



innovating social security

**A contribution from DEP to the development of the
position paper of PlusConfidence**

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Crisis in Ireland

- Substantial and real growth 1987-2001
 - Population grows by 1m (20%) 1990-2010 and GDP by 145%;
 - Manufacturing boom esp. HiTech, Pharma;
 - Workforce grows by 100% and Participation Rate to 68%;
 - Unemployment falls to 4% (of which 1-2% long-term);
- Property market bubble 2002-2008
 - Speculative bank financing from global sources to 2.5 times GDP;
 - Dynamics of “cheap money”, derivatives etc. in low-regulation climate following introduction of Euro creates finance bubble;
- Dealing with the 2008 bank crash
 - State guarantees all international loans (nationalises bank debts);
 - EU-IMF-ECB loan and restructuring agreement (“bail-out” 2009-13)



Employment since the crash

- Unemployment rises to 14% in 2009 following collapse of the construction industry and bank finance crisis;
- Retail industry contracts radically;
- The unemployed are construction workers and professionals, retail industry employees, other professionals;
- Unemployment remains constant at 14%, of whom half now long-term unemployed (over 1 year); 30% youth unemployment;
- Employment in industry falls marginally and industrial production and exports grow again from 2010;
- “Troika” Deal includes agreement on rationalising and restructuring labour market and employment services.



DEP pilot initiatives with Employers

1. The boom years

■ **Strategic aims:**

- Maximise LM participation;
- Eliminate long-term unemployment (LTU);
- Upskill the workforce by min. one NQF level.

■ **Programmes and Pilot Projects (examples):**

- ***JobRotation*** to maximise LTU re-integration combined with workforce upskilling;
- ***Learning at Work***: Modular further training on NQF system combined with continued workplace participation;
- ***Competency based workplace progression*** (and recruitment) to replace school-only-based qualification requirements;
- ***Migrant Integration*** initiatives on skill assessment basis;
- ***Traveller Employment***: Work first plus subsequent competency development and access to open job opportunities..



DEP pilot initiatives with Employers

1. The recession years

■ **Strategic aims:**

- Early activation and re-inclusion of unemployed;
- Holistic LTU support/activation approach (Community Link model);
- Restructuring employment services to combine benefits and activation, progression and qualification (National Employment and Entitlement Service and Skills Service replace FÁS);
- One stop shops approach for PES with high-use IT self-diagnosis.

■ **Programmes and Pilot Projects (examples):**

- ***Tús (= "Start"):*** half-time work placement/internship for full benefit with free disposal of remaining time;
- ***JobBridge:*** Full and half-time one-year work placements/internships with accompanying guidance and upskilling options.
- ***Local Employment Service:*** Re-orientates inter-agency holistic case management approach aimed at activation outcomes.
- Also to mention: ***Local Labour Clauses*** and ***Social Enterprises***.



Irish Employment Services: Bedrock system

- **The Developmental Welfare State:**
 - **Perspective and programmes developed through social partnership (National Economic and Social Council);**
 - **Being implemented since 2006, and now accelerated in crisis conditions (incl. with key factor cost);**
 - **Ideal: move from welfarism to flexicurity model;**
 - **Partnership system of state, employers, unions and community sector for flexible front-end localised client-centred delivery;**
 - **Move away from “Target Groups”;**
 - **Move to “Single Adult Payment” benefit system;**
 - **All training and education encompassed in 10-point NQF (350 defined trades – FETAC) with modular delivery;**
 - **“Tailored universalism”, i.e. common holistic managed approach with individualised “tailoring” to need.**



Irish Employment Services: Bedrock system

■ **Delivery System:**

- Now unified as National Employment and Entitlement Service;
- Move to “one stop shops” for employment service, benefits payment, learning and guidance services;
- PES Job Centres and community-based “Local Employment Service” network centres (LES) (high supports to long-term unemployed);
- Single client record data collection and analysis system;
- Self-diagnosis/resource cloud system for both independent unemployed and high support clients;
- Integration of all training/education into NQF system (1-10) with focus on modular acquisition of learning and vocational basis;
- Intermediary role of LES to coordinate agency collaboration, employer involvement, client outcome (enhanced by NZ model);
- No privatised providers yet (except in disabilities area – REHAB), but possible future move in this direction.



Philosophy change since the crisis

- **Move to “Work First” approach;**
- **Institutional restructuring – centralised control of diverse local service delivery mechanisms;**
- **Social partnership determines overall programmes, but withdrawing from delivery level;**
- **Learning (LLL) as integrated accompanying element;**
- **Conditionality – always present but now emphasised;**
- **Key employer role through work placement/internship programmes, with back-up HR and support services;**
- **Early activation intervention (within 3 months);**
- **Post-placement role of intermediaries strengthened;**
- **Inter-agency working codified (case management);**
- **Major upskilling of PES staff with Guidance training;**
- **Benefits/Activation linked;**
- **Training (NQF) accompanies, not precedes, work.**



Some initial reflections on “Innovating Social Security”

- ***Active Inclusion*** a core concept to encompass both full participation and activation (democratise services);
- ***Team-building system*** of local engagement (services) through inter-agency and individualised case management;
- ***Back door “work first”*** policies require a conceptual leap for the post-first-year engagement period to ensure happy outcomes for reintegrated long-term recipients;
- ***Customer demand culture*** must come to employment services and be serviced incl. through innovative IT (Irish web-based speed dating and eGuide models of interest?);
- ***Outcomes, not outputs;***



More initial reflections on “Innovating Social Security”

- ***Self-diagnosis through online systems;***
- ***Empowerment for self-service*** a key to future service;
- ***Internship/Placement*** systems a proven path for effective employer engagement (supported by HR);
- ***Future Jobs*** concept very positive;
- ***Add-on competency development***
- ***Job Rotation has a role to play*** (though expensive);
- ***Upskilling PES staff*** an insuperable challenge?
- ***Key role of skilled intermediary guidance/support facilitators*** even more important in new systems;
- ***Wrap-around intensive case management*** (NZ/IRL) works! – but now in work-first context.



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