

Innovating social security

Think tank discussion and position paper

1. Introduction

This document is intended to provoke thoughts and ideas that can fuel the development of innovative practices in work and income policies in different countries. We first provide some short background on why innovation is necessary – now more than ever. We then outline some underlying values for innovation – differentiating innovation from mere change. Against this backdrop we then go into some areas of actual innovation, building on the presentations and discussions from the two meetings of the think tank (Rotterdam, October 2011 and Berlin, June 2012). The aim is to (eventually) provide an overview of the essence of different innovative practices, in order to make these transferable; an overview of ‘big ideas’ behind good practices, for inspiration and new impulses. The (eventual) aim is an easy-read overview of innovative and transferable approaches taken in different countries.

2. Change is necessary

Reform is an on-going process in social security. This is easily understandable; work and income policies make up a large part of government budgets, and the choices that have to be made, often divide political parties. However, the economic crisis, declining government budgets and rising unemployment, put further reform in the area of work and income policies even higher on the agenda. In most countries cost effectiveness right now is a top priority. In addition, western countries face structural developments that challenge social security even further.

Retirement of the post-war baby-boom generation will lead to higher costs and to expected shortages on the labour market. This labour market paradox of redundancies on the short term and shortages on the long term, make youth unemployment and the consolidation of a group of long-term welfare recipients – both short-term consequences of the current crisis – an even bigger concern. Social security not only has to become cheaper, it also has to become more effective in preventing social cleavages and in keeping vulnerable groups attached to the work force (active inclusion).

Individualisation (or: de-traditionalisation of society), immigration, a widening gap between higher and lower incomes, and so on, lead to growing diversity and a growing need for tailoring of policies rather than one-size-fits-all type solutions.

So, on top of on-going reform of work and income policies, further change is necessary. Social security has to become cheaper, more effective, and has to adapt to socio-cultural and demographic changes.

3. Innovative change

To complicate matters even more, we can no longer rely on traditional solutions.

Firstly, current economic conditions in most countries do not allow for a ‘big state’. The state by itself cannot solve problems of unemployment – if it ever could. On a systems level, fighting unemployment increasingly requires a co-operative effort of the state, employers, trade unions and NGOs. On a practical level, combatting unemployment

requires a joint effort of client, caseworker, employer, social network and other professionals. Such a co-operation cannot be directed top-down, but rather requires team-building, finding common goals and coordinated action, always with a view to 'what works'.

Secondly, in the last decade most countries have implemented work first type policies by reducing eligibility to benefits, increasing conditionality, and/or replacing a right to a benefit with a right to a (created or subsidised) job. These 'front door' policies have been largely successful in keeping out those who do not really need support. However, it is questionable whether further closing of the front door will be as effective, or whether it will backfire because some people are cut off from the support they need, leading to an increase of social costs in other areas (such as care, health, police and justice). It seems plausible that further increase of effectiveness requires attention to the 'back door' (increasing outflow of long-term recipients) rather than the 'front door' (limiting inflow of new recipients).

Thirdly, an even more consequential development may be the rising importance of the internet, social media and mobile communication devices. These are not only new means of communication that yet have to find their way into government agencies and government communication. They are also democratising access to information and creating ownership of one's own digital portfolio. Authority is no longer automatically accepted; for example, patients visiting their doctor often have already searched for information on their problem in the internet, have made their own diagnoses and argue with their doctor for a specific prescription. So far this seems to be somewhat less of an issue in social services or employment offices, but generally speaking, authority is no longer automatically accepted, and paternalistic top-down policies increasingly meet with resistance and fail to achieve what they intend. Even if they achieve compliance, this is still not the same as people actually taking responsibility for their situation. On the other hand, the adequacy of self-diagnosis can also be questioned, especially as a basis for spending public money.

This means, in short, that we are looking for innovative ways to make social security cheaper, more effective and up-to-date regarding means of communication and way of communicating (respecting and stimulating peoples own responsibility).

4. Points of departure for social innovation

The essence of social innovations is often successfully put forward in the form of one-liners:

From pampering to encouraging involvement

From knowledge to practical applications

From doing things by the book to more creativity

from silo approaches to integrated services

from problems to solutions

from control to independence

from discipline to taking responsibility

from output to outcome

from dividing means to empowering people

More analytically, against the backdrop of the challenges mentioned above, innovation should contribute to:

- strengthening peoples own competences and resources (resilience, better coping): empowerment.
- connecting unemployed people to jobs/employers: matching
- more freedom, more responsibility, and more trust (as opposed to distrusting paternalism): strengthening networks, social cohesion and a sense of belonging

Social innovation, flexicurity, life-long learning, social integration and human dignity, creating new skills and new jobs, are among the central themes on the EU 2020-strategy.

5. Innovative practices

As a result of the two meetings (thus far) of the Think tank (Rotterdam, October 2011 and Berlin, June 2012) we have identified six areas of innovation. These areas are:

- employer involvement;
- result oriented case-management;
- integrated services;
- customer-focused ICT;
- quality of the service delivery;
- cost-effectiveness of the social services.

5.1. Employer involvement

Helping clients find employment requires that we involve employers in the processes of recruitment, matching the clients with the vacancies, placements, job coaching and retention, as they have vacancies and are in a position to offer benefit recipients decent and sustainable jobs. Involving employers and acquiring vacancies can be done from different perspectives and in different ways.

A- Employers as customers of services: offering HR services

Many Cities, together with the Public Employment Service have developed Employment Service Centres offering (free) HR services for SME's.

Examples : Job Point Berlin, Daad Rotterdam, Mission Australia

Key employer role through work placement/internship programs, with back-up HR and support services.

Lessons learned :

- understanding employers needs
- located close to shopping areas
- easy access for the public
- create customer friendly environment
- direct and supportive approach of clients by staff members
- focus on (local) SMEs
- positive branding of the organisation
- building trust with employers and jobseekers

B- Employers as network partners for developing projects

Employers are invited to participate in and contribute to existing networks of relevant partners on the local and regional level. Network cooperation in Private Public Partnerships (PPP) is also an important driver for innovation.

Examples : Dublin Employment Pact and Employability Learning Network Scotland

Cross-Government initiative supporting local employment partnerships (Dublin) and employability partnerships (Scotland), and wider Community Planning partners, to improve the way employment/employability policies are delivered

Lessons learned :

- focus on common problems and possible solutions
- importance of good practices and evidence of what works, including case studies
- access to resources such as toolkits, online learning programs
- focus on (local)SME's

C- Contract compliance and social return

Employers are encouraged to develop programs for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The goal of CSR is to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere who may also be considered as stakeholders.

Example : Rotterdam policy of 5% social return in tendering contracts

Companies tendering for orders (\geq EUR 225.000) procured by the city of Rotterdam are obliged to dedicate a minimum of 5% of the amount on creating employment opportunities for:

- people on social benefits
- registered jobseekers \geq 6 months
- students: combining training and employment
- target groups: developing skills (worker- , working- and generic skills)
- internships (training, support and guidance by employers)

Lessons learned :

- good network with employers
- supporting demand-led approaches
- focus on win-win solutions
- solid social return policy
- ensured political support

Different methods can be used for different client groups: different approaches for long term unemployed (holistic based and client-wrapped around services) and short-term unemployed (work-first and 'work-to-work' arrangements).

Clients that are 'closer to the labour market' can be matched to existing and future vacancies. Where a match is not yet good enough, training, job coaching and wage subsidies can be offered to make up for, and to close the gap. Clients more distanced from the labour market often require a different approach, in which not only clients are prepared for a job, but also jobs are adapted to clients (among other things through job carving). This different approach also needs longer term financial arrangements/contracts to guarantee continuity, particularly in disadvantaged areas

and for certain target groups (such as indigenous populations in Australia and New Zealand).

As finding a job is the ultimate goal with benefit recipients, it seems only logical to make vacancies (i.e. the actual and real possibilities on the labour market) leading in the matching process. In the past the focus has often been on the client, and finding a suitable job for that client. This may be a good strategy for not so easy to place clients. For most clients, however, an approach that takes real possibilities as a point of departure, seems more practical.

An interesting 'middle way' seems to be the concept of *future jobs*, as developed in the UK and subsequently the Netherlands (Rotterdam). The ideas behind this is to place clients that are not yet quite ready in vacancies that are not yet quite there, but that will emerge later, as every organisation has a certain turnover of personnel and has fluctuations in orders and production. Reasoning from the client process, it involves a turning around of the normal sequence of events: place first and then develop the client, rather than first develop the client and then place. In this approach, matching is done mainly on 'soft skills', rather than on a motivation and competences that are used in more traditional matching. In the concept of future jobs competences and motivation are considered as things to be developed, not so much as a stable basis for matching. Matching focuses more on whether or not someone as a person fits into a company, and whether or not his/her way of learning matches the leadership style and way of coaching at the work place.

Wage subsidies often contain adverse incentives for employers; if an employer invests in an employee with a wage subsidy and his/her productivity increases, the wage subsidy is lowered. It would make sense to make longer-term agreements with employers, that would make it more profitable for employers to invest in employees with a wage subsidy – upgrading their competences, productivity, and for a certain period also their profitability for the employer.

5.2. Result oriented case-management

Social services have a double task; on the one hand help people find employment to support their own lives, and on the other to provide financial support and make sure that tax-payers money is spent in a responsible way. In short: effectiveness and legitimacy. When put alongside each other these tasks seem to be equally important, but in practice, in different cities across Europe, only around 10% of all working hours in the delivery of social security policies seems to be spent on actually helping people find a job. In practice, a defensive line of controlling risks seems to be much more important than an offensive line that focuses on achieving results. Also, there are a lot of supportive services (e.g. language courses for immigrants, settling debts, and so on) that also need to be delivered, but that seem to distract from the core business of helping people find employment.

In the last decade, most countries have made huge efforts to 'put work before income' and to realise 'a shift from legitimacy to effectiveness'. Still, this rhetoric in many places has not yet sufficiently translated into a more result-oriented delivery.

In many areas improvements can be realised, of course depending on the situation. For example, in many places we are still busy putting a work-ability assessment before a social assistance application, often years after a shift in discourse has already taken place. Also, often risk assessment still seems to dominate clients' assessments, even though a focus on opportunities of people rather than impediments, and utilising their strengths, competences and (realistic) ambitions rather than focusing on their weaknesses, limitations and lack of motivation, seems much more promising in achieving results. Also, connecting clients to vacancies calls for some sales competences, that often still need to be developed: being able to construct a 'selling story' of a client to raise enthusiasm with an employer, and to construct a 'selling story' of a (seemingly less interesting) vacancy to raise enthusiasm in clients.

What seems to be most called for, is not so much the development of ideas on how to improve results. Rather, the challenge seems to be how to implement such ideas, and to shift the focus of delivering organisations and caseworkers. Implementation of entrepreneurial (cost-conscious and result-oriented) casework can take a similar development in private insurance as an example.

Example : Dutch insurance company (Interpolis)

Some 15 years ago, Interpolis started working from trust rather than distrust. They have translated this, among others, into the architecture of the offices, their way of working, and the way they handle claims. If a client files a loss, Interpolis hardly asks any further questions, and quickly pays out the insurance money, with only random control. Against all scepticism Interpolis experienced a 12% decrease in filed losses, an increase in customer-satisfaction, and a raise of profits through abandoning a lot of control work.

Commercial insurance also focuses much more on cost-effectiveness of actions. Translated to the world of social security, an investment in a client should be profitable by shortening the duration of claiming a benefit. In this perspective, long-term clients are much more expensive than clients that are closer to the labour market, justifying a bigger investment in the more expensive clients.

In practice, the focus in most cases is on clients closer to the labour market. With these groups it is easier to realise a higher outflow, but not necessarily to diminish the budget spent on social benefits, that is in larger part spent on clients more distanced from the labour market.

A result-orientation should be secured through result-agreements with case-workers, that contain result expectations on limiting benefit-expenditure rather than on outflow-numbers; result expectations that do not encourage creaming, but encourage cost-effectiveness. This also implies;

- counselling (on request) as a new profession (no new paternalism);
- importance of 'selling the client' to the employer;
- building of trust in relationship with (long term unemployed) clients.

Example: Mission Australia

Mission Australia is a (not for profit) private vendor in Australia. Mission Australia has been operating for 152 years and employs over 3,500 people across Australia, operating from over 300 sites and delivering more than 550 Services. Mission Australia helps more than 300,000 people per year:

- community Services: (Families, Youth, Homeless)
- employment Solutions
- early Learning Services
- housing

Lessons learned

- longer term contracts to guarantee continuity, particularly in disadvantaged areas and contracts for indigenous populations (10 years funding)
- devolve contract management to lead providers that engage with smaller providers to deliver services (Communities for Children)
- funding on outcomes and leave process to the practitioners
- encourage secondments between Government and Non-profit providers for better understanding
- government, being a small provider itself, keeps in touch with delivery and administration

5.3. Integrated services

Services to citizens are often not provided according to what someone needs, but according to how things are organised. Social security, health, education, housing, police and justice, social work and so on, constitute policy silos that operate from their own internal logic – often more concerned with what services someone is entitled to than with what someone needs. Several initiatives have emerged to counter this silo-approach.

In almost all western countries jobcentres are being developed, constructed and implemented. Jobcentres offer social services in the field of employment (public employment service and local government together), income support and counselling on financial matters.

Governance of Jobcentres in Europe

In different European countries, jobcentres are differently positioned. In some countries (e.g. Belgium) the local jobcentres are an initiative from central/regional PES, in other countries (e.g. Sweden, Ireland) an initiative from cities, and in other countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Norway) a joint initiative from PES (including Employee Insurances) and cities.

Where cities have the lead jobcentres are complementary to PES. Focus is (initially) on target groups more distanced from the labour market. Participation is in most cases more compulsory.

Where PES has the lead, jobcentres are complementary to local social services. The target group comprises all unemployed and all benefit recipients. Participation is voluntary, although benefit offices may reconsider the right to a benefit. In most cases this seems to be a rather weak link.

Where jobcentres are a 'joint venture' between cities and PES, complementarity is not an external phenomenon, but an internal challenge. Differentiation of target groups within jobcentres works through different client streams. Participation is based on a combination of trust and incentives.

(Job centre comparison report for Eurocities)

Jobcentres operate in different contexts. Jobcentres use similar work processes: diagnosis and plan; guidance, training, internships; job mediation; coaching and aftercare. Jobcentres are all experimenting with E-services (Stockholm seeming to be the

most 'advanced'). Services offered are in all cases very diverse in order to meet the demands of a broad range of clients (e.g. labour market information, job orientation, developing basic work skills, strengthening self-steering, wrap-around services and so on).

All jobcentres offer some sort of employers services. Where jobcentres work complementary to PES, focus is on local employers and smaller companies. Active job matching is part of the services at all jobcentres, although the extent to which this is actually done may differ.

Jobcentres differ with regard to the extent that they use 'intermediate organisations' to approach employers, or alternatively involve employers more directly. Some jobcentres look at employers as a (second) client, others look at them as a network partner.

There are also several initiatives putting people in the centre, aimed at realising a more holistic assessment of a persons needs, as well as a more holistic look at societal costs and benefits, and client-wrapped-around services. What people need does not always mirror how services are organised and structured. There is a strong correlation, for example, between being on welfare and health problems (translating into a shorter life expectancy). Many welfare clients have multiple problems, and are also clients in other policy fields. It is very well conceivable that interventions in one area will pay back in another area. This is often not visible, though.

Example : Ministry of Social Development New Zealand

In New Zealand meeting people where they are is an important point of departure. An integrated service response and *wrap-around intensive case-management* are developed for the most vulnerable, among others through *Community Link*. The Work and Pensions department is locally partnering up with community, voluntary sector, non-government and other government agencies to provide services together for the client. Clients only need to tell their story once, not every time.

New Zealand also involves the family and the friends of the help-seeking individual in the route to overcoming the problems and finding the right solutions, with specific arrangements and responsibilities of people surrounding the individual person written down in a family-contract. In this way the social network of the client is involved in effort of reaching the objectives, set in a common understanding of the clients problems and needs with a view to the personal situation of the client and the relevant circumstances. Family and friends become stakeholders in finding the right solutions and play an active and decisive role in supporting and encouraging the help seeking individual.

Lessons learned:

- wrap-around intensive case management works
- active inclusion of a (help-seeking) person's social network is decisive in setting the right objectives and reaching the right goals
- the wraparound process recognises the importance of long-term connections between people, particularly the bonds between family members
- a family-contract helps to identify and specify the role and importance of stakeholders' responsibility
- importance of building trust in relationships with people
- the wraparound process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, culture, and identity of the child/youth and family, and their community

Example : Fit 4 Work Netherlands

The *Fit4Work* program in The Netherlands is aimed at clients with multiple problems, among others mental health problems. A multi-disciplinary team makes an integrated diagnosis on mental health problems and employment skills, with additional attention to social problems and physical health problems. On the basis of this diagnosis an inter-sectoral intervention plan is made, that includes mental health interventions (short-term out-of-clinic treatments with a guaranteed intake without a waiting period), reintegration programs offered through labour market organisations, and if needed also health promotion programs offered through municipal health organisations, and social interventions. There is continuity of support and care, immediate intervention on perceived barriers for work or social participation, there are labour market experts available for mediating clients to paid employment, and there is support and guidance to participants and their prospective employers available, to avoid relapse into unemployment.

Objectives are that participants work according to their capacity and ability in mainstream organisations for 12 hours a week or more, have a more positive health experience and/or health afterwards, have a reduced health consumption afterwards (leading to a reduction of health costs), and are more self-reliant afterwards.

Example : Neighbourhood management in Berlin

The Berlin district of Neuköln is the most deprived area of Berlin and probably the most deprived district of whole Germany, with a lot of newcomers throughout the past years from various countries. Berlin City invests a lot of resources in creating a supportive approach for citizens of the High Deck Quartier (neighbourhood in Neuköln). This approach is based on the idea of neighbourhood management: offering people the social services they need (language courses, mediation, counselling, job-orientation, health check, parental guidance etc.) in their specific situation, often delivered through intermediary organisations; settlers from non-German backgrounds, who experienced the integration process themselves. This idea (neighbourhood mothers) was successfully transferred from Rotterdam to Berlin.

Lessons learned :

- building trust in relationships with people
- respect in which people and cultures differ (diversity)
- meeting the people where they are
- dedicated staff (many set-backs)
- exemplary leadership

An instrument for making a *societal costs-benefits analysis* is currently developed in the Netherlands (see 5.6.)

5.4. Customer-focused ICT

Development of e-services and the use of new media (among others mobile phones, email, internet, facebook, twitter) is high on the agenda of Public Employment Services in many countries, among other Norway, Sweden and The Netherlands. An important driver for this is the cost-effectiveness of electronic services. Not every jobseeker needs to have, or every situation requires personal contact. The development of e-services can help people becoming more self-reliant, as they can be more in control of their own process, have direct access to registration systems, and can do more themselves (e.g. search vacancies, update their files).

This also implies the ownership of a person's own digital portfolio and the question of adequacy of self-diagnosis as an instrument of demand-side management and challenge of to what extent self-diagnosis can be trusted and used as a starting point and direction for further exploration.

Example : Public Employment Service Sweden

The PES in Sweden, as an addition to recruitment sessions where employers come to the office and have speed meets with jobseekers, now also works through the internet, with the use of videos, for example, and with facebook. Information that people used to make phone calls for, can now be found on the internet.

In order to deliver services in a more tailored way, clients need to interact. This requires another vision on clients (stakeholders instead of obedient recipients), another mentality of the staff, a better use of new technology that is available and a more integrated service delivery. Innovation of ICT in this sense is an integral part of customer-centered, integrated services.

One example can be laying out vacancies on a map, accompanied by information on the job, a video of the workplace and the company, and information on how to get there with public transport. Another example can be the use of video-CVs to present jobseekers to prospective employers.

Example Self-Diagnosis and online access to own files Norway and Netherlands

The PES in Norway (NAV) and the Netherlands (UWV) use the instrument of self-diagnosis for job seekers to create their own personal portfolio, which is visible to employers and can be used by the PES to match with available vacancies. The inspiration in Norway for developing the new ICT system is online banking – transparency, real-time access to own information files, possibility of direct mutation and update. Development of the new ICT is not only driven by the aim to cut costs, but also by the aim to improve performance, improve transparency and client-involvement. Empowerment for self-service is a key to further development of future services.

5.5. Improving the quality of the service delivery

Improving the quality of service delivery is a pivoting point for innovation. In some countries a division is made between financial services (payment of benefits) and employment services, making the first a back office activity. Whereas employment services are often localized, there are tendencies to standardize and centralize supportive services such as a call center, administration and paying benefits (e.g in Norway). Also profiling (the recording and analysis of a persons psychological and behavioral characteristics) is used in all the different countries.

The aim is both to reduce costs and to free up personal conversations with clients from ‘bureaucratic’ issues, and to strengthen the focus on finding employment and increasing self-reliance.

Example : Public Employment Service (NAV) Norway

In Norway a system of visitation is introduced as an instrument for (organisational) cultural change. The aim was to develop leadership at the job centers, by facilitating mutual learning between the offices. Groups of 3-4 leaders of job centers meet on a regular basis to (critically) support each other, in turn taking the role of visitor or being visited (or teacher and pupil, so to speak). The concept seems to be equally simple as it is successful. Since the introduction of the system hardly any external consultants have been hired anymore, as the process is driven by the organisation and participants themselves; and results and user-feedback have improved. The system has gone quickly from pilot-phase to national policy, and is also widened to other areas and other groups.

The basis is the establishment of trust, a common goal (to be decided by the group itself, with a question of the ‘visited’ leader as a point of departure), and a learning attitude. Input in the process comes from amongst others balanced score cards, mystery guest reports, and interviews with staff. The basic idea is that feedback from trusted and respected colleagues is more valued than feedback from outsiders.

5.6. Improving cost-effectiveness of the social services

Cost effectiveness in the field of social services includes reducing bureaucracy and administrative burden, and improving the performance or effectiveness of interventions.

The current financial and economic crisis puts a lot of pressure on the welfare systems worldwide. Due to austerity measures budgets are declining and the need for tangible results and knowledge about ‘what works’ is rising. This implies a growing importance of:

- providing scientific proof of what works (evidence based);
- solid (long-term) financial arrangements for long-term interventions;
- transparency;
- cost-effectiveness (cost-benefit analysis) of approaches on the long term and societal level.

Existing good examples of what works are the dual systems of learning and working in several countries, early interventions, setting the right performance indicators and the development of an intervention calculator (aimed at calculating the costs and benefits of integrated re-integration services for specific target groups).

Example : Importance of dual systems (learning – working) Berlin and (learning at work) Dublin

Germany

In a dual education system, apprenticeships in a company and vocational education at a vocational school are combined. Such a system exists in several countries, notably Germany, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Switzerland, but also Denmark, the Netherlands and France, and for some years now in China and other countries in Asia.

In the *Duales Ausbildungssystem* young German people can learn one of 356 apprenticeship occupations (*Ausbildungsberufe*), such as e.g. Doctors Assistant, Dispensing Optician or Oven Builder. The precise skills and theory taught are strictly regulated and defined by national standards: An *Industriekaufmann* (Industrial Manager) has always acquired the same skills and taken the same courses in production planning, accounting and controlling, marketing, HR management, trade laws, etc.

Ireland

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a credit transfer system developed for qualifications in England, Wales and Ireland. The Framework has nine levels covering all levels of learning in secondary education, further education, vocational, and higher education. Though academic higher education courses (such as academic degrees) are not covered in the NQF, it is broadly aligned with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), allowing levels of achievement to be compared.

Example: importance of ‘early interventions’ Norway and Germany

It is cheaper and more sensible to tackle social problems before they arise, rather than spend ever-greater sums on remedial policies, whether they take the form of more prisons, police, drug rehabilitation or supporting larger and more costly lifetimes on benefits.

Early intervention services are currently designed to meet the needs of infants who have a developmental delay or disability. Sometimes it is known from the moment a child is born that early intervention services will be essential in helping the child grow and develop.

In Norway currently primary school follow-on programs are being developed focusing on parenting support, language, numeracy and literacy, and the development of children’s social competences.

In Germany young children at young age are being prepared for the dual education system, by informing them about the apprenticeships in a company and vocational education. In Berlin the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (PES) invites school classes to visit a special information centre in one of the Jobcentres.

Example : Star-rating system Australia : setting the right performance indicators

Job Services Australia agencies are rated by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), every six months (or milestone) on performance, based on placing clients into work and keeping them employed for 13 and/or 26 weeks. A Star Rating system is used, ranging from one to five stars; five stars indicate the highest level of performance.

The ratings are calculated using a regression model that looks at the number of jobs or outcomes that a site has achieved.

The Job Services Australia (JSA) Star Ratings are used by:

- job seekers to assess the comparative performance of providers in their local area,
- providers as a measure of their contractual performance, and
- the department to drive improved performance and allocate business share to providers.

The ratings measure the relative performance of providers against two contractual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- KPI-1 Efficiency - the average time taken by providers in comparison with other providers to assist relevant participants into employment.
- KPI-2 Effectiveness – the proportions of relevant participants for whom placements and outcomes are achieved, including social outcomes for Stream 4 participants (Job seekers that are assessed as having the most severe levels of disadvantage and may be affected by such things as mental health, disability, homelessness, abuse, drug/alcohol etc.)

Example: Intervention calculator the Netherlands

The intervention calculator is a web-based tool designed to give insight into the costs and benefits of re-integration of multi-problem clients and build scientific policy choices. It is a free calculator, developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and it is based on scientific research of the effectiveness of reintegration programmes for specific target groups (youth, homeless, lone parents, ex-prisoners and long-term unemployed). The intervention calculator shows a prognosis of the:

- results of a specific intervention for one of the targetgroups
- costs and benefits of this intervention (and who pays and collects)
- break-even-point on a 10 year basis.

6. Conclusions

In this discussion paper we have prepared some ‘food for thought’ based on the discussions and the outcome of our think-tank meetings in Rotterdam (October, 2011) and Berlin (June, 2012). We also presented a number of existing good practices showing the importance of innovative changes in the identified six areas.

The general conclusion of the Berlin-meeting is that there is a need for exchange and transferability of good practices. It is regarded as a value in itself that needs to be fuelled and strengthened by building on discussions, exchange of views, ideas and practices and developing ideas for transferability and further exchange of good practices and lessons learned. The aim of this Think-tank is to encourage this by taking incremental steps and achieving tangible results.

The aim of this Think-tank is not to get mixed-up in national and international politics; this is the playing field of policy makers and politicians. This Think-tank is in search for thoughts and ideas and that can fuel the development of innovative practices in work and income policies. Surely this will raise debate. But it's intention is to find and discuss thoughts and ideas, to examine existing policies and practices and to develop innovative approaches that help to create better social policies and more effective and cheaper social services beyond political dispute.

This Think-tank also focuses on what works best on the ground-floor in close view to the clients interests, taking clients (jobseekers and employers) and staff-members with earnest intent as stake-holders in a mutual process of keeping people attached to the work force (active inclusion).

So far, we have been busy identifying the essence of social innovation and of the different innovative practices in search for the 'big ideas' behind those good practices and the drivers for innovation.

We feel the time is right to take things to a next level, by:

- publishing (simultaneously) an article or manifest on our findings in our home countries;
- influencing politicians, policymakers, managers, practitioners by spreading our ideas and findings in national and international forums (e.g. EUROCITIES, PARES, OECD-LEED);
- developing ideas for transferability and exchange of good practices;
- strengthening the role of the Think-tank as a living network and as a support group for collegial consultation and policy learning (demand driven);
- the organisation of visits (peer-review) and pilots and experiments;
- organising an adequate infrastructure for networking: meetings, discussion platform and website (open source) and further dissemination;
- applying for European and external funding of the Think-tank for future meetings and actions.

It is our aim to achieve the following goals in the next years:

- an authoritative and scientific publication on social innovation;
- further dissemination of our ideas, findings and conclusions;
- a living network of ambassadors (also in their home country) of our ideas, findings and conclusions;
- a clear view of innovative practices that really work on the ground floor (evidence based) and the conditions for transferability;
- providing solid policy recommendations for politicians, policymakers, managers and practitioners on the local/regional, national and international level.

In order to make this happen, the participants of the Berlin meeting are requested to reply to the following questions and to make an inventory of ideas, suggestions and contributions for further development of this Think-tank.

Questions:

- 1- What good practices are interesting for you, your organisation or your home country to adopt?
- 2- On which policy-measure, practice or instrument would you, your organisation or your home country like to receive feedback from peers, via this Think-tank?
- 3- What are the existing and future challenges in the examples you have mentioned and that are included in this paper?

We also encourage further dissemination of this paper.

Henk Spies and Nico van de Vrie

Rotterdam, 6-7-2012