the criteria for successful projects, which can be found on the Hanse Passage website. However, it is very difficult to find measurable and comparable criteria for good practice projects.

Here are some considerations:

### **Economic point of view**

An objective criterion seems to be the costs of a project related to the benefits. For example, a project of x Euro has helped y elderly back to work, which saved z Euro in social benefit costs. This seems simple. However, for low educated elderly it will take more effort and therefore more money to get them back into a job, but can the project be considered less effective? A project aimed at increased awareness is not so easy to seize in terms of costs/benefits. Moreover, project costs and benefits differ per country, so simply using a cost-benefit analysis does not work when comparing projects in an international setting.

### **Non-measurable effects**

In many (European) projects, empowerment of the target group is an important aspect, which is difficult to measure. Often empowerment is a side effect of project activities. However, for the people concerned, empowerment it is an absolute must to get a job. A good example is the project in Dolnoslaskie, aimed at encouraging women to become entrepreneurs. Not all the participants became self-employed, but the effect of the training had a big emancipating effect.

### **Innovative projects**

The outcomes of an innovative project are by definition not known, so it is difficult to find objective criteria to measure the effectiveness of this kind of project. As we have discussed during one of our ELLABO meetings: investments in innovative projects are as necessary as the research and development investments in e.g. the pharmaceutical industry.

### **Late results**

Results may go beyond the running time of the project. For example, one of the French projects was quite expeditious in signalling a problem regarding the elderly and trying to increase awareness among employers. However, it took more than the running time of the project to make employers aware of the extent of the problem. Therefore, the effect of the project came rather late. Sometimes, the methods of a project will become part of the regular policy or working methods. This might not be taken into account when we just measure the results at the end of a project.

### **Common sense**

Often much effort is put into developing formats for reporting and evaluating projects. Of course, it is important to get a clear picture of project results. However, in the end we recognised most of the good and inspiring practices by using our common sense.

General success factors for a project are:

- proper preparation (don't rush to start a project) including an analysis of the labour market situation
- clear project goals
- commitment of participating organisations
- clear communication with all partners concerned

- a capable and motivated project team
- a careful selection of participants
- the starting point of a project should be the main problem and not the availability of a subsidy.

## 1.3 Supportive policy measures

This chapter provides an overview of the most common policy measures to keep elderly in work longer in order to prevent unemployment among elderly and to stimulate the re-employment of the elderly.

In the former chapter we discussed the difficulties in defining 'good practice projects'. To judge the success of policy measures is even more difficult and goes beyond the scope of our project.

To keep older people in work longer is one of the measures promoted by the European Commission to face the demographic changes. Due to these changes, in 2050 the ratio of people in the pension age (65+) to the potential labour market population will be just 1:2. Now this is still 1:4. This is the effect of a retiring baby boom generation, combined with a higher life expectation and a lower birth rate.

The labour market population in Europe will probably still be growing up to 2017 because more women will enter the labour market and older people will work longer. This is an economic necessity, which has to be stimulated extensively.

In the next paragraph the European context of elderly on the labour market will be described. Subsequently, the policy measures that we have run across in ELLABO will be discussed. The chapter will end with some recommendations.

### 1.3.1 Europe and the labour participation of the elderly

All member states of the EU face the same challenge: to find answers to the demographic changes. The EU states that the ageing population is in fact not a problem, but the current employment and social security systems are not adapted to it and

have to be reformed. 'In short; the member states face a problem of retirement rather than a problem of ageing', states Vladimír Špidla (Member of the European Commission, with responsibility for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities). The concern about the demographic time bomb should lead to reforms now. The coming ten years will provide us the chance (...) Government policies must adapt to the new demographic situation. For example, women between 30 and 45 increasingly face a triple burden; raising children, building a career, and caring for parents. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt education systems and working patterns to the 'course of life'.

According to the European Commission, the EU has made a lot of progress in the field of parental leave. Some member states have gone further than the EU laws prescribe. Thanks to flexible parental leave and good quality child care, more women can enter the labour market and bear the number of children that they want.

The EU policy on older workers is part of the general employment strategy; the Lisbon strategy. The key issues of this strategy are: more people should work and remain in work, more jobs are to be created, and early retirement should be discouraged. The new measures reinforce the strategy; by making the labour market more flexible in order to stimulate labour mobility, by adapting the social security systems and incorporating life long learning.

These measures are mainly worked out on the national level. The EU supports this with a couple of specific European measures. The Commission, in its Communication as of 12 October 2006, pointed out that ageing is a fundamentally positive trend and it stresses that we should be perfectly capable of facing up to the challenges it raises. The Member States have already embarked upon several reforms: pensions, health, labour market, education systems...particularly within the framework of the renewed Lisbon strategy on growth and employment. The Communication proposes a reference framework for action by the Member States, enhancing the Lisbon strategy and introducing a long term perspective with

fresh proposals on demographic renewal. There are five key themes identified for action:

1. a Europe that fosters demographic renewal;
2. a Europe that puts an emphasis on work;
3. a Europe that is more productive and more competitive;
4. a Europe that is equipped to receive and integrate migrants;
5. a Europe that has healthy public finances.

For all these points the European Social Fund, which is the financial instrument of the European Employment Strategy with an annual budget of over ten billion Euro, has a key role to play in the implementation of all these guidelines by the Member States.

Enhancing the adaptability of workers and companies is the first priority under the new rules of the Social Fund, which specifically mention the need in this context to invest more in strategies to achieve better access to training, and particularly for older workers.

Europe places an emphasis on work because there is a need to increase the rate of employment amongst women, young people, and older people. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce early exiting from the labour market, and encourage « active ageing » and age-focused management in the business sector. The key to success is to change the way Europe organises working activities throughout life, and to invest in training and good working conditions. In this context, the European Union will lend its support to all the players in the Member States, particularly at the regional and local levels which are involved in adjusting to change with the help of the European Social Fund. At the European level, in order to help the Member States adapt to demographic change, the Commission proposes to act as a facilitator through two actions: the Demography Forum and the progress report, which is a key instrument in the Lisbon strategy.

In past years, there have been a lot of actions on a European scale. Many different development activities are being carried out to

strengthen the position of the older workforce on the labour market. Through EQUAL, the European Social Fund has supported more than 200 development partnerships aimed at older people and the labour market. The purpose has been to develop skills and methods in order to bolster the European labour market in the short and long terms. Many research projects are also taking place, helping to build up a bank of know-how on the mechanisms that have caused older people to be prematurely removed from the labour market. By facilitating exchange projects, the EU stimulates a broad use of this built up knowledge.

### **1.3.2 Policy measures from the ELLABO research**

Concerning the labour participation of the elderly, the following measures have been derived from the ELLABO research:

#### **Increasing awareness measures and improving the image of and attitude towards elderly workers**

These measures consist mainly of (governmental) campaigns to create awareness among employers and employees of the demographic consequences. It is important, however, that the message of these often national campaigns trickles down to regional and local level. For example, regional and local politicians and personnel from job agencies should turn into ambassadors to promote the value and necessity of employing elderly workers and keeping them in work.

The effectiveness of those campaigns is difficult to measure, but they seem to be essential to support the other measures.

## **Stimulating training and life long learning**

To prevent unemployment is the most effective way to improve the labour participation of the elderly. One of the key elements is continuous training.

Life long learning is very important for keeping up the current demands of the labour market. Training is important throughout one's working life. Especially, between the ages of 40 and 50, people can easily become frustrated or turn sour in their work. Training helps them to remain flexible and mobile. Our French partner found that elderly workers receive much less training than their younger colleagues. To keep people in work longer, this habit should drastically change. Governments can stimulate life long learning programmes with financial incentives. For example, reimburse training costs by tax measures for employers and employees.

Training for unemployed elderly is rather important to get back to work. It is important not to take the 'short cut' but rather to provide for training with a lasting effect, even when the costs are higher. Usually, unemployed elderly receive social benefit. Therefore, the government has a task to provide the means for training.

## **Stimulating health improving measures**

It is evident that good health is essential for proper functioning in a job. Besides for the rules, governments have to create safe and healthy working conditions, in which they can provide information and financial incentives to care for a healthy labour market population.

## **Reforming the social security system**

All governments are already taking measures to reform the social security system. They are meant to face the rising costs of the ageing population. The main measures are:

- Abolishing early retirement facilities
- Adopting an age anti-discrimination law
- Raising the official retirement age
- Equalising the retirement age between men and women
- Abolishing partial retirement facilities
- Shortening the duration of the employment benefit
- Extending the obligations for elderly unemployed living on social benefit
- Abolishing extra days off for elderly to make them 'cheaper'
- Right to training for (elderly) workers
- Easing dismissal protection

It is important that those measures go hand in hand with firm support for elderly workers and elderly unemployed.

## **Tax and other financial measures**

With financial measures, governmental organisations can provide (positive and negative) incentives to improve the labour market situation of the elderly. The reimbursement of training costs has already been mentioned. In several countries employers pay lower premiums when they hire an elderly worker and/or the risk of disability is minimalised.

Governments can also provide for subsidies for innovative and exchange projects regarding this theme. Many governments seem to be busy cutting budgets. However, the consequence is that all room for creativeness disappears. This obstructs innovation, whereas innovation is as important for the labour market as it is in e.g. the technical sector.

Finally, governments can take measures for people with low chances to return to the labour market (for example subsidised jobs) and create a good climate for starting entrepreneurs. Self-employment can be a good alternative for the elderly and should therefore be made as easy as possible.

### **Improving the adaptability of employers and employees**

The measures that can be taken to improve the adaptability of employers and employees are described in chapter 1.4. Governments can stimulate this through the aforementioned policy measures (e.g. awareness campaigns, financial measures, training, health measures).

### **1.3.3 Policy recommendations**

Europe's future economic growth will increasingly depend on productivity gains and its capacity for innovation, and consequently on investment in training and in research and development. Europe's economic performance will also depend on how well companies seize the opportunity for new markets associated with the needs of an ageing population. The future generations of older people will no doubt be a far more active segment of the population - and far more significant as consumers. We should also not underestimate the increasing demand - in qualitative and quantitative terms alike - for welfare and health care. Our societies must therefore invest in training the people who will work in that sector in order to improve the quality of services and to raise the profile of this type of work. The increasing proportion of older people will clearly mean many adjustments at various levels - starting with education in general and extending as far as urban development, transport policy, etc. The impact of ageing is very important as regards the functioning of our regional economies and labour markets and as regards local governance.

While ageing is a worldwide phenomenon (with the exception of the African continent), the way it affects the Member States of the European Union and different ELLABO-regions is uneven. In certain regions, the impact of ageing can be exacerbated by the fact that young people move away in search of better job prospects. Other regions acquire new populations, and these movements, which are difficult to predict, can make it tricky to adjust infrastructures to changing population groups.

The demographic change is a challenge for economic performance. The competence lies primarily with the Member States, each with its own special characteristics, and there can be no 'one-size-fits-all' policy or 'model answer'. Therefore, the good practices can in most cases not be transferred from one region to another. However, the underlying ideas, the inspiration and the good and bad experiences can be shared. Since 'age management' will become increasingly important, it is necessary to exchange experiences, also in the European context. Involvement is needed not only from governments, but also from social partners, educational organisations, enterprises, and intermediary organisations.

In short, according to ELLABO the most important policy issues are:

- To create broad awareness about the consequences and opportunities of the ageing population. The means that can be used are publicity campaigns and using key persons as 'ambassadors'.
- To place a large emphasis on the prevention of unemployment among elderly. This has to start early in people's careers by means of life long learning, which can be promoted by financial incentives. Once older persons are unemployed, it will take a large effort to re-enter the labour market.
- To adapt the social system to make it ageing proof.

- To develop middle and long term policy in order to create a workforce that meets the future needs of society. For example, more people will be needed in health care, how can this kind of work become more attractive to prevent large labour shortages?
- To create a positive climate for (European) exchange and innovation.



## 1.4 Measures to retain older employees

### 1.4.1 Fields of action of demography-oriented labour and personnel policies

One of the central challenges of the future will be the question of how the companies will be able to maintain their innovative and competitive abilities with older staff.

It will be crucial as to how the workforce grows older and which social and personnel-political provisions will be proposed. In order for the potential of the increasing part of ageing staff to be used productively, labour and personnel policies are called upon for a change: Their task - particularly from the point of view of the pensioning age at 67 (or even beyond) - is, therefore, to promote the ability to work and the employability of the staff along their entire working life.

With the new weighting of the factor 'labour', the labour and personnel policies acquire an additional significance in the companies. Their task increasingly lies in including the potential of older employees in their long-term planning, and in offering them development opportunities in turn enabling them to stay longer in employment.

That way, classical topics of personnel and organisational development are focused on as fields of action to manage the impact of the demographic change. The companies as well as the labour and social policies need to reconsider and shape these topics with a demographic bias. An ageing-adequate view of all corporate and political strategies, structures, and measures is required.

The following fields of action of personnel and organisational development have been discussed in the ELLABO practice examples:

#### Recruitment policy

Traditional personnel policies have, as a rule, addressed young jobseekers. A change in this view is absolutely required due to the demographic change because it must be considered that staff will grow older in the future - as generally shown in the ELLABO practice examples.

It shows that companies that start considering demography early, which reconsider their old personnel policy and orient it to age diversity, are absolutely able to increase their value generation if hitherto unused human resources are developed and productively employed and all ages are considered in personnel planning.<sup>1</sup>

The lack of junior staff challenges companies to develop unconventional forms of staff recruitment. Those that succeed in winning new groups (e.g. women) will have a competitive advantage. The core workforce also needs special treatment and provisions (e.g. career concepts that make employability possible up to retirement).

In view of a looming lack of skilled staff it is also possible to provide for a balance of supply and demand for workers via existing or newly created networks. ELLABO shows examples for it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See details in the practice examples: 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.7, 2.2.8 and 2.2.9

<sup>2</sup> See details in the practice examples: 2.2.4 and 2.2.6

## **Preventive health promotion, health and safety at work, health management**

Biological ageing is usually not the reason for problems of older staff in the work process. Many problems arise only in and through the work process itself. Wearing down of health and skills is accepted in several work processes and operations. In addition, badly-planned structures hinder older employees from performing according to their age.

Physical efficiency and health need not deteriorate with increasing age. Chronic illnesses are often a consequence of lifelong misuse of physical abilities which can be avoided at an early stage by health prevention. Therefore, an important *curative* task in the companies consists of considering the situation of older employees and of thinking about the prospects they still might have, for example checking which workplaces suit employees with reduced health or ability to learn.

An important *preventive* task in companies addresses the causes of one-sided demands on staff by involving the entire working environment in considerations and planning. Companies raise the questions:

- What can and are we to do in order for employees to be motivated to do their job and not just work by the rules?
- What can and are we to do in order for employees to retire in good health?
- How can the persons involved meet their various responsibilities?

### **Measures for (lifelong) training**

In view of the demographic change, training of employees obtains a new significance, as various examples show. That concerns extensiveness and continuity as well as the contents of training measures. Lifelong learning is becoming an absolute necessity for

employees if they want to stay in employment up to a ripe old age. Companies must include training in a strategic personnel management in order to keep and further develop their experiential knowledge and know-how as a competitive factor.

Older staff is not limited per se to their ability to learn, but rather is a matter of how the concrete situation is viewed. Where skill problems really occur, e.g. due to limited learning conditions, they can mostly be solved by customised measures.

In training with older employees it is useful to consider learning styles and speed and to employ special learning arrangements (e.g. blended learning).<sup>3</sup>

To secure a sufficient quality and quantity of training and lifelong learning, regional efforts are also required. As ELLABO shows, this can be achieved by a targeted combination of companies at regional level, and supporting measures by socio-political structures are useful.<sup>4</sup>

## **Competence and knowledge expansion**

Training is more than ever a strategic task. A systematic knowledge transfer secures the productive basis of the companies. Older employees are often experienced; knowledge and experience are lost when they leave the company. That is particularly true for person-linked knowledge such as personal networks or knowledge about work and decision processes, which can be a real threat to the productivity of the company. Preservation of knowledge and transfer of experience are, therefore, fundamental for companies; the examples show the application of different tools and methods of

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<sup>3</sup> Practice example 2.2.8

<sup>4</sup> Practice examples 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.6 and 2.2.9

knowledge management: transfer from old to young and vice-versa, mentoring etc.

### **Age(ing)-adequate work organisation and working time regulation**

Particularly the increasing number of older employees in the future requires the ageing-adequate adaptation of work organisation and working time. That also applies to the organisation of work and breaks. Attractive workplaces with little physical strain and little stress are required.

ELLABO examples show that a structured facilitation of work (e.g. through setting up of new company units with special working time arrangements and working conditions) led to a sinking rate of absence because of illness, considerably increased motivation and the work satisfaction of staff and as a whole led to a longer stay in employment - these are important effects for the improvement of competitiveness of companies in the demographic change.<sup>5</sup>

### **Management**

A task comprising all fields of activity consists in the building up of an improved management culture. Management quality is crucial to the identification of employees with their job and thus to their working capacity and length of stay in the company.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Practice examples 2.2.1 and 2.2.2

<sup>6</sup> Practice examples 2.2.7, 2.2.8 and 2.2.9

### **1.4.2. Raising awareness for demography-adequate personnel development and organisational development<sup>7</sup>**

The message about the urgency to act in view of the ageing society is noticed in various ways. In the economy, the demographic message still has very little impact on actions. Currently, the companies do not experience the forecasted effects of the demographic change as a universal serious problem. Being clouded by day-to-day business, the demographic change is treated as a matter for which one will have to be prepared sometime somehow.

Therefore, it is important to raise the awareness of companies and employees for the future changes on the labour market now in order to start a new culture of learning and working in the company. To achieve this, the ELLABO practice examples show different tools and procedures (e.g. age structure analyses in companies, information campaigns etc.).

There are recommendations to publicly raise awareness about the (regional) demographic developments and their implications in the economy and society. They aim to change the awareness in the heads of people and companies, generate new ways of looking at age and promote a culture of reciprocal esteem in the company and society.

Due to the long-lasting way that older employees have looked at, in companies, the belief became fixed that they are less flexible and ill more often than younger staff, mentally decreasingly efficient and not ready to adapt to social change. These are paradigms haunting people's minds (in personnel offices, but also of persons affected by them). Medical research proves that a decrease in performance due

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<sup>7</sup> Practice examples 2.2.3, 2.2.4 and 2.2.9

to age under normal circumstances often only sets in from the age of 70 onwards.

An important awareness-raising task is, therefore, to put the negative image of the older workforce up to discussion with personnel managers and in companies in general.

It is important that all awareness-raising activities go on from existing networks (at regional level or between companies), that they include economy-related actors such as chambers, associations, agents of business development, trade unions/lobbies and educational organisations. They must be addressed as multipliers and trained to acquire the necessary skills to transport the challenges of the demographic change into the companies and society.

In view of the remaining necessity to increase the awareness of companies for a change in personnel policy, the practice examples of Marriot Hotel (2.2.7) and Barclays (2.2.8) can be put forward as tangible best practices and as guidelines for an effective personnel policy that takes the demographic development into account.

## 1.5 Measures for unemployed elderly

We have described 8 good practices that are mainly focussed on unemployed elderly (some of the projects are having a broader focus). From those projects it can be concluded that it takes a lot of effort to get elderly back to the labour market. And the longer the unemployment periods take, the more difficult it gets. Therefore, the prevention of unemployment among elderly should have the most serious attention paid to it, since it is the most effective way to improve the labour participation of elderly. And when it comes to unemployment, the elderly should get support as soon as possible to keep the unemployment period short. Accompanying measures, such as changing the mindset of employers, seem to be also necessary, but the effect is difficult to ascertain.

The measures described in the good practices can be divided into the following categories:

- Empowerment/revaluating and updating skills/training of unemployed elderly
- Finding alternatives for paid labour e.g. work in self-employment, voluntary work, or subsidised jobs
- Accompanying measures such as increasing awareness among the advisors from job agencies, etc.

### 1.5.1 Empowerment, revaluating and updating skills, and training of unemployed elderly

Empowerment of unemployed elderly is the leading thread running through all the projects. Unemployed elderly often have worked for a long time in the same company and feel 'discarded' by their employer. They are angry or frustrated and feel insecure about the future. To apply successfully for a new job, they have to regain confidence and a positive attitude. Different projects work with

group meetings. The exchange of experiences seems to be working well.

When unemployed elderly stopped looking back and start looking forward again, it is time to update skills, orientation on the labour market and searching methods.

It is evident that certificates are often not up to date anymore so in several projects the skills and working experiences of someone are made visible with competence tests. This should result in a clear picture of what someone can and wants to do.

Then, the unemployed elderly should have a clear view of the possibilities on the labour market; some professions don't exist any more and some terms of employment (like a permanent job) are hard to find on the current labour market.

Also, the ways of looking for a job have changed. Often elderly unemployed are not using the Internet yet, and the traditional application letter does not seem to work well for elderly unemployed. Therefore, several projects pay attention to networking as a means to get a job.

Obviously, the activities mentioned above are not always enough for getting a new job. Sometimes additional training is necessary to update for example knowledge on ICT or technical skills.

Then, there is a group of people with a long distance to the labour market. Often this is the case with long term unemployed. These people often have a mixture of problems; besides for their age they might lack basic education, working experience, and/or have personal problems. For them, a long term training programme will be needed or alternatives such as a subsidised job or voluntary work.

### **1.5.2 Alternatives for paid labour**

Quite a few projects focus on entrepreneurship as an alternative to paid labour. There are some logical reasons for this; personal (elderly might not want to work under a boss any more) and economic (the trend is that companies tend to employ less personnel. Instead they outsource part of the work or hire freelancers, so there is more space on the labour market for (small) entrepreneurship).

Projects focused on self-employment are successful if the participants are highly motivated and have the necessary skills to become an entrepreneur. Since the process of starting a company is quite complicated in most countries, there is a need for coaching, also during a certain period after the start.

As mentioned above, for the group of long term unemployed the process of re-entering the labour market is quite complicated. An alternative to paid work is voluntary work. Though this can be a solution for people to participate in society, the social benefit rules often oblige people to keep on searching for a paid job. The 'Longa Vita participation programme' (see 2.1.2) tries to change the attitude towards voluntary work.

Another alternative is the instrument of subsidised jobs. Though this is normally a temporary measure, it can be used for long term unemployed to gain the necessary working experience. The effectiveness of this instrument has not become clear from our good practices.

### **1.5.3 Accompanying measures**

The accompanying measures, such as increased awareness among employers and on political level have been discussed in chapter 1.3. However, there can be other factors that obstruct elderly to re-enter the labour market. For example, in the Netherlands it appeared also

necessary to influence the attitude among advisors of job centres and social security agencies. It was no exception that a 20-year-old advisor told elderly 'they didn't have a chance to get a job because of their age', which was perceived quite disturbing by the persons concerned. In workshops advisors became conscious of the positive points of elderly. Instead of having prejudices themselves they had to be turned into ambassadors for the elderly unemployed.

## Conclusions and future perspectives

In the ELLABO project we attempted to find answers as to how to improve the labour participation of the elderly. We found a broad range of measures, from large political items down to the individual. There is a necessity to face the consequences of demographic change. We described 21 good practice projects, from which we derived lessons. Every region has its specific problems, and therefore, the best practices cannot be transferred entirely from one region to another. However, the projects were inspiring and solutions can be used by others in an adapted form. We hope that the ELLABO project has contributed to the awareness that a higher labour market participation of older people is of large importance to society.

The recommendations from the ELLABO point of view are summarised below:

On a policy level:

- To create broad awareness about the consequences and opportunities of the ageing population. The means that can be used are publicity campaigns and using key persons as 'ambassadors'.
- To place a large emphasis on the prevention of unemployment among elderly. This has to start early in people's careers by means of life long learning, which can be promoted by financial incentives. Once older persons are unemployed, it will take a large effort to re-enter the labour market.
- To adapt the social system to make it ageing proof.
- To develop middle and long term policies in order to create a workforce that meets the future needs of society. For example, more people will be needed in health care. How

can this kind of work become more attractive to prevent large labour shortages?

- To create a positive climate for (European) exchange and innovation.

On the level of companies and employees:

- To increase awareness among companies that age proof human resource management will be a must to keep the competitiveness in the future
- To introduce a demography-oriented personnel policy in companies, which comprises:
  - a recruitment policy that not only directs young people, but also other target groups
  - health management (physical and psychological, how to keep the staff motivated?)
  - measures for life long learning and training
  - developing methods for knowledge transfer (between older and younger staff)
  - developing an age-proof work organisation
- To motivate older employees to stay in work longer. This also means to create awareness among older employees that they take the responsibility on their own to remain flexible, motivated and mobile, which demands an active attitude towards their employer.

On the level of unemployed elderly

- To provide firm support to elderly as soon as they become unemployed or prior.
- To provide for training according to individual needs. This can be empowerment, revaluating and updating skills, labour market orientation, or additional training measures.
- To stimulate alternatives to paid labour, e.g.
  - Supporting elderly who want to start their own business

- Creating subsidised jobs and extending the possibilities for voluntary work
- To remove other obstacles for elderly unemployed to re-enter the labour market.

### **Future perspectives of the ELLABO network**

The ELLABO project effectively described good practice projects that will be disseminated by partners through their network and to a broader public per the Internet.

The other purpose of the ELLABO project was to create a network that would continue beyond the running time of the project. This can be realised in two ways:

On the exchange level:

- The partners will keep each other informed about interesting projects and developments. This will be done virtually. They will share information and invite each other to interesting events, conferences, etc. concerning the topic of elderly on the labour market.

On the action level:

- The partners will look at the possibility for a follow up of ELLABO. This will depend on the means available. A new project should be more action-oriented. For example, organising international study visits for employers to companies with age proof personnel policies and practices.
- Already some of the ELLABO partners are working together on other labour market themes. For example, a delegation from Flevoland is going to visit Niedersachsen to see how they are setting up social companies for disabled people. Additionally, some partners are working out a project idea on labour migration. This indicates that the network has a broader function than the ELLABO theme.

As we mentioned in chapter 1.2, projects often have immeasurable effects. This is also the case with ELLABO. During the course of the project we learned a lot about each other's regions, we learned how to deal with cultural differences, developed a stronger 'European feeling', and made new friends.

We are grateful to the Hanse Passage programme and our organisations for having made this all possible.



## Part 2 Description of good practices



## Part 2.1 Supportive policy projects



## 2.1.1 'Temporary support centres WerkWijzer 45+ in Fryslân and Twente'

Target group: people over 45 years of age that are working and job seeking, employers, human resources departments, and employment intermediaries

Start and end dates: Twente: May 2003 – December 2004. Fryslân: March 2004 – February 2007

Parties involved: Twente: RPA Twente, job agency, agency paying out social benefits, and reintegration companies. Fryslân: job agency, province of Fryslân, employers' organisations, MKB-adviseurs (MKB Adviseurs is an advisory service for SME companies), municipalities, reintegration companies, Chambers of Commerce, public welfare organisations, as well as trade and industry

Contact person: Ms H. Harkema, [hennyh@pip-projecten.nl](mailto:hennyh@pip-projecten.nl)

### Description

WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân and Twente are the temporary physical support centres for everything that is related to people 45 and over and employment. WerkWijzer 45+ is available for advice, information, and support. These expertise centres develop and promote activities dealing with people 45 and over and employment. WerkWijzer also functions as a 'spider in the web' that provides an overview, stimulates networks, and saves people from having to reinvent the wheel.

The objective of both WerkWijzers is to realise that all the regional parties involved will go the extra mile to strengthen the position of older people in the job market.

Projects and workshops are currently being prepared or carried out in Fryslân. Contacts have also been made with companies, care organisations, a number of municipalities, and educational institutions. In addition, WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân is involved in the first branch of TalentPlus in the northern Netherlands.

In October 2003 and March 2005, the province of Overijssel presented research reports regarding the labour market situation for the coming years. The reports especially elucidate the phenomenon of the aging working population. As a result of the first research report, the project WerkWijzer 45+ Twente officially commenced.

### Results

The main goal of WerkWijzer is to initiate a complete turnaround in the way employers think about people 45 years and over employees and job seekers. These kinds of changes are hardly measurable. WerkWijzer clearly reached the position of 'spider in the web'. Especially in the region Fryslân, WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân is involved in many of the projects that stimulate the participation of people 45 years and over. This proves the importance of a support centre to get things going. Besides for its role in these projects, WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân has developed the following workshops:

#### 1. 'Emphasis on over-45 talent'

This workshop is intended for employment intermediaries and sets out to improve the coaching of and finding employment for job seeking people 45 years and over. Communication with job seekers and employers and utilising effective instruments are of prime concern. Two important pillars of this workshop are dealing with the Anti-age Discrimination at Work Act and diversity. The workshop is intended for advisers from job agencies and agencies paying out social benefits and consultants from reintegration companies.

The workshop aims to:

- make participants conscious of the image that is created regarding older job seekers and employees;
- inform participants of the Anti-age Discrimination at Work Act and its consequences for employment intermediaries;
- inform participants of the government measures aiming to stimulate the labour participation of older people;
- provide participants tips and practical hints to enable them to communicate better with 45+ job seekers and employers;
- hand out instruments to the participants to help more effectively coach and find employment for job seekers that are 45 years and over.

## 2. 'Competence Analysis for 45+ job seekers'

This workshop focuses on clearly mapping out competences and confidence building. This encourages exploring, enlarging, and utilising the job seeker's own possibilities. The target group of this workshop involves job seekers that are 45 years and over.

The objective of the workshop is for participants at the end to:

- have clearly mapped out skills and competences;
- have drawn up a competence chart;
- use the skills and competences for their own career;
- have drawn up a personal action plan;
- have been stimulated to utilise the network and to effectively know as to how to execute this.

## 3. 'Working with the competences of 45+ job seekers'

This workshop focuses on assisting and coaching job seekers that are 45 years and over. The target group for the

workshop involves the professionals who coach, find employment for and/or train job seekers that are 45 years or over.

The objective of the workshop is to ensure that participants:

- are skilled in working with the competence analysis;
- can assist job seekers with methods to develop the competence chart;
- can assist and coach job seekers with the drawing up and carrying out of a personal action plan;
- can assist job seekers in networking.

Besides for the role of WerkWijzer 45+ Twente in some projects, which is to be mentioned later on, the following results were reached in Twente:

- Developing an awareness programme for employers and employees about the advantages of increasing mobility on the labour market.
- Developing a programme to promote 'life long learning'.
- Collecting and mainstreaming of best practices.
- Brochure 'Grijs-werken-aanbevolen', about all the obstructions and solutions.
- Several newsletters.

## **Recommendations**

Ms Van Leeuwen, a policy-maker for labour market affairs for the province of Fryslân has the following recommendations for setting up a temporary support centre.

- A support centre should be created for a period of several years (at least 3). This is less important for centres that are part of an already well-known information centre for a certain target group.

- From the word 'go', commence to actively develop and provide information or propagate a best practice example from elsewhere.
- Invest strongly in the creation of networks.

### Further information

There are several WerkWijzer branches in the Netherlands. WerkWijzer circulates brochures (a regional brochure for job seekers and a national brochure for employers and human resources managers) and newsletters. For more information, go to [www.wwijzer.nl](http://www.wwijzer.nl)

## 2.1.2 'Longa Vita Participation Programme'

Target groups: social partners and governmental decision makers, unemployed 50+ people

Start and end dates: 2005 - ...

Parties involved: Bureau Denim, Phusis, SESAM Academie, and several other advising organisations (social partners, jobcentre, social security office)

Contact person: Ger Tielen (Bureau Denim), [ger.tielen@planet.nl](mailto:ger.tielen@planet.nl)

### Description

#### Reasons for commencing the project

Many unemployed 50+ people encounter significant difficulties when re-entering the labour market. The normal re-integration measures are not very successful for this group of people.

On the other hand, there is an enormous amount of social (voluntary) work to be conducted throughout Dutch society. The Longa Vita Participation Programme aims to connect this unused reserve of experienced workforce with the high demand for voluntary work.

#### Elements of the project

##### Lobby

The social benefit rules oblige the unemployed to regularly apply for paid jobs, even when their chances are close to zero. The Longa Vita Participation Programme is lobbying on the national and regional levels to have voluntary work accepted as an alternative to paid work.

The (juridical, practical, etc.) obstacles encountered will be translated in the policy proposals.

##### Development of local pilots

Local meetings will be organised with all the relevant parties (such as the jobcentres, the social security office, local government, voluntary organisations and social partners) as a starting point for the development of local voluntary activities for seniors. Those activities have to meet the criteria of Longa Vita, e.g. training for a specific voluntary job and coaching on the job.

##### Model programmes

The Longa Vita Participation Programme offers model programmes for training, coaching, building up of social networks, and the matching of seniors that can be utilised for the development of new activities.

##### Example projects

Longa Vita offers its experience from various examples of projects

##### Project integration coaches

Seniors are trained as a coach for individuals or families from ethnic minorities. Their task is to help them to become socially and economically independent within Dutch society. The project is to start in 10 larger cities in the Netherlands. Approximately 100 coaches per city will be active.

##### Project SESAM coaches

Former managers that are now 55+, and currently unemployed, are trained by the SESAM Academy to be coaches and advisers in voluntary organisations. After the example of the American Leadership Institute on Ageing, former managers are trained within 12 weeks to support voluntary organisations with their management, promotional, and financing activities. Two senior advisers work as a team, in which they remain in the network and meet each other regularly. For their work, they obtain a certain allowance that the Academy uses for organising new trainings.

Other example projects:

Family coaches: seniors are trained as a mentor for problem families.

Cultural ambassador: seniors promote the cultural participation of the elderly or are trained to protect cultural inheritance.

Tannhäuser Team: a group of seniors helps the local government with the restructuring of a socially problematic neighbourhood in the city of Apeldoorn.

## Results

Lobby

At the moment, one of the pension funds is conducting research in order to identify the barriers for the elderly in participating in voluntary work. When the research is finalised, there will be a discussion on the national level with a broad range of decision makers from the social partners and (semi)governmental organisations on this topic. Subsequently, the abovementioned pilot programme will commence for a duration of two years.

Example projects

The programme offers many 50+ people the opportunity to complete training, as well as participate in new social networks and useful voluntary work. Paid work is not primarily the focus, but by way of the new network, the voluntary work occasionally will lead to paid work. For example, from the 120 people who have been trained by the SESAM Academy, 10% have found and secured a paid job. According to one of the trade unions, this is 6 times higher than the normal opportunity that 50+ people have when re-entering the labour market.

Within the project integration, there are 160 people that are active coaches, or currently in training, in which projects are already started or about to start in 10 cities in the Netherlands.

## Recommendations

According to Ger Tielen, voluntary work and paid work seem to belong to two different worlds, whereas an approach between the two is necessary for future society, where so much work heavily relies on volunteers. This cannot be performed by voluntary organisations alone. The government and social partners should ease the regulations to make it easier for the elderly to perform useful voluntary work, and thereby, enter into new social networks.

To start a programme such as this, the full commitment of the social partners should be sought.

### 2.1.3 'SENIORS – Experimental Strategies and New Integration Methods for the elderly workers located in Upper Normandy'

Target group: job seekers (45+), elderly workers (50+), and employers

Number of participants targeted: 40 to 50 experiments on knowledge transfer, unlimited for recruiting the unemployed

Start and end dates: 2001 – 2005

Parties involved: OPCAREG, DAFCO (Academic Delegation for Education and Vocational Training), ICD (Chamber of Commerce training organisation), DDTEFP76 (Regional office representing the Ministry of Employment and Continuing Education), DR ANPE (Unemployment office)

Contact person: Mrs Corinne MERLINO, OPCAREG Haute Normandie; Mrs Coryse TETREL, OPCAREG Haute-Normandie

#### Description

##### Reasons for commencing the project

- An active ageing population in France and increased risk of a lack of workforce from 2006 onwards. At the onset of the project, in 2001, no one in Upper Normandy is anticipating this risk or its induced effects.
- The need to maintain economic activity and the level of pension plans.
- European directives have recommended an extension of 5 years in the retirement age as of 2010 (63 years) for all the countries in the European Union. It is, therefore, necessary to inform companies about the need to maintain the

employability of those over 50 years of age and to point out their added value (experience, knowledge acquired during their working time).

This experimental project had a twofold objective:

- 1 – increase the awareness of the need to capitalise on the expertise of elderly workers and maintain their employability.
- 2 – organise a campaign for the employment of those over 45.

##### Aims of the project:

- Identifying the specific characteristics of employees over 50 in the companies of the Haute-Normandie
- Helping companies to anticipate the coming demographic changes and to significantly evolve in their recruitment and adult training practices
- Experiment with 'training' solutions in order to manage the career-ends of ageing employees (over 50), by organising the transfer of expertise and/or accession to new skills
- Act upon this public of seniors and increase their sense of self-worth, of value within the company, to prepare them better for a longer professional life
- Encourage the employment of older job-seekers in regional companies.

##### Action plan:

- Action 1: Analyse the local situations in terms of senior employment
- Action 2: 'The learning company': managing ageing employees better
- Action 3: Encourage the recruitment of senior job-seekers



## Results

### Action 1:

- Survey within 50 local companies (pre-identified with an ageing population pyramid) in order to identify the characteristics of ageing employees as well as management practices for them
- Network mobilisation: corporate clubs, Employer organisations, Chambers of Commerce, ANDCP, ANPE (Employment exchange), training organisations, Temporary work agencies, trade unions, etc.

Action 2: Only 19 older workers trained out of the 80 aimed for.

Action 3: Despite a press conference and an extensive communication campaign, only one instance of recruitment was reported. However, it is necessary to clearly state that the employment agency had not organised a reliable tracking device, which means that the result cannot be measured well.

### **What came out of the surveys:**

- only larger companies (+250 employees) seem to understand the strategic importance of age management
- if elderly workers are seen as valuable to the company, very few HR departments/managers have concrete solutions
- Vocational training was rarely seen as a concrete tool/solution to help resolve age management issues.

### **What the project highlighted:**

- recruiting 45+ people seems to be more difficult than training the elderly. Most employers think they are more expensive, less adaptable, and less motivated than younger people, who tend to appear more career minded.
- Knowledge transfer experience was a rather positive experience for both employer and employee as both parts realise the value of the person/the work they carried out throughout their career. For some people, learning how to train younger people gave them an improved self image and

a vocation to become part-time tutors later on, after retirement.

## Recommendations

- Although the results seem weak, it is important to remember that the project was very innovative when it was set up in 2001.
- In addition to results, Equal projects track their impacts as the latter may be used for setting up more effective, subsequent actions.

The impacts of “SENIORS”:

**For partners:** a better understanding of the organisation of work and human resource management for this specific population, i.e. the 50+ people

**For beneficiary companies:** Testing experiments on end-of-career management, better use of experienced senior employees, and training support for the transfer of expertise, as well as an increased awareness of age management issues.

**For employees:** taking into account their career management, on the one hand, the experience gained which is passed on to and used by younger generations, on the other hand, the specific difficulties of adaptation due to high-speed changes in the workplace.

**For older job-seekers:** Enhancement of their capacity for occupational integration by following the suitable training courses and a better image.

## Further information

<http://www.opcareg-hn.fr/framestart.php?bdx=4&page=32&menu=4>

## 2.1.4 'Pathway to the future' (Equality parcours d'avenir)

Target group: Employees over 45, employers

Number of participants: Unlimited

Parties involved: 10 regional OPCAREG, Union Nationale RETRAVAILLER (Helping the long term unemployed return to work), University of Paris Dauphine, CEREG (Research entity), Centre Inffo(sic? or Info?) (Information agency specialised on continuing education issues)

Dates : May 2005 – September 2007

Contact person: Mrs Coryse TETREL, OPCAREG Haute-Normandie

### Description

Reasons for commencing the project

This project is the result of the fusion between two Equal projects. Its aim is to communicate, at the national level, various issues related to training employees over 45 years of age, with a view to the reduction of the discrimination factors on this particular target group. A toolkit on age management issues will be designed for both employers and employees.

Objectives of the project

- To help companies anticipate career management/progression for the 45+
- By making good use of the new measures resulting from the LLL legislation (2004)
- To promote mobility (transversal or vertical)

Elements of the project

1 – Survey amongst employers and employees to understand how employment and training of the 45+ is dealt with within French companies.

2 – Specific training on this issue for 12 OPCAREG advisers

3 – 70 companies take part in a survey to help define the specifications for the toolkit

4 – A think tank is engaged in transversal skills, as they increase the opportunities for obtaining employment after redundancy or when trying to return to work.

### Results and Recommendations

- At this stage, the project is still in operation. Therefore, it is difficult to discuss any recommendations. However, a few points can be mentioned:
- Most companies seem to understand the strategic importance of employing or retaining those over 45, in which they are generally at a loss, however, about the concrete measures that will enable this.
- The other issue regards the discrimination factors: young men with high qualification levels have a 70% higher chance of being offered training on the job than a woman aged 45 with low qualifications. The toolkit aims to provide concrete help on how to bridge this unfair gap.

## Part 2.2 Activities aimed at retaining older employees



## 2.2.1 'Halberstma Pallets Grou B.V. and Talant Partnership'

Target group: older employees of Halbertsma Pallets and clients of Talant

Number of participants: eight Halbertsma Pallets employees and twelve Talant clients, with a maximum of 24

Parties involved: Halbertsma Pallets Grou B.V. and Talant

Contact person: Ms T. Arends and Mr T. Kliphuis at Halbertsma Pallets Grou B.V.

Type of company: Halbertsma Pallets Grou B.V. is a pallet board factory; Talant is a care institution that provides care and support in the field of living accommodations, work, and spending the day meaningfully, learning and living for people with a mental handicap.

### Description

Like many other companies, Halbertsma Pallets was confronted with an ageing staff. On account of the physically heavy work, older employees cannot always follow the difficult work pace any longer. Through mutual contacts, an idea arose to enter into a partnership with Talant.

The objective of this project is to set up an independent woodworking company within 2½ years by employing mentally handicapped employees that are professionally coached by Talant in co-operation with Halbertsma Pallets staff.

Prior to the project, a meeting was held for the parents/caretakers of the Talant clients and the Halbertsma Pallets staff concerned. These Halbertsma Pallets employees had completed a course that explained the nature of the Talant clients' behaviour and showed how to deal with this behaviour.

### Results

The project is still in progress and in 18 months the final results will be evaluated. From intermediate evaluations, it has shown that the Halbertsma Pallets employees concerned are doing physically lighter work now so that they will be able to stay at work longer (very low rate of absenteeism due to illness). It also appeared that both the Talant clients and the Halbertsma Pallets employees enjoyed their work, partly because they could determine the work pace themselves.

It appeared that there is not an abundant demand for products that might be made in this separate company unit. A think tank has been set up for order acquisition. Several companies are involved in this think tank. These companies will research the exact needs of the market.

### Recommendations

If Mr Kliphuis were to hand over the project he would advise thorough research of the market. It should be studied as to whether there is enough specially adapted work for the target group. Moreover, a lot of energy should be invested in the project. Companies should be well aware of the fact that a lot of time and money need to be invested in order to have people from two entirely different cultures work together. Participation in the project happens on a voluntary basis for the Talant clients and Halbertsma employees. However, this work can certainly not be performed without a commitment that eventually everybody must achieve to the best of their abilities in order to reach the status of an independent company.

It is Mr Kliphuis' estimate that such a project can only work in production companies.

## Further information

Websites:

- Halbertsma Pallets Grou B.V.: [www.halbertsma-pallets.nl](http://www.halbertsma-pallets.nl)
- Talant: [www.talant.nl](http://www.talant.nl)

## 2.2.2 'Batavus Policy for older Staff'

Target group: Batavus employees 55 years of age or over with work related complaints but that are able to do work within the handlebars unit

Number of employees in the handlebars unit: 7 at the moment, a maximum of 8

Contact person: Ms T. Schaper, personnel department officer at Batavus

Type of organisation: bicycle factory

### Description

The handlebars unit (unit for older employees) was set up because Batavus was confronted with the problem of ageing employees. Some employees who had conducted their work for years were no longer able to keep up with the rest of the employees doing the normal work. Because of the Collective Labour Agreement Act measures, changes in society, and good entrepreneurship, Batavus began searching for a fitting solution. In the end, a special unit for older employees, the handlebars unit, was set up. In this way experienced employees with extensive knowledge of the company were retained. In addition to this, in individual cases, special arrangements were made for older employees to stay on at Batavus on a part-time basis; these are always tailor-made arrangements.

Handlebars unit employees must be 55 years of age or over and have work related complaints. In addition, they should meet the following requirements:

- At the moment the employee reaches 61 years of age and 9 months he or she must join the TOP scheme (Temporary Old Age Pension Scheme with a 100% allowance).

- These employees must have a medical certificate from the company doctor that they are capable of performing this work.

In principle, sick employees are not admitted to this unit; they must first recover in their own department of work.

The main objective of the handlebars unit is to keep the target group at work. Additionally, the employees are expected to reach a level of productivity that has been set beforehand.

### Results

Since the time that the handlebars unit was set up, there has been no work related loss of working hours among the target group. This means that, relatively speaking, there is very little absenteeism within the unit. The employees in the unit experience less work pressure because the regulating possibilities have increased. Moreover, their output is at a fitting level.

### Recommendations

Ms Schaper has the following recommendations regarding the setting up of a unit for older employees:

- Be creative.
- Look at the opportunities and possibilities and not only at the problems.
- Draw up a cost-benefit analysis.
- Consider how far a company can go and is willing to go with regard to good entrepreneurship.

Keep in constant conference with the Works Council.

### Further information

Websites:

- Batavus: [www.batavus.com](http://www.batavus.com)

## 2.2.3 'Human resources policy for all ages in Fryslân and Overijssel'

Target group: employers of medium and small companies in various sectors in Fryslân and Overijssel

Number of participating companies: Fryslân: 20 SME companies. Overijssel: 11 SME companies.

Start and end dates: Fryslân: March 2005 – January 2006. Overijssel: January 2004 – January 2005

Parties involved: Fryslân: WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân and MKB Adviseurs. Overijssel: WerkWijzer 45+ Twente, MKB Adviseurs [MKB Adviseurs is an advisory service for SME companies]

Contact person: Mr D. Zeldenrijk, senior adviser human resources at MKB Adviseurs, [dzeldenrijk@mkbadviseurs.nl](mailto:dzeldenrijk@mkbadviseurs.nl)

### Description

The project aims at making SME companies in the Fryslân and Overijssel regions conscious of changes with regard to the 'de-greening and greying' of the working population, in turn aiming particularly at its consequences for their personnel management.

In Fryslân, the companies were selected on the diversity of their geographical location and on the variety of the economic sector. The selection of the companies was conducted with the help of the networks of WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân and MKB Adviseurs. For this reason, companies were more readily willing to cooperate in the quick scan; it is more difficult to find new companies for this co-operation. Persuasive arguments in this context were the review of their personnel management and the possibility of free advice. The prospect that the companies might qualify for subsidies in the case of a further elaboration of the project also made them more cooperative.

The companies in Fryslân were contacted per telephone to make an appointment. Also by means of articles in the general media, in the sector's media, and newsletters throughout Fryslân and Overijssel attention was drawn to and information diffused on the theme of de-greening and greying [terms to describe the relative lack of young people and abundance of old people]. In Overijssel, about 100 companies received mail about the quick scan.

By means of a quick scan, 20 SME companies in Fryslân and 11 companies in Overijssel could see the effects of their personnel management in general and the consequences of the greying ageing of their personnel in particular. Moreover, companies have become conscious of this phenomenon in this way. With the findings of the quick scan, the companies can start a follow-up project with the help of subsidy schemes from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment or the HRM scheme from SNN (in which the regions Fryslân, Groningen, and Drenthe work together). In the quick scan, the following items are dealt with:

- age spread of the entire staff;
- recruitment and selection;
- communication;
- training (courses);
- working conditions;
- personnel administration.

### Results

The companies have been informed of the theme of 'de-greening and greying', also partly through national attention and other campaigns. In addition to this, the 20 MKB companies in Fryslân and 11 SME companies in Overijssel have become conscious of their personnel management and the consequences of ageing.

As a result of the findings of the quick scan, a total of ten companies started a follow-up project; they applied for a subsidy. Atop that, four companies in Fryslân would like to start a follow-up project in the future. Eight of the eleven SME companies in Overijssel made action plans to resolve obstructions.

Because only 31 companies took part in the project, the project is not fully embedded. In the general scheme of things, the project has had little influence because SME companies work independently and have little contact with other companies. For the future, it would make sense to incorporate such small projects into a larger unit and/or to adjust a follow-up project.

## Recommendations

Mr Zeldenrijk provides the following recommendations:

- Good mutual relations in the project team. In this case, it was the cooperation between WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân and WerkWijzer 45+ Twente and MKB Adviseurs.
- Make the actual carrying out of the project to take place in a fairly short period; this will keep participants active.
- Speaking the language of an entrepreneur has proven to be important. This makes for better contact.

## Further information

Websites:

- MKB Adviseurs: [www.mkbadviseurs.nl](http://www.mkbadviseurs.nl)
- WerkWijzer: [www.wwijzer.nl](http://www.wwijzer.nl)
- The subsidy scheme of the Ministry of Social Affairs can be found at [www.agentschapszw.nl](http://www.agentschapszw.nl)
- Subsidy schemes of SNN can be found at [www.snn-online.nl](http://www.snn-online.nl). One can apply for the HRM-scheme mentioned above until 31 December 2006.



## 2.2.4 'Intersectoral mobility in Overijssel' (Menselijk Kapitaal Centraal)

Target groups: Older employees who would like to switch to another sector, especially the employees who have health or mental problems in their current job, and therefore, are not able to practise their profession. Employers who will have problems with their older employees or who will have problems because of a shortage in their staff.

Number of participants: One of the goals of the project is to realise twenty career transitions in different sectors. Another goal is to raise awareness among approx. twenty companies.

Start and end dates: January 2006 – January 2007

Parties involved: Province of Overijssel (leadpartner), RPA Twente, Stichting Stimaro, Stichting Bedrijven Ontwikkelpunt (BOP), Werkarchitecten (regional organisations), VNO-NCW Midden and MKB Oost Nederland (employers associations).

Contact person: Ms H. Harkema, project leader, and Ms. G. van de Bunt, expert in communication for province of Overijssel, [hennyh@pip-projecten.nl](mailto:hennyh@pip-projecten.nl), [g.vd.bunt@overijssel.nl](mailto:g.vd.bunt@overijssel.nl)

### Description

Stimulating the elderly to participate longer on the labour market is one of the key priorities of the province of Overijssel. At the moment, there is a lot of internal mobility within organisations. But within five years that won't be enough to solve the problem. Intersectoral mobility can be a good solution to preserve human capital on the labour market. In reality, it seems difficult for older workers to switch to another sector, due to obstructions such as psychological and cultural obstructions, financial and juridical, as well as competency and educational obstructions. To build bridges

and to tackle obstructions, the Dutch government supports twelve projects on intersectoral mobility. This project is one of them.

The main aim is to stimulate sustainable participation on the labour market in the province of Overijssel. More specific, the project attempts to stimulate the mobility of older employers between sectors and thereby contributing to a growing participation on the labour market in Overijssel. Another aim of the project is to realise twenty career transitions in different sectors.

The project consists of four different regions: the north eastern part, Stedendriehoek, Twente and IJssel-Vecht. Therefore, in each region, five transitions should be realised within approximately one year.

Each region has its own project manager, coming from regional organisations. The project manager is specifically responsible for his or her region and the building of a network. The project manager is also to work on stimulating instruments on intersectoral mobility. In the north eastern part, the project manager is to develop a replacement instrument. A platform for staff services will be developed in the region Stedendriehoek. In the region Twente, the project manager would like to develop a competence centre. This centre matches the older employees' competencies that were obtained elsewhere to jobs in other sectors. In IJssel-Vecht a network of companies will be developed. This centre would like to raise the awareness under employees and employers as to the possibilities of intersectoral mobility.

### Results

The instruments themselves (replacement instrument, platform for staff services, competence centre and the network for companies) are not unique. But to connect them with intersectoral mobility and to develop them into stimulating instruments on intersectoral mobility is in fact innovative. The work is demonstrably positive. Although the project is still running, several career transitions already have been realised. Until October 2006, sixteen career

transitions in total are ongoing. Five transitions have been realised this far. One of the goals is to raise the awareness among approx. twenty companies. In total, 74 persons of 47 different organisations have showed their interest in the project.

## Recommendations

- By involving those organisations that are already active within the theme and by using the knowledge of experts in this field and by using the existing networks, it is possible to start such a project within a short period.
- To realise the aims of the project, paying attention to communication is crucial. During the project period, the parties involved constantly inform each other about the proceedings. For the steering committee and for other experts, several meetings will be organised. Furthermore, the project has its own newsletter and website. On a regular basis, the project team publishes articles in newspapers and magazines and gives presentations at meetings.
- It is difficult to motivate small and middle sized companies to participate in the project. To solve this sticking point, the project managers visit companies individually. This is a rather labour-intensive task, but the results are positive.

## Further information

More information on this project can be found at [www.overijssel-in-progress.nl](http://www.overijssel-in-progress.nl)

Other websites:

- Province of Overijssel: [www.overijssel.nl](http://www.overijssel.nl)
- To contact Ms H. Harkema: [www.pip-projecten.nl](http://www.pip-projecten.nl)

## 2.2.5 'Human resources policy for all ages at OSG Piter Jelles'

Target group: all age groups of the staff.

Number of participants: 550 staff members, approx. 60 of whom are older (over 50) employees

Start and end dates: 2002 to present

Contact person: Ms J. Bos, policy officer human resources at OSG Piter Jelles

Type of organisation: school for secondary education

### Description

As a part of integrated personnel management, OSG Piter Jelles started an older personnel management policy four years ago because a large part of their staff is over 50. This policy was converted into a human resources policy for all ages because policies should not be aimed at the older staff only but also at other groups (20 – 30, 30 – 40 etc.). This policy for all ages has been running for one year now.

The integrated personnel management policy and the policy for all ages aim at a decrease of absenteeism due to illness and at an increase of well-being on the part of the school staff.

Several instruments are being deployed for this policy. For the group of older people (over-50-year-olds) a stress reduction training programme called 'The Tired Heroes' is being used. This training programme focuses on stress and time management. The programme consists of seven days, in which there are three blocks of two days and a refresher/evaluation day. During the training programme the participants stay at a conference centre. Prior to the training sessions the participants obtain information on the subject

by means of an article in the staff magazine. Subsequently, the older staff members were contacted personally by means of a letter about the training programme, followed by an individual interview.

Apart from the staff members being looked at, the management organisation was also investigated as to how it might be changed. In addition to the programme mentioned above, the management was also trained to spot signals from the staff better.

Additionally, and as a part of this policy, training places are offered each year to 25 trainee teachers. The object of this is, among other things, to also provide older staff an opportunity to see other methods of teaching. By this means, it is attempted to create a change of attitude. At the end of the academic year, some of these trainees are offered a job at the school.

### Results

Sixty 50+ staff members were sent a letter; this is the total number of older people within the organisation. Of these, forty staff members were present at the meeting and all of them subsequently enrolled for the training course. The course yielded the following result:

- drop in absenteeism among the 50+ staff;
- staff members' motivation improved;
- staff members' attitude towards work has changed; they behave more professionally and this has had a positive effect on the environment;
- staff members have become more assertive and establish priorities.

## Recommendations

As regards a human resources policy for all ages, Ms Bos has the following recommendations:

- Become well acquainted with the prominent problems within an organisation.
- Show an interest in and understanding of work and people
- Being able to look at problems in an integrated way is a prerequisite
- Be creative and show courage.

A lot of money is needed to carry out this policy. The money that is necessary to be able to tackle the subject properly is not always available.

## Further information

Websites:

- OSG Piter Jelles: [www.piterjelles.nl](http://www.piterjelles.nl)

## 2.2.6 'Mobility Centre Eemsmund Region'

Target Group: Within the Eemsmund region in Groningen, various companies have joined forces to work on the following personnel issues:

1. change in personnel requirements due to new technologies
2. ageing; develop an age-conscious personnel policy
3. conjuncture influences
4. increasing competition

Start and end dates: 2004-2008

Parties involved: 15 companies (Akzo Nobel Chemicals BV, Akzo Nobel Functional Chemicals BV, Aluminium Delfzijl BV (Aldel), Bio Value, Brunner Mond, Delesto BV, Dow Benelux BV, Draka Comteq Telecom BV, Methanor Vof, Teijin Twaron, Zeolyst, Chemicals Ppg Industries BV, Delamine BV, Start Chemiepark, Rohm and Haas) and the employment office (CWI)

Contact person: Ms L. Lumunisenay, head HRM policy Akzo Nobel Chemicals BV

### Description

The initiative to work with various parties on personnel issues in the Eemsmund region was taken by Akzo Nobel Base Chemicals. The Mobility Centre should promote stability in the region's job market. The centre will focus on the joint trans-business approach to a range of personnel issues. The aim of the Mobility Centre is to generate knowledge and create a network infrastructure in the region and thus improve the job market in the region. By sharing knowledge and expertise and the underlying employee database, it will be easier to respond to supply and demand for employment. This will ultimately make the north more attractive for both employers and employees and promote the more efficient and flexible use of personnel.

The companies participating in the Mobility Centre have no legal and/or political associations. This also provides the project its unique character; this kind of trans-business approach to personnel is completely new to the northern Netherlands. The confidence of the participating companies in the success of the Mobility Centre and the importance they attach to the success of the project is reflected in the fact that they are all involved at their own risk and expense and contributing all the required resources and knowledge themselves. The costs will be borne by all the parties. Besides for the production companies and the CWI, the venture also involves various temporary employment agencies. Their input will allow for better control of the matching between supply and demand.

The Mobility Centre has three important objectives:

1. promote reintegration/employability
2. anticipate the problem of ageing
3. exchange/transfer of employees

By jointly providing other career trajectories, career options, and training advice we hope to improve the employability of workers in the Eemsmund region. This should open up possibilities for the flexible exchange of employees, thus preventing unnecessary redundancies. By cooperating on such a large scale, we hope to promote opportunities for reintegration in the Eemsmund area and to anticipate the approaching ageing trend.

### Results

The initial results of the Mobility Centre pilot in the Eemsmund region have been positive.

On behalf of the companies involved in the Eemsmund region, the Mobility Centre is responsible for the trans-business matching of supply and demand of personnel. This results in greater flexibility and employability of the workers. Improving employee qualifications of and increasing the range of jobs on offer results in the upgrading

of the labour potential. Furthermore, the Mobility Centre focuses on keeping groups of older employees at work. This age awareness programme has now been launched, but still requires a great deal of attention and monitoring.

Presented in figures, it may be assumed that the following quantitative objects have been/will be achieved:

-number of training places created: 75

-number of job application training courses: 100

-number of redundant employees placed through the Mobility Centre on vacancies: 125

## **Recommendations**

The Mobility Centre pilot must create a platform for young and old employees alike in the Eemsmond region focusing on a range of employment issues. The centre must enable older employees to continue working for longer periods and ensure that young employees are trained to fill vacancies. Employee mobility must also be improved in the case of redundancies. By working with various businesses in the Mobility Centre, a much broader approach to employment issues becomes possible.

## **Further information**

For further information, please contact Ms Lumunisenay, head of HRM policy Akzo Nobel Base Chemicals BV in Delfzijl.

## 2.2.7 'Age positive practice in the Marriott Hotel, Grantham'

Target group: employees and new hires of the Marriott Hotel

Contact person: Ms A. Upsall

Type of company: Hotel

### Description

When we heard in the news about the importance of being positive about age, it encouraged us to review all of our policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that we consistently demonstrated good practice in age diversity.

1. All policies within the hotel are reviewed to include good practice regarding age diversity. The Marriott Hotel's staff handbook states quite clearly that all associates should be treated fairly, with respect and dignity, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnic background, or sexual orientation. This is discussed in detail within the company induction process. Examples are:

- A. No mention of age is ever shown in the recruitment advertisements that are employed. The application form does ask for the age of the person applying, on the back page, but this is purely so that we as a company can manage and monitor diversity. Two people carry out all of the interviews; one of these is a Human Resource member, ensuring that all the recruitment policies are adhered to.
- B. As a company we have always hired based on personality and then taught relevant, specific skills. All Team Leaders within the hotel with the responsibility for recruitment attend a workshop to provide them the skills needed to interview objectively. This includes

questioning techniques, information about the company's equal opportunities policies, interview notes and the law.

- C. As a hotel, we also carry out Career and Personal development plans annually for all associates regardless of age. It is also company policy to advertise promotion opportunities internally. Decisions are based on the employee's ability to carry out the new role, and never age.
  - D. All new starters within the hotel, regardless of age, complete a 90-day induction process, which includes a company and department induction and the completion of three books by the new employee with the help of a New Hire trainer.
  - E. Although we have had to face redundancy in the past due to business demands, age was never used as selection criteria. Instead, the job requirements, skills, experience, personality, and employment records were used.
2. Our employees are actively encouraged to work past the State Pension Age. We made the decision that should our mature colleagues wish to work beyond 65 years of age that we would not stand in their way. This is found to be both beneficial to the hotel, which reduces recruitment costs, and the employee, who may not want to retire and who is still fully competent in their ability to carry out their duties. All of our cases of 'deferred retirement' are reviewed annually.
  3. Older employees are also encouraged to act as mentors for younger employees during the New Hire three-month induction period, because we find mature workers to have a patient, reassuring manner, which helps new starters settle into our workplace quickly and efficiently.

## Results

Ms A. Upsall, HR Manager of Marriott says: 'we have found that our older workers demonstrate skills and abilities that we are looking for - people-orientated skills, good communication skills, and they take personal responsibility for guests' satisfaction within the hotel.

The hotel and catering industry is sometimes viewed as employing mainly young workers, especially students who may wish to work part-time, or during a gap year. However, the Grantham Marriott hotel has worked very diligently to change this by examining all of our policies and practices - and now over 30% of our workforce is aged 45 or over.

Since we have begun to focus more on age diversity, our labour turnover has fallen by 50%, and therefore, we have been able to reduce overall recruitment costs significantly. Guest questionnaires, which are monitored monthly, show that customer satisfaction has increased, up six percentage points. Our staff survey shows that employee satisfaction and motivation has also increased. We now boast a more flexible workforce, which is committed to ensuring the success of the hotel.



## 2.2.8 'Human resource policy for all ages at Barclays'

Target group: employees of Barclays

Contact person: Mr D. Weymouth, Group age champion, Barclays Bank PLC

Type of organisation: Barclays is a financial service group engaged in banking and investment management

### Description

Like many financial organisations, Barclays suffered in the early 1990s, when companies were cutting swathes of their workforces. This resulted in the loss of a number of older employees, a large amount of corporate memory, which led to the expectation that people could retire at 50 with a generous package. This was also compounded by the fact that, over a number of years, the organisation reduced the number of external recruits, which resulted in a reduction of younger people entering the financial sector. Barclays is working diligently to redress the balance.

The main challenges are to:

- Attract older staff into the workplace
- Develop a Modern Apprenticeship scheme to attract younger people into the organisation
- Ensure Barclays is seen as valuing people, regardless of their age.

What we did to meet these goals:

1. Commissioned a piece of research called 'Working to 70' that enabled the group to develop detailed HR plans and policies around what people really want from their organisation to encourage them to work past the age of 50.
2. Analysed the Employee Opinion Survey in order to identify what factors are an issue for people of different ages.

3. Reviewed all HR policies and checked new policies to ensure no undue mention of age or any age bias. Ensured all policies such as career breaks are open to all staff, at all ages. Announced that the new right to request flexible work applies to all staff; making it attractive to older workers as well as those with children or other commitments.
4. Raised awareness around age diversity to all recruiters, training designers and deliverers and how to deal with this in everyday situations.
5. Raised awareness through all the staff via a number of training interventions, including age diversity in customers training. Developed pages within the Barclays intranet site to promote and raise the awareness of age diversity.
6. Focused recruitment for older people in our call centres, which generally have a legacy of being a very young working environment.
7. Developed recruitment adverts on the theme 'No Age Barriers'.
8. Reviewed the retirement policy – although the normal retirement age continues to be 60, staff have the option to request to work until the age of 65, where there is a business need. Reviewed recruitment policy – enabling people over the age of 60 to apply for roles.
9. Introduced a new pensions scheme called afterwork that allows staff to continue to contribute to their pension as long as they remain employed, and increase flexibility.

### Results

- Today, Barclays now employs more people over the age of 50 than under the age of 21
- The number of people over the age of 55 in the organisation has increased by nearly 400 in the last 2 years

- 61% of employees who reached their normal retirement age of 60 in the last couple of years have continued to work for us, matching a business need with personal requirements
- People over the age of 60 recruited into the organisation were employed in a number of roles from telephonists to senior leaders
- Over 170 16 to 19 year olds participated in the organisations modern apprenticeship scheme with very positive results
- The extension of career breaks and paid leave has made the organisation much more attractive to older people wishing to continue work who may have caretaker commitments to meet as well as their role with Barclays
- All training is delivered via a 'blended' approach that takes into account different learning styles and speeds to absorb information.

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## Recommendations

It was agreed at the onset that to make a difference in this area, more than just the HR team had to pull together. Under the close guidance of David Weymouth, Chief Information Officer and Group Age Champion, a working party was pulled together from across all business areas to ensure the changes in policy and practice could be felt throughout the company. Members of this senior group included HR, Equality & Diversity, Resourcing and Learning, Marketing, Pensions, Senior and middle management representation from all business units. The sheer strength of this group came from the fact that all of the business was represented at a very senior level, people who could make things happen and the assurance that a central policy would be implemented and put into practice throughout the group.

## 2.2.9 'BRELAG' – Project association for the design of in-plant learning and work in the demographic change

Target group: elderly workers (45+), employers  
Number of participants: 40 companies in the region of Bremerhaven/ Bremen  
Start and end dates: July 2006 – December 2007  
Parties involved: GPI GmbH, Volkswagen Coaching GmbH, IHK-Bremerhaven (Chamber of Commerce), HWK-Bremerhaven (Chamber of handcraft), Arbeitnehmerkammer Bremen (Chamber of workers), Bildungswerk der Wirtschaft Unterweser, BWU e.V. (Employers training organisation)  
Contact person: Mr Peter Hans Koch, GPI GmbH

### Description

#### Starting point

Due to the declining birth rates, enterprises should be prepared for the problem of ageing. The conditions for older persons to stay longer in working life have already been designed by the government. Thus, the number of 'old people' in companies is increasing. Another side of it is that the young staff of today will be the 'old staff' of tomorrow. If a working life of 40-45 years is to be possible in Germany, then a reduced, evenly distributed demand on mental and physical potencies of an "average" employee is required in working life.

For that reason, it is necessary that the personnel policy sees this issue as an important field of activity in the company. With the new weighting of the 'factor' labour personnel policy, also attains an additional importance. Its task increasingly consists of taking into

account the potentials of employees that are already working in the company and to offer them development opportunities. That would be the end of a youth-centred personnel policy and a rejection of short-term personnel planning. The organisation of the demographic change requires a new, systematic concept.

#### Activities

BRELAG supports a personnel policy of companies in view of the demographic change. It aims to promote an innovation-maintaining personnel policy and the adaptability of employees. To achieve that we depart from the present situation, analyse the potential of labour and develop prospects. We focus on the recruitment of specialist staff, enlargement of competence and knowledge, health measures, promotion of older persons, and the working environment.

The project operates in Bremerhaven and Bremen. It organises economic, public administration and training bodies as well as chambers and social partner institutions. The aim is to raise awareness, analyse, plan and implement measures that are to utilise the potential of older employees.

#### Elements of the project (methods and results)

- In a first step, every partner of the association informs its respective addressees at the level of the companies and associations along the topic of demographic challenge. It is to convince enterprises that personnel development does in the end pay. The topics are discussed at events for companies.
- In a second step, personnel managers and other representatives of companies are made fit for practical

responses to the demographic change. In working groups they can discuss lines of action (benchmarking), develop common steps of action and exchange moderators for workshops.

- Subsequently, in-house analyses are conducted and concepts are developed according to the specific situation in companies in four fields of action:
  - health management,
  - training of older employees,
  - vertical and horizontal career design and
  - ergonomic improvement of work and processes.
- As good practice, we established the following methodological steps of an age-structure-analysis and work-ability-profile:

1) We analyse the current age structure of the workforce in the company and project the age structure 5 to 10 years forward ('age structure analysis'). The figures on age-critical areas in the key departments of the value generation normally show strong necessities for personnel managers to act. The age structure analysis is an early warning device that provides criteria to plan the workforce.

2) In a second step, the workforce of the company is examined for competitiveness in terms of qualification, motivation and health as they are now and what they will look like in the future. As a result, ongoing measures of personnel development in the company are reconsidered. Neglected training and job assignment of older staff, to date performing one-sided jobs, learning blockades due to repetitive jobs, prove to be unfavourable as they are competitive handicaps.

3) A third step consists in planning and implementing new measures inevitably resulting from the first two steps of the

analysis. Each company will choose specific solutions for their problems from the modules provided and decide on their own way of planning and implementation. Thus, the volume, sequence of steps, and duration of any additional measures depend on the problems and solution concepts on the spot, the measures are prioritised by means of checklists. We further this step by providing support workshops.

- Materials and experiences developed in the association are available to all regional companies.

## Results

BRELAG is an ongoing project that started in July 2006 using methodologies and experiences of a former EQUAL-project in the field of Age Management. Specific results can only be delivered at a later stage. BRELAG expects 'demographic proofed companies' in the end.

## Recommendations

Companies have to widen their activities in personnel development in the face of the demographic change. Additional costs may arise. Normally, training and health promotion does not pay off immediately, but it does in the long run (i.e. allow 1-3 years for return of investment). The crucial task is to make companies believe in the future and to impart this belief as an employment prospect to the workforce. Measures undertaken together with other companies, adopting new models..., all that is possible and will help. Yet good practice of others is not so important; what matters is one's own will to go in new ways, the readiness to be convinced by arguments, and the data supporting the development of human capital.

## Further information

- A guide for personnel managers/facilitators in small and medium-sized enterprises titled: 'Fit for the demographic change. Age structure analysis and work ability profile – new methods of personnel development' (Authors: Dr. Günter Gebauer & Sabine Seemann) is available at GPI GmbH; Brief description: The age structure analysis is an early-warning indicator, which provides reference points for the planning of the workforce, the present and future personnel strategies, for the controlling of the entrance and leaving of staff. The data enable the making of reliable statements on the future challenges in the face of the demographic change such as recruitment and training of employees in central areas of value generation. That is followed by the development of a work ability profile of the company, which provides the basis for the planning of personnel-political measures.
- For further information, please contact Mr Peter H. Koch (GPI GMBH)  
[koch.gpi@arcor.de](mailto:koch.gpi@arcor.de)

## Part 2.3 Measures for unemployed elderly



## 2.3.1 'TalentPlus Foundation'

Target group: motivated, (academically) educated job seekers from different disciplines of at least 40 years of age

Start and end dates: 1995 to present

Contact persons: regional chairman of the TalentPlus Foundation in the region

- Heerenveen: Mr A.D. Hoedemaeker
- Twente: Mr P. van den Heuvel
- Zwolle: Mr H. van der Hoeven

### Description

TalentPlus is a foundation for academically educated people of at least 40 years of age, who have been excluded from employment. The object of the TalentPlus Foundation is to support this group on their way back to the job market. This support is given by fellow participants who are in a similar situation. Because of their expertise and work experience of many years they analyse each other's situation and behaviour, they train, make plans and stimulate each other in their search for a new job. Everyone involved performs the work for the TalentPlus Foundation on a voluntary basis.

The Job Agency reminds older job seekers of the existence of the TalentPlus Foundation. Occasionally newspaper interviews are given to point out the existence, aim, and method of the Foundation.

The TalentPlus Foundation is divided into regions. Each region meets weekly and is chaired by the regional president. Periodically there are meetings of all the regions. The weekly meeting starts with the opening and the minutes, followed by a brief discussion of the applications/job interviews of each person; after this the group splits into various study groups. These study groups focus on:

- optimization of one's curriculum vitae;
- application/interview skills;

- internal and external network training;
- formulating personal and job interview experiences;
- exchanging personal and job interview experiences;
- job finding.

In addition, the Foundation also visits employers to draw their attention to the theme of older people and employment. In this way members gain a greater insight into employers' selection criteria. This has a most positive effect for both parties.

### Results

Within the project, a lot is done by the members during these meetings. Most members of the TalentPlus Foundation find work within six months. In the Heerenveen region, 60% leaves the project having found a position or a project. But it is difficult to say whether this result is wholly attributable to the help of TalentPlus Foundation members. Naturally, other factors also may have contributed to the members having found employment.

### Recommendations

If Mr Hoedemaeker were to hand over the project he would advise to begin by making an inventory of what the members know so that the meetings can be adapted accordingly.

It is important for a regional group to have very motivated participants. Precisely because of its voluntary (but certainly not without absolute commitment) character the project really works. Still agencies paying out certain social benefits could put in extra effort to have some more groups started as it is a cheap means that yields excellent profits.

## Further information

Websites:

TalentPlus Foundation: [www.talentplus.nl](http://www.talentplus.nl)

TalentPlus Foundation region Twente: [www.talentplus-twente.nl](http://www.talentplus-twente.nl)



## 2.3.2 'ICT for self employment'

Target group: people with middle and higher vocational qualifications who are receiving social benefits and who have the ambition to become self-employed

Parties involved: job agency and agencies paying out certain social benefits

Start and end dates: 2005-2007

Contact person: Mr G. Visser and Mr A.G. Beets of de Plannenmakers, [garmt@deplannenmakers.nl](mailto:garmt@deplannenmakers.nl); [beets@deplannenmakers.nl](mailto:beets@deplannenmakers.nl)

Type of organisation: network organisation of self-employed entrepreneurs

### Description

The object of the project is to get people off the dole and assist and coach them towards self-employment. The 'ICT for Self-employment' project was set up by the Plannenmakers (makers of plans) together with other partners.

The Plannenmakers are a group of experienced people working in an Open Training Centre (OTC) for future self-employed entrepreneurs, Self-employed Persons Without Personnel, and other, new cooperative forms of enterprise. Self-employment is aided with the help of ICT. The interactive software is intended to prepare for self-employment and is offered at the OTC. The method was developed in co-operation with the University of Nijmegen. The method includes the following programmes:

- Digipad: offers help to make choices in relation to a personal plan, in particular, self-employment.
- Digibiz: with the help of a step-by-step plan, 46 assignments are done aiming at a proper preparation towards self-employment.

At the end, the participant will have completed a feasibility study and a business plan.

A coach is present at the OTC to assist the future self-employed businessmen. The participants are coached from the pre-initial stage until six months after the start of their company. Especially this latter element is of crucial importance and is missing in many other activities/projects that aim to promote self-employment.

The future self-employed entrepreneurs are recruited by means of the job agency, agencies for social benefits, and advertisements in local papers.

For the funding of the project an ESF- Equal subsidy is utilised (50% of the total cost). Until 2008 subsidies can be utilised, after that date, the OTCs must fend for themselves.

### Results

There are projects going on at Assen, Veendam, Dokkum, Heerenveen and Wijchen. To date, six self-employed businesses have been started with the aid of the Plannenmakers at Veendam. It has become clear that recruitment is difficult. It also appears that it takes the official institutes paying out benefits a long time before they approve the participation of their clients.

### Recommendations

Mr Visser and Mr Beets provide the following recommendation in relation to the setting up of such a project:

- One's heart should be in this socially important activity.
- One should be sufficiently able to run the project.
- There should be ample financial room for obligations that must be met while the Equal subsidies often take rather long to arrive.
- Have good people around you (extensive network).
- Other parties can help you on the road towards self-employment.

## Further information

In case somebody receives a benefit, the costs of the use of the software programmes and the coaching are paid by the agencies that pay out the benefit. In some cases the employer may pay the costs, for instance, in the case of outplacement. When the costs are not paid by other parties the participant him or herself must pay. The costs are approx. € 5,000 per participant.

People who want to take part in the project do not need to have an official certificate to run a business but they do need to have practical know-how. This differs for every sector.

ESF-EQUAL subsidy may be applied in the case of innovative projects of an international nature.

Websites:

- De plannenmakers: [www.deplannenmakers.nl](http://www.deplannenmakers.nl)

### 2.3.3 'Academy of entrepreneurship 50+' (Akademia przedsiębiorczości 50+)

Target group: unemployed 50+ people, searching for a job, especially for women, who do not benefit from the retirement system.

Number of participants: It was planned that the project works with 200 participants in 4 voivodeships, 2 groups of participants of 25 people in each. 72 job seekers

Start and end dates: January 2006- September 2006

Parties involved: Democratic Union of Women (Demokratyczna Unia Kobiet)

Contact person: Renata Berent-Mieszczanowicz

tel/faks +48 0-71/ 341 71 43, 341 71 44,  
50plus@duk.org.pl or DUK-Wroclaw@wp.pl

#### Description

The project is designed for unemployed 50+ people, searching for a job, especially for women, who do not benefit from the retirement system. There is an assumption that the inhabitants of the local community of the participants will also benefit from the project, especially their families. The project is set up with broad co-operation between NGO institutions, local authorities, job givers (local entrepreneurs). Its main goal is the intensification of the working activity of elderly people through:

1. psychological support
2. coaching and training
3. innovative training programme designed for people at special ages and equipped with different skills and with different levels of education

4. coaching and training leading to preparation to become an entrepreneur
5. financial support for chosen business projects
6. activation of the local community and creation helpful environment for entrepreneurship of elderly people
7. dissemination of project outcomes through seminars and conferences

#### Results

Projected outcomes

This is still an ongoing project. In this moment "The best business-plan contest" is to be finished. More details about the measured outcomes of the project will be available in 2007.

It is planned that:

1. 200 participants will take part in the project in 4 regions
2. 10 participants will benefit from support for starting their own business
3. 40 participants will register their own enterprise

#### Recommendations

In preparation for such projects, criteria for enrolment (who can participate) should be more precise. The term: people after 50 years of age in danger of exclusion from the labour market are too general.

One has to be prepared for a struggle with bureaucratic and complicated procedures.

### 2.3.4 'On your own – own a business after 50' (Własna firma po 50-tce)

Target group: people over 50 years old (including unemployed and job seekers without the right to receive social benefits) who want to change or improve their position on the labour market.

Number of participants: 60 participants for coaching activities. Furthermore, financial support as a reimbursement of payments according to social insurance system (up to 50% of the total cost, but no more than 5,000 Euro) for 28 persons who prepare the best business plan.

Start and end dates: 1.02.2005 – 30.11.2005

Parties involved: Fundation Kalos Kai Agathos

Contact person: Kalos Kai Agathos

ul. Długosza 2-6

51-162 Wrocław

tel./fax.: (+48 71) 79 46 387

e-mail: [info@kaloskaiagathos.org.pl](mailto:info@kaloskaiagathos.org.pl)

#### Description

The programme concentrates on:

1. help in starting the participant's own business
2. the increase of skills and competences – one of the reasons of unemployment is a low level of education among elderly Polish people, lack of knowledge about modern techniques of work and lack of knowledge on how to run a business. Activities within the project aim at building such knowledge for participants – what are the possibilities for them as future entrepreneurs, with what kind of economic, legal, and financial regulations will they have to deal with.

3. the increase of self-consciousness and motivation – psychological workshops should help the participants to substantiate self validation, and furthermore, to build positive thinking about own possibilities and perspectives; it is connected with coaching in self-presentation, techniques of stress management, how to deal with critics, how to keep distance and direct emotions.

#### Results

Projected outcomes of the project

28 micro-enterprises

the psychological outcomes

- improving the processes of individual progress
- improving the competence of co-operation with social environment
- building up own strategies of activities and education

This is an ongoing project. Currently, we know that:

- a) 60 people participated in coaching activities
- b) 44 business-plans took part in the contest
- c) 22 business-plans where approved – 3 persons retired
- d) 19 new enterprises are being supported financially

#### Recommendations

1. Recruitment

One must direct attention to the psychological predisposition of people who are supposed to run their own business: need for psychological tests and qualifying interview

2. Proper order of training – first hard knowledge, and after that before starting the business psychological support. Such Coaching should be implemented also after the training process.

3. Individual consulting during the process of business-plan preparation

4. Training institutions should be prepared for monitoring the activity of new entrepreneurs for at least 6 months after training. Monitoring should include issues regarding the health problems of new entrepreneurs: they are at a 'risky' age.

## 2.3.5 'Employing experience!'

Target group: job seekers of 45 and over (with at least intermediate vocational training) and employers

Number of participants: 72 job seekers

Start and end dates: preparation July 2005 – measuring of the effect February 2006

Parties involved: WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân, TalentPlus Foundation and steering group Grijs Werkt (Grey Works)

Contact person: Ms H. van der Heide, project manager at WerkWijzer 45+ Fryslân

### Description

The idea of the 'Werk met ervaring!' (Employing experience) project was to establish contacts between the two parties, job seekers that are 45+ and employers, through 'networking'. The meeting at Heerenveen on 14 October 2006 was the starting signal for the national project of six meetings. Nationwide 450 job seekers 45+ and 150 employers met briefly during these meetings.

The object of the project was to link the specific knowledge, characteristics, and experiences of the 45+ job seekers and the employers' (potential) needs. This means that these job seekers were stimulated to engage in networking. Additionally, employers were shown a positive picture of motivated and energetic 45 and over job seekers.

For the Heerenveen meeting, one started by recruiting 75 45+ job seekers and 25 employers. The job seekers were approached through their advisers at the job agency or institution for social benefits. The employers were invited by means of a letter first and subsequently contacted per telephone.

The job seekers were trained in groups in September 2006 in obtaining a clearer picture of and mapping out their competences by means of the workshop 'Competence Analysis for job seekers 45 years of age and over'. This led to a network chart, a competence profile, an A5-format sheet stating the name, function, and seven competences on the front and an ultra-short CV on the back. These plasticised network charts served as the job seekers' visiting cards at the meeting.

This was followed by refresher-and-evaluation meetings organised in groups to exchange experiences and to go deeper into the use of and how to go about networking.

### Results

After three months, a measuring of the effect took place. The results of this measuring are as follows:

- the objective of stimulating to engage in networking had been reached; nearly 75% positive replies;
- 44% of the job seekers had found a job;
- 14% of these had found a job by means of network talks;
- 18% of the participants had set up their own company or were working on it.

### Recommendations

It was not easy to find a sufficient number of employers. A recommendation in this context is to start approaching employers in good time and to do this in person.

It is also recommended to hear both job seekers' and employers' reactions afterwards.

## Further information

Websites:

- WerkWijzer: [www.wwijzer.nl](http://www.wwijzer.nl)
- Regiegroep Grijs Werkt: [www.senior-power.nl](http://www.senior-power.nl)

## 2.3.6 'Elderly get to work in Flevoland'

Target group: job seekers of 45+ with a relative small distance to the labour market, advisers and employers

Number of participants: unlimited

Start and end dates: April 2005 – April 2007

Parties involved: jobcentre, social security office, province of Flevoland (financial support), organisations that support self employment

Contact person: Mr Henk Brantenaar, manager CWI Lelystad, e-mail: [henk.brantenaar@cwinet.nl](mailto:henk.brantenaar@cwinet.nl)

### Description

#### Reasons to start the project

In the Netherlands, people who become unemployed will inscribe themselves at the CWI. Here a judgement is made as to whether the unemployed person has a small or big distance to the labour market. During the first six months the unemployed with a small distance have to look for jobs on their own, with a minimum of support. However, after research, it became clear that a large group of 45+ people with (theoretically) a short distance to the labour market weren't able to re-enter the labour market within this 6 month period. This led to the conclusion that this target group needed more support.

#### Elements of the project

##### 1. Workshops and meetings for unemployed over 45

The project supports 45+ unemployed, who often haven't had any recent experience applying for jobs. By means of workshops (consisting of 1 entire day and two times half a day for follow up) they regain their footing following job loss, acquire a clear picture of their skills once again, learn how to network and present a good CV

and application letter. These CV's are passed on to job agencies to assist them in finding employment.

Beside for these workshops, information meetings are organised for 45+ people who are interested in starting their own businesses. Serious candidates can obtain additional support.

##### 2. Workshops for advisers

A second element of the project is the organisation of workshops for personnel in the job agencies and social security offices, where a bias against the elderly unemployed tends to exist. The workshops are meant to increase their sensitivity for the specific problems and approach of elderly unemployed. Moreover, the advantages of elderly personnel are highlighted. They can use these arguments to convince employers to hire the elderly. These workshops are comparable to the 'Emphasis on 45+ talent' as described in Werkwijzer (see 1.1).

##### 3. Employer's approach

This part involves convincing employers to employ elderly people.

### Results

Six workshops have been conducted for 54 advisers. The reactions of the participants were variant from 'not at all, to very useful'. Managers were sometimes reluctant to let their personnel attend the workshop. This might be due to the fact that it is an 'attitude' workshop of which tangible results are difficult to ascertain. The workshop has been modified and is now part of the national training programme of the CWI academy.

The employers' approach is still in the execution phase as a joined activity with different organisations. A symposium for human resource managers has been organised on the topic of demographic change and how to cope with this item within companies.



The workshops for the unemployed have been rather successful. They were judged very positively by the target group. Up to October 2006 approx. 80 of the 156 participants that attended the entire workshop are back at work (e.g. 50%). The target for the entire project has been set at 70, so the result has already exceeded the original target.

Surely not all the results are attributable to the workshops; some people would have found work anyway. But, compared to the period before the workshops, the number of elderly that got back to work has increased by 60% (CWI figures of Lelystad).

In the meantime, these workshops also have become part of the national programme of the employment office.

Until now, two information meetings have been organised for elderly unemployed who are interested in self-employment. Many elderly are interested in starting a business, but the social security regulations were not exactly stimulating this. On 1 July 2006 the social security law was changed. It is easier now to start a business while still receiving (part of) the unemployment benefit allowance.

## Recommendations

The workshops for elderly are an instrument that we can recommend. They are rather easy to organise and all organisations concerned are by now convinced about their effectiveness. After all, the first condition for an elderly unemployed to re-enter the labour market is a positive attitude. The workshops help to get rid of frustrations and people leave with more self-confidence. Find a good workshop leader, not too young, who can be confronting and who is genuinely interested in the participants.

As for the workshops for advisers: next time it might be better to have separate workshops for personnel from the social security

offices and jobcentres, since it is difficult to make all items of the workshops interesting for all parties. The idea was to have cross-pollination between these parties, but in practice it was a source of discontent.

### 2.3.7 'The Spa caretakers' (Opiekunowie uzdrowisk)

Target group: people over 50 who are unemployed in two spa towns: Szczawno Zdrój and Jedlionja Zdrój.

Number of participants: 50

Start and end dates: 1.02.2005 – 30.11.2005

Parties involved: Fundacja Edukacji Europejskiej (Foundation for European Education)

Contact person: Fundacja Edukacji Europejskiej

ul. 1-go Maja 112, 58-305 Wałbrzych

tel./fax (74) 849-21-33

e-mail: [office@fee.hm.pl](mailto:office@fee.hm.pl)

#### Description

1. Increasing the activity of elderly people on the labour market
2. Preparation of people over 50 for taking a job in the area of spa near Wałbrzych: Szczawno Zdrój and Jedlina Zdrój
3. Increasing the qualification of the target group
4. Providing people over 50 knowledge about the possibilities to change their vocational career, in turn offering a new occupation
5. Creation of new occupations on the local labour market: The senior-sitter and the green area keeper
6. Creation of new attitudes and skills through coaching and workshops in senior care and gardening
7. Creation employment possibilities for participants of the project and the possibility of starting a business within the Senior-Care Co-operative.

The programme concentrates on:

Increasing the activity of the people over 50 who are unemployed in two spa towns: Szczawno Zdrój and Jedlionja Zdrój. The project presents the method of such activation in the field of preparation for taking on a new job in the spa-tourist business. The basic thing here is the co-operation between local authorities. The project is designed to create new occupations:

#### 1. The senior-sitter

In the spa near Wałbrzych, most of the clients are elderly people. The sociological research clearly shows that 8% of the Polish people do not want to take care of their elderly parents over 65, which means that over 300,000 people in Poland do not have contact with their family. The problem of isolation and loneliness of elderly people is not solved by Community Home for seniors, pensions, or other forms of all day care institutions. 80 per cent of the elderly do not want to live in such institutions. There is no doubt that for elderly sick people, the best place for living is their home and nearest environment. But it is clear that not the stay at home itself but rather the quality of the home care is crucial for quality of life. 'Taking care of the elderly' is a new space on the labour market, which will bring much higher 'social income' than 'new technologies'. In the next 15-20 years over half of the employed in the sector of the so-called 'social services' (caretakers, therapists etc.) will work for retired people. Caretaker is an assisting hand for seniors, feeding, supplying them in their home with necessary products and services, entertaining them, and administering medical care.

#### 2. The green area keeper

The spa near Wałbrzych is the largest 'Green reservoir' for the largest agglomerations in the region. There are a lot of parks, meadows, and other green areas that are used by patients and local residents who like to spend their time actively or take part in therapy. Parks are a natural showcase of the spa and are

automatically an element of tourist infrastructure of the region. Local authorities would like to hire skilled specialists for taking care of the green area. Each year there are hired workers from the employment office (unemployed for 'intervention job') but they usually do not perform their job well. Participants of the project will be trained for proper and professional care of green areas (gardens, meadows, parks). It is known from market analyses that there are firms interested in workers trained in that way.

## Results

The goal of this phase of the project was to help the beneficiary to find a job or start their own enterprise.

In the first part of this process it was planned to organise a 6 month subsidised employment in terms of vocational preparation for 25 participants from the 'Green Area Keepers' group. After the vocational preparation it was planned to establish 15 job positions for a period of a minimum of 6 months (in co-operation with local authorities).

The same steps were taken to help the participants from the Senior-sitters group - 6 months of subsidised employment for 25 people. After that, the participants with the help of the project leader can join the Senior-Care Co-operative.

## Recommendations

Great attention should be paid to the recruitment process. There should be planned financial measures for occupational and psychological advisers during recruitment. Only participants should be recruited that are really motivated to change their situation and not those who are just willing to receive small financial support and training benefits and then to stay in unemployment after the end of the project.

## 2.3.8 'Arbeitsmarkt50.de'

Target groups: over 50 years old and those people who – without promotion - would be in an unemployment situation in the nearer future. Working over 45+. Entrepreneurs.

Start and end dates: October 2005 – September 2007

Parties involved: representatives of the regional economy (business developer, chambers of commerce, industry and trade organisations), University of Oldenburg, the town of Wilhelmshaven, the regional labour agency, charities, trade unions, health insurance companies, Motio GmbH (consultancy for health management in companies), Personalberatung Sukop (personnel consultancy), Designpraxis (advertising agency).

Contact person: Dr. Klaus-Dieter Pietzka, projectmanager arbeitsmarkt50.de, c/o Volkshochschule Wilhelmshaven, Virchowstrasse 29, 26382 Wilhelmshaven

### Description and results

#### Background

In September 2005, the Federal Government of Germany selected 62 innovative regional model projects out of 93 involved labour agencies and municipal institutes within a national competition for the reintegration of the older unemployed.

Arbeitsmarkt 50.de is the awarded regional project of Wilhelmshaven. Wilhelmshaven is a town next to the North Sea with approx. 86,000 inhabitants and an unemployment rate of 18%.

#### Elements of the project

The project team (approx. 20 people of all the groups mentioned above) decided to place the focus of the project on the long term unemployed and the still employed elder workers. With scientific support from the University of Oldenburg the situation of the Wilhelmshaven labour market was precisely analysed. Then, the project team developed a package of coordinated measures and single projects in the range of work, health, and qualification.

All measures were accompanied by an enormous awareness campaign with ads, flyers and an own project website.

After profiling, 1,100 persons were identified as 50+ long term unemployed or 50+ employees in need of support. In this period, the profilers were faced with a great many 50+ long term unemployed who were not open to work after a long career of living of social benefits.

After the profiling, different qualification measures were conducted for the long term unemployed, for example, motivation measures, occupational trainings, improvement of core competences, assistance for applications, and setting up an own company. These reintegration measures take place over a period of 2 years and are divided into 4 groups with 20 participants each. Up to now, 40 participants have attended the courses, 38 finished them, 7 participants already obtained a new job.

In addition to these measures, the project team could up to now place 12 participants into the so-called 'Arbeitsgelegenheiten'. Arbeitsgelegenheiten or 1-Euro-jobs allow unemployed to earn a little extra money in addition to their dole. These jobs have to be offered by official authorities and cannot be in competition with jobs on the primary labour market. Examples for 1-Euro-jobs are additional work in a kindergarten and sick-nursing. The objective of these jobs is to provide the long term unemployed a structure to their days.

Health programmes have been conducted for the unemployed 45+ since midyear. The themes of these programmes were 'motion' (28

participants), 'recreation' (22 participants), 'stress' (7 participants) and 'nutrition' (29 participants)

Profiling, qualification, and coaching for business start-ups have been conducted since June 2006. 21 participants joined the measures, which will last up to March 2007.

A second group will start in December 2006.

One of the targets of arbeitsmarkt50.de is to keep older employees in their jobs, as for 50+ people, it is much more difficult to find a new job than to keep one. Therefore, 'quasi' deals for preparing older workers for future requirements and to promote and extend their vocational core capabilities. In March 2006 a group of 71 50+ employees started training on information and communication technology. The training will last until the end of October 2006. Another training module deals with management skills. 27 participants are in the course from 01.03.2006 until 21.07.2007. A business English class started with 29 50+ in March 2006. 21 of them finished in August.

The wide range of measures of the project also includes the employers. Different workshops informed them in a very detailed manner about the consequences of the demographic change and the opportunities in engaging older workers. They also learnt to perform a potential analysis of their personnel and to develop health and education strategies for their older employees. 155 participants joined the workshops.

## Recommendations

Arbeitsmarkt50.de is a very broadly based project. With a budget of 1.8 million Euro, many aspects of an ageing working society have been included. Nevertheless, an unemployment rate of 18 per cent as it is in Wilhelmshaven limits the possibilities of reintegration or starting up businesses.

When asked for the weaknesses of the project the team leader mentioned that the lead time was too short. It would have been better to take more time for the instruction of the personnel, for the organisation of all components, and to develop contacts.

The strengths are the permeability of the project for the participants, i.e. the participants can use qualification modules of other projects and the networking with all partners of the economy, organisations, and other institutions.

## Final remarks

We hope that the 21 good practices that we gathered as a part of the ELLABO project in turn offer inspiration and good advice for those who would like to set up new projects for seniors.

We found it rather interesting to collect them!

We are rather aware of the fact that THE super project does not exist and that copying an entire project from one region to the other is difficult in most cases, because the circumstances are too different. Therefore, we will be happy if someone can take at least some parts from our project descriptions: for example the project idea or the working methods.

If you need further information, please don't hesitate to contact the persons mentioned in the project description or one of the ELLABO partners shown below.

Flevoland:	Karin Maatje, <a href="mailto:k.maatje@ppaflevoland.nl">k.maatje@ppaflevoland.nl</a> Harriët Gerrits, <a href="mailto:h.gerrits@ppaflevoland.nl">h.gerrits@ppaflevoland.nl</a>
Fryslân:	Jolanda van Leeuwen, <a href="mailto:j.m.vanleeuwen@fryslan.nl">j.m.vanleeuwen@fryslan.nl</a>
Overijssel:	Elsa Hof, <a href="mailto:eaw.hof@overijssel.nl">eaw.hof@overijssel.nl</a>
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