WP6 National Reports

The Individualisation of Social Citizenship in Europe

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The Individualisation of Interventions

(Work Package 6)

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1. Introduction

"Do more for those who need it the most"; this is the new leitmotiv promoted by the public employment service in France. It emphasizes a series of key concepts among which the central ones are individualization, categorization, vulnerable groups, targeting and profiling. All related to one another, they have been increasingly used by public stakeholders in the field of employment and more especially in the field of labour market integration policies. This paper aims at identifying the degree and nature of the individualisation of interventions of social cohesion and employment policies in one case study in France and its consequences on the service (the consequences of these services on the individual will be further developed in WP7). Do the tools elaborated in order to individualize the service enable a tailor-made support? How are individualization, profiling and categorization related? What are the consequences of this individualization trend on the overall organisation of the public employment service? And what are the consequences for a specific vulnerable group: long-term unemployed? This report will also tackle the construction of citizenship with regards to the accountability of the citizen, the public service and its intermediary (the street level bureaucrat). Has individualization modified the former balance between right and duties for both the citizen and the public service? Can we observe a new 'social contract'? Last, we will analyse the spectrum of choice labour market integration policies provide in this new framework that fosters a stronger individualisation of services.

Thus, this paper first describes organisational and governance context in order to clarify the landscape. Then, relying on the idea that it is at the implementation level that structural contradictions can be identified (Dubois, 2012), the governance structure of everyday work will be examined in order to shed the light on managers' and street level bureaucrats' discretion, and to understand the organization of daily practises. This work on street level bureaucrats - understood as part of the policymaking process (Lipsky, 1980; Wildavsky and Pressman, 1984) - aims at completing the analyses of labour market integration policies (see Localise reports, Barbier, 2005, Kunzel, 2012, Van Berkel, De Gradd, Sirovatka, 2011, etc.). The implementation and the development of an individualised approach will be analysed and will consequently question the degree of standardisation this framework implies. A chapter will then analyse the categorization process, before presenting the share of responsibilities at stake in this landscape.

In sum, this report investigates how the question of social cohesion and individualisation is taken in charge in the general common procedure for long-term unemployed with regards to five tensions the empirical work and the literature highlighted: (1) individualised versus generalised services, (2) program-driven versus organization-driven services, (3) integrated versus sectorialized services, (4) universalist versus differentialist approach, (5) localised versus territorialised services.

2. Methodology

The common choice we made was to analyse individualisation through a specific group: long-term unemployed. This group revealed some very interesting insights with regards to the categorization process. Indeed, the definition of a long-term job seeker (the 'long-term unemployed' designation is not frequently used, actors – and policies - rather refer to long-term job seekers instead – see also chapter 4 and 6) can be both different from one organization to another, and changing over time. Currently, the official definition (the one used by the national employment agency and by the national institute of statistics and economic studies) defines a long-term job seeker as a person that is registered at the national employment agency for over a year[1]. Yet, a report realised in 2011 by the national employment agency broadens this definition (Pôle Emploi, 2011). A long-term job seeker is there someone that has been registered at the national employment agency for over twelve months within the last eighteen months. The main finding of this report is that long-term unemployed are not a homogenous group. Some have been unemployed for over eight years whereas some others have worked every now and then over the last months, but have not worked enough to be drawn back from this category.

Table 1. Percentage of long-term unemployed (over 12 months) since 2008 in the European Union, France and the Aquitaine region

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
European Union (27 countries)	2,61	2,98	3,84	4,14	4,64
France	3,11	3,51	4,04	4,16	4,30
Aquitaine	2,41	2,70	3,03	3,36	3,29

Source: Eurostat

The empirical analysis has been conducted in the city of Bordeaux. Caseworkers from the main organization of the public employment service (Pôle Emploi) were interviewed, along with street level bureaucrats working on a specific program (the minimum income scheme support). This choice is based on one key characteristic of the French governance system (Berthet, Bourgeois, Tourne Languin, 2013): the important outsourcing of both actions and a part of the support of vulnerable groups to service providers and to partners. Consequently, it

[1] http://www.insee.fr/fr/methodes/default.asp?page=definitions/demandeurs-emp-longue-duree.htm

seemed inappropriate not to analyse both the main organization in charge of delivering labour market integration services, and one of program that often reaches long-term unemployed and that is outsourced to non-profit organizations[2]. The program chosen is the support organized in the framework of the minimum income scheme as it reaches many long-term unemployed[3] and is an interesting program to investigate when working on activation policies (it is often used to illustrate the French activation – see Zirra, 2010). Hence, we addressed the matter of the individualisation of services for long-term unemployed through an interesting organisational approach that is not an innovative case, but rather a traditional one that can be found in many other situations. The reason we did not choose an innovative case relies mainly on the fact that in a highly centralized system, there is only few – if any – innovative cases framed at the local level. The case presented in this paper is not only based on one organization but on one program. Hence, we do not analyse the way street level bureaucrats deal with long-term unemployed in one specific organization, but rather how one specific program addresses the individualisation of long-term unemployed. This program – the minimum income scheme – set up a specific service with regards to its governance scheme and its approach of the beneficiary. Thus, it is not an innovative case as it is spread on the whole national territory, but it is particularly interesting and relatively innovative compared to other services. Moreover this income scheme is a former local experimentation that has been generalized to the entire territory after its evaluation by a RCT (randomized controlled trial) procedure. It will thus be important to question the articulation of programs-driven approaches versus organizations-driven approaches / the impact of the measure cognitive and normative frameworks versus the impact of the organization's culture in order to illustrate the complexity street level bureaucrats and beneficiaries face with regards to the governance and the implementation of services.

Four interviews were conducted with street level bureaucrats working at the national employment agency. One manager from the same organisation was also interviewed in order to test his/her impact on the organisation of the service (hence enabling us to test Evans'

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[2] Hence, when needed, we will distinguish the two kinds of organizations we met in order to shed the light on the similarities and divergences between the national employment agency and private service providers.

[3] A recent report (Caf, 2013) described five profiles of minimum income recipients: (1) young unemployed with diploma starting their labour market integration with no specific difficulties, (2) unemployed who cannot benefit from the unemployment insurance anymore registered at the national employment agency for over a year, (3) women that are isolated and have childcare issue, (5) older beneficiaries that have several difficulties. Amongst these categories, we met unemployed at the end of their unemployment benefit and isolated women that also fit into the previous category.

argument on the influential role of managers in the implementation stage (Evans, 2011). Four other interviews were conducted with street level bureaucrats working on the support set up in the framework of the minimum income scheme (RSA). Due to the program-driven approach we decided to take, it was difficult to meet caseworkers working in the same organization on the same program (as minimum income scheme program referees are not numerous within one organization, but are rather in many different organizations). Therefore, we met these street level bureaucrats within three different organizations. Seven interviews were conducted with long-term unemployed that were chosen by street level bureaucrats within service providers in charge of implementing the minimum income scheme. The main selection criterion was related to the distance from employment. Indeed, we wanted to meet with long-term unemployed that were on a labour market integration path (instead of a social one). It means that long-term unemployed we met did not have strong social impediments that would – according to the street level bureaucrat in charge – make them 'unemployable'.

Table 2: Interviews[4]

	Street level bureaucrats
1	Employment national agency
2	Employment national agency
3	Employment national agency
4	Employment national agency
5	Non profit service provider
6	Non profit service provider
7	Private service provider
8	Private service provider
9	Head of the local employment national agency
	Beneficiaries
1	LTU
2	LTU
3	LTU
4	LTU
5	LTU
6	LTU
7	LTU

[4] About 25 more interviews were conducted in the framework of a Phd on the implementation of cross-sectorial policies (Bourgeois). These interviews were conducted with caseworkers from service providers organizations and the national employment service.

The issue of unemployment and labour market integration policies is sensitive. In a time of high unemployment rates, the efficiency and relevancy of their service are often called into questions. The numerous criticisms towards their services in the media have introduced a kind of reluctance towards external observers, which made complicated meeting with street level bureaucrats and long-term unemployed. Consequently, we had to go through a heavy administrative system to allow the interviews with street level bureaucrats. Yet, this empirical analysis occurred in a favourable policy window (the new plan - *Pôle Emploi 2015*- developed by the national employment agency states that a closer relationship with the academic world should be promoted). This dynamic clearly facilitated our approach but we were still unable to interview long-term unemployed. It was easier to have access to street level bureaucrats working for service providers and partners. Nevertheless, due to the program-driven orientation, we had to go through several intermediaries to know whom to contact. Regarding long-term unemployed, street level bureaucrats managed the interviews that took place in their office. This process of organizing interviews reflects the *millefeuille* facet of the system (Berthet, Bourgeois, Tourne Languin, 2013), along with difficulty to identify some of the key actors of the service.

3. Organisational and governance context

In France, activation was progressively developed. First promoted without being effectively implemented, it has become more formal over the last decade. Several measures were developed in order to introduce activation polices in France. It was for example, the objective of the transformation of the former minimum income scheme - *RMI* ('inclusion' minimum income) - into the *RSA* (active solidarity income) in 2009. The creation of *RSA* reinforced the conditionality of social benefits. It also reinforced the link between social assistance and employment policies. These two dynamics demonstrate the promotion of an activation-friendly integrated approach (Berthet, Bourgeois, forthcoming). Moreover, changes that affected the organizational structure of the services in the employment public service shed light on a reinforced (yet limited compared to some other countries such as the UK) marketisation and contractualisation that are at the core of the activation trend (Berthet, Bourgeois, forthcoming).

Even though decentralisation processes have transferred some responsibilities to subnational bodies, the French political and administrative system remains centralised. Regarding the sector of employment policies, the State keeps the prerogative (Gramain, Exertier, Herbillon, 2006). Local stakeholders develop some projects at the local level. Yet, they are mostly in charge of developing national policies on their territory.

The organisational structure of the PES at the territorial level takes the shape of a *millefeuille*[5] (Berthet, Bourgeois, Tourne Languin, 2013): the regional representatives of the state *(the Préfet of region, the SGAR: secrétariat général aux affaires régionales* - General secretariat for regional affaires -, and the *DIRECCTE* - Regional directorate for companies, competition, consumption, work and employment -), the Regional Council, the General Council (and a network of territorialized agencies implementing its policies), NGOs, private actors, national employment agencies (regional and departmental offices and their local agencies), and many others tackling employment through their own responsibilities.

The main actors in charge of delivering labour market integration policies for long-term unemployed are the local national employment agencies that cover one delimited territory and are often specialized on one (or several) sector of activity (hospitality or business for

[5] Also the name of a French cake, it literally means 'thousand layers'. In a metaphorical sense it refers to the superposition of many actors, organizations and measures.

example), its partners, its service providers and other actors such as NGOs (see below). Activation policies have reinforced the central role of the national employment agency. Indeed, the conditionality attached to the registration as an unemployed has made it an almost compulsory step in many aspects.

The *Revenu de solidarité active* – thereafter the *RSA* - (active solidary income) is the minimum income scheme, which replaced the minimum income scheme (revenue minimum d'insertion RMI) that was established in 1988. Established in 2008, the RSA was set up to fight against possible inactivity traps. It aims at completing the income of the beneficiary, to "guarantee its recipients sufficient means for living, in order to combat poverty, encourage the exercise of or return to professional activity and assist in the social integration of recipients" (Law n°2008-1249 of December 1st 2008). It supplies an income provided an active search for a job or a vocational project (training) is being carried out. It shows a major step towards activation (Berthet, Bourgeois, 2011). According to Zirra, the RSA was "attached to the newly created Pôles Emploi creating a universal minimum income scheme administered by a one-stop-shop for all jobseekers and benefit recipients, and endowing case managers with real sanctioning capacity (Clegg and Palier 2010)" (Zirra, 2010, p.15).

Partners are acknowledged as such by both policymakers and caseworkers. They have frequent contacts and their speciality is clearly identified by all. Service providers are chosen through tenders. They are either private organizations or non-profit organizations. They have a contractual relationship with the national employment agencies. And they often find it complicated to reach caseworkers from the national employment agency if they need to talk about one unemployed. Beneficiaries are orientated to them by national employment agencies' caseworkers (and sometimes, by others such as the General Council) with an 'outsourcing sheet' that demonstrates the formal and contractual facet of the relationship. Last, the national employment agencies' caseworkers may guide the unemployed towards other actors with whom they do not have a contractual relationship. In this case, they cannot formally outsource the unemployed, but can only advice them to contact these organisations. These guidances are based on the knowledge of the local network.

Central organization	Partners	Service providers	Other actors
National employment agencies	Mission Locale (youth)	Private organizations in charge of delivering one specific service	Local actors working on related issues
	PLIE (local plan for economic inclusion)		
	Cap Emploi (disabled)		

This multiplicity of actors and the important use of outsourcing rely on the will to have specific services for either specific groups, or specific needs. Indeed, partners focus on specific groups. Service providers are in charge of delivering some services that are defined in time (usually last a few months) and that are more intensive that what can be done by the national employment agency. Moreover, outsourcing represents a way to address peripheral hinders (linguistic matters, social, housing, etc.) as it enables caseworkers to orientate the beneficiary towards an organization identified as able to address these hinders. Here, we have a large understanding of outsourcing: we understand it as the process of orientating the beneficiary to another service provider for both short-term action and global counselling. Based on that definition and with regards to all long-term unemployed[6], we can estimate the use of outsourcing at approximately 90%[7]. All the beneficiaries we met went through an outsourcing process at some stage of their labour market integration path (as minimum income recipients or before).

[6] Not only minimum income recipients, but also long-term unemployed that are entitled to the unemployment benefit. In the case of minimum income recipients, the outsourcing concerns mainly short-term actions as the main service provider was already chosen upon its experience and capacity to target long-term unemployed.
[7] In 2002, the outsourcing of measures by the employment ministry and its agencies reached about 700M€ (6% of the total expenditure on active policies). At the national employment agency, the usage of service providers is very important; it increased tenfold between 1998 and 2003. See Berthet 2010

4. Two different daily routines and their impact on the beneficiary/caseworkers relationship

Although the caseworkers we met all share the same objective: to facilitate the entry/return of the jobseekers onto the labour market; we observe a wide range of ways to address this aim. The different situations differ with regards to the governance structure of street level bureaucrats' everyday work, and to their level of discretion. Indeed, each program and organization has its own organizational scheme that frames the work of the caseworker, that can even get caught between two different schemes he/she is deemed to follow (the organization and the program's ones).

Prior to analysing the individualisation process, we need to clarify the landscape and to explain how caseworkers fulfil their duties, how is their everyday shaped and in what context they provide the service. Hence, we will first present their daily practises, their tasks and the way their timetable is organized. Then, the trajectory of the long-term unemployed will be developed in order to show how the individual fits into this landscape. Last, we will present the main criteria used in labour market integration services (on what criteria are caseworkers evaluated and how are they controlled).

a) Daily routines: a segmented random organization versus a focused routine

National employment agencies' caseworkers described a wide range of tasks pointing out a kind of randomness of their everyday work routine. They have three main tasks according to the group they provide services for: unemployed, enterprises and employees.

- The most well known of their task is to provide services to the unemployed (information, orientation, unemployment benefit calculation, and programmes). There are two levels. First, they receive unemployed at the information desk who come looking for advice, documents or information. At the second level, they manage their 'portfolio'[8] (*"to give life to your portfolio, it's sending offers, follow unemployed (…) and also well know the services we can offer").* They contact persons that belong to their 'portfolio' for face-to-face compulsory appointments or by phone and emails in order work on their labour market integration.

[8] Literally, « *portefeuille* » in French

- They are to provide information for employed people and advise any workers regarding employment.
- They also collect offers and set up a hotline for questions from enterprises.

Caseworkers explained that it is the ‘local management team’ or the ‘local organisational technical team’ (depending on its designation that has changed over the last years) that usually sets up their weekly planning. They insist on the fact that there is no typical day. Tasks are planned on a half-day unit basis: *“We can’t talk about a typical day. A typical week, yes, it’s more adequate. A typical day, it will be a program organised by .. hum.. how.. now, it’s our head of production team, before, it was our team manager, the name has changed, it doesn’t mean the same things, now, it’s true, it was the head of the production team, and it became the team manager”*. Back office tasks are supposed to be dealt with within the time dedicated to meet jobseekers. There is no specific time dedicated to these tasks outside the appointments themselves.
The time dedicated to face-to-face interviews and counselling does not represent the main activity of the street level bureaucrat working at the national employment agency (whereas it is usually the main part of the activity of street level bureaucrats working in private organisations). At least one half day, they have to welcome people at the reception desk for advise and questions. They also have half days to work with enterprises. Some are also in charge of processing unemployment benefits calculation. And last, they have one half day for staff meetings when the agency is closed to public.

The recent national Employment strategy fosters the reinforcement of caseworkers’ autonomy (it is one of the six orientations (see below))[9]. Increasing caseworkers’ leeway aims at improving the service delivery for those who need it the most and on a tailor-made basis.
Yet, this discretion appears to be more a way to address organisational matters than counselling issues. Interviews shed light on recent organisational changes that are supposed to relieve the burden of the monthly mandatory meetings with all the unemployed in the caseworkers’ portfolio. Consequently, they have been allowed to choose how they want to contact people they are in charge of (even though there are two compulsory face-to-face meetings).

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[9] “Give more room for manoeuvre to caseworkers in order to implement the individualisation of the service offer” (BOPE, n°71, 16 juillet 2013)

National employment agencies' caseworkers manage a profiled portfolio they choose.

- "Follow-up modality[10]": for job seekers that are relatively independent in their search and do not need regular meetings, job seekers considered as close to employment
- "Guided modality": for job seekers that need to support from their counsellor and more regular meetings
- "Strengthened modality": for those that need strong support from their counsellor in their labour market integration path through very regular meetings

Regarding the content of the counselling, they remain relatively free to choose the way they want to deal with the person's issues. They choose the programs or actions they propose and service providers they can direct towards. Nevertheless this choice is constrained. They have to choose amongst existing programs (that according to caseworkers have only changed to a limited extent), and service providers that have been selected through tenders. Yet, some explain that they have somehow lost autonomy[11] or that these changes did not really increase their room for manoeuvre because of the development of more rigid frameworks in parallel. Interviews brought up the factors upon which subjective experiences of autonomy rely on professional background and seniority (see 6.b).

The landscape that shapes caseworkers' everyday work is quite different in private organizations in charge of delivering services to long-term unemployed (Local plan for employment and inclusion – *PLIE* -, departmental house for social inclusion – *MDSI* -, NGOS, and enterprises). These caseworkers also talk about the burden of administrative tasks (in some organizations, they are accountable for every quarter of hour), but they insist on the fact that they have one single main task: counselling.

They are concentrated on their counselling task that integrates administrative works. They sometimes also work with enterprises, but it is usually related to one unemployed they are working with and they do not distinguish this task from the counselling one. Thus, all their daily practises are linked to their 'portfolio'.

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[10] The usage of the term « modality » shows clearly that the different kinds of supports differ mainly in terms of structure (frequency of the appointments, communicating tools) rather than with regards to the counselling itself. In French, they are called: *modalité suivie, modalité guidée, modalité renforcée.*

[11] "Between before and now, let's say that counsellors – and this is my point of view – have lost autonomy. We have a reinforced control from our hierarchy; it's not bad you know, it's just a matter of perspective. (…) So there is a very more accurate framework of our interviews, with schedules… a segmentation of our interviews with big items we have to tackle."

In these organizations in charge of delivering services to long-term unemployed, the nature of the relationship between the paymaster and the provider may impede caseworkers' room for manoeuvre. For instance, organizations that provide services to unemployed that are outsourced by the national employment agency usually still have a certain discretion regarding the way they handle their schedule (their own organization of their timetable), the counselling itself (less pressure on putting the unemployed on other actions, on how to address peripheral hinders, etc.), but are required to follow a more rigid framework (notably with regards to the frequency of the appointments). Hence, the control is made on the edges of the service and less on the content of the counselling: *"Pôle Emploi's services are very restrained by the contract, especially in terms of administrative tasks. We'll have appointment every fourteen days precisely for example or every five working days"*.

b) The individual's trajectory

The traditional labour market integration path usually follows the following steps: the unemployed is supposed to register at the national employment agency at first, and is then directed towards an appropriate program (delivered by the national employment agency or other organisations if necessary). Indeed, the national employment agency being responsible for both placement and unemployment insurance, it is a major step. The unemployed is supposed to have one referee caseworker. This referee can belong to various organisations that are either partners or service providers (the national employment agency for most unemployed, Mission Locale when the unemployed is between 16 and 25 years old, PLIE for some long-term unemployed and other 'far from employment' unemployed, other private organisations[12] when the unemployed is a minimum income recipient). The beneficiary gets his/her referee through different processes: he can contact the organisation that is going to ensure his/her support, or he/she can be orientated there on one's formal guidance. In the case of minimum income recipients, the general council, in charge of the implementation of the RSA, usually makes the first guidance. A paradoxical situation often occurs in such context: several referees that are not aware of the multiple overlapping supports simultaneously conducted for the same beneficiary. In this situation, the beneficiary will be advised different

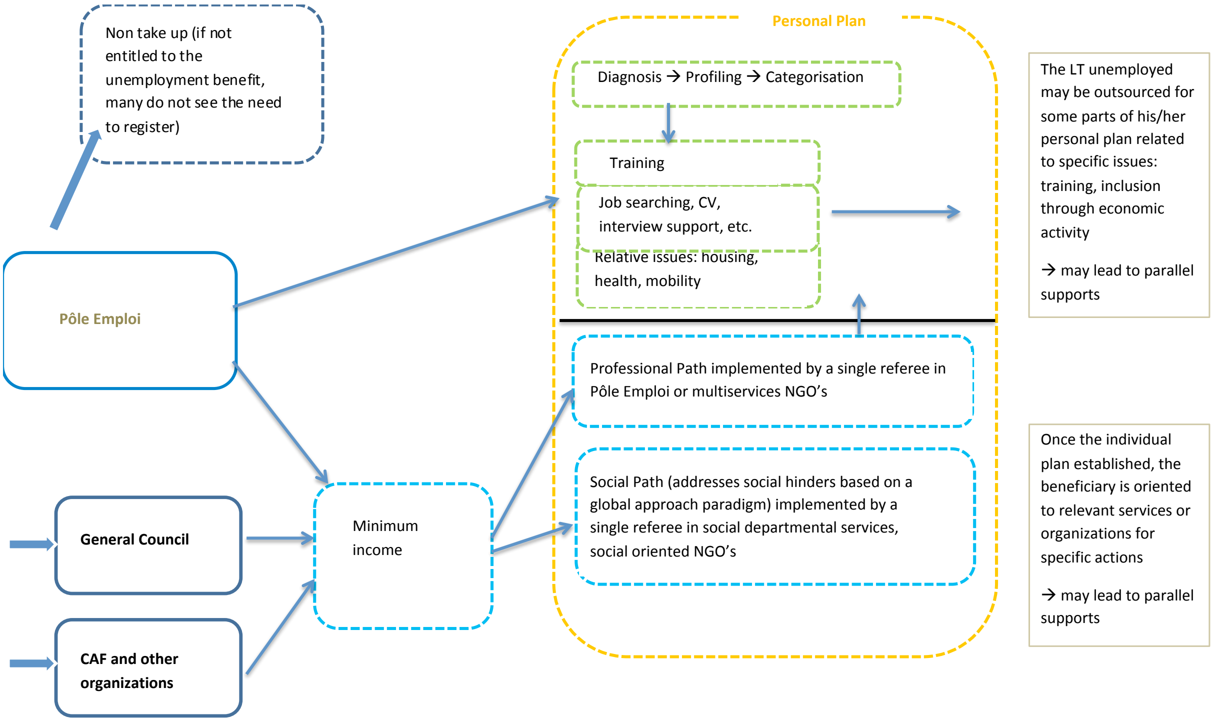
[12] By private organisations, we refer to the legal status. It can be both non-profit organisation and lucrative businesses.

paths, and can easily get lost into prescriptions (Berthet, Bourgeois, Tourne-Languin, 2013) and guided in many different ways.
The system and the way the beneficiary perceives it seem to be less accurate and more utilitarian: "*So, the departmental house of solidarity and inclusion was for the housing issue. As the national employment agency sent me here (service provider), I only go to the national employment agency to check the job offers and to sign on every month, but otherwise, no. I'll meet my counsellor after because now, I'm with the service provider for six months. So it's after that she/he will meet me to put things down, not before*".
People go to the national employment agency for special needs such as a training or urgent question and mainly regarding the unemployment insurance: "*yes, because the national employment agency, it's if you really have a big issue to sort out that you take an appointment, but otherwise, it's about after six months that they see that you are still here without a job*". Long-term unemployed expectations are low[13] and their usage of the employment public service is often strategic.

Although one caseworker is presented as the single referee of the unemployed, he/she still has to ask the stakeholder that has outsourced the unemployed not only to approve but also to make the formal guidance. They are the single referee but can't access some information or direct to any training without the agreement of the ordering party: "*I don't have a login to make formal guidance... I have no room for manoeuvre in terms of orientation, it has to be the referee"*. From then on, the quality of the relationship with the ordering party may impede the efficiency of the counselling provided by its partners: "*they have the magic button*". In some cases (when the service provider is a partner (see chapter 3)), the single referee is the one that is in charge of path management: "*Usually, we are the only one because we are on what we call the 'path management', which means that if someone is codified as among our beneficiaries (and if this codification is still in the national employment agency's files), he/she will be sent back to us*".
The complexity of the relationships with the national employment agencies has increased consequently due to the increasing number of jobseekers' registration. Unless caseworkers have a strong network inside the national employment agency it may be difficult to contact the caseworker in charge: "*what is problematic is that we don't have their phone numbers*".

[13] This observation may result from the fact that we had to meet unemployed through other services than the national employment agency. Thus, they were all outsourced and supported by service providers.

Figure 2: Long-term unemployed trajectory



Source: based on Berthet, Bourgeois, Tourne Languin, 2013

c) The increasing control of caseworkers' work

Within the last decades, the promotion of public tenders led to news forms of governance. It notably related to the will to foster new public management methods in the field of employment. Yet, even though its implementation remains limited, it has encouraged an increasing control of caseworkers' actions.

On what basis are caseworkers controlled? What are the criterions used and how do street level bureaucrats interpret them? Identifying the criteria used to evaluate caseworkers' work and the level of discretion they have should enable us to grasp paradigmatic elements of labour market integration processes.

At the national employment agency, caseworkers do not have strict numeral objectives to achieve. Monitoring relies on annual interviews with the head of the agency that analyse the work of the casework based on indicators they find on their IT system. The IT system aims at picturing the way the caseworker handle his/her portfolio (how many people have left the portfolio or have entered, what is the frequency of the appointments). The elements of paramount importance according to caseworkers are the number of actions towards which the caseworker has directed unemployed and the number of unemployed put on a job offer published by the national employment agency

These indicators do not seem to strongly affect caseworkers' room for manoeuvre so far. "*The counselling of the unemployed? As I told you, according to me, the room for manoeuvre is on… the content of the counselling. It hasn't changed. Even services do not change, it's always the same thing, we have the business creation, the project, the research*". Yet, it may impede and/or orientate the service towards specific purposes (for example, prescribing unemployed on one outsourced service). "(Our indicators are both) *quantitative and qualitative. Well, then, after, the aim is really collective action, so you know, to convoke as many persons as possible, to work on CV, promote service offers, enterprises, to link the unemployed to service offers, to employers*". Even though all caseworkers do not perceive the use of indicators in the same way, all acknowledge that it can be a tool to improve their work, and that it is not used as a strong pressuring tool for the management team (yet, some fear it could become one). Nevertheless, the risk is that it may lead to trying to fit in with the criteria (find someone that corresponds) rather than seeking the usefulness of the action (facing one's issues, looking for a measure that corresponds). "*So, the requirement to 'place a product' – quotation marks – on a measure, we can face it sometimes. But maybe in a small agency they would tell you it's a pressure. In a big one, we always lack measures. In a small agency, I guess it could be a constraint to find someone in a portfolio that corresponds. Out of 60 counsellors, as the work is not totally individualized, out of 60 counsellors with different kinds of modalities, it's not a big constraint".*

Moreover, the indicators used question the changes in the 'portfolio' with the objective of ensuring an active service. But they do not seem to address its quality and its results in terms of social and employment integration.

d) Different relationships according to the frequency and stability of the relationship

Long-term unemployed expressed various degrees of relationships with the caseworkers they met during their integration path. Indeed, when they meet quickly someone that will not have time to listen to their needs and their trajectory, they usually do not put their trust in them and do not expect much from the service provided. They then may initiate an instrumental relationship (go to appointment when compulsory with no expectations and in return ask for documents, for trainings), or do not contact the person anymore. It also occurs when they go to the same institution expecting to meet with the same person they had met before and meet someone else. This situation can be explained by the change of counselling modalities or a modification on the profile of the unemployed. Most of the long-term unemployed we met encountered these situations while being followed by the national employment agency. They are now reluctant or have only little expectations when they are convoked[14]. "*At the national employment agency, when you want to see your counsellor, it's not immediate unless there is something very very urgent. But usually, you have to take an appointment and it's after two weeks that they give you one. (..) But you know the national employment agency, we go there for researches, all that, but otherwise, if we don't have any specific needs… well…"*.

When being supported by private providers, they usually meet more often and always with the same caseworker during longer interviews. Moreover, the interviews are less standardised (see chapter 5) making it more flexible according to the beneficiary's needs. It then depends on both interpersonal matters and on the caseworkers' ability to create a relationship. Yet, the framework in which private providers work seems to represent a facilitating factor for a relationship where the unemployed feels at ease.

From caseworkers' perspective, both frequency and stability in the relationship with the unemployed also appear of paramount importance. Indeed, caseworkers working at the national employment agency often face changes in their 'portfolio', which they have not initiated. It occurs when someone's situation changes or when someone was sent on a program for a few months and comes back in another 'portfolio'. They have an orientation aim more than a counselling one, as corroborated by one long-term unemployed: "*So when I came to register, they told me they would be in touch soon after. They sent me a mail to give me an appointment well, two weeks later. So I came, we talked about what I had done, studies, jobs I had before and all that. She took notes and well. It's how it all started. Immediately, she put me in contact with… I had a counsellor* (a service provider)". Consequently, they do not seem to expect the same kind of relationship other caseworkers

[14] It is important here to remind that long-term unemployed we interviewed were now supported by private providers and not anymore at the national employment agency. The modalities they talked about are not anymore at stake. It is thus important to cross this information with the perceptions of caseworkers working at the national employment agency.

wish to develop. The lack of continuity in the support leads to a matching purpose (putting the beneficiary on the appropriate program or outsource him/her)[15].

As already demonstrated, caseworkers working in private organizations (partners or service providers) usually have more time dedicated to their counselling task (administrative duties included). Hence, even though they also have a large number of individuals to work with, they explained that they do not switch from one task to another and are focused on one main task. Indeed, they do not see their tasks as separated in different ones, but rather perceive them as a whole rooted in a path perspective. This analysis relies mainly on their ability to organise their schedule. Moreover, because they have no specific framework to follow with regards to the interview they organize, they are less constrained with regards to the content. This landscape facilitates a listening, considered as central in their task: "*being a counsellor means having big ears everywhere. Big ears because you need to listen a lot the person you follow who come here to have quality listening and not a passive one. It is really an active listening and a listening that will enable us to efficiently find solutions, suggest things, integrated data we did not think of, that are not always strictly professional but that interferes with that*".

[15] At the time of the empirical work, caseworkers did not have enough distance to analyse the new modalities that were established. Within the first months of the new modalities framework, they explained things did not really change, but they expect the situation to settle with regards to the stability of the relationship (but not the frequency because of the numerous unemployed they work with and the time dedicated to this task that does not allow regular interviews).

5. Individualisation – standardisation of interventions

Caseworkers insist on the fact that one the key facet of individualisation is the adaptation of the counselling to the needs of the person: "*individualisation of the path, it's also taking into account the (…) demand*". They explain that individualising the service means being able to identify and address peripheral impediments (such as health, social, housing or childcare issues) in a more comprehensive way. It both enables and requires taking the individual as a whole and not only through the prism of employment.

In this part, the standardisation and individualisation of interventions will be put into questions with regards to the activation trend, promoted through most recent social cohesion and employment policies. We will first present the extent to which activation has led to more standardised ways of delivering service. Then, we will try to grasp the individualisation dimension in caseworkers' practises. Last, the consequences of this system (being simultaneously standardised and individualised) on the unemployed will be developed.

a) Activation polices fostering standardised paths?

In both the national employment service agencies and service providers, socio-professional paths are always somehow standardised.

In the first case, services are set up in a formalised way. Even though caseworkers are increasingly autonomous in the modalities of their counselling task, the standardisation concerns the content / steps of the counselling. Official documents from Pôle Emploi, such as Official Report or legal decrees for instance, defines the precise organisation and schedule of a socio-professional path[16].

In the second case, the contractual relationship resulting from the tender comes with rigid frameworks (in terms of schedules and evaluation). Some dimensions are standardised (appointments' frequency for instance), but caseworkers adapt this framework. Moreover, they 'de-standardise' within the path. Indeed, their room for manoeuvre especially concerns the content of the path.

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[16] *Sources :* Bulletin officiel de Pôle Emploi, 29 décembre 2011, n°123; Circulaire DGEFP no 2008-18 du 5 novembre 2008 relative à la mise en oeuvre du projet personnalisé d'accès à l'emploi et à l'offre raisonnable d'emploi;

Interviews with caseworkers from the national employment agency revealed the highly formalised structure of the early stages of the support. Registration and profiling is not to vary from one unemployed to another. Besides, caseworkers are supposed to follow the scheme and are provided with framed 'questionnaires'. The first interview (registration and diagnosis interview) is formalised and timed (50mn interview). Caseworkers enter online all the information, collect and verify all the documents, eventually calculate the compensation entitlements and make a diagnosis. Based on that diagnosis, the unemployed is put in one of the three profiles (followed, guided or reinforced). Each local agency defines the specificities of the three types of guidance based on the national guidelines[17]. Nevertheless, all three are based on variables of distance to/from employment and/or employability degree. The nature of the counselling is supposed to vary according to the type of guidance[18].

As already mentioned, there are no mandatory monthly meetings anymore with each jobseekers of the 'portfolio'. New mandatory milestones are a 4th month and a 9th month meetings. In between, the caseworker may contact, call in or email the person. On the 4th month: "*Here, let's say we have to go over the profile of the unemployed, which means to make sure he looks, the job he looks for, that he has a space on the internet. For example, make sure he has the tools to look for a job, check how he finds offers, check his degree of autonomy, whether he has peripheral hinders that appeared between the time of his registration and now or that he has not told us then. Well, things like that. So it's quite framed*". Not all caseworkers make the same usage of the formalised interview outlines. Some (mainly the ones with the most experience) tend to step back from these outlines. Yet, interviews are always segmented in order to collect information on the unemployed: "*So there is a framework, much more precise for interviews with time frame, and a segmentation of the interview in big items we need to tackle. So it's planned*".

Facing a large number of people in their portfolio (the average, based on our interview, is 170 individuals in one caseworker's 'portfolio'), caseworkers from the national employment agencies outsource people to other organisations. This increasing trend – along with the

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[17] In the agency where interviews were conducted, the followed modality corresponds to people looking for jobs that have many vacancies and unemployed ready to work. The guided modality is for people who need to elaborate their professional project and those who need trainings. The reinforced modality corresponds to young unemployed.

[18] This system is relatively new as it was implemented at the beginning of 2013. It is therefore difficult to analyse its results and interviewees explained that they are in a transition period that might not reflect the real effects of the new system.

promotion of new public management methods - has reinforced the standardisation of relationships[19].

Long-term counselling and short-term actions are distinguished. "*It is standardised… We do way more standardisation on services we handle, on short services that are standardised. The counselling, it is a service - with quotation marks – a follow-up spread over time, it cannot be standardised. Even us, we could not handle it*". According to street level bureaucrats, long-term counselling cannot be standardised whereas short time action can.

Nevertheless, crossing information from street level bureaucrats that work in both national employment agencies and private organizations showed that not only is it a matter of length of the counselling, but it is also a matter of both the perception of the global approach and the organizational structure.

Thus, the follow-up delivered by national employment agencies' caseworkers is shaped by guidelines, recommendations to focus on the professional project and the injunction of employment. It may lead to more standardised follow-up than in other organizations. In these organizations, an administrative rigid framework may impede caseworkers' practises. However, their room for manoeuvre (see chapter 4.1) enable them to deliver a flexible service with regards to addressing peripheral hinders and to adapting the follow-up to the individual.

b) Promoting individualisation through standardised actions?

Individualisation is a key concept of the strategic guidelines of PES. However, in everyday work, how do caseworkers define and implement it in a context fostering standardised procedures? What variable may restrain the implementation of individualisation for some or enabling it for others?

Individualisation is assimilated to the degree of flexibility in adapting the support to beneficiaries' needs or interests. Hence, when addressing this issue, caseworkers (from all organisations) refer to their room for manoeuvre. Indeed, they support the idea that

[19] The share of information between ordering parties and service providers is limited. Service providers find it difficult to reach national employment agencies' caseworkers (no direct phone line, not always a direct contact). Yet, the informal dimension of the share of information used to be crucial and might be impeded by the rigid framework established through these new relationships. "*There are things we can't write* (on the unemployed evaluation or prescription sheet). *Things we cannot say, for example, health issues. I mean there are ways to put things. (…) Not everything can be written on the file*".

individualising the integration path is first and foremost about their own flexibility (for example, in choosing how to communicate in order to adjust the intervention to the needs of the individual). It explains why the way policymakers try to develop individualisation relies on giving more room for manoeuvre to caseworker. However, as we just demonstrated, it goes along with what some perceive as a standardisation of the procedure. Hence, there is a room for manoeuvre on the form, on the communication means. But giving more room for manoeuvre to the caseworker does not systematically equip him/her to individualise the follow-up.

At the national employment agency, the three main components of the follow-up caseworker has discretion on are:

- The end of the monthly mandatory meeting: "(…) *with the old monthly meeting, it was… I thought it was less relevant because we were so overburdened because we had to meet people that did not always needed it no matter what. But following these obligations… Now, the system is more flexible. The fact that we can have tailor made milestones enable us to do so according to the planning*".
- The communication system: "*But it depends of the caseworker, how he/she works, you see? I mean that the 2015 plan puts the emphasis on the counsellor's autonomy regarding the way he/she handles its 'portfolio'. So here, I am maybe more used to work with emails, phone, so I have multiplied such contacts. Others will prefer face-to-face appointments. It all depends on the person".*
- The evolving information system: "… *In 15 years, after seeing many measures, I thin that now we think differently. But the core of the job has not really changed. Expect from improvements… IT system and also well… on the idea that well, everyone does not have to be seen on a monthly-base, it's not worse if the room for manoeuvre is here. It is maybe more that*".

All interviewees emphasized the fact that a tailor-made counselling involves addressing social impediments and providing services according to the individual's project. Nevertheless, the empirical work revealed that caseworkers from the national employment agency are not really focused on counselling but rather on prescribing and outsourcing. They have a "*rich tools catalogue*" and choose the fittest. They can also outsource the long-term unemployed to another service provider.

Caseworkers in service providing organizations relate the quality of their counselling to their capacity to individualise their service: "*well, for me, when I'm with someone, it's not the same thing than with the previous person or the one that follows*". Individualisation requires time, method (rather than tools) and network. Caseworkers are able to manage the schedule, content and organisation of the socio-professional path. Appointments usually last longer than within the national employment agency.

The frequency of the interviews is scheduled, but caseworkers often adapt the rhythm because they perceive adaptation as the key factor to individualise the service. "*There are some people I will need to see, so exceptionally two times a week, if there is a precise thing to sort out in emergency, etc.*". Consequently sometimes caseworkers play with the edges in order to fit in the contractual obligations. For example, they will predate interviews and adapt their schedule according to their timetable and the individuals' needs. It shows that the way the organizational framework has been thought does not reach its objectives, as it does not enable caseworkers to individualise. Hence, even though individualisation is promoted in legal documents, it seems that the landscape does not always facilitate its implementation, thus questioning the ways that are developed to foster it. Moreover, the fact that street level bureaucrats manage to adapt the structure according to their needs and the beneficiary's needs shows that the organizational framework only structures the procedure to a certain extent. The shape and modalities of the counselling are set up. But the procedure can be slightly adapted with regards to delays and schedules.

Caseworkers also put the emphasis on the method they use: "*so, we were talking about tools before. Well, we rather have a methodology to readapt the several services we provide. Not readapting, but rather re-appropriate. It would be that. To re-appropriate them with regards to the persons we have, well, everyone wins at the end*". Method – understood as the way to use tools in order to develop a labour market integration path - as a paradigm of intervention is thus more important than tools (such as trainings or CV workshops).

Nevertheless, it appears that individualisation does not take on the same understandings for all. No clear definition was given making the individualisation incentive relatively blurred for caseworkers. For example, while many see individualisation as an adaptation capacity, others perceive individualisation as working with the person alone: "*we have to say that individualisation of the interviews at all costs, if we get stuck on that, it can't work. For example, it is not rare to see people coming with others. Well. What do we do? We individualise interviews, we are supposed to see them alone, but it can't work this way. If they* *come with people, it's because there is something behind, it means that the person comes with her network. And actually, we see it clearly, if we do not accept the network during the first interviews, the person won't talk and won't adhere. So, what's the point? The point is to respect the terms of references or to make the person agree with the approach*". Some also point out that individualisation as focusing on the individual's needs might not be the answer to labour market integration issues of people that are far from employment: "*It's a very westerner ideal that does not work and is very individualistic actually. And the projects that result from that follow this ideology, but do not work for all. And no matter the cultural origin. Excuse the expression, but someone really in needs is centred on his/her needs. And it's normal. And that's where we need to be able to do something. That's what makes sense for them. On the contrary, with these actions that are a little locked, we don't systematically have the disposals to do that. But I think that the counsellor's skill is to know how to overcome this, and to readapt things*". Individualisation appears here as a paradigm that is interesting for some (with incomes for example), but does not reach the needs of others (long-term unemployed with very little income that first of all need an income before working on their professional project).

There is a global tendency of individualising the edges of the follow-up (organizational matters and tools): adapting the ways caseworkers contact the unemployed according to the beneficiary's needs and resources or adapting the frequency of the meetings according to the distance from employment. While this trend concerns all unemployed, the individualisation of the content of the follow-up (what to work on, how to address the different issues that are to be tackled) mainly concerns those that are considered as far from employment, which includes long-term unemployed amongst others.

6. Categorization as a way to individualise

Our observations suggest that with regards to process and tool, fostering individualised counselling has resulted in the reinforcement of categorisation. Nevertheless, even though the categorisation seeks to make the landscape clearer for the numerous service providers and to develop tailor made services for some categories of people, it means that unemployed have to be put into boxes that represent official targeted categories: young, long-term unemployed, disabled, people living in a sensitive urban zones (*ZUS - zone urbaine sensible*), women, minimum income scheme recipients. These boxes open up specific services / programmes that were developed for such or such group in order to address its specific issues. However, some job seekers do not fit into these boxes. Many are on the edges of the categories (they are 6 months too old to be considered as young for example). It leads caseworkers to develop a 'do it yourself' approach in order to make people fit into the categories that entitle the individual to a service.

a) What usages of categories?

There is an important variation of definitions of the long-term unemployed (see chapter 2) amongst the organizations and caseworkers in terms of unemployment duration: "*there are those that will tell you that a long-term unemployed is someone that has twelve months within the last eighteen months. Then, there are those that will count 24 out of 36. So, what's a long-term unemployed? Because 12 out of 18, it's not always a catastrophe*". Hence, the category of long-term unemployed is put into questions: "*we can't say that there is a specific counselling for long-term unemployed because at some stage there are all jobseekers. We should stop that, we should stop ourselves from looking at them as long-term unemployed, because, then, at some stage, we do not manage to work with them anymore*". After all, most talk about the individual: "*The word I could use, and that I do not use very often, it's beneficiary. But usually, I talk about an individual* (personne), *an individual that is part of such or such measure".*

Most of the caseworkers we met in our case study, no matter they work for service providers or the national employment agency, refer to the unemployed with the following terms: *le bénéficiaire* (beneficiary), *le demandeur d'emploi* (the jobseeker), le *bénéficiaire du RSA* (minimum income scheme recipient), and most the time, *la personne qui vient nous voir* (the individual that comes to see us). All of them criticized the term “client”, mentioning it with quotation marks referring to new public management. It shows that caseworkers have kept their social workers tradition (see 6.b) of taking the individual as a whole. But it also puts the emphasis on the social-orientated dimension of their work.

Long-term unemployed are sometimes pictured as ‘service consumers’. Indeed, most of them are used to go from one organization to another, either on their own move or outsourced by the national employment agency (or other organizations). Interviewees often complain about how they are sent from one place to another: “*They made me go round and round. I went back to the national employment agency. (…) She sent me I don’t know where. They sent me to two different places to end up here*”.

Some of them have developed a real knowledge of the organizational structure of the PES and of existing services, but most of them get confused with the different organizations they are confronted to and the program they follow. Since they go from one place to another, they are often in relation with several caseworkers, sometimes on the same issues. The long-term unemployed we met explained they have to repeat their story all over again each time. They do not always understand (or care) for the logic of intervention or hierarchical relation between actors. They somehow are lost in the process of being outsourced in order to enable a tailor-made counselling.

The key characteristic of the trajectory of long-term unemployed is hence that several actors, programs and organizations embed it. Usually, they are outsourced on different programs and/or private organizations that are specialised on counselling far from employment jobseekers. It is complicated to have a clear view of their trajectory as there is no typical one and as it is usually a complex one (see figure below).

Such different designations and categorisations are related to:

- the perception the counsellor has of his/her job (purposes, posture, role),
- the professional and/or organizational culture,
- the perception of the individual unemployed: his/her responsibility in his/her search, the category in which he/she belongs, in which he/she can fit in.

These factors corroborates on the one hand Lipsky’s analysis (1980) that sheds the light on two major factors that influence street level bureaucrats’ behaviour (the organizational context and “the intrinsic cognitive-emotional utility functions of individual street level bureaucrat”

(Rice, 2012, p.2)), and, on the other hand, Evans' work that put the emphasis on the professional and organization cultures (Evans, 2011).

Nevertheless, no matter his/her perception, using categories is necessary in the French framework. Indeed, it is a profiling tool that enables the caseworker to put someone on an action made for such or such category. "*We have one individual, a unique one, in front of us, with specific needs (...). Even though we are into individualisation, we try at some stage to put people into boxes (...) It is a bit annoying because taking them as individual is our strength and that will tell them that*". Hence, as already demonstrated, giving more room for manoeuvre to the counsellor does not automatically make him/her able to individualize the service. We notice a paradoxical situation: the promotion of individualisation came along with the development of categorization.

Profiling is a key step of counselling. What are the categories used? Who define them and on what criteria? As already stated, the main variables used to profile the unemployed are the distance from/to employment (notably with regards to peripheral hinders), the degree of autonomy with regards to their job searching and the feasibility of the project. Being 'employable' means that "t*he individual is ready to go to work, he/she has the skills… he/she has everything. But then, the job offer is missing. He/she is employable. (...) It means that there is no hinders and that he/she can directly be at work*". According to interviewees, most of those that are registered as jobseekers are 'legible'. However, most caseworkers argue that within the jobseekers, there is few that are not looking for a job or any service, but rather for the benefits that are entitled to registration as jobseeker (they most of the time evoked the free transportation card – see 6.c).

The main dimensions that are taken into account in order to conduct the profiling and to make the individual legible to the caseworker are:

- Mobility: is the unemployed able to go to another city / neighbourhood (both with regards to its material and cognitive resources)?
- Language knowledge: is the unemployed able to communicate? What are his/her language skills (writing and speaking)?
- Autonomy: the evaluation of the autonomy is based on the assumption that the more autonomous the unemployed is, the more employable he/she is
- Communicating tools: how does the unemployed communicate? How does he/she introduce him(her)self? In sum, what first impression will he/she give to an employer?

To put an individual into one category, formal documents are analysed (diploma for example) and the fact that one comes with documents is also an indicator, his/her reactivity during the interview and the way he/she communicates. Hence, even though not all caseworkers have the exact same definition of the criteria they use to profile the unemployed, we can identify three main categories of indicators that are used to measure the distance to/from employment: if the professional project matches with the labour market reality, peripheral hinders and the unemployed ability to actively look for a job (Lavitry, 2012). In sum, profiling mainly relies on subjective criteria (for example: the evaluation of the personal situation).

b) The diversity of counsellors' profiles

We have already demonstrated that many changes have occurred in the field of employment and social cohesion policies (in terms of paradigm shift, management tools, organisation practices, etc.). It also applies to human resources strategies. Indeed, interviews with street level bureaucrats showed that there are many different profiles among them. We can first make a distinction between service providers that have until recently – and yet, not for all – mainly hired social workers, and the national employment agency that has hired different profiles of workers over the years. Indeed, we observe different profiles in different periods of time: "*in my generation of counsellors - because at this time, there were competitive exams and the modalities were very much oriented according to the profiles they wanted. So, there were 'trends', and that's true that the year I did it, they were strongly looking for work psychologists (…) We had year 98, year 99, we recognize each other. (…) In the agency we find generations - even though we are not of the same age but I mean generation of counsellors – that were hired within the same periods of time*". Hence, after a period of time where work psychologists were targeted, commercials also became the target in order to reinforce the bridge between the jobseeker and the business world. Regarding service providers, they have to be divided into two kinds: public and non-profit private organisations on the one hand, and on the other, profit organisations. The latters that have more recently became central actors in the field of labour market integration services, are composed of profiles quite similar with the ones found in the national employment agency. Public organisations (such as Missions Locales) and private non-profit organisations have mainly hired social workers for a long time. Now, some of them tend to hire more heterogeneous profiles (commercials, people coming from universities, etc.). And after the introduction of a socio-professional counsellors training, all the previously quoted actors now increasingly recruit social-professional counsellors.

Towards a more structured occupational group[20]?

While the diverse profiles previously introduced used to be more social-oriented, many interviewees have the feeling that the introduction of the more recent profiles (commercials, but also – even though to a relative extent - socio-professional counsellors) introduced or reinforced a shift towards a more employment-centred approach.

They fear that it will change the conception of the street level bureaucrats' objectives. Indeed, the latters are concerned that when they acknowledge a global approach based on the « human » in its whole (with social hindrances, family issues for example), more commercial profiles are more focused on labour market integration and are less concerned by 'peripheral hinders'. They usually argue that it is not their job, their competence and their task and thus, they orientate the beneficiary towards another organisation dealing with these issues. The actions that are set up are similar in both cases: they all orientate the beneficiary towards the most adequate organisation. The difference relies on the conception of a path towards labour market integration that takes into account a comprehensive integration compared to a more sectorialized and fragmented one where the street level bureaucrat only concentrates on labour market integration. The new profile of socio-professional counsellor (with the diploma) appears as a balance between both profiles (social versus employment oriented), which corroborates the search for professionals that were able to address both simultaneously. Hence, there has been a human resources strategy shift in many organisations which, facing a lack of job opportunities, looked for professionals that could eventually facilitate the communication between the labour market services world and the business one.

Nevertheless, it has challenged the former idea of the older occupational group that sees labour market integration as part of the social integration process, as a mean to achieve a more comprehensive integration. Whereas for newer counsellors labour market integration is the final aim and social integration is peripheral (as the term 'peripheral hinders' suggests) even though still necessary to address.

[20] Demazière and Gaddéa define an occupational group as "groups of workers practising an occupation with the same name, and which are consequently socially visible, acknowledged and which benefit from an identification. They occupy a differentiated space in the social division of work, and are characterized by a symbolic legitimacy" (Demazière, Gaddéa, 2009, p. 20)

Hence, not only do organisational practises and new management tools hinder the cross-sectoriality that represented a strong root of the profession, but the human resources strategies that were adopted also seem to impede the development of the global approach that seeks to address all issues that one may face in a single integration path. All in all, the development of such strategies is somewhat paradoxical with the promotion of cross sectoriality by policymakers.

In a paper that compares different sociological approaches, Vezinat invites academics to question the sociology of occupational groups with regards to specificities related to the national typology of welfare states (Vezinat, 2010). Esping Andersen argues that France is a conservative/corporatist welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990). This feature represents an explanatory factor to the persistence of the global approach in spite of an emergent occupational group with a new cognitive framework, and governance schemes that challenge its implementation. It is not due to an institutional culture as this statement occurs in many different institutions (national employment agency, Missions Locales, PLIE, and so on. It is neither a professional one, but rather to an occupational one. Indeed, in the case of street level bureaucrats working on labour market integration, street level bureaucrats that have been working in the field for over a decade have observed a recent professionalization process. This new occupational group is hence recent, and consequently a new professional culture has not yet settled. And the former landscape was made of too diverse profiles with their own professional cultures to talk about a common professional culture. We thus make the hypothesis that it is more an occupational culture that was shaped through common values that enables the global approach to remain (even though challenged by new organisational practises).

c) The de-legitimatization of the unemployed: some consequences of the activation paradigm on the street level bureaucrats' work

The activation paradigm fostered the registration of all unemployed at the national employment agency in order to ensure an active behaviour. It means that through the increasing linkage between formerly distinct policy fields (especially the social assistance one), it has promoted the registration of individuals who did not previously registered at the national employment agency. It became a compulsory step in order to benefit from social benefits or other services. "*I think that there is an entire system to review in terms of the registration as jobseeker. Because, here, people get registered for the bus card you know. They well understood that if they only register for that, we don't register them. So now, they say that yes, they look for jobs, for some hours of cleaning. It's an entire mentality we need to change, but…*". Hence, some unemployed might be de-legitimated in their approach.

Moreover, caseworkers explained that very often, long-term unemployed are far from employment. Generalist counsellors (working with all categories of people) are not able to address peripheral hinders directly. Thus, these unemployed are or could be better followed by specialised agencies. Many of them (and all the LTU we met) are provided with other services and/or benefits (minimum income benefits, social assistance, housing assistance, etc.). In these organizations/services, the unemployed benefits from this specialised service recommended by national employment agency caseworkers. Yet, they still have to be registered as unemployed there if they want to benefit from these services and/or benefits. Therefore, they register and are called for interviewees that are often considered as useless by both caseworkers and unemployed. Moreover, it makes the registration at the national employment agency a non-voluntary process unlike what it was meant to be originally.

Counsellors argue on their lack of skills and remind us that it is not their task to provide a social service. It sheds light on a divergence of perceptions between policymakers and those that implement the policies putting the emphasis on the necessity to analyse street level bureaucrats' work (Van Berkel & Valkenburg, 2007): recent policies put the emphasis on the idea that everyone falls under employment matters even with social issues, that everyone should think in terms of employment and employability; whereas street level bureaucrats delivering labour market integration services explain that social issue is not theirs to address. "*We have not sorted out the issue of the number. We have not either sorted out the confusion between Pôle Emploi and a social organization. Because, I don't know if it's everywhere the same, but it's probably our biggest problem. Because people that come here for Pôle Emploi, they get the service, and to be honest, people are rather satisfied..* "

While many dimensions of the activation trend have been acknowledged by caseworkers to different extents (new public management, individualisation, territorialisation, cross-sectoriality, etc.), they often criticize the idea that all unemployed should be actively looking for a job no matter they have other issues to deal with. Indeed, they criticize the incentive to register as unemployed and to work with everyone on employment issues without taking into account their distance to employment. Hence, we observe that amongst "those that would need it the most" (Pôle Emploi 2015), some are de-legitimated by counsellors, hence revealing a divergence between discourses and the real impact of the policy (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). This de-legitimization process may occur when they perceive a strategic usage of the employment service, or when the unemployed is too far from the core issue tackled at the national employment agency (employment) and first of all need a social counselling.

Service providers are not concerned by this situation. Indeed, they are not a "compulsory step". On the contrary, only already profiled and categorized people are orientated to them. Hence, they spend the first interview identifying the profile of the unemployed and his/her project. But this profiling step does not aim at putting him/her into one category, but at developing the counselling path.

d) The categorized unemployed: standardisation of the national employment agency versus a more individualised service provided by service providers

How do long-term unemployed experience this categorisation and profiling process, and a certain standardisation of the service?
Our interviews revealed that long-term unemployed feel they receive a more individualised service with service providers than from the national employment agency that most of them perceive as a 'toolbox' enabling them to get services or as a controlling agency in charge of sanctioning and/or ensuring their active behaviour.

Long-term unemployed we met do not seem to expect both service providers and the national employment agency to help them to an important extent. Indeed, they put the emphasis on the scarcity of jobs and the difficulty to find a job no matter their skills, networks, etc. Most of them have benefited from several services over the months (/years) that they perceive as means to maintain a link with employment matters. Nevertheless, even though they acknowledge the purpose of the services they are being oriented towards, they are often discouraged by the economic situation.

Supported by service providers, they all agree on the ability of the caseworker to individualise the service and have the feeling both their situation and their project is taken into account. According to the long-term unemployed we met, the motivation is the central dimension that is of interest to caseworkers working in an organization that provide services: "*you have to be motivated*". They have almost never mentioned any skill-sets or experiences that would make them more or less legible to the bureaucracy, but rather to the employer. The category of long-term unemployed seems to prevail over other possible legibility criteria such as diplomas or skills. Indeed, the category of long-term unemployed is often associated to 'far from employment' and to 'peripheral hinders'. The skills and competences criteria are thus secondary if other obstacles hinder the labour market integration. In this case, the first criterion is the assessment of the cognitive and material resources (motivation and material hinders such as childcare issues or mobility) [21]. According to beneficiaries we met, once being put into the official category of long-term unemployed and being orientated towards a specific organisation, the main dimension that plays a role in the relationship with the street level bureaucrat is their motivation to find a job and to overcome their hinders. It is based on the assumption that given the low qualifications of many long-term unemployed and the several peripheral obstacles that may hinder their labour market integration, the main resource they can use is their motivation. It shows a pessimistic vision of the labour market integration of long-term unemployed. Moreover, it puts great emphasis on the individual's responsibility to find a job.

Long-term unemployed we met were not apprehensive of the way street level bureaucrats perceive and assess them. However, based on their experience with the national employment agency, they explained that they have to "*fit*" when meeting one caseworker there. In other ways, rules are to be followed and it is better to agree (to come to the appointment, not to express your difficulties but show your motivation and active behaviour, etc.) in order to avoid sanctions and to keep the caseworker on his/her side. A street level bureaucrat explained: *"we are at the crossroads… there is the confusion for the minimum income scheme recipients, it's not clear sometimes, there are deprived. (…) They don't understand well the situation but they feel they should lie to us a little bit, and that's the problem. That's the confusion*". Hence, a relative fear of the national employment agency can be identified. The

[21] Results can be different for highly qualified long-term unemployed. Their skills and competences being more important, it might be the main legibility criteria used. Our analysis is based on the long-term unemployed we met (with relatively low degree of qualification and peripheral hinder(s)).

fear concentrates upon the ability of radiation on the one hand, and is explained by the threatening tone of the formal communication ("*all our mails are threatening. Even the convocation mail are threatening*").

7. Responsibilization and agency

As Brodkin explains, “all too often, bureaucratic discretion is the nemesis of accountability” (Brodkin, 2008, p.1). Yet, it is a matter of paramount importance when tackling individualisation and implementation. Who is responsible for what in the process of labour market integration? What are the caseworker’s responsibilities, the public employment service’s ones, and the ones that fall under the unemployed? How is it perceived and how is it implemented?

With regards to unemployment the activation paradigm fosters a shift of responsibilitization from the State to the unemployed (Berthet, Bourgeois, forthcoming). However, both caseworkers and long-term unemployed we met revealed that the balance between their distinct roles has not deeply and really changed.

a) Contractualisation: a formal tool

Contractualisation questions the nature of the relationship between the state and the citizen. It challenges the place, role, duties and rights of individualisation and organizations (Berthet, Bourgeois, forthcoming). Contractualisation can also be analysed and understood with regard to the relationship amongst private and/or public stakeholders. Here, we are interested in the responsibilities allowing access to the services provided by the agency and the individual’s understanding of his/her responsibility for the situation. Therefore, in this part we address the contractualisation issue in terms of formalisation of rights and duties between the state through the caseworker and the unemployed.

Over the past decade (and even more), contracts have always been used in labour market integration and social cohesion policies. They have always stated the rights and duties of actors involved (the beneficiary and the state through the agency and its caseworker). If one goes to a service provider, another contract that corresponds to the specific service he/she will get has to be signed. The signature of the contract usually occurs during the first interview.

The contract mainly represents a tool for caseworker. According to them, it is a tool to set the terms of the service and of the relationship between both stakeholders. The commitment dimension remains relatively absent from caseworkers’ point of views.

The main purpose of the contract is to open up a space for discussion, shedding the light on its instrumental dimension. Two main objectives underlie this step of the relationship (a third one was also mentioned):

- (1) to express the duties of the unemployed: "(…) *By contractualisation, what do you mean? Interviewee: To come to an agreement on what he/she will do for his/her search for employment*",
- (2) to put the emphasis on the need for an active behaviour: "*between the individual and us… they are actors of their own future… and consequently, we won't do without them, we will always do with them*",
- (3) to create a relationship based on a mutual involvement where the caseworker's duties would mainly be to give information and the unemployed duty would be to be motivated and to be involved. With regards to this purpose of the contract, the caseworker that mentioned it explained that according to him, it is not a shared aim by all caseworkers and that it depends on their profiles (caseworkers with a commercial background or coming from the unemployment insurance would be less concerned by the idea of a mutual involvement than others for example): "*Contractualisation, it's really… but it's also, well, it's also to inform the unemployed. (...) Therefore, at the minimum, we owe the unemployed clear and precise information. (...) If we don't contractualise at the beginning, if we don't inform the individual of the rights and duties. He/she has rights; we have to inform him/her about these rights, it's important. But he/she also has duties, we also have to inform him/her that he/she can't just register*".

Except from one experience, no caseworkers have ever been confronted to a refusal of the contract. Regarding the content of the contract, no one was able to tell us its exact content (neither caseworker, nor unemployed). It reinforces the idea that caseworkers use it as a tool, as a material support to initiate the relationship. In sum, the contract is a formal tool that finalizes the diagnosis. It is a formalism instrument.

From the unemployed point of view, the contract does not represent an incentive or a document that can be used afterwards by any of the stakeholders. They sign it as they sign the numerous documents they have to sign during their labour market integration path. "What is this inclusion contract? Interviewee: *Nothing, you sign a paper to ask them to renew it*".

b) Who's responsible?

Hence, while the public employment service is still responsible, to a certain extent, for the labour market integration of unemployed, the promoted new public management aims at making caseworkers accountable for the service. However, "even advanced efforts to improve accountability by applying New Public Management (NPM) techniques of performance measurement and 'pay for performance' contracting, at times, may do more to provide the appearance of accountability than accountability-in-fact" Brodkin, 2008, p.2).

Caseworkers explained that they have a certain their responsibility in the labour market integration of the unemployed. But this responsibility remains limited compared to the one of the unemployed. "*I'll say it's 50/50 because we both sign. But in real life, it's the unemployed that will look for a job, it's 100% for the unemployed in a way. Well, more than the responsibility, our duty is to inform at first. To inform him/her, to advice him/her as much as possible. And there are those that are able to do, and those that are not".* Thus, caseworkers are facilitators and enablers. "*Yes, obviously, there is a responsibility. Because, yes, we are to guide the unemployed, to give me job offers, to give him/her the tools he/he doesn't have, to check that he/she really looks for a job. Yes, there is a degree of responsibility. (...) But it's limited because we don't see the individual that frequently. And because there are other actors".*

Two kinds of responsibilities arise: a responsibility vis-à-vis the State (in terms of public expenditure), the employment public service and the incentive to bring the unemployed back onto the labour market or on training (caseworkers are responsible for decreasing the number of unemployed), and a responsibility towards the unemployed him(her)self (caseworkers are then responsible for the individual's (re)integration on the labour market). The objective is the same in both cases, but the dynamic that underlies the approach differs. They are accountable for the same thing but not towards the same actor. These approaches are not usually dichotomous, but are rather embedded in the point of view caseworkers develop in terms of responsibility. They are caught between traditional socially orientated approaches that focus on the individual's integration, and between a pressure to reduce the number of registered unemployed and the de-legitimatization process at stake in some situations. "*Yes, it's his/her search for employment. It relies on him/her. And that's what they forget, because they come to the public employment service with a leitmotiv that says that we have to find them offers, we have to find them a job. So, by contradiction, we can't oblige enterprises to hire them".*

In the case of the national employment agency, as the main objective is to direct the unemployed, to put him/her on programs, the responsibility is less focused on the labour market integration's path. It hence less relies on a continuous work, but rather on punctual actions. The responsibility with regards to the labour market integration is then directly put on the unemployed, and less on the caseworker that is not part of an integration process.

Long-term unemployed corroborates the share of responsibilities caseworkers presented. The expectations are on acquiring tools to facilitate the integration (mainly: how to write a CV, how to look for jobs) and/or getting access to services and trainings. They do not expect caseworkers to look for jobs for them. They do not expect to get a job thanks to the service either. They see the labour market integration counselling as a continuous facilitating service. Hence, long-term unemployed are sceptical about their (re)integration on the labour market, but they remain involved and concerned. The relationship with the service provider and the modality of their counselling (increasing frequency, being listened to and having their projects and personal situation taken into account) seems to be more empowering and motivating than the sanctions (that are though not strictly implemented) and incentives that lead to strategic usages of the service.

c) The weak implementation of sanctions

Sanctions have been developed over the last decade in France in the national employment agencies and in the framework of the minimum income scheme (Dubois, 2007). Service providers are to report any non-attendance or passive activity to the ordering party (the national employment agency or the authority in charge of the minimum income scheme – the general council).

Yet, caseworkers have a room for manoeuvre with regards to the implementation of these sanctions.

In the case of the national employment agency, as warnings are automatically sent in case of absence, there is no leeway. But crossing of is very rare according to interviewees.

"*Sanctions are due to a lack of information from the unemployed. I mean that if someone is absent to an appointment but that he/she sends us an email saying sorry I was absent, I think that 80% of the caseworker will enter an appointment saying to him(her)self he/she will convoke again. But they don't have internet access, they don't know what is a computer, so to let us know… Then, we have 48 hours to enter an appointment, an excuse. Then, the 'listing management' goes, and it's not in our hands anymore. So you have a certain room for manoeuvre… I mean I would do it, but someone who has just arrived…"*.

As Lavitry explained, "the control of the active search for employment, which goes along with a development of the sanctions, makes the caseworker even more accountable as it can be the starting point for an adjournment of the unemployment insurance" (author's translation, Lavitry, 2009: 5). Hence, a strict implementation of the sanction would put the caseworker in a situation where his/her own perception of an active behaviour could cross-off one unemployed. It explains why they usually explain that sanctions are useful but rarely strictly implemented. They use their discretion to evaluate a "right middle": "the parsimonious usage of the sanction in case of job refusal or insufficient active search could be explained by administrative modes of putting people away, but also by a professional rooted in the willingness to defend a 'right middle'" (Lavitry, 2009: 5). "*Yes, so sanction with regards to what? To sanction means we cross the individual off; that he/she won't benefit from his/her minimum income benefit for example. He/she is sanctioned if he/she doesn't come to an appointment let's say… counselling interviewees. In this case, it's logically the same for everyone. Then, he/she is sanctioned if he/she does not reply to job offers. If he/she sends us back the offer saying, well no, I'm not looking, it's not something I'm interesting in, you bother me. Then, he/she will be sanctioned, of course. He/she will be sanctioned if he/she does not reply to actions, convocations. He/she can be sanctioned, of course. But you know, there is also a human facet, which is handled by the manager that takes into account the global situation. An individual who… you know… with factual elements, I mean an individual that systematically misses appointment, I think his/her excuses will hardly be admissible*".

Hence, sanctions are implemented to a limited extent. Conditionality is formal and represents an incentive, but hardly leads to sanctions (Zirra, 2010; Clegg and Palier, 2010), but only to warnings. There are two levels of sanctions according to caseworker: one that is considered more 'right' (missing several appointments without any justification with a clear lack of motivation and involvement), and one considered too strict and dehumanized (following strictly the rules without taking into account peripheral factors). Some argue that the new generation of counsellors will act differently and may follow the rules without using their room for manoeuvre. It sheds light on the fact that no matter the level of discretion caseworkers may have, the main issue relies on their awareness and usages of this discretion (Lipsky, 1980). The kind of usage and whether they are aware or not of their discretion is subjective as it relies on their professional and personal cultures and experiences and on their perceptions (see de-legitimization of the beneficiaries). The management team supervises these subjective criteria and controls them to a certain extent as they explained they are aware of the several practises caseworkers mentioned. It shows "the role of shared professional commitments, transcending the distinction between local managers and practitioners" (Evans, 2011: 377). They seek a balance between the nationally fostered implementation of activation-friendly policies (with its conditionality, sanctions, employment for all, more rigid frameworks and standardisation of some practises) and former practises and professional cultures focused on the individual / the human (meaning they maintain a certain discretion and flexibility).

8. Conclusions

Analysing individualisation in practise in one local entity contributes to the research on local worlds of activation and on the research conducted on implementation issues. One of the main tensions that arise from this research is the difficulty to make the relationship between organization-based and program-based actions clear. It reveals a complex governance structure in France, which makes the implementation of activation policies a difficult task for caseworkers, and easily makes the beneficiary lost in the system.

Individualisation is acknowledged by all as crucial to labour market integration services. Understood as giving more room for manoeuvre to caseworkers, this promoted trend is hindered by the lack of time caseworkers have to work with each individual. Moreover, it appears that the way policymakers have fostered individualisation does not enable or equip caseworkers to individualise the service. It may even sometimes impede individualisation. Indeed, the counterpart of a promotion of a more important room for manoeuvre is the development of more rigid frameworks. It takes two different shapes according to the organization concerned. Regarding the national employment agency, caseworkers have more discretion on the modalities of the relationship with the beneficiary (the way he/she is contacted, the frequency of appointments). But their schedules are also very constrained and the content of the counselling (what is to be dealt with, where to direct the unemployed) has become more rigid. In the case of private service providers/partners, their room for manoeuvre is high regarding the content of the counselling. They have less power than the national employment agency (cannot formally send someone to another organisation for a program or a training as easily as them), but do not have frameworks to follow during their appointments. Nevertheless, they have to follow increasingly rigid guidelines with regards to the modalities of their work (frequency and length of appointments).

Even though cross-sectoriality is promoted by policymakers and street-level bureaucrats and has led to several changes of governance structure and policies (the creation of the RSA for example reinforcing the link between social assistance and employment policies), services are still relatively segmented, which adds up to organizational complexities (Geddes, 2000) for both caseworkers and long-term unemployed. Nevertheless, the changing landscape results in making the registration at the national employment agency a compulsory step for all.

However, local agents still wonder to what extent is everyone able to work on labour market integration?

Even though the individual's responsibility is central in getting a job according to both long-term unemployed and caseworkers, labour market integration services are perceived as facilitators. They work on how to search and on peripheral hinders (childcare, housing, mobility, language skills), but the individual is rarely blamed for his/her unemployment while the economic situation is often pointed out. However, there is a kind of de-legitimization of the labour market integration process that occurs for those further away from employment (or those that are considered as 'inactive' and having a strategic usage of the employment public service). In this landscape, the motivation of the unemployed represents both a legitimacy (the unemployed is legitimate to benefit from a service over his/her motivation) and main legibility criterion (the (re)access to the labour market relies notably on the individual's motivation). Motivation and personal competences, along with the identification of peripheral hinders are the main dimensions that make the individual legible to caseworkers. .

Discourses could reflect a dualisation of the labour market policy putting the emphasis on vulnerable groups. Yet, at the national employment agency, the struggle to affirm a position between social assistance and labour market integration in a context of increasing control of caseworkers' activity and results, and being given a certain room for manoeuvre, a selectivity process could occur (Lavitry, 2012) leaving those that are the further away from employment (those that are de-legitimized in their labour market integration) aside. The strong divergences identified between caseworkers working at the national employment agency or in service providers' organizations do not only rely on different professional backgrounds and organizational cultures, but also on the different rooms for manoeuvre they have and on the objectives that stem from the organizational scheme (counselling versus orientation).

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Appendices

1. Interview guide for caseworkers
2. Interview guide for long-term unemployed
3. National employment agencies' socio professional path

Interview guide in French
Caseworkers

ENTRETIEN AVEC LE CONSEILLER
Informations à donner au début

- Le but de l'entretien :
- Confidentialité : anonymat, pas de nom et pas de diffusion de l'information aux collègues ou manager
- Utilisation des résultats (qui / comment) : Programme de recherche Européen
- Publication des résultats :

Age:
H/F:

Pour commencer

- Education et parcours professionnel
- Formation spéciale pour l'accompagnement de DELD
- Nombre d'années d'expérience de gestion de portefeuille et accompagnement
- Temps complet / mi-temps

I. Information sur l'ALE Pôle Emploi / autre

- Quelle est la mission principale de PE ?
- Quel est votre rôle à Pole Emploi / nom de la structure (préciser)?
- Comment y a-t-il de personnes employées?

II. Information sur l'organisation d'une journée de travail

- Comment se passe une journée type?
- Combien de bénéficiaires rencontrez-vous par jour? Et combien de temps passez-vous en moyenne avec chaque personne?
- Avez-vous le temps de préparer vos rdv avec les bénéficiaires ?
- Quelles autres responsabilités avez-vous (ex administratives, dossiers administratifs, extra/intranet, projet…) ?
- Comment arrivez-vous à gérer toutes ces tâches? Y a-t-il des choses que vous ne pouvez pas faire faute de temps?
- Quel est votre rôle dans la relation avec le bénéficiaire ? Et à Pôle Emploi ?
- Vous sentez-vous personnellement responsable du bénéficiaire ?

- Que se passe-t-il quand un bénéficiaire prend contact avec Pôle Emploi ? Que se passe-t-il ensuite ?
- Qui rencontre-t-il/elle?
- Le bénéficiaire a-t-il un conseiller référent spécifique ?
- Y a-t-il une personne spécifique qui suit ce qui se passe avec le bénéficiaire ?
- En moyenne, combien de conseillers de PE accompagnent des DELD ?

- Y a-t-il un nombre précis de DE que vous devez rencontrer par jour ou par mois?
- Pouvez-vous décrire un rdv type avec un DELD ?
- Ces rdv sont-ils planifiés ?
- Combien de temps durent-ils ?
- Qui est à l'origine de ces rdv (le DELD, vous, autres) ? Avec quelle fréquence / régularité ?
- Où ont lieu les rdv avec les bénéficiaires? (Si possible, noter l'organisation spatiale: bureau fermé favorisant la discrétion ou espace ouvert : relation impersonnelle, massive processing)
- Contactez-vous aussi les DELD en dehors de ces rdv (mail, tél…) ? Dans quels cas?

III. Suivi et contrôle dans l'ALE / autre structure

- Comment votre travail est-il contrôlé par vos supérieurs / managers?
- Sur la base de quels critères ?
- Est-ce qu'il y a des indicateurs de performance / qualité ? (si possible collecter des tableaux de bord)
- Que mesurent-ils ?
- Qui les définit ?
- Sont-ils pertinents ?
- Que se passe-t-il s'ils ne sont pas atteints ?
- Ces indicateurs de performances influencent-ils / impactent-ils votre journée de travail?
- Pouvez-vous être récompensés pour de bons résultats? Comment ?
- Vous est-il déjà arrivé à vous ou à un collègue d'être sanctionné ? Pourquoi ? Qu'en pensez-vous ?
- Comment les objectifs et les indicateurs de performance influencent-ils votre travail avec les DE ?
- Que se passe-t-il si un DE fait une réclamation à propos d'un conseiller ?

IV. Le Traitement des bénéficiaires

- Quels sont les outils que vous utilisez quand vous travaillez avec un DELD (dossiers et documents administratifs, trame d'entretien, test psychologique, PPAE ou autre plans d'action…) ? (si possible collecter)
- A quoi servent-ils ?
- Comment estimez-vous leur utilité (dossier et document administrative, trame d'entretien, test psychologique, PPAE ou autre plans d'action…) ? En quoi vous aident-ils à travailler avec les bénéficiaires? Quels outils préférez-vous utiliser ? Pourquoi ?
- Pouvez-vous les modifiez ? Comment les adaptez-vous dans votre travail au quotidien ?
- Avec vous un format pour les entretiens et rdv, un modèle, une liste de questions que vous utilisez pendant un rdv avec un DELD ? (si possible, collecter)
- Comment les trames d'entretien ou de rdv sont-elles préparées ?
- Les autres conseillers les utilisent aussi ? Est-ce obligatoire ?

- Qu'en pensez-vous ?
- Comment traitez-vous, utilisez-vous l'information ainsi collectée ?

- Les DE doivent-il remplir des documents, dossiers, test… ?
- Quel type de dossier? (à collecter)
- Quelles informations sont collectées ?
- A quoi servent-ils ? Sont-ils obligatoires? Que pensez-vous de leur contenu?
- Discutez-vous des résultats de tests avec les DE? Cela aide-t-il les DE à évaluer leur situation ?
- Prenez-vous des notes pendant les rdv ou collectez-vous l'information d'une autre manière à propos des bénéficiaires ? comment ?
- Que contiennent vos notes? D'autres personnes y ont-elles accès ? Qui ? Comment utilisez-vous cette information ?
- Parlez-vous avec vos collègues des bénéficiaires? C'est-à-dire ?
- S'il y a des guide de rdv / trames d'entretien : Est-ce parfois difficile de coller à la trame pendant le rdv ?
- Quelles difficultés apparaissent avec les DELD ? Comment gérez-vous la situation ?
- Est-ce que les personnes à difficultés (reprendre les mots du conseiller) ont quelque chose en commun ? Pouvez-vous les décrire ?
- Quel terme utilisez-vous pour parler des DE (bénéficiaire, allocataire, …) ?
- Quelles caractéristiques du bénéficiaire sont prises en compte pour rendre le chômeur actif / responsable dans sa recherche / to plan activation (personnalité, éducation, compétences...)?
- Pourquoi ceux-là ?
- Vous avez dit avoir collecté de l'information sur une DE XXX, qu'en est-il d'autres problématiques telles que (prendre un exemple non cité par le conseiller) qui peuvent limiter l'accès à l'emploi. Quelle est votre marge de manœuvre ?
- Qu'en est-il de l'employabilité ? Est-ce pertinent? Quelles sont pour vous les dimensions pertinentes de l'employabilité ?
- Les autres conseillers peuvent-ils participer ? D'autres acteurs locaux ?
- Que faites-vous si quelques choses est au-délà de votre champs d'intervention ?

V. L'activation

- De quelle manière vous y prenez-vous pour render un DELD actif
- Y a-t-il un plan d'action individuel pour chaque individu ? (Noter le nom utilisé par le conseiller) Pouvez-vous le décrire ? (récupérer un modèle)
- Quelles informations y figurent ?
- Comment est-il partagé ? Quel est le rôle du PPAE?
- Que proposez-vous au DE ?
- Qu'est-ce qui décide de ce que vous pouvez proposer ?
- Quelles sont les étapes pour rendre un DE plus actif dans sa démarche ?
- Quel est le cadre ?
- Quel est le rôle du DE dans la définition du PPAE ?

- Jusqu'à quel point les actions / propositions sont-elles sur mesure pour le DE ?
- Quelle est sa marge de choix ?
- Avez-vous la possibilité d'adapter les actions aux besoins ou intérêts du DE ? (si non, pourquoi)
- Le faites-vous souvent ?
- Les bénéficiaires participant-ils aux choix des actions, des programmes mis en œuvre pour eux? (si non, pourquoi)
- Les responsabilités du DE et de PE sont-elles écrites dans le PPAE? Comment ? Ce plan d'action impose-t-il des obligations à PE et au DE, ou uniquement au DE ?
- En terme de responsabilité, quelles sont les conditions que doit remplir le DE pour obtenir de l'aide de PE? Sont-elles obligatoires ? Y a-t-il un suivi, une evaluation permettant de verifier qu'il/elle les remplit bien? /
- Quelles sont les sanctions? Comment sont-elles appliquées?

VI. transfert d'information entre les organisations

- Est-ce que vous coopéré quotidiennement avec d'autres organisations, institutions pour des DELD ?
- Lesquelles ?
- En quoi consiste cette collaboration?
- Comment affecte-t-elle les DELD ? Comment cela agit-il sur leur chance de trouver un emploi et sur leur bien être ?
- A votre avis, cette coopération fonctionne-t-elle bien par rapport au DE ?
- Si non, pourquoi?
- Quels défis, difficultés émergent d'une telle coopération ?
- D'où viennent ces problèmes ? Comment les gérez-vous ?
- C'est-à-dire ?
- Informez-vous les DELD de ces autres prestataires ? Dans quelles situations les orientez-vous vers ces organisations ?
- Avez-vous quelque chose à rajouter ?

Merci pour votre temps et votre coopération!

Interview guide in French:
Long-term unemployed

ENTRETIEN AVEC DES DELD

Information à donner au début

- Le but de l'entretien: connaître la situation et le parcours du DE, ses attentes, le contenu et son « vécu » de l'accompagnement (participation, objectifs…) avec à Pole Emploi
- Confidentialité : anonymat, pas de nom et pas de connaissance du dossier du DE
- Utilisation des résultats (qui / comment) : recherche Européenne sur les politiques de l'emploi

Age:

H/F:

I. Parcours et situation de l'interviewé

- Pouvez-vous me parler un peu votre situation / me raconter un peu votre histoire ?
- Avez-vous une famille?
- Où vivez-vous?
- Quelle est votre expérience professionnelle?
- Et au niveau logement ?
- Avez-vous fait des études ?
- Comment ça se passe au niveau du travail depuis que vous avez quitte l'école / fini les études?
- Quel était votre dernier poste? Pendant combien de temps ? Que s'est-il passé ensuite ?
- Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous au chômage ?
- Est-ce votre première inscription au chômage ?
    - Si Non : Pouvez-vous m'en dire plus, svp. Comment s'est passé la première prise de contact avec PE / *autre* ? Qu'est-ce qui vous a décidé à les contacter? Qu'attendiez-vous?
    - Avez-vous déjà bénéficié d'une aide sociale, d'un accompagnement (par une association, la municipalité, un organisme de formation, un prestataire …)
    - Si oui : Dans quelles circonstances? Qu'est-ce qui vous a décidé à les contacter? Qu'attendiez-vous?

II. Avec Pôle Emploi

a) Structure de la relation

- Comment se passent vos rdv à PE ?
- Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous inscrit?
- Avec quelle fréquence êtes-vous venu à des rdv? Combien de fois êtes-vous venus à des rdv depuis que vous êtes inscrit ?
- Qui rencontrez-vous?

- En quoi consistent ces rdv? Pouvez-vous me donner des exemples?
- C'est utile? En quoi?
- Etes-vous encouragé à poser des questions à votre conseiller?
- Vous apporte-t-il/elle des réponses utiles, qui vous aident ?
- Comment s'adresse-t-il à vous? (Est-il/elle bienveillant, poli, indifférent, impoli)
- Avez-vous ressenti de la pression? A propos de quoi ? (demander des précisions sur les formes de pression autant positives que négatives qui ont pu être ressenties)
- Comment se passe un rdv typique, pouvez-vous le décrire?
- Comment décririez-vous votre relation avec le conseiller?

b) Diagnostic et catégorisation

- A votre avis, est-ce que le conseiller a une connaissance approfondie de votre situation ?
- Si non: quelles sont les info qui lui manquent? Pourquoi ?
- Vous souvenez vous des questions que votre conseiller vous a posées pour comprendre votre situation ? C'était quand ?
- Que vous a-t-il/elle demandé sur vous ?
- Les questions portaient sur votre éducation, parcours professionnel, votre vie privée ?

  Vous a-t-il/elle questionné sur vos attentes?

  Vous a-t-il/elle demandé ce que vous vouliez faire professionnellement ?
- Avez-vous été surpris par ces questions ? lesquels, pourquoi ?
- A-t-il/elle expliqué le pourquoi de ces questions?
- A-t-il/elle expliqué à quoi serviraient vos réponses ?
- Avez-vous eu à remplir un dossier ?
- A-t-il/elle expliqué l'objectif de ce dossier ?
- Avez-vous passé des tests ou fait des bilans (de personnalité, de compétence…) ?
- Si oui: quels étaient ces tests?
- Qu'en pensez-vous (des tests)?
- Sont-ils utiles ? comment ?
- Sont-ils problématiques ? Comment?
- Avez-vous eu votre mot à dire sur les résultats pu / discuter les tests?
- Si oui: comment cela s'est-il passé?
- Est-ce que ça a changé quelque chose ?

c) Services & conditionnalité

- Comment s'est construit votre plan d'action (plan personnalisé d'accès à l'emploi ou autre) ?
- Pouvez-vous me dire en quoi il consiste ?

- Avez-vous participé à sa définition ?
- Ce plan d'action a-t-il été écrit ?
- Est-ce un plan d'action individualisé ?
- Vos responsabilités pour trouver un emploi y figurent-elle ? comment sont-elles formulées ?
- Etiez-vous d'accord avec votre conseiller sur le plan d'actions (PPAE / plan personnalisé d'accès à l'emploi) qui vous a été proposé ?
- L'avez-vous signé ?
- Que ce serait-il passé si vous aviez refusé de le signer ? Avez-vous été informé des conséquences d'un tel refus ?
- Cela vous est-il arrivé ou aurait-il pu vous arriver ?

- Que vous a-t-on proposé pour votre accompagnement ? (en termes d'offre d'emploi, d'action d'accompagnement, d'allocation)?
- Qu'en pensez-vous ? Cela correspondait à vos attentes ? à vos besoins ? sinon pourquoi ?
- Avez-vous eu le choix ? ou y avait-il une seule option ?
- Avez-vous pu choisir les actions (programmes) ? le prestataire ?
- Avez-vous été obligé de participer à des actions de formation, des périodes d'insertion, de mise en situation ? Quelle en est votre expérience ?
- De quelle aide avez-vous bénéficié ? (demander des précisions)
- Y avait-il des conditions pour en bénéficier ?
- Avez-vous des obligations à remplir, des actions à faire par vous-même pour en bénéficier ?
- Y a-t-il un suivi ou une évaluation de la manière dont vous remplissez vos obligations ? Et est-ce que ça détermine si vous recevez ou non une allocation ?
- Cela est-il positif pour vous ? comment ?
- Ou négatif ? comment ?
- Avez-vous déjà eu l'impression que le conseiller vous positionnait ou vous incitait à vous positionner sur une action ou un programme qui ne vous intéressait pas ?
- Si oui: par exemple ?
- Y a-t-il eu des propositions de offres de PE que vous d'avez pas suivies / acceptées ? De quel type ? Pourquoi ? Y a-t-il eu des conséquences ?

d) Agency

- Pouvez-vous agir sur votre l'accompagnement ?
- Pensez-vous pouvoir défendre votre intérêt dans votre relation avec PE ? Pourquoi ?
- Vous est-il arrivé de souhaiter participer à tel ou tel type d'action / programme et que cela ne soit pas possible ? Pouvez-vous m'en dire plus ? Qu'avez-vous fait ?
- Est-il arrivé que vous ne soyez pas satisfait de l'accompagnement ? C'est-à-dire ? Qu'avez-vous fait ?
- Vous êtes-vous trouvé en situation pénible ou difficile avec votre conseiller ? A propose de quoi ? Qu'avez-vous fait ?

III. Responsabilité et responsabilisation

- Avez-vous pu obtenir les informations dont vous aviez besoin à l'agence PE ?
- Cela a été facile de rencontrer et d'avoir accès aux personnes que vous aviez besoin de rencontrer ?
- Pensez-vous que l'on vous vous a suffisamment et clairement précisé la démarche de l'accompagnement et les responsabilités / la répartition des responsabilités à chaque étape ?

- A votre avis, quelles raisons et circonstances ont causé votre chômage ?
- Etes-vous vous-même responsable du fait d'être au chômage ? dans quelle mesure ?
- Auriez-vous pu faire les choses différemment (pour ne pas être au chômage) ?
- Qui ou quoi en est la cause ?
- A votre avis, pour PE, qui est responsable de votre recherche d'emploi ? Vous ou eux ?
- Qu'est-ce que vous devez faire vous-même pour trouver un emploi ?
- Quelle est la responsabilité de PE ou des prestataires ?
- dans le PPAE, a quoi PE s'engage-t-il ? quelle est la responsabilité de PE ?

IV. Relations avec les conseillers de prestataires

- Avez-vous été orienté vers d'autres prestataires ? lesquels et pourquoi ?
- Si oui : quel est votre expérience de leur aide ? accompagnement ?
- Cela vous a-t-il aidé ? Comment ?
- Cela a-t-il compliqué les choses ? comment ?
- Comment ça se passe en passe entre PE et le prestataire ? (transmission des info, des données, réalisation des diagnostics)

V. Evaluation de l'accompagnement par le bénéficiaire, impact sur le bien-être:

- Que pensez-vous ? Comment l'évaluez- vous ?
- Vos besoins ont-ils été pris en compte ? de quelle manière ?
- Pensez-vous qu'ils ont tenu compte de ce que vous vouliez ? Ou avez-vous été obligé de vous positionner / avez-vous été positionné sur un ensemble « tout prêt » d'actions et programmes ?
- A votre avis, un plan d'action individuel est-ce utile ? comment ? pourquoi non ? cela vous a-t-il servi ?
- Pouvez-vous m'en dire plus sur votre situation actuelle (professionnelle et personnelle) ?
- Dans quelle mesure votre situation s'est-elle améliorée ou dégradée depuis vos rdv avec PE ? Quel est le rôle de PE dans le fait que cela ait changé en mieux / pire ?

- Dans quelle mesure l'aide / l'accompagnement a-t-il influencé votre confiance / votre assurance ?
- Dans quelle mesure les actions / services pourraient-ils être améliorés ?
- Enfin, comment évaluez-vous votre expérience avec PE ?

Merci pour votre temps et votre coopération !

National employment agencies' socio professional path:

Registration at the national employment agency

Rights of the unemployed :
- Access to the national employment agency's services (job offers, placement advice, etc.)
- Unemployment benefit (in some cases)

Convocation:
Finalization of the registration

Duties of the unemployed:
- Renew his/her registration based on an actualisation calendar
- Define and update the personal action plan
- Do positive and repeated actions to search jobs
- Accept reasonable offers
- Accept training, inclusion and help to find jobs actions
- Accept subsidized jobs offers
- Go to all the national employment agency's convocation
- Inform the national employment agency of all the changes regarding the situation

1st appointment:
« Diagnosis and registration interview » (50 minutes)

Framed

If refusal
- Possible radiation (or legitimate reason)

Individualised plan to get back to work (PPAE) and Employment reasonable offer (ORE)
(not later than 15 days after registration)

Developed and updated by the unemployed and the caseworker
In concrete terms, the PPAE is realised on the basis of the profile of the unemployed and conclusions from the 1st appointment.

PPAE Criteria
- Training;
- Skills;
- Knowledge and competence acquired during work experience;
- Personal and familial situation;
- The local situation of the labour market.

Content of the PPAE
- Precise the nature and characteristics of the job that is looked for, the geographical area, and the expected salary
- **Actions towards which the unemployed has been orientated. l**

Three different types of support: followed, guided, and reinforced

Actions, workshops (CV, etc.)
ACTIVE PORTFOLIO

Orientation (with assessment sheet) to service provider
INACTIVE PORTFOLIO

Appointments to work on the PPAE (frequency depends on the types of support)
Compulsory appointments: 4th and 9th month

Sources :

WP6 National Report: Germany

The Individualisation of Interventions

Authors: Deborah Rice & Christina Siebolds, CvO University Oldenburg (CETRO)

Project acronym: LOCALISE

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Coordinating Organisation: CARL VON OSSIETZKY UNIVERSITAET OLDENBURG (CETRO)

Table of contents

1. Introduction

This country report is part of the FP7 research project LOCALISE that analyses how local actors deal with the conflicts and dilemmas caused by integrated social cohesion policies in six European countries: Poland, Sweden, France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany. The project is divided into six empirical work packages focusing on the practical implementation of active labour market policies. In Work Packages 2-5, we analysed different approaches to active inclusion at the local, regional, national and European level. For this purpose, interviews were conducted in three localities per country, with a focus on policy and governance-related aspects of active inclusion. WP6 and WP7 now turn to the individual level of active inclusion, investigating how caseworkers and other front-line officials provide active labour market measures to the long-term unemployed. For these two Work Packages, a second round of about 15 interviews was conducted in one of the previously-studied localities (in each country).

In the German context, we chose to study the Eastern German municipality "EAS" more intensely in the second round of interviews. EAS had 230,000 inhabitants in 2013 and is situated in the province of Saxony-Anhalt. EAS has suffered greatly from de-industrialisation since the collapse of the German Democratic Republic and now concentrates on the development of its service sector (e.g. call centres). EAS's unemployment rate is still relatively high compared with the rest of the country (11.5% compared to 6.7% in December 2013), although the long-term unemployment rate has dropped drastically in recent years (now 38.9% compared to 36.3% in the whole of Germany in December 2013). The Jobcenter EAS served 10,500 uninsured "UB II"[1] clients in December 2013, about half of whom were long-term unemployed (5,085). EAS was chosen as the interview site for WP6 from the three localities investigated earlier because due to the relatively unfavourable labour market in EAS, it could be expected that the long-term unemployed population would be most diverse in EAS (in localities with low unemployment, the unemployed population tends to be more homogeneous, with only a so-called 'hard core' of clients with a long distance from the labour market remaining in the minimum income scheme for uninsured unemployed clients). Such a diversity of clients poses an extra challenge to Jobcentre organisations, which must develop differentiated services for a broad range of client groups. Hence, we expected that the organisational challenges associated with integrating employment and social services would be most pronounced and visible in EAS.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows. In section 2, we describe how we organised and analysed our interviews. In sections 3, we then discuss the Hartz-reforms of 2005 that set the stage for new actors and measures in the local implementation of active labour market policies. Section 4 turns to the governance structure of every-day work in the German "Jobcenters", tracing the organisational structures and routines that shape how caseworkers treat different client groups. Whether these treatments are individualised or standardised is investigated in the following section (section 5). The final two empirical sections of this report discuss the more normative questions of categorisation and responsibilisation, describing how formal profiling procedures influence caseworkers' mindsets and subsequent actions vis-à-vis long-term unemployed clients. Also the question how clients themselves experience being classified and responsibilised by the "agents of the welfare state" (Jewell 2007) is addressed in more detail in sections 6 and 7, before section 8 concludes with some overarching observations.

2. Methodology

In this section, we briefly describe how we recruited our respondents, where the interviews took place and how we analysed the interviews. The recruitment of our respondents proceeded largely via the Jobcenter management. After we had secured permission to conduct a second round of interviews in EAS, a senior manager (whom we had already interviewed during the first interview round) arranged for interviews with eight caseworkers dealing exclusively with labour-market integration (rather than benefit administration), scheduled at about one-hour intervals over the course of two days. As requested, the senior manager took care to recruit a variety of caseworkers dealing with different client groups, more specifically

- under 25 year-olds, to whom special regulations apply – largely geared towards stricter treatment and hence stronger incentives to work (two respondents)
- under 35 year-olds without a secondary education, for whom a special federal programme has been set up to realise a secondary degree (“Late Starters” [*Spätstarter*])
- above 50 year-olds, for whom a special national programme has been set up to realise labour-market re-entry (*Perspektive 50plus: Beschäftigungspakte in den Regionen;* called “Annual Rings” [*Jahresringe*] in EAS)[2]
- single parents
- self-employed.

In addition, we spoke with two caseworkers who did not serve a specific target group. All interviews with caseworkers took place in the respective caseworker’s office.

Concerning the client respondents, we had requested that each caseworker respondent would recruit one long-term unemployed client who had a meeting at the Jobcenter in the week that we were in EAS, and who would be willing to expend another hour on talking with us. In the end, only four client interviews could be realised because not all caseworkers were able to arrange an interview. For this reason and because we were not able to recruit unemployed respondents via different channels in EAS, we decided to recruit an additional four client interviews in the Northern German municipality of “NOR”. The latter interviews were again organised via one Jobcenter caseworker with whom we had conducted a pilot interview, as well as through an independent “Unemployment Self-Help Association” (*Arbeitslosenselbsthilfe*). Initially, we had some concerns that choosing unemployed respondents from two cities would jeopardise the validity of our research; however, since we found that client experiences were relatively consistent across Jobcenters and municipalities in our small sample, we no longer think that our mixed group of client respondents is problematic for the interpretation of the research results.

All interviews with clients in EAS took place in the Jobcenter building, in two cases with the respective caseworker being present. Initially, we had thought that the caseworker’s presence might again jeopardise the interview results because we were afraid that the clients would not dare to speak up if their caseworker was there with them. However, it turned out that the opposite was the case: At least the two clients with whom we conducted a group interview seemed to welcome the opportunity to voice their personal opinion in the presence of their caseworker. In NOR, one client interview took place at our university; one interview was conducted in a downtown café; and a last group interview with two unemployed persons active in the Unemployment Self-Help Association took place in the organisation's headquarter.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded using the coding software MAXQDA. We based our codes on the outline for the WP6 report but amended our code list after having coded the first two interviews in order to make sure that all elements and concepts relevant specifically for the German context were covered. In order to secure the anonymity of the respondents, the respondents' names will be replaced by a code every time we quote them in this report (A for caseworkers, B for clients, both coupled with a random number, e.g. A1, A2, B1, B2, etc.).

3. Organisational and governance context

In order to understand how German Jobcenter caseworkers put active inclusion policies for the long-term unemployed into practice, it is important to have a basic understanding of the German UB II benefit and activation system. The UB II system in Germany goes back to the Hartz reforms of 2005 that merged social assistance (*Sozialhilfe*) with the former unemployment assistance scheme for insured but long-term unemployed people (*Arbeitslosenhilfe*). By merging the two systems, the Hartz reforms not only drew most former recipients of 'charitable' social assistance into the employment system, making them subject to job-search requirements under the motto of *Fordern* (a rough equivalent to 'sticks'), but also gave them access to employment measures that had previously been restricted to insured claimants under the motto of *Fördern* (roughly equivalent to 'carrots'). Today, the German UB II system is thus characterised by a very heterogeneous benefit population, ranging from people with multiple problems who have never worked to older people with a work-history of several decades who were made redundant, next to university graduates who are entering the labour-market for the very first time.

In order to accommodate the heterogeneity of problems that can be diagnosed among the UB II population beside unemployment proper, the Hartz policy reforms were accompanied by an organisational reform that created a new type of agency, the so-called "Jobcenters", for tending to UB II clients. The Jobcenters are for the most part governed jointly by the Federal Employment Agency (FEA; *Bundesagentur für Arbeit)* and the municipalities (*Kommunen*) under whose aegis the social assistance scheme formerly fell. Staff members in these joint Jobcenters continue to be associated with their 'old' employers and receive work contracts according to either the FEA's or the municipal employment scheme. In addition, there are now 108 so-called optional municipalities (*Optionskommunen*) running their local Jobcenters autonomously without the FEA as a partner. The rationale behind this organisational reconfiguration was that the FEA can bring a long experience with employment services (and established networks with employment service providers) to the Jobcenter table, whereas the municipalities can contribute a high degree of professionalism in dealing with more far-reaching social problems that hinder employment and must therefore be addressed before or while labour-market integration is pursued.

Another political rationale behind combining national (FEA) and local (municipal) expertise in dealing with long-term unemployment has been the expectation that employment services will have a greater effect if local actors have the discretion to appropriate national instruments and regulations to local labour market contexts as well as individual client cases. Therefore, the Jobcenter reform included a relatively large room for manoeuvre for Jobcenter managers to build networks with other public and private service providers, develop new activation and counselling instruments, and bundle employment and social services into unique parcels depending on each client's situation and needs. More specifically, § 16a of the Social Security Code II (*Sozialgesetzbuch II*, abbr. SGB II) makes it possible to provide "holistic and comprehensive support" by linking job-insertion services with care offers, debt counselling, psycho-social counselling, drug counselling or counselling for alcoholics. In addition, the provision of employment services was made voluntary in the SGB II beyond the two basic services of job placement and educational counselling (§ 16 SGB II), which in practice means that individual caseworkers have a large discretionary space in granting activation measures to clients. However, besides this room for manoeuvre, the SGBII also introduced a number of monitoring mechanisms in order to ensure national service standards. Thus, all German Jobcenters are categorised into one of 12 types depending on their local labour market context.[3] For each type, three performance indicators are measured and published every three months: "Reduction of need for assistance" (i.e. spending on UB II benefits), the "Job insertion rate", and "Changes in the number of beneficiaries" (§ 48a SGB II). As we learned in EAS, these performance indicators are sometimes handed down to the individual level, thus putting pressure on individual caseworkers to actualise higher job-insertion rates. As one caseworker in EAS reports:

> *You only hear, 'Bad, the figures are bad, we have to do more'. Of course, this also depends on the team leader, whether he or she filters out this [pressure], which is not the case in our team. As I said, you're only criticised for what you haven't accomplished, but a corresponding 'praise culture' in the sense of 'Wow, this looks good' is missing entirely higher up the ladder.*

As a final remark, also the funding mechanisms behind activation measures have a strong influence on caseworker practices. In Germany, activation measures for UB II clients are financed out of federal funds (§ 46 SGB II), some of which are granted under specific national programmes (such as "Late Starters" and "Annual Rings", see section 2) while others are broadly earmarked for specific purposes, although the Jobcenters are free to design specific instruments within those broader categories. This funding arrangement implies that Jobcenters have no incentive to save excessively on activation; in contrast, under the German cameralistic accountancy system, Jobcenters are incentivised to use up their entire budgets during one year – even if it means assigning individual clients to 'unnecessary' measures (as left-over budgets may entail lower federal budgets in consecutive years). Hence, one relatively frequent responsibilising practice in German Jobcenters consists in assigning clients to standardised 'mass' measures such as application trainings, as we will see in the empirical analysis.

4. The governance structure of everyday work

With these policy and governance considerations in mind, let us now turn to the concrete interaction between caseworkers and clients in German Jobcenters as reconstructible from our interviews. In this section, we briefly describe the cornerstones of client-processing in German Jobcenters, from the first intake interview to the signing of an individual integration agreement and follow-up interviews. As was mentioned in section 2, all "A" respondents signify caseworkers while "B" respondents signify clients.

The main tasks of caseworkers in German Jobcenters are: preparing client meetings, conducting client meetings and doing administrative follow-up work (e.g. writing down issues that were discussed during the client conversation, making an assessment of the client's progress, stagnation or regress, etc.). In line with the profiling procedures used in all German Jobcenters (see section 6), the main elements to be addressed during client conversations are job-search and additional measures that may be necessary for achieving labour-market success.

The period of intervention starts with the client's first contact with the Jobcenter at the express counter. There, clients are assigned a number and when they are called up, they can voice their concerns at this counter. In most cases, clients have two concerns in this situation: On the one hand, they must fill in an application for unemployment benefits; and on the other hand, benefits are conditional on making an appointment with a caseworker geared towards reducing benefit dependency and finding a job as quickly as possible. In most Jobcenters, caseworkers are responsible for either benefit administration or job-search assistance and counselling – not both of them combined.

In EAS, the intake interview is conducted with the first caseworker who is available. It takes place after the first contact at the express counter. The caseworker checks the main facts about the client's situation and places him or her with a personal adviser fitting the client's target group description, e.g. people above 50 years of age, people until 35 without a secondary education, young people below age 25, lone parents, people with health-impairments, or self-employed persons. For uninsured unemployed people without any of these specific features, assignment to a caseworker takes place according to postcodes and the first letter of the family name. As caseworker A7 (7) reports,

> *I have the regular clients between 25 and 65 who are generally employable. In our Jobcenter, we process them according to file numbers, the file number a household receives from the benefit department. I have file numbers ending in 223-340 in a certain post code area. I have [name of two suburbs], these are (…) typical hot spot areas.*

If it turns out during the activation process that clients have multiple problems and therefore require intensive counselling, they can be referred to a so-called case manager (*Fallmanager*) whose caseload is much lower than that of regular caseworkers (*Integrationsfachkräfte*). (More details on the case management system are given in section 5).

Each caseworker has a fixed caseload. For case managers, this caseload normally seems to be around 70-80 persons whereas 'regular' caseworkers have up to 450 clients in EAS (cf. A7 [31]; A6 [28]; A5 [68]; A8 [35]). During the first consultation between a caseworker and a new client, the personal situation of the client is discussed as well as the client's vita and the last job he or she had. The caseworker analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the client (more details are given in section 6) and enters the relevant information in an IT platform provided by the FEA, called "VerBIS". On the basis of this so-called client profile, additional activation measures may then be discussed. To give an example of such a remembered conversation:

> *My caseworker asked me which jobs I could see myself doing and which ones I cannot imagine at all. And then we pondered together. My caseworker asked me what kind of retail job I would prefer: electronics, hardware, or grocery store. I told her directly: grocery store – never ever! You don't have a chance of promotion there at all. And the only thing you ever do there is to stock shelves. Yet what I*

> *would like to do, as a salesperson or retail merchant, is to talk to customers. Preferably also about something that I have expertise in. (B6, 74)*

The client profile created during the first session is very important for the consecutive activation steps as well as for a client's future within the Jobcenter organisation, because when caseworkers change, other caseworkers will build up on the already existing profile.

Clients have to be called in at certain time intervals. In most cases, these intervals depend on the target group, more specifically the group's size or set of problems. For example, young unemployed people must be invited more often, just as persons with multiple problems tend to be called in more frequently so that counselling can be more intensive. Emergency meetings are generally also an option, yet at the discretion of the individual caseworker.

Once a complete client profile has been established in VerBIS, caseworker and client are meant to sign a so-called individual "integration agreement" (*Eingliederungsvereinbarung*). This integration agreement is one of the important instruments in the every-day work of caseworkers because creating it gives structure and direction to the interaction with the client: *"Do we want to put this into the integration agreement? Or don't we? Do you think you can manage it like this?"* (B6, 62). As this quote illustrates, caseworkers typically create the integration agreement together with the client. The client has the opportunity to gauge what may be possible to accomplish until the next meeting. Only if a client refuses to be activated, caseworkers turn to the legal possibility to make certain requirements mandatory by way of an administrative act (*Verwaltungsakt*). However, as one of our caseworker respondents reported, only action strategies whose success is not dependent on voluntary client participation or the personal motivation of the client tend to be mandated in this way, for example a certain number of job applications per month *("for example, then we put in there: three self-selected job applications per month"* [A2, 61]).

Notwithstanding the conversational nature of the creation of the integration agreement, the agreement thus has the status of a legal contract between client and caseworker. It lists the most important rights and duties that each side must adhere to. After a client responsibility has been set, the client is legally required to fulfil it – otherwise, sanctions ensue, as will be described in section 7. Our client respondents generally perceived the integration agreement as a practical and reasonable instrument, but:

> *As I hear from some other colleagues, for example, (…) their caseworkers put into the integration agreement that they must write ten job applications within three months. What's this, that's not motivating, is it? It's more like, 'Do it like this and then we're done with it'. But that's not helping, is it? (B6, 66)*

Another aspect about the integration agreement that one client respondent reported as problematic is that the integration agreement does not contain all information which the caseworker has entered into the IT system "*They also write down their own opinion about it"* (B6, 64). Related to this is the criticism voiced by client B6 that it is very hard to switch to a different caseworker if the *"chemistry"* is not right and no productive working relationship ensues. In order to be transferred to a different caseworker, one would have to go through the Customer Response Management department and file an official complaint (B4, 22-27), from which many clients shy back:

I find it a pity that one cannot change one's caseworker without a lot of effort, from which many people shy back. But sometimes, the chemistry simply isn't right from the start. (B6, 133)

Hence, at least the clients in our sample think that it is a matter of luck to get a friendly caseworker: "*No. I have to say that I am very satisfied with my caseworker. Stroke of luck"* (B3, 117).

However, in concluding this section, it should also be mentioned that working as a caseworker at a Jobcenter is not an easy job because some clients are temperamental and tough. Discussions can escalate and caseworkers sometimes find themselves in unsafe situations (A7, 75). Difficulties may also arise when caseworkers are much younger than their clients because in such cases, it may be hard for a caseworker to be taken seriously:

Sometimes it is very hard for me when I have a very young caseworker in front of me. They do not know the past as I do [a reference to the reunification period in Germany]. This very young person - he is as old as my granddaughter - told me that I do not show enough initiative, and that enrages me. (B4, 18)

To summarise, as we have seen in this section, caseworkers in German Jobcenters have a complex role to fulfil. The main task of Jobcenter caseworkers as mandated by law is to reduce benefit dependency and guide people back into employment. Clients, in contrast, are generally interested first and foremost in the provision of benefits, which they need in order to survive – with activation often only being a secondary goal for them. In such an environment, caseworkers must identify individualised roads towards employment in a very short time, given high caseloads – unless they serve a particular target group, for which more counselling time is usually granted. Thus, caseworkers have a large responsibility not only in legal terms but also vis-à-vis clients, who are to some extent dependent on the goodwill of the caseworker. Most clients in our (probably biased) sample expressed satisfaction with their current caseworkers, but also indicated that this had not always been the case. Hence, the relationship between caseworkers and clients is far from being an easy one according to our interview data. As one long-term unemployed respondent expressed it, the ideal caseworker should be *"helpful, demonstrate pathways and identify solutions, not only cut the benefit while they are sitting in a feathered nest"* (B5, 18). In the next section, we will now address the question how caseworkers try to find an optimal match between client problems and activation instruments.

5. Individualisation – standardisation of interventions

When talking about standardised versus individualised interventions for long-term unemployed clients, it is crucial to take into account the difference between regular casework (*Arbeitsvermittlung*) and case management (*Fallmanagement*) in the German Jobcenter system. As we saw in section 4, regular caseworkers often have very many clients whom they must see periodically, for which reason it is nearly impossible to counsel clients intensively. Case managers, by contrast, have much lower caseloads, which allows them to spend more time on individual client cases with complex problems. As caseworker A2 (47) puts it,

We also have the so-called case management. They take care of people with very heavy problems, drug addiction, debts and so on, without a permanent place of residence. (A2, 47)

Meetings with a case manager are more frequent and longer than in a regular counselling trajectory, and clients have the opportunity to get follow-up appointments quickly. Once a client has switched from regular casework to case management, he or she may stay in case management for up to two years. Once that time is over or when complex barriers to work have been durably removed, clients are transferred back to a regular caseworker in order to enable more clients to receive intensive counselling. In a nutshell, the differentiation between casework and case management in German Jobcenters implies that a deliberate organisational boundary is created between more standardised and workfarist interventions in the 'normal' casework system, and intensive individualised counselling in the special case management system.

A second observation we made in EAS is that caseworkers responsible for different target groups tend to focus on different types of interventions. For example, caseworkers responsible for young people under 25 ("U25") have a special focus on education and training. Also internships are used relatively routinely for this age group, even in foreign European countries (one U25 caseworker told us about a provider offering internships in Hungary, Spain, Greece and Mallorca, where young people receive English lessons and train to develop a daily routine and take responsibility at a workplace). Lone parents are another special target group that is structurally discriminated in the labour market and therefore has a special need for retraining programmes or wage subsidies, as caseworker A1 (76) expresses who is part of the Jobcenter-internal programme "ANA – Not leaving lone parents alone" (*Alleinerziehende nicht alleinlassen*):

> *I'm not sure if only giving financial incentives to employers is the solution. A rethinking is needed. (…) A mother is to a certain extent also an organiser. You have to acknowledge that she is able to coordinate and organise things. But that kind of understanding is lacking and if you have a labour market full of potential employees, she will be excluded from the start, even if she is 100 times more qualified. (…) So a societal rethinking concerning lone parents is direly needed. After all, (…) this is a large group.*

Sometimes, special client groups with implicit special activation approaches are created not by Jobcenters themselves but through federal programmes making extra funds available for certain target groups. Currently, one of these groups are people above 50 years of age ("Ü50" or "50+"), for whom a national programme entitled "Perspective 50+" (*Perspektive 50plus: Beschäftigungspakte in den Regionen*) has been installed:

> *This federal program is called "Perspective 50+" and throughout Germany, there are 78 employment packages, depending on the region. In larger regions, there are sometimes two packages. In our region, (…) we have the employment package 'Annual Rings'. For each region and package the name is different, or they do not use a special name - only '50+'. (A8, 12)*

However, even within the age group of 50+, differences in activation approaches are prevalent because only clients close to the labour market are taken into the 'Perspective 50+' programme. As caseworker A8 (14) explains,

> *Someone with a lot of health issues or other private problems is not interesting for us. Because we want to give people a helping hand who have been actively looking for work for some time and who only need a little bit of extra help to get back into work.*

Another example of a federal programme creating a new specialised target group is the programme "Late Starters" (*Spätstarter*) geared towards helping people under 35 without a secondary education.

In our sample, caseworker A6 is responsible for this special group of clients: *"Currently, I am responsible for the project 'Late Starters'. We strive to guide customers below 35 towards a secondary qualification"* (5). Finally, a last target group that the Jobcenter EAS created independently consists of self-employed clients. Such people turn to the Jobcenter for support if they do not earn enough to make a living (A3, 3) or if they plan to become self-employed in the future. In such cases, the first step a caseworker will undertake with the client is to investigate whether the business model behind the client's self-employment is sustainable. If not, the caseworker will counsel the client to terminate the self-employment and find regular work, or

> *For example to turn the self-employment into a part-time activity (…) – so there are numerous available options and we try to identify them together with the customer, we try to find a solution together and so far, this works well. (15)*

Another possibility for self-employed clients is to participate in a training course about self-employment offered in cooperation with the province of Saxony-Anhalt and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (A3, 25). In summary, as we have seen above, the degree of standardisation versus individualisation of activation measures in German Jobcenters depends not only on whether a client is counselled by a caseworker or case manager, but also on whether a client belongs to a certain pre-defined target group (in EAS: U25, lone parents and self-employed, plus two target groups tending to federal programmes – U35 and Ü50). Our careful assessment is that the procedural target group approach used by virtually all German Jobcenters can be helpful for developing specialised expertise and tailor-made counselling approaches for the client groups in question. However, the target group approach also has a negative flipside, namely that clients categorised as 'normal' receive only standardised and workfarist job-search assistance although they, too, might be in need of more specific advice. As client B5 (9) puts it, "*I have said under tears, 'Handicapped people have rights, but I have no rights'"*.

Beside a watershed between basic and intensive counselling on the one hand and target group specifications on the other hand, a third factor leading to differentiated interventions in German Jobcenters is the legal discretionary space of caseworkers: *"We have discretionary space in virtually all procedures we can or must apply. Whether it's about activation measures or funding – everything, basically"* (A5, 65). Also caseworker A8 (23) talks about the large discretion he has in his work:

> *Our daily work consists almost entirely of discretion. (…) It's at the discretion of every caseworker whether someone will get a refund for posting job applications (…) or is granted a voucher for a private job counsellor.*

A fourth factor that reinforces the third and is a source for differentiated activation approaches in German Jobcenters is the large range of measures available to caseworkers in the German context. Besides regular job counselling, at least 16 types of instruments were mentioned in our interviews that we will briefly discuss in the following paragraphs. To begin with, a wide array of counselling offers is available for clients with complex obstacles to employment, such as **(1)** a family coach (i.e. a professional working closely with entire families to improve their home situation and familial relationships); **(2)** debt counselling; **(3)** addiction counselling (for alcoholism, drug abuse, compulsive gambling etc.); **(4)** social-psychiatric counselling; **(5)** legal counselling (e.g. on pension rights or patient's provisions), and **(6)** preventive health programmes related to physical fitness or nutrition because *there are many clients whose life world has become very small after having been unemployed for so long. They are trapped in a vicious cycle and might eat only fast food. We want to show them that there are other possibilities. And that this can have an effect on your overall well-being. (A8, 37)*

A second group of measures is geared more towards building up job-related capacities, such as: **(7)** driving skills; **(8)** job application skills; **(9)** or professional qualifications. According to caseworker A6, application trainings are used relatively frequently (as will be explained in more detail below) but clients rarely request those types of services on their own:

It is very, very rare that someone requests an application training out of their own initiative. Only new customers maybe, who just started receiving benefits. (…) Where we do have customers requesting certain measures is in the area of qualifications, though. (55)

Professional qualifications are often procured in the form of individual modules, meaning that only specific skill trainings are added on top of an existing qualification. Complete re-training courses are also an option but must be certified by the Federal Employment Agency: *"Occupational re-training courses (…) are degree-orientated and take between one and two years (…) whereas modular trainings take only six to nine month. We have a welding module, for example"* (A5, 14). Other popular areas for retraining are "w*arehousing, logistics, commissioning, vehicle licences, teaching, IT, hotel sector and gastronomy"* (A5, 8).

Besides specialised counselling and training, German Jobcenters also have several types of on-the-job trainings or employer incentives on offer, such as **(10)** substitute jobs geared towards building up a daily routine or testing out which education one would like to pursue (the latter only for young people); **(11)** internships (for young people even in foreign countries, as was mentioned above); **(12)** work trials in which an employer can test out a candidate for one or two weeks for free (including *"refunds for travel costs or work clothes"* (A7, 19); **(13)** wage subsidies where the Jobcenter pays up to 50 % of a person's wages for 12 months or even longer for people above 50, with the employer having to employ the person further for at least the same duration after the wage subsidy has ended (A8, 49/51); and **(14)** so-called civic work, i.e. substitute workplaces in the public sector:

This is for very long-term unemployed people (…). They carry out substitute tasks in additional workplaces that would normally not exist. For example, they might walk through the city in pairs and look for damages in road covers and pavements (…). This helps the building authority to make more targeted repairs, which in turn saves money but doesn't take regular jobs away from regular workers. (A8, 8)

It is called "Red Jackets" here in EAS. People who ride on public transport to help passengers with impairments. Helping people with walking frames or wheelchairs onto the trams. (A8 [group interview], 103)

Finally, caseworkers have a number of auxiliary measures at their disposal such as **(15)** refunds for travel costs, job applications or working tools; and **(16)** assisting clients with finding a childcare facility – which seems to be a specialty of the municipality of EAS:

In EAS there is an agreement with the mayor: Everyone who has found a job or apprenticeship and has formal proof for that immediately receives a place at a day-care centre. Even if it means that other people who are not in work or education lose their place. (A5, 46)

As the above discussion has shown, the large variety of activation instruments available to German Jobcenter caseworkers leads to much variation in the treatment of long-term unemployed clients, reinforced by other factors discussed earlier. However, before turning to the next section where the profiling procedures used by German Jobcenters are discussed in more detail, a (fifth and) last factor should be mentioned here that contributes to a relative standardisation rather than differentiation of measures in German Jobcenters, namely the German cameralistic funding system that incentivises Jobcenters to use up their entire activation budgets before the end of the fiscal year in order to demonstrate high demand and thus avoid shrinking budgets in consecutive years. As caseworker A6 explained to us, for instance, some activation measures are purchased in bulk at the beginning of the fiscal year:

> *Every year, we have to make a plan. Each department estimates their likely demand for activation measures. (…) And then there is also always a correction from above. That we have to purchase some more measures or placements, for instance. (A6, 53)*

In some cases, the number of procured placements for activation also depends on public tendering rounds:

> *There is a tender for a fixed, pre-defined number of participants. (…) And the provider with the best offer wins it. And because there's a set price, (…) we may have to or be pressed to fulfil a quota of 50 participants per week, because the provider has been paid for those 50, whether they are there or not. So we have an incentive to fill up those places in order to make full use of our resources. (A3, 53)*

As a result of these bureaucratic necessities, caseworkers sometimes have to assign bulk measures (such as application trainings) to clients without this being particularly useful for the client, as caseworker A6 (51) reports:

> *Sometimes these measures don't fill up. And then there are orders, 'Select some people, the measure must fill up'. And then you have to try to find a good match, of course. (…) But if I know a client has already completed three application trainings, (…) I certainly won't send him there a fourth time. But such orders exist, 'The measure must fill up, we have paid for it'. They don't want to waste money.*

This statement shows that it is sometimes a tightrope walk for caseworkers to weigh the needs of their clients against legal demands. Nevertheless, caseworkers generally do their best to find a suitable activation measure for a particular client:

> *If I say, 'You will attend this measure (…)', that will have no effect. We have to work together with the customer. The measure has to fit the customer. If that is not the case, such an activation measure will backfire. (A5, 8)*

To conclude, this section has discussed five factors that contribute to diversified or standardised interventions in German Jobcenters. Generally speaking, high caseloads (within the regular counselling system) and a cameralistic budgetary system contribute to standardisation, whereas differentiated counselling approaches (caseworkers/case managers), special target groups, legal caseworker discretion, and a broad range of activation instruments contribute to more individualised interventions. Hence, our overall conclusion from this section is that the one-stop-shop "Jobcenter" agencies are organisationally well-equipped for providing tailor-made services; however, in practice, scarce staff resources (to be funded by the municipalities and the FEA) and cameralistic federal funding mechanisms often counteract the smart organisational Jobcenter design.

6. Categorisation and legibility

As was already mentioned above, the communicative process culminating in the creation or update of a personal integration agreement (*Eingliederungsvereinbarung*) forms a key part of the caseworker-client interaction in German Jobcenters. In this paragraph, we explain in more detail which information caseworkers must enter into the IT (Information Technology) system used by German Jobcenters, the VerBIS platform of the FEA. Another categorisation procedure that is addressed in more detail below consists of a standardised psychological test, which the FEA conducts to assess the suitability of clients for certain retraining measures, educational trajectories, or professions. After having described which profiling and testing procedures are employed by German Jobcenters, the remainder of this section illustrates based on our interview material how formal profiling categories influence caseworkers' informal client perceptions (or not), and how clients respond to being 'legibilised' through formal profiling procedures.

Categorisation: Profiling procedures

As was mentioned in section 3, most German Jobcenters are joint ventures between the Federal Employment Agency and a municipality. Therefore, all joint Jobcenters use the FEA's IT system "VerBIS" as a standardised tool for collecting client data and structuring client interventions. Creating a client profile constitutes the first of four phases in the FEA's client-processing cycle, with the second to fourth cycle being entitled "Determining a goal", "Selecting a strategy/strategies", and "Implementation/follow-up" (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2013). Whenever a client first applies for benefits or returns to the Jobcenter after more than six months, a new client profile must be created. Following the IT interface on the computer screen, the caseworker begins by analysing the client's so-called 'strengths' (*Stärkenanalyse*) and what is euphemistically called 'potentials' (*Potenzialanalyse*), which means that any existing obstacles to work or activation are to be identified and stored in the form of 'action requirements' (*Handlungsbedarfe*). Strengths and potentials can manifest themselves in four formal categories:

1. **Qualifications** ("Primary qualifications", "Vocational qualifications", "Professional experience" and "Language skills")
2. **Capacities** ("Intellectual capacities", "Job-relevant health restrictions", and "Work and social behaviour")
3. **Motivation** ("Initiative/work attitude" and "Readiness to learn/retrain")
4. **Circumstances** ("Personal circumstances", "Geographic mobility", "Housing situation", "Family situation [including care responsibilities]" and "Financial situation").

After all categories and sub-categories have been discussed and the caseworker has entered the relevant information into the IT system, the resulting client profile is automatically allocated to one of six profile categories that indicate the prospective timeframe of activation. These are:

INTEGRATION PROFILES:

Market profiles (*Marktprofile*): No action requirements. Labour market integration prospects: up to 6 months.

Activation profiles (*Aktivierungsprofile*): Action requirements in the category "Motivation". Labour market integration prospects: up to 6 months.

Improvement profiles (*Förderprofile*): Action requirements in one of the three categories "Qualifications", "Capacities" or "Circumstances". Labour market integration prospects: up to 12 months.

COMPLEX PROFILES:

Development profiles (*Entwicklungsprofile*): Action requirements in one of the three categories "Qualifications", "Capacities", or "Circumstances" plus one additional category (or strong action requirements in the main category). Labour market integration prospects: above 12 months.

Stabilisation profiles (*Stabilisierungsprofile*): Action requirements in the category "Capacities" plus at least two additional categories (or strong action requirements in the category "Capacities"). Labour market integration prospects: up to 12 months.

Support profiles (*Unterstützungsprofile*): Action requirements in the category "Circumstances" plus at least two additional categories (or strong action requirements in the category "Circumstances"). Labour market integration prospects: above 12 months.

Depending on the type of profile, the caseworker then selects a feasible goal for activation or job-search in the second phase of the FEA's client-processing cycle. These goals are grouped into four standardised categories:

1. Employment in the regular labour market
    a. Local employment
    b. National employment
    c. International employment
    d. Mini-job, midi-job, temporary employment
    e. Self-employment
2. Employment outside of the regular labour market
3. Primary/secondary/tertiary education
    a. Local secondary education (apprenticeship)
    b. National secondary education (apprenticeship)
    c. Primary/tertiary education (school/university)
4. Stabilisation of existing employment/self-employment

If a regular job is chosen as the goal for activation and if the client has a market profile (meaning that immediate labour market integration is possible), the caseworker can use the computerised client profile to immediately run a nation-wide search for job openings in the FEA's job database. Otherwise, the third phase of the FEA's client-processing cycle consists in selecting one or more strategies for bridging the gap between the client's status quo and the identified goal of activation. Table 1 gives a brief overview of the possible activation strategies associated with various action requirements according to the official FEA documentation (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2013, pp. 18-9).

Table 1. *Activation guidelines for German Jobcenter caseworkers (own translation).*

CATEGORY	ACTION REQUIREMENT	ACTION STRATEGY
Qualifications	Primary qualifications	Obtain school diploma
		Prepare apprenticeship
	Vocational qualifications	(Further) vocational training
		Obtain vocational degree
		Graduate management
		Authentication of international degrees/qualifications/certificates
	Professional experience	Enable professional experience
	Language skills	Obtain/improve German language skills
		Obtain relevant foreign language skills
Capacities	Intellectual capacities	Test capacities
		Improve capacities
		Obtain employment adequate for health status
	Relevant health restrictions	Test capacities
		Improve capacities
		Obtain employment adequate for health status
	Work and social behaviour	Accustom to working life (daily routines)
		Strengthen work/social behaviour
Motivation	Initiative/work attitude	Change perspectives
	Readiness to learn/retrain	Improve readiness to learn
Circumstances	Personal circumstances	Level out individual competitive disadvantages
	Geographic mobility	Increase mobility
	Housing situation	Stabilise housing situation
	Family situation (incl. care responsibilities)	Make or expand child care arrangement
		Make or expand care arrangement for family members
		Stabilise family situation
	Financial situation	Stabilise financial situation
Overarching	Optional and irrespective of identified action requirements	Job placement
		Move into sustainable self-employment
		Check cooperation/own initiative
		Terminate or reduce benefit eligibility (for employed/self-employed)
Decentral		Local strategies

Before turning to the question how caseworkers and clients perceive the FEA's profiling procedures and in which ways the formal FEA categories influence the subjective client perceptions of caseworkers, the next section briefly discusses another standardised way of assessing clients in German Jobcenters, namely psychological tests geared towards establishing whether clients possess the intellectual and work-related skills required for a certain (re)training measure or education.

Categorisation: Psychological test

As caseworker A7 (25) told us, only joint Jobcenters use standardised psychological tests because such testing procedures have been long-established by the 'vocational psychological service' (*Berufspsychologischer Service*) of the FEA. Since three of our eight client respondents reported to have taken the test, our impression is that psychological tests are used rather customarily by Jobcenter caseworkers before granting longer and/or expensive educational measures to clients. This impression is further supported by caseworker A5's (12) statement about educational trajectories for clients under 35:

> *All young people under 35 without a professional degree should be encouraged to get one. If the client agrees and a suitable option is found, we pave the way for that. We start with a psychological test and if the result says, "OK, he is able to finish this education, he has a certain IQ", we are ready to roll.*

However, we also got the impression that psychological tests are sometimes used as an implicit tool for denying expensive activation measures to 'non-promising' clients. As caseworker A7 (25) explains:

> *Of course there are many [customers] who pursue a utopian goal. (…) With a history of cancelled activation trajectories, and then they sit here presenting me an offer for a driving licence for heavy vehicles (…) at the price of 12,000 Euro. Which of course requires certain intellectual capacities. (…) Thank God we still have the possibility to consult the psychological service in these cases.*

As the FEA reports on its website, the test is conducted in groups but the forms are customised to each client, depending on the skills that would be required for a particular training course, education, or job (such as commercial skills, technical skills, or artisan skills).[4] Most questions have to be answered on a computer screen, but some questions are also distributed on paper. After the test has been completed, a psychologist discusses the test results individually with each client. The test results are also forwarded to the responsible caseworker, who then can base his or her activation decisions on them.

The following types of tests or test elements are offered by the FEA's vocational psychological service:[5]

1. Capacity tests
    a. Tests of general cognitive skills
    b. Tests of specific cognitive skills
    c. Tests of specific job-related skills
    d. Tests of knowledge taught at schools
2. Personality tests and tests of personal interests.

The sample questions given on the FEA's website are strongly reminiscent of a regular IQ test, pertaining to logic (identifying systematic relations between shapes, words and numbers), visual thinking, mechanical problems, and maths.[6]

Our three respondents who took a psychological test describe the testing procedures as follows:

> B3: Took the test in order to be admitted to a retraining course as an office clerk (duration: 2.5 years). The test contained questions about maths and logical thinking, as she recalls it. She had to take the test at very short notice (3 days) because the course had already started. B3 passed the test and was admitted to the retraining measure.

> B5: Took a psychological test twice in order to assess her ability to complete a training course as an assistant nurse (duration: 200 hours, i.e. five full-time-equivalent weeks). B5 had difficulties using the computer, although she claims to have understood the questions well. B5 failed the test twice, hence the qualification was denied her.

> B6: Took the test in order to be admitted to a retraining course as a painter and decorator (duration: 2 years). The test contained questions about German, maths, logical and visual thinking, as he recalls it. He was notified of the test two months in advance and was able to prepare for it. B5 passed the test and was admitted to the retraining measure.

Having hereby given an overview of the way in which formal categorisation procedures (profiling and psychological tests) are used in German Jobcenters for making clients legible to the bureaucracy, the following subsections now turn to the question what this legibilisation means for the caseworker-client relationship and caseworkers' mental images of clients. In a first step, we discuss the structurating influence of official profiling categories on conversations between caseworkers and clients in German Jobcenters. In a second step, we then address the degree to which the client perceptions of caseworkers are shaped by formal profiling procedures. Finally, we give the word to our client respondents, presenting how they personally perceive the profiling process.

Legibility: The structurating power of profiling procedures

The term "structuration" goes back to Anthony Giddens (1981) and denotes the power of ideational structures to reproduce themselves in the ideas and actions of individual agents. Hence, when we speak of the structurating power of the profiling categories used by German Jobcenters, we imply that profiling procedures serve as cognitive lenses through which caseworkers perceive individual clients and select certain behavioural responses. Over time, as these cognitive lenses become more habitualised and hence less elastic, it becomes increasingly difficult for individual clients to disprove caseworkers' standardised mental templates (and thus elicit non-standardised behaviour). For this reason, it is important to pay close attention to the profiling procedures on which caseworkers' client perceptions are based, and how they shape the caseworker-client interaction.

The German Jobcenter caseworkers we interviewed implicitly or explicitly acknowledged the structurating influence of the profiling categories of the VerBIS system on their conversations with clients. This is illustrated particularly well by the following quote of caseworker A7 (13-15) who used to work with insured UB I clients at the FEA before switching to a Jobcenter and hence a UB II caseload:

> *In the UB I system, (…) certain client responsibilities are also set, but (…) how to fulfil them is up to the client. Here, this tends to be different because you must identify different action requirements (…). It is an advantage that we work with the same software in both benefit systems, because the conversation structure and where to fill in what (…) is the same. We have different activation offers (…), not least because they are funded from completely different sources. (…) The possibilities I have to support clients are different from the UB I system (…) where most [clients] are recently unemployed, so that there are also less problems in the social and family sphere, that's simply a reality. Or maybe they're just less open about it, they look for work, enter a new job, end of story. Whereas here, you get to know more because much more information must be disclosed in order to receive UB II benefits. In the UB I system, you only have to say where you have worked and how much you earned, but nothing about the housing situation – which automatically becomes known here, for instance.*

As this extensive quote illustrates, client conversations in German Jobcentres are strongly shaped by the information caseworkers must fill into the VerBIS system, and hence by the profiling categories used by VerBIS. In this context, it becomes particularly relevant that caseworkers hardly ever fill in a blank sheet when meeting a new client because clients are either referred to them by a different caseworker (who has already carried out one or more profiling rounds) or by the express counter responsible for client intakes, as was reported in section 4. This means that whenever caseworkers start forming a mental picture of a new client case, this case has already been framed in terms of formal problem definitions that leave non-official problem categories unaddressed. As caseworker A2 (14) explains:

> *The intake happens downstairs. They check what clients are capable of, what the status quo is, CV and all, school diplomas etc. And we carry out the follow-up talk, that is our first conversation so to speak.*

We browse through the client profile once more: Ok, what can they see themselves doing, what do they want.

As several caseworkers report, any first conversation with a new client therefore has as a central goal to form a coherent mental picture bringing together what is already stated in the existing preliminary profile and what the flesh-and-blood client sitting in front of them is communicating verbally (and non-verbally). In the words of caseworker A7 (23):

Usually, (…) I then say, "Well, we don't know each other yet. I will try to get a quick overview based on the things that have already been filled in", of the impression I get about personal data, social relations etc., (…) what you did previously etc. And I give the customer the opportunity to engage with me right then, to tell me whether there is something else, whether I have understood something wrong, or maybe something has been filled in incorrectly. Such as, sometimes is says they have a driver's licence when in fact they don't.

In line with the formal profiling categories, the mental image or problem perception that caseworkers seek to obtain during a first client encounter revolves around the client's "Strengths" and "Potentials" operationalised in the form of "Qualifications", "Capacities", "Motivation" and "Circumstances", as was explained above. To begin with, the **Qualifications** category focuses mostly on clients' professional qualifications and language skills, as is exemplified by the following quote of caseworker A2 (10) who works with young clients under 25:

The educational level of most of our clients is unfortunately not very high. Many do not have a high-school diploma and are also not interested in getting one now, or they are simply not capable of getting one.

It is noteworthy that caseworkers generally link the question about skills directly to the question *"what somebody wants"* (A2, 57) because job-search or activation trajectories for which clients are not motivated are deemed unlikely to be crowned with success: *"If I can't change their basic attitude, even a driver's licence won't get them into work"* (A7, 29).

When German caseworkers talk about clients' **Motivation**, it is striking that motivation is generally discussed as a personality trait or personal state of being rather than as related more narrowly to a particular profession or activation trajectory. Without exception, all our caseworker respondents draw up a verbal spectrum between clients who are motivated to work and know what they want, and clients who are not motivated to leave the UB II benefit system at all, as is illustrated by the following quote of caseworker A8 (41):

You have (…) highly motivated customers, they submit countless job applications per month (…), more than you'd ever ask of them; and then there are others who need – sorry for putting it like this – three kicks in the bottom for one single job application.

Another striking observation that emerges from our interview data is that caseworkers seem to have very different perceptions of where on that spectrum most of their clients dwell. Crudely speaking, our impression is that caseworkers with a lower caseload (such as the so-called case managers or *Fallmanager* in the German UB II system) tend to have a relatively positive image of clients' work and life motivation, as do caseworkers responsible for a relatively easy-to-reintegrate target group (such as self-employed). For instance, caseworker A8 (dealing with a low caseload of clients above 50 years) says about *"problematic customers who have an excuse for everything"*: *"But as I said, these* *are isolated cases"* (43); and caseworker A3 who specialises in self-employed clients makes the assessment that:

> *There are always exceptions, even in our target group: [Customers] who lack motivation, who dismiss every suggestion you make. (…) But in general, (…) we cooperate well, we click well – probably also due to the frequent appointments we have here. (37)*

In addition to target groups and caseloads, caseworkers' own personality traits may also play a role in their client perceptions. This is illustrated by the following quote of caseworker A5 (68) who takes great professional pride in her work:

> *Customers who completely refuse to cooperate – we have those, too. But it happens less with me, I would dare to say.*

When it comes to the issue category **Circumstances**, a first observation we gathered from our interviews is that German Jobcenter caseworkers unequivocally embrace the official policy discourse that complex obstacles to work must be taken away before a client can enter paid employment because they find this idea confirmed in their daily practice:

> *Of course you must always check if a normal job placement trajectory is feasible (…) or whether there is something you must first address, because otherwise the whole placement process will fail. (A6, 32)*

In line with official action stragies as represented in Table 1, the main types of circumstances identified by German caseworkers as hindering labour-market reintegration are family circumstances, addiction, debts, and limited mobility. However, we also gained the impression from our interviews that not all circumstances are seen as equally surmountable in individual cases. In other words, the official "Circumstances" category seems to have practical limits in daily application because the impossibility to reintegrate certain clients into the labour market is not foreseen in the official action guidelines. The following four interview titbits – all of which pertain to family circumstances – illustrate in an exemplary fashion that caseworkers react differently to obstructing factors in a client's environment depending on whether those obstacles are seen as 'curable' or not:

> **Extrinsically caused personal crises are seen as 'curable':** *Of course I cannot embark on a job-search trajectory with someone and say, "Let's (…) get you into work" if I know he's newly divorced or he's currently not allowed to see his child (…), of course that weighs heavy on someone like that, of course he won't have the mind to apply for jobs (…). That's why we must first mitigate such personal circumstances, in the sense of finding solutions (…), in order to put him back in the mind of applying for jobs. (A8, 35)*

> **Extrinsic structural factors are seen as 'incurable':** *Even in office jobs, in warehouses, everywhere there are shifts. But I can't work shifts if I'm a lone parent with no one to take care of my kids outside of the regular working hours – it's not possible. That's a very big problem, very very big. (A5, 44)*

> **Intrinsic socialisation is sometimes seen as 'curable':** *There are some stranded creatures (…), young people with more negative than positive baggage because they come from dysfunctional families or because life just didn't take the direction they wanted in the (…) first ten years or so of their life. Also for them, we are there. (A5, 12)*

> **In other cases, intrinsic socialisation is seen as 'incurable':** *One third manages to be successful in life [if they have a problematic educational and social background]. Thus, parents have a big influence on the future development of their children. (A4, 9-12)*

Finally, in the **Capacities** category even more than in the "Circumstances" category, German Jobcenter caseworkers speak of 'incurable' individual-level or structural factors that lie outside of the activating logic of the German UB II system. For example, caseworker A6 (87) laments that the current labour-market environment no longer has a place for people with low mental capacities:

> *We also have many customers with a very low IQ. But there are no jobs for [such] customers (…). In times of the GDR [German Democratic Republic], they would simply have been given a broom [to clean], but we don't have those [jobs] now. At the most, there are the 1-Euro-jobs, but they don't count as work, that's not [labour market] integration for us.*

At another point during the interview, caseworker A6 (91) refers to a tension between nation-wide job-search requirements and the mental incapacity of some clients to be mobile in their job-search:

> *Many of them couldn't manage to live anywhere else. Normally you'd have to say, they must look for jobs everywhere in Germany, but some cannot even read a train schedule. They can't leave the city, that's way too complicated for them. Some are even unable to find their way to us. If you tell them, 'Go to the main office in [name] street', that's an immense challenge. And these people won't be taken on anywhere else in Germany.*

As these examples show, the "Capacities" category again differs from the first two formal problem categories in VerBIS ("Qualifications" and "Motivation") because its empirical application often brings to the surface unsurmountable obstacles to work that cannot be 'cured' by Jobcenters in the current competitive labour-market environment. This is also evinced by the following quote of caseworker A7 (31) who mentions health issues as impeding employability: *"There are people where I say, I can go out of my way, the customer can go out of their way, it simply won't work because […] they're ill and sometimes in a wheelchair".*

To summarise, as we have seen above, the official categories of the FEA's profiling system VerBIS have a strong structurating influence on how caseworkers and clients interact in German Jobcenters. Especially regular caseworkers (job consultants – *Arbeitsvermittler*) with high caseloads do not have the time to discuss each client case in great length; therefore, they rely to a great extent on information filled into VerBIS by other caseworkers or intake personnel. However, we also saw above that caseworkers organically appropriate the FEA's four profiling categories in daily practice. For instance, the "Qualifications" category is often used to unearth more generally what a client 'wants' in life, because only if such a vision exists are retraining measures and other educational instruments deemed feasible. Also the "Motivation" category seems to be interpreted in a slightly more comprehensive fashion than foreseen in VerBIS, namely in terms of a personality trait rather than as pertaining more narrowly to the motivation to work. Also, we saw above that caseworkers' judgement of the motivatedness of clients seem to differ structurally between regular caseworkers and case managers.

The two remaining profiling categories discussed above – "Circumstances" and "Capacities" – differ from the categories "Qualifications" and "Motivation" in so far as they sometimes make visible the practical impossibilities of realising labour-market integration in spite of an official policy discourse mandating caseworkers to look *"primarily … at strengths, not at weaknesses"* (A2, 73). As caseworker A6 (68) estimates, only about *"five percent"* of her clients are close to the labour market – *"the lion's share are very far removed"*. Also caseworker A7 (35) reflects:

There are less and less [clients] with whom you can really score a success. (…) It's either those without motivation or those who are not able, simply can't [work]. Yes, and then there's a few in between.

Besides a generally large distance from the labour market, we found an indication of five further factors that hinder the smooth application of formal profiling categories to real client cases:

- <u>Personal distrust:</u>
  With some caseworkers, the customer may not open up because he realises, 'I can't get through to them' or so. (…) But once you've worked with them for a while, once they have sat at your desk several times, they usually open up. (…) Not all of them, but most of them. (A6, 23)
- <u>Incongruences between benefit systems:</u>
  Our medical service said: 'Permanently work-incapacitated', a young man. But of course the pension fund said 'No' because they have their own doctors. What then? (A7, 33).
- <u>High caseloads</u>:
  Of course, someone with a caseload of 400 customers cannot look deeply into a single client case, that's simply impossible. They can't get a detailed picture of the personal circumstances, it really doesn't work. (A8, 35)
- <u>Lack of time</u>:
  If you're unlucky, there are 10 people in front of your door. Then (…) the quality of the first interview will suffer because you must hasten. (A6, 32)
  Some clients, we really must take by the hand (...), you really must work closely with them. But you can't do that with everyone, our working time does not allow that. (A2, 26)
- <u>Frequent caseworker changes:</u>
  I recently had a customer – a colleague had moved to West Germany (…) and her customers were distributed among everyone. (…) For this reason, I had him here for the first time and he said, '[name], every time I'm seeing someone else. No offence, but to whom am I supposed to open up here?' And you know, if you then look into [the file], you really see that there is no clear strategy. (…) Everybody looks at it differently. (A5, 58)

With these brief impressions in mind, let us now turn to the final question of this section: How do the clients themselves experience being made bureaucratically 'legible'?

Legibility: How do clients experience being assessed?

In general terms, we can distinguish two types of client statements about being assessed in our interview material: (a) statements pertaining to the personal interaction of clients with their caseworkers, and (b) statements about the UB II system more generally. As to (a), several clients (and also caseworkers) mention that how formal profiling procedures come across depends crucially on the personality of the caseworker applying said procedures. The central issue here seems to be whether a caseworker manages to apply the profiling categories in an organic, 'human' manner so that the client feels acknowledged as a human being and individual. The following three quotes give an illustration of how clients react cognitively when they do not feel 'seen' as an individual by their caseworkers:

- <u>Trying to convince caseworkers of one's 'worthiness':</u>
  In the beginning, I had to beg a lot at the Jobcenter. (…) That I'm really motivated and I'm really willing to do a lot. (B6, 36)
- <u>Rationalisation of one's own shortcomings as causing distanced caseworker behaviour:</u>

With many caseworkers, I haven't been satisfied. Even before my time in jail, there were many problems. I feel that they often close off. But I also think that I myself contributed to that. I chose the crooked path myself, right. And maybe that's part of the reason why they were so distant and didn't want to help me. (B6, 42)

- Non-cooperation:
  I had taken over this client and it said here [on the computer screen] that he was not motivated, did not cooperate and had not showed up several times, there were only negative remarks. So I talked to him. I turned this thing here [the computer] around. I said: 'Look how my predecessor categorised you. I don't know you, I would like to talk to you about that'. (…) And I said, 'Do you have an idea why she categorised you like that?' And he was able to explain it to me. I even understood it somehow, I turned the whole profiling around. He hadn't received a single measure that he found to make sense, that fit him. He had not been listened to and he did not feel 'seen'. (A5, 64)

As to (b), several clients expressed dissatisfaction with the profiling procedures not on an inter-personal basis, but on a systemic basis, as the following quotes show:

- Lacking privacy during intake:
  When you sit there, you have to pull a number, right, then you sit there with a lot of people. And you hear a lot, right. And (…) I would say that Jobcenters should handle this a bit more discretely. (B6, 60)
- Only applications count as job-search efforts, not the time spent:
  It would be nice if there was a form where we could fill in how much time we have spent at the computer looking for jobs. (…) Because when there are no vacancies, there are no vacancies. (…) Otherwise, it might look like (…), 'has only two applications'. But I can't prove that I have spent six, seven hours at the computer doing good work. (B4, 31)
- Formal/informal age categories create artificial boundaries for activation measures:
  The problem was that I couldn't find a provider (…). Because I'm above 25, right, so many providers immediately block off and say, 'No, above 25, if you haven't achieved anything until that age, why should we try again now and invest money'. (B6 [age 28], 76)
- Opinions on the psychological test are mixed:
  B5 (10) – feels that she failed the test because it was computerised: *"Doing it with the computer was complicated, that was new for me"*. B5 is bitter that the test prevented her from getting an internship in a social profession (as a care assistant).
  B6 (80) – finds the economic cost-benefit calculation behind the test sensible: "*I thought it made sense that they did that. To find out whether it would pay off. Who is cognitively capable, right. Whether someone can do work for which you need some brains."*

Having hereby addressed how UB II clients are categorised according to formal profiling procedures and how this shapes the interaction and mindsets of caseworkers and clients, the following section now turns to the question how clients are cognitively activated or 'responsibilised' in German Jobcenters.

7. Responsibilisation and agency

In the final empirical section of this report, we now address the question how (and out of which considerations) caseworkers seek to discursively make clients responsible for their own fate (aka: job-search success). We also outline how German caseworkers deal with sanctions if clients do not meet their job-search or other requirements, and how all of these aspects are experienced by the clients themselves.

Responsibilisation: Caseworker views on client responsibilities

In our interviews, we found three caseworker quotes that pertain to the general responsibilities of unemployed UB II clients. These responsibilities entail *“using all available possibilities to end one’s dependency status”* according to caseworker A3 (71); and *“actively looking for work or, if there are other things to tackle first, contacting certain counselling agencies etc.”* according to A7 (23). Caseworker A5 (74) uses more a provocative formulation when she relates her attitude towards clients who refuse taking on a job that would entail in-work benefits:

> *Then I have to appeal to them: ‘But it is your duty to leave UB II. Who do you think is paying for your UB II? You have not paid any insurance contributions for that, (…) this is 100 % taxpayer money’.*

However, there are also instances of caseworkers expressing a more empathetic view in our interviews (and even in the interview with A5). For instance, caseworker A7 (67) says that she would theoretically have to force a middle-aged woman with a part-time job and an in-work benefit into “taking on (…) an additional job or a different job with more hours”; however, A5 signals that this is difficult or even unrealistic in a labour market in which employers have legal incentives to offer part-time jobs rather than full-time jobs. Hence, A5 reasons,

> *I won’t go out of my way [in such a case]. I’ll call her in, we’ll talk and I’ll do a [job] search, it’s not that I won’t do anything, but if there is nothing, there is nothing, and if she doesn’t find anything, she doesn’t find anything. (…) Because she is glad to have that job and I am glad she has that job. (…) Of course that would be different with a 28 year-old who delivers pizza for 100 € [per month], it’s only logical that I would try to place him elsewhere. So, you simply have to look at it from a realistic perspective and assess whether more is possible, or not.*

The theory-practice theme is also taken up by caseworker A8 (67) who muses about the very tiring work conditions at some modern-day work-places such as bakeries:

> *She simultaneously has to take things out of the oven, make sandwiches, operate the cashier, wait the tables etc. Not everybody can deal with such pressure, that’s completely understandable. These are the things that are sometimes not acknowledged in theory.*

And finally, also caseworker A2 (34) justifies a differentiated approach towards job-search requirements, depending on a client’s motivation:

> *We take a look at the clients. If we see, ‘OK, they have to be motivated’, then we do ask for five applications per month. If we see ‘OK, she is motivated’, then I’ll say ‘OK, I know she’s looking, and if she cannot manage five [applications], then it’s simply like that’.*

As all of these examples show, a workfarist rhetoric is relatively strong in the German UB II system, but whether caseworkers transmit that rhetoric to clients depends on the general attitude of the individual caseworker as well as on caseworkers’ subjective assessment of individual client cases.

Responsibilisation: Caseworker views on sanctions

When it comes to issuing sanctions, we see in our interviews that German UB II caseworkers talk about sanctions in three specific ways. Firstly, sanctioning is framed simply as a bureaucratic procedure and duty that caseworkers have to apply. Thus, caseworker A1 (9) says in a somewhat down-playing manner: *"Of course I am also obliged to take more rigorous steps in some matters and say: 'This is not in order'"*. Also caseworker A5 (30) says:

> *If they stop attending [the measure], if they cancel without talking to us, we register this as a 'cancellation without due cause' and that entails a compensation claim of 30 % [of the costs of the measure].*

And caseworker A2 (34) explains about sanctions for young people under age 25:

> *With our clientele, if they do something wrong, (…) the benefit reduction is 100 % straight away. (…) With the exception of a non-show, then it is 10 % as usual, but in all other cases, it's 100 %. Only the rent is paid through.*

Secondly, caseworkers are well aware of the moral dimension of sanctions for vulnerable citizens and hence devise moral justifications for sanctioning. For example, caseworker A1 (9) reports how she often justifies sanctions vis-à-vis clients: *"I also try to turn this around a bit and say, 'it was you who pushed me into this situation, in fact'"*. Caseworker A5 takes a more abstract perspective, framing sanctions as a pedagogical measure:

> *This regulation was instituted because of people like that, who simply stop attending. Such behaviour is now being policed more strictly, which I think is good. I always say, '(…) Staying away unexcused, that's not OK, also employers wouldn't find it OK, nobody accepts behaviour like that (…)'. They have to understand that.*

And caseworker A2 (38) rationalises stricter sanctions for young people by a utilitarian argument:

> *I agree with that, because they are our future, so to say. With the current lack of skilled employees etc. (…) we can't wait to see if they want to start an education at 30, when it's too late. Then they won't find an employer anymore.*

Thirdly, however, UB II caseworkers also take into account the human dimension of sanctions, drawing up an implicit watershed between justified-pedagogical sanctions for clients who are able but unwilling to work, and looser sanctioning behaviour towards vulnerable clients whose capacity to work is mentally or physically impaired. To give an illustrative example, caseworker A6 (21) emphasises that it is important to talk personally to clients in order to understand the reasons behind non-compliance:

> *Then we call the customers in. (…) We have to send them an invitation and then we talk about what's going on, of course threatening with legal consequences. But it can be – sometimes people momentarily lose control, or things break apart within the family, that's understandable, then we won't immediately reduce the benefit. But first, they have to come here and talk to us. We can't find out things like that on our own.*

If clients are not willing to talk and 'do the best they can', however, sanctions are usually seen as a legitimate means to prevent benefit abuse:

> *Either they take responsibility for their actions, so that (…) I'll say, 'OK, there will be no benefit reduction', or they continue to deny everything and say that everything is as it should be – in that case, they must bear the consequences and there might be a benefit reduction. Sometimes that works as a wake-up call, but not for everyone.*

As a final remark, the human implications of sanctions also make caseworkers take a somewhat holistic perspective towards sanctioning, meaning that they will sometimes abstain from a sanction if it would durably 'damage' their working relation with a particular client. Again in the words of A6 (41):

> *Of course we sometimes turn a blind eye. Especially if you have someone at your desk for the first time, if you immediately bring up a potential benefit reduction, your future cooperation with that client will suffer.*

To summarise, we have seen above that German UB II caseworkers tend to discuss sanctions from three perspectives: a bureaucratic-procedural perspective, a pedagogical-utilitarian perspective, and a human-relational perspective. In the following section, we now outline how caseworkers' attitudes towards clients' responsibilities surface in 'responsibilising' client conversations in daily practice.

Responsibilisation: Caseworker conversation techniques

In this section, we will give some concrete examples from our interviews of how caseworkers use responsibilising conversation techniques in the process of activating long-term unemployed clients. First of all, many caseworkers state that it is important to reach an agreement with the client about what should be done because otherwise, non-compliance and hence activation failure are likely outcomes. Thus, caseworker A5 (8) states: *"We have to do it together with the customer. The measure has to fit the customer. Otherwise, activation will fail"*. Also caseworker A2 (43) states: "*They must want it, otherwise it makes no sense"*. And caseworker A5 (8) says:

> *The customer might even break away at a crucial moment because he reasons, 'I don't want to do that, you put me in a programme that I can and will not complete because it's a step backward for me, not a step forward.*

Which specific conversation techniques caseworkers employ further down the road depends on which client type they perceive as sitting in front of them. As several caseworkers mention, many clients do not have a precise vision of what they want to achieve and in which direction job-search or training should go for them. To give two short examples:

> *Even at 24, many [customers] do not know where they want to go. (A2, 15)*

> *Some are clueless: 'What shall I do? Tell me, what should I do?' (A4, 38)*

In these cases, caseworkers tend to challenge clients in order to make them think more actively about what they would like to do with their lives. As caseworker A7 (23) reports,

> *Sometimes I sit there and say, 'What now?' I try to pass the ball to the client, asking 'What is your goal, where do you see yourself in five years?'*

As this example shows, the responsibilising quality of the 'challenging' discursive technique consists in framing the problem of unemployment as a personal problem affecting the client's entire personal life, and reminding the client of the fact that inactivity at the present stage may have detrimental effects on the client's future.

A different conversation technique is used when clients are perceived as having unrealistic plans or excessive expectations. In these cases, caseworkers tend to test clients' motivation or perseverance.

For example, caseworker A7 (25) relates how she would converse with a client requesting an expensive professional training albeit having quit several training programmes in the past:

> *I'm not someone who would say as a principle, 'That's impossible'. But you have to prove to me first that you have changed (…). I mean, 11.000 Euro (…) and then you might not even finish your CAD [computer-aided design] diploma because you no longer fancy that??*

Even more confrontational techniques are used when clients are perceived as reluctant to work. For instance, caseworker A6 (154) told one of her clients in our presence that he had *"to get going"* with an internship he had been trying to organise for a long time. At a different point during the client conversation, A6 told her client:

> *If you miss appointments unexcused even now, that gives a very bad impression. I mean, later on when you're in employment, employers won't accept that. (…) So, we see each other again on the 21st at 9:30. And hopefully you'll have made progress with that internship thing by then.*

Caseworker A6 (55) also reports more generally about when she would pressure a client to enrol for a particular activation measure:

> *Some clients, you have to push towards it and say, 'It is now simply time for you. You have to move a bit. Have a look at this, you should participate in this'.*

However, it should also be mentioned that caseworkers seem to hardly ever rely exclusively on a strict conversational approach. Instead, discursive 'carrots' and 'sticks' are used alternately – caseworkers unite the 'good cop' and 'bad cop' role in one person in order to increase the chance that either conversation strategy will bear fruit. To illustrate, caseworker A6 (153) told her client encouragingly (beside being strict with him), *"Maybe it's better to grit your teeth, then you will be done next year, you'll have your qualification"*. And further: *"We can do this, Mr [name]"*.

Finally, encouraging and sympathetic conversation techniques seem to be used exclusively when clients are perceived as doing their utmost best, only failing to find work because of structural conditions (e.g. a well-known reluctance of employers to take on single parents). This is exemplified well by the following statement of caseworker A1 (30) vis-à-vis a 'motivated' single mother:

> *I can't change the circumstances – I know them very well. But as we said, let's just keep calm and try, and if anything happens, we'll talk about it and find a solution*.

A similarly careful communicative style is used when caseworkers perceive sensitive personal issues such as body weight as an obstacle to employment:

> *In such cases, I often speak from my own experience. I'll say, 'With this office job, I sit at my desk all day' – although that may not even be so – (…) 'and probably I should see to it that I eat more healthily. (…) How about you, what are your eating habits these days?' (…) And then the conversation automatically turns to those issues. (…) Our work is not only about the FEA and simple job placement from the first to the last minute, because these small things, sometimes they can matter a lot. (…) People start listening more attentively. You can really see it in their body language. A8 (38)*

In concluding this section on the discursive responsibilisation of unemployed clients in German Jobcenters, we will now give the word to our client respondents, indicating how they perceive being 'responsibilised'.

Agency: How do clients experience being activated?

In the final empirical part of this report, we now address the question how clients see their own responsibilities as job-seekers, how they perceive caseworkers to support them in their job-search efforts, and to which degree clients' perceptions reflect or diverge from the caseworker attitudes outlined above. Starting with clients' perceptions of their own responsibility to find work, it is notable that only two of our client respondents directly address job-search efforts in 'duty' terms. Thus, client B6 (36) remarks: *"I realised, I have to do it myself. You can't always say, 'Hey you, can't you get some work ready for me?' Yeah, you have to take initiative yourself'"*. And client B3 (95) says about the individual integration agreement:

> *Let me put it like this, (…) I'm asking something of them and I won't get it just like that. I have to do something in return, and that's this contract, so to say. That's why I find it reasonable. (…) But I haven't had any negative experiences with it. (…) After all, you receive money from the state, they pay your rent, you don't have that everywhere. (…) In other countries you don't get money for doing nothing, that's how I look at it.*

Even sanctions were not a big issue for the client respondents we talked to, although this may not be representative of the German UB II population as a whole because active clients showing a lot of initiative are likely over-represented in our sample. In fact, only one of our client respondents had had personal experiences with sanctions:

> *Sanctions – only if I caused them myself. With many people, when they get sanctioned, I find it justified. They know perfectly well they have an appointment but they don't show up – then it's the right thing, in my opinion. (…) In earlier days, it annoyed me – 'I only missed one appointment, why immediately [a benefit reduction of] 30 % (…) for three months, or 10 % for three months'. But nowadays, I actually think that sanctions are perfectly right. In most cases. (B6, 98)*

Hence, at least in our (almost certainly biased) sample that we recruited mainly via Jobcenter staff, clients do not perceive job-search requirements or sanctions as harsh. However, the manner in which job-search duties are communicated or concretised by individual caseworkers is sometimes experienced as unfitting by clients. For instance, client B6 (65) criticises that some caseworkers only force unemployed people to write job applications, rather than lifting up their spirits or assisting them:

> *When it is stated in the integration agreement that one must write ten job applications within three months - what's this, that's not motivating, is it? It's more like, 'Do it like this and then we're done with it'. But that's not helping, is it.*

Also client B4 (66) complains that some caseworkers do not take into account the physical restrictions of older people enough when assigning them job applications:

> *They always say, [you have to look for work] in all of EAS, but EAS is big. I live at the far end of [name suburb] and if I have to travel to the other end of EAS, (…) I'll need a restroom somewhere on the way, and many of us have that problem. We're not asking for work immediately in our vicinity, but at least (…) I would need to be able to get there (…) without having to change trams four or five times. But often they say, 'But it's still in EAS'. But EAS is big.*

Other clients voice a similar criticism, yet with a more systemic touch. Here, the point of critique is that job-search requirements are to a certain degree arbitrary, depending on higher-order bureaucratic mandates:

> *It happens regularly, once or twice per year, that a new order is issued to be stricter with people, have them write more job applications or reduce their housing costs, and other things like that. Some of the Jobcenter staff also know this, they realise that this is to a certain degree simply ridiculous. (B7, 103)*

Finally, several clients also lament that they feel pressed into an 'unmotivated' personality category (and treated as such) when in fact, they have a completely opposite view of themselves and their sincerity in looking for work. The following quotes by client B4 express how clients react cognitively-emotionally when they feel disregarded and unduly pressured by caseworkers:

> *It hurts. (78)*

> *If you already put pressure on yourself and then someone [says], 'You show too little initiative', then – I do want to, but why… I mean, I had been doing an internship for four weeks. I worked at a nursery home (…) with 150 people, that was assembly-line work and I was completely exhausted in the evenings. (…) And after those four weeks, of course I had no applications. And then he said, 'You must nevertheless apply'. I said, 'But when should I do it, it's simply impossible'. (…) The man had not made a mistake in fact, I know he had to ask me that, but I missed – a certain sensitivity (…). He certainly did everything correctly and I'm sure it was the way it was supposed to be, but he just did not take into account the individual person, you know, because everyone is different. Some people don't take things like that to heart; he had realised that I… He did apologise to me at last and said, 'I still see great potential in you'. But I did not see any potential anymore at that moment, I just wanted to leave. (33)*

Experiences like this stand in sharp contrast to the self-perceptions expressed by clients, who see themselves as doing their utmost best to find work, as is illustrated by the following titbits (although it should be noted that due to a certain selection bias in our sample, we probably did not even get to speak to 'unmotivated' clients):

> *You try, one wants to work (…). Not sit at home all day, clean and be a mother and housewife, you also want to be in touch with people outside and do something for yourself, for your own feeling of self-worth. (B1, 16)*

> *I don't want to appear as a loser in front of my kids – 'sits around all day, puts stuff in [application] folders, drinks coffee' – that's impossible. I wasn't raised like that, my siblings aren't like that – both of them work. So, that's utterly impossible. (…) I don't want [my kids] to say one day, 'Mom also did it like this'. (B1, 79)*

> *And I begged to get just any job. I would like to continue working with old people. Two months later, I get an invitation by the AWO (…) – 'We have a work contract equivalent to 165 Euro [per month] for you'. I said, 'I take it, I'll take anything, if only I can work'. (B4, 84)*

> *I don't want to just sit around at home, that's nerve-racking. (…) I'd rather have a job and do something sensible than to sit around here doing nothing. (B2, 228)*

Hence, if we juxtapose these self-perceptions of clients with the judgement of several caseworkers mentioned above that most clients do not have a vision of what they want to do in life, one gets the impression that German Jobcenter caseworkers are so used to vulnerable and/or 'unmotivated' clients that they may overlook 'motivated' clients when they sit in front of them – unless clients prove beyond doubt that they are 'different', as client B6 (36) recalls:

> *And then I first did a substitute job. And I really gave my best, to prove to them that I'm really willing. And I believe it was only then that they opened up and said, 'Yes, OK, we'll see to it that we find funding for you'.*

However, our statement that Jobcenter caseworkers tend to overestimate the degree of clients' passivity should be taken with caution because our sample is too small for us to make any definitive statements in this regard. Also, it must be taken into account that by far not all clients perceive the activation endeavours of (all) caseworkers negatively. To take client B3 (94) as an example:

> *It always depends on the caseworker. (…) I have so far always been lucky with my caseworkers. I have also heard different stories, though. But in my case, everything went well so far, I'd say. (…) They also sent job offers to my home when they had found something. I really received intensive counselling here, I have to say.* (94)

> *She always took into account what I wanted and also what was possible. Yes, they do that.* (28)

Also client B2 (224) says: *"They talk to you and take into account the individual person. They don't say, 'This is what has to be done'".* And client B6 (62) recounts:

> *For instance, when it came to making the integration agreement, (…) she really reflected together with me: 'Should we put this in there, shouldn't we put it in there, do you think you can manage it like that?'*

However, client B6 (50) also remarks that he experienced intensive counselling only once he was referred to a case manager (because case managers have much lower caseloads than regular caseworkers). This supports our overall impression that tailor-made counselling/activation is only the rule in the case management part of the German UB II system, with the activation approaches of regular caseworkers being much more standardised and workfarist.

8. Conclusion

This country report discussed "street-level" activation discourses and practices in a German Jobcenter (cf. Lipsky 1980). For this purpose, we conducted and analysed interviews with eight caseworkers and four clients in the Eastern German city "EAS" (supplemented by four client interviews in the Northern German city of "NOR"). Our caseworker respondents not only had diverse educational and professional backgrounds but also went about their daily work in individually specific ways. Nevertheless, a structured and coherent account of the factors stimulating individualised versus standardised client approaches emerged from the caseworker interviews, for which reason we feel safe to claim that our findings are to some degree generalisable to the German UB II system more generally. The same can be said of our client interviews that also yielded coherent impressions of the effects of activation on clients' self-perceptions and behaviour, although our client sample was again highly diverse (comprising two single mothers, an ex-convict, an immigrant, an older person, a young person, and two very long-term unemployed clients).

Interestingly, some client interviews did not yield as much information as we had hoped because our respondents seemed on their guard concerning our intentions as researchers; on the flip-side, the two times that a caseworker was present during a client interview, highly dynamic conversations full of rich details ensued that gave us a deeper understanding of how clients experience to be ‘legibilised’ and ‘responsibilised’ during the activation process. Hence, one methodological lesson we have drawn from our research is that researchers should not shy away from trusting in the agentic capacity of unemployed individuals, rather than by definition seeking to ‘protect’ from the assumed “governmentality” power of state officials (cf. Foucault 1991).

Turning to the empirical and analytical lessons to be drawn from this report, two different kinds of such lessons can be drawn from the material presented above. First of all, we would argue based on our research that the organisational design of joint FEA-municipal Jobcenters in Germany is very well suited for integrating vulnerable unemployed citizens into the labour market, or at least bringing them closer to paid employment. Not only do the Jobcenters have a broad range of (and sufficient funds for) activation measures at their disposal, but also do the Jobcenters effectively combine the ‘employment’ expertise of the FEA (differentiated profiling system, standardised interventions) with the ‘social’ expertise of the municipalities (third-sector partnerships). Also the legal framework of the Social Security Code II provides a good basis for tailor-made and effective activation services, for instance by granting caseworkers high discretion in tailoring interventions to individual clients’ needs. However, and this is the second kind of conclusion we would draw from this study, four over-arching factors may hinder the effective implementation of the SGB II policy design and one-stop-shop Jobcenter structure in daily practice. These are:

1. **Scarce staff resources**, leading to
    - a dominance of ‘regular’ casework (with very high caseloads) over ‘marginal’ case management (with much lower caseloads and hence more intensive counselling)
    - rampant short-term contracts for caseworkers, causing frequent caseworker changes and hence lacking coherence in individual clients’ activation trajectories

2. **Cameralistic funding mechanisms** that sometimes create perverse incentives to ‘fill’ up activation measures

3. Differentiated **federal programmes and local target group approaches** that improve counselling for clients within the respective groups, but widen the quality gap between counselling for target group ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’

4. A lacking **‘personal chemistry’** between individual caseworkers and clients.

In order to mitigate the negative consequences of the above four aspects, the following strategies might be considered:

- Stabilising and intensifying counselling relations between caseworkers and clients by
    - reducing regular caseloads
    - expanding case management
    - making caseworker contracts more long-term (all of which would likely increase Jobcenters’ administrative costs, however)

- Switching to a more flexible and modular procurement scheme, the latter meaning that not only entire programmes, but also parts of programmes can be bought and flexibly combined for individual jobseekers.

- Differentiating activation approaches not along social problem definitions (such as ‘age’ or ‘family status’) but along the degree of clients’ distance from the labour market more generally

- Making it easier for client to switch caseworkers. Additionally or alternatively, regular caseworker trainings should be institutionalised to update caseworkers’ conversational skills and knowledge of current activation programmes/labour market trends.

In spite of the above-sketched room for improvement, we would like to end this report by saying that our interviews have taught us great respect not only for the life-struggles and often astonishing perseverance of long-term unemployed individuals, but also for the difficult work of Jobcenter caseworkers. We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our respondents for having shared their experiences with us.

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Appendix (A): Interview guide caseworkers

1. **Einführung, Hintergrundinformation**
   - WOZU führen wir die Interviews, WER sind wir? (Jeder stellt sich vor)
   - Wie werden die DATEN verwendet
   - Sie können jederzeit eine Frage NICHT BEANTWORTEN, eine PAUSE einlegen oder das Interview BEENDEN, wenn Sie das möchten
   - Dürfen wir das Interview AUFNEHMEN?

2. Funktionsbeschreibung
   - **Was ist Ihr AUFGABENGEBIET bzw. HINTERGRUND (Ausbildung, Beruf)?**
     i. WIE LANGE arbeiten Sie schon im Jobcenter?
     ii. Was haben Sie VORHER gemacht?
     iii. Welche AUFGABEN haben Sie neben Fallmanagement/Vermittlung?
     iv. Haben Sie ein internes Vermittlungs-/BeratungsTRAINING durchlaufen?
   - **Wie sieht ein TYPISCHER ARBEITSTAG von Ihnen aus?**

3. Kundenstamm
   - **Wie ist Ihr KUNDENSTAMM aufgebaut?**
     i. Haben Sie einen FESTEN oder wechselnden Kundenstamm?
     ii. WIE VIELE Personen betreuen Sie zurzeit?
     iii. Haben Sie eine spezielle ZIELGRUPPE?
     iv. Was sind die größten PROBLEME Ihrer Kunden neben der Arbeitslosigkeit?
   - **Nach welchen KRITERIEN erfolgt die Kundenzuteilung hier im Jobcenter?**
     i. Ist das überall in Deutschland gleich oder ist das SPEZIFISCH für das Jobcenter [xxx]?

4. Beispiel zur Veranschaulichung
   - **Gab es in der letzten Zeit eine(n) Kunden/ Kundin, der/die ihnen besonders im GEDÄCHTNIS geblieben ist? Können Sie etwas mehr über diesen Fall erzählen?**

5. Vermittlung/Beratung: Erster Kundenkontakt
   - **Wenn ein Kunde NEU zu Ihnen kommt, wie verläuft das erste Gespräch? Wonach FRAGEN Sie? Was muss am Ende GEKLÄRT sein? Wie lange DAUERT ein Erstgespräch?**
     i. Haben Sie dafür irgendwelche LEITFÄDEN oder EINGABEMASKEN am Computer? Könnten Sie uns diese einmal zeigen? Dürfen wir davon ein(en) Exemplar/Ausdruck mitnehmen?
     ii. Inwiefern beeinflusst die Erstellung der EINGLIEDERUNGSVEREINBARUNG den Gesprächs-verlauf? Wie individuell ist diese in der Praxis? Dürfen wir ein leeres Exemplar mitnehmen?
     iii. Welche PFLICHTEN haben die Kunden? Was passiert bei Pflichtverletzungen?
     iv. Wie gehen Sie vor, wenn jemand NICHT DIREKT eine Arbeit aufnehmen kann? (z.B. fehlende Kinderbetreuung, Obdachlosigkeit, Suchtprobleme, Schulden, psych. Probleme etc.)

v. Gibt es dafür standardisierte VORGABEN bzw. Vorgehensweisen?

6. Vermittlung/Beratung: Weitere Schritte
   - **Wie geht es nach dem ersten Gespräch WEITER?**
     i. Wie HÄUFIG sehen Sie Ihre Kunden? Wovon hängt das ab?
     ii. Was machen die Kunden in der ZWISCHENZEIT? Haben Sie zwischendurch Kontakt?
     iii. Gibt es dafür standardisierte REGELN oder ist das von Fall zu Fall verschieden?
     iv. Können Sie sich an die Kunden ERINNERN oder greifen Sie auf Akten etc. zurück, um sich Fälle wieder vor Augen zu führen?
     v. Diskutieren sie manchmal Fälle mit KOLLEGEN?

7. Maßnahmen und Vermittlungsvorschläge
   - **WELCHE Maßnahmen gibt es (Kurse/Weiterbildung, Praktika…)?**
   - **Bieten Sie IMMER Maßnahmen an oder nicht? Wovon hängt das ab?**
     i. Kommen die Kunden auch SELBST mit Vorschlägen?
     ii. Wie ENTSCHEIDEN Sie, ob/wann eine bestimmte Maßnahme sinnvoll ist?
     iii. Gibt es hierfür standardisierte RICHTLINIEN oder Tests?
     iv. Wie viel ENTSCHEIDUNGSSPIELRAUM haben Sie bei der Genehmigung von Maßnahmen?
     v. Wie sehr UNTERSCHEIDEN sich die genehmigten Maßnahmen in der Praxis?
   - **Wie schätzen Sie den vorhandenen MAßNAHMENKATALOG und die dafür vorgesehenen MITTEL/PLÄTZE ein? Reichen diese aus?**
   - **Suchen Sie für Ihre Kunden auch STELLEN(ANZEIGEN) heraus?**
     i. Wenn ja: Welche KRITERIEN werden dabei berücksichtigt?
     ii. Welche Arbeit ist ZUMUTBAR/SINNVOLL, wo sind die GRAUZONEN?
     iii. Gibt es die Möglichkeit einer NACHBETREUUNG?

8. Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Einrichtungen, Arbeitgebern etc.
   - **Mit welchen Einrichtungen und Ämtern arbeiten Sie bei der Vermittlung bzw. Betreuung Ihrer Kunden ZUSAMMEN?**
   - **Haben Sie auch Kontakte zu ARBEITGEBERN?**
     i. Gibt es dafür VORGABEN?
     ii. Wie sind diese Kontakte ZUSTANDE gekommen?
     iii. Wie VERLÄUFT die praktische Zusammenarbeit bzw. Weitervermittlung?
     iv. Verläuft die Zusammenarbeit GUT? Wo gibt es evtl. SCHWIERIGKEITEN und warum?
     v. (Inwiefern) PROFITIEREN die Kunden von der Zusammenarbeit mit diesen Partnern?

9. Aufgaben von Kunden und Jobcenter
   - **Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die Voraussetzung für eine ERFOLGREICHE Vermittlung/Betreuung? – Von Seiten der Kunden? Von Seiten des Jobcenters?**
     i. Was müssen die Kunden SELBST tun, um wieder in Arbeit zu kommen?
     ii. Gibt es Kunden, die besonders SCHWIERIG sind? Wie gehen Sie mit ihnen um?

iii. Gibt es interne ZIELVORGABEN, an die Sie sich halten müssen?
iv. Wenn ja: Wie BEEINFLUSSEN diese Ihre Arbeit? Haben sie sich im Laufe der Zeit GEÄNDERT?

- **Welche Aspekte Ihrer Arbeit GEFALLEN Ihnen am besten? Welche weniger (und warum)?**

10. **Gibt es noch weitere Punkte, die wichtig sind?**
    - Von Ihrer Seite…
    - Von unserer Seite…

11. **Danke und Abschluss des Interviews**

12. ***Selbst notieren:***
    - *Geschlecht*
    - *Geschätztes Alter*

Appendix (B): Interview guide clients

1. **Einführung, Hintergrundinformation**
   - WOZU führen wir die Interviews.
   - Wie werden die DATEN verwendet?
   - Sie können jederzeit eine Frage NICHT BEANTWORTEN, eine PAUSE einlegen oder das Interview BEENDEN, wenn Sie das möchten
   - Dürfen wir das Interview AUFNEHMEN?

2. **Die Lebenssituation**
   - Wie lange sind Sie schon arbeitslos?
   - Wie kam es dazu?
   - Was haben Sie vorher gemacht?
   - **Haben Sie Unterstützung aus Ihrem familiären Umfeld?**
     - Alleinstehend oder Partnerschaft?

3. **Verhältnis zum Jobcenter**
   - **Können Sie mir Ihren allerersten Kontakt mit dem Jobcenter schildern? Was ist Ihnen aufgefallen? Wie haben Sie sich gefühlt?**
   - Haben Sie immer noch den gleichen Arbeitsvermittler oder hat er gewechselt?
   - Welcher Vermittler ist Ihnen besonders im Gedächtnis geblieben? Warum?
   - Hatten die Vermittlerwechsel Einfluss auf die Qualität der Beratung? Wenn ja: welchen?
   - Wie würden Sie Ihre Beziehung zu Ihrem jetzigen Vermittler beschreiben?
   - Fühlen Sie sich von Ihrem Vermittler ernstgenommen?
   - Denken Sie, Ihr Vermittler versteht Ihre Situation?
   - Wissen Sie, welche Informationen Ihr Vermittler über Sie speichert?

4. **Vermittlung/Beratung**
   - In welchen Abständen haben Sie Termine im Jobcenter?
   - **Wie lange dauern Ihre Beratungsgespräche in der Regel?**
   - **Wenn Sie an Ihren letzten Besuch bei Ihrem Arbeitsvermittler zurückdenken: Was wurde dort besprochen oder abgefragt? Haben Sie einen Fragebogen bekommen? (Persönlichkeitstest; Stärken-Schwächen Analyse)**
   - Hatten auch Sie Fragen an den Vermittler? Wenn ja: Worum ging es da?
   - **Haben die Fragen des Vermittlers alle wichtigen Bereiche abgedeckt oder fanden Sie, dass wichtige Dinge ausgelassen wurden?**
   - Wurde eine Eingliederungsvereinbarung aufgestellt? Wenn ja: Können Sie sich daran erinnern, was darin stand? Welche Bedeutung hat diese Vereinbarung für Sie persönlich?
   - Haben Sie Jobangebote bekommen? Wenn ja: Haben Sie sie als nützlich bzw. passend empfunden? Wie sind Sie mit den Jobangeboten weiter verfahren?
   - Haben Sie Vorschläge des Jobcenters auch mal nicht befolgt? Wenn ja: Gab es dann Konsequenzen und wie sahen diese aus?

5. **Maßnahmen**
   - **Welche Maßnahmen haben Sie schon gemacht?**
   - Warum gerade diese – wie kam es dazu (mussten Sie, wollten Sie)?
   - Was haben diese Maßnahmen Ihnen gebracht? (Qualifikationen, Motivation…)
   - Wurden Sie jemals zu einem psychologischen Test geschickt? Wie war das?
   - Was würden Sie selbst gerne machen, wenn Sie frei wählen könnten?
   - Wovon hängt es Ihrer Meinung nach ab, welche und ob überhaupt Maßnahmen gemacht werden?
   - **Hatten Sie die Möglichkeit, mitzureden oder Vorschläge einzubringen?**

6. **Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Einrichtungen**
   - Hat Ihr Arbeitsvermittler Sie schon einmal an eine andere Einrichtung vermittelt?
   - Falls nein: Wissen Sie, ob das Jobcenter mit anderen Einrichtungen zusammenarbeitet?
   - Haben Sie sich jemals selbst an eine andere Einrichtung gewandt, um Unterstützung zu bekommen? Wenn ja: Welche war das und wie kam es dazu?
   - Finden/fanden Sie es hilfreich, von mehreren Stellen Unterstützung zu bekommen? Warum (nicht)?

7. **Erwartungen**
   - **Was denken Sie, woran es liegt, dass Sie noch keine Arbeit finden konnten?**
   - **Was muss Ihrer Meinung nach passieren, damit Sie wieder eine Arbeit bekommen?**
   - Denken Sie, das Jobcenter sieht das genauso oder anders?
   - Würden Sie sagen, es gibt in dieser Hinsicht einen Unterschied zwischen Vermittlern?
   - Was macht Ihrer Meinung nach einen guten Vermittler aus?

8. **Vermittlung und Beratung: weitere Schritte**
   - **Inwiefern beeinflusst das Jobcenter Ihren Alltag? Gibt es Dinge, die Sie anders handhaben würden, wenn das Jobcenter Sie nur auf Ihre Anfrage hin betreuen würde?**
   - Fühlen Sie sich gut beraten? In welcher Hinsicht könnte das Jobcenter Sie besser unterstützen?
   - Wie beurteilen Sie allgemein Ihre Erfahrungen mit dem Jobcenter?
   - Bei Langzeitarbeitslosen: (Wie) hat sich die Betreuung durch das Jobcenter im Laufe der Jahre verändert?

9. **Gibt es noch weitere Punkte, die wichtig sind?**
   - Von Ihrer Seite …
   - Von unserer Seite …

10. **Danke und Abschluss des Interviews**

11. **Selbst notieren:**
   - Alter
   - Geschlecht

Endnotes

1 Unemployment Benefit II (Arbeitslosengeld II), the German unemployment benefit scheme for non-insured clients

2 See http://www.perspektive50plus.de [Rev. 2013-11-19].

3 For an overview of the 12 types, see http://www.sgb2.info/node/1260 [Rev. 2014-01-30].

4 URL: http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_26236/zentraler-Content/A10-Fachdienste/A102-PD/Allgemein/PD-Frage-4.html [Rev. 2014-01-16].

5 URL: http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_26812/zentraler-Content/A10-Fachdienste/A102-PD/Allgemein/Psychologischer-Dienst-Instrumente.html [Rev. 2014-01-16].

6 URL: http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_26236/zentraler-Content/A02-Berufsorientierung/A021-Personale-Dienstleistungen/Allgemein/Testaufgaben-Beispiele.html [Rev. 2014-01-16].

The Individualization of Interventions

WP6 National Report

Italy Country Analysis

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(Under the specific supervision of Paolo R. Graziano)

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to focus on how public administration labor services and practices allow for individualized interventions towards citizens. Evidence suggests that labor market and public administration in all European countries are undergoing a gradual process of individualization influencing how individuals perceive their citizenship and choice options. The analysis described in this report is centered on the emerging tensions between "standardization" and "individualization" principles underlying the New Public Management (NPM) practices. On one side, current policies discourses are focused more and more on activation policies aimed at increasing people's employability through continuous learning, individualized training and self-assessment capabilities. On the other, technologies development influenced the interaction between bureaucrats and users. Human interactions are mediated by online forms to be filled in by case-workers, behavioral tests conducted by therapists, schedules and other technological instruments. Individual discretion, usually characterizing street-level bureaucracy is now replaced by standardized technological instruments aimed at increasing people "legibility". "Legibility" is defined as the necessity to make visible, measurable and evaluable people's characteristics in order to simplify public administration's procedures, their follow-up and verification. Legibility makes people "*process-able*" (Garsten & Jacobsson, 2013) and *typified.*

This report principal aim consists in shedding some light on the potential contradictions arising from the tension between "standardization", coming from NPM organizational approaches, and the growing attempts to offer tailor-made, individualized employment and training services . In order to focus on this theme, a relevant part of this report is focused on one side on the variety of instruments, formats and modules used by street-level bureaucrats to process and categorize users in their every-day routinary activities and on the other, on the various programs aimed at providing individual-specific services. A second relevant research theme regards dualisation of labor policies. In several countries, public employment services are divided into those targeting "normal" job seekers and "disadvantaged" categories. But what are the definitions used to define a "normal" and a "disadvantaged" job seeker? And in which way does the mechanism "enforcement-reward" function at the local level in the case study of Italy?

In this report, we decided to focus on the case of Milan because it presents an unusual organizational variety and innovativeness respect to Rome and Naples. The organization we focus on, AFOL-Milano - acronym for “Agenzia per la Formazione, Orientamento e Lavoro” - is a local public employment service agency covering, with five territorial branches, the huge area of the Province of Milano (about 4 million inhabitants). Parallel to standard Public Employment Services (PES), the central territorial agency, AFOL-Milano, provides a variety of services including consulting for immigrants, lifelong-learning programs, corporate professional training services and placement, career guidance for students, workers and job seekers, women dedicated psychological consulting. This organizational richness make this case-study particularly interesting because of the focus on individualized programs and services.

2. Methodology

ISTAT[1] – Italian national statistical institute – definition of "unemployed person" is the following: a “person between 15 and 74 years old that:

- undertook at least an action of job search in the four weeks before the reference week and who declares to be disposable to work in the following two weeks or;
- is going to start a job in three months respect to the week of reference and declares to be disposable to start a new job in the following two weeks if it was possible to anticipate its start”.

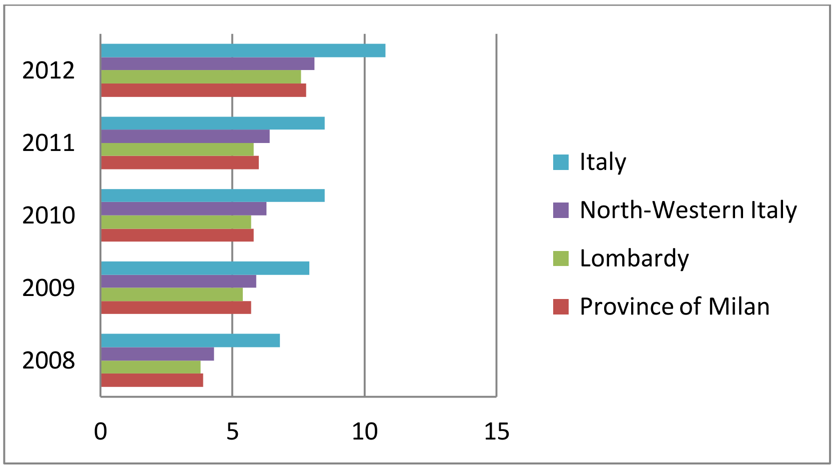
Before the analysis, some clarifications are necessary since Italian legislation provides the same bureaucratic treatment and the same social rights to long-term unemployed people as well as to long-term first-job seekers. According to Law 407/1990 , long-term unemployment status is attributable to “all subjects that, after having lost their previous job or stopped their autonomous activity, have looked for a new occupation for twelve months or more”. The definition of “unemployed person” is not to be confounded with the definition of “first-time job seeker”, a person who “is in search of the first occupation for six months (in the case of youngsters between 15 and 24 years old or until 29 years old if they hold a Bachelor or Master) or twelve months for adults. Filling the declaration of immediate disposability to work (to be made at the nearest Public Employment Service office at the front-office called “Centro per l’Impiego”) a long-term unemployed person or a first-time job seeker is able to obtain the formal status of “unemployed”. This gives registered people the right to receive unemployment benefits - variable in amount and length according to single working histories - and unemployment services aimed at work

[1] http://www3.istat.it/cgi-bin/glossario

reallocation. Unemployment status can be lost in specific cases (new job acceptance, unjustified absence at a convocation, refusal of a new job proposal from the PES office) or suspended for limited time periods (in case of short-time job contracts).

The Province of Milan, presents a slightly lower unemployment rate than the rest of Italy (Fig.1). As shown by available data for the five years 2008-2012, the rate of unemployment augmented significantly overcoming the 10% in 2012 at national level. Locally, the unemployment rate follows the national trend, still remaining under the threshold of 10% (7.8% in 2012).

Figure 1: Unemployment rates 2008-2012 territorial comparison (in percentages)



Author's calculation on data available at http://dati.comune.milano.it/

Data collection

From September to December 2013, we collected totally fifteen interviews: eight to case-workers and seven to long-term unemployed. Interviews to case workers were a bit longer than those to job-seekers and lasted about one hour and a half each (Table 1). All of them were recorded and transcribed[2]. Access was allowed first by AFOL General Director, but contacts were provided personally by CPI – Centro per l'Impiego - Office Manager so we should consider the possibility of selection bias in order to give an idealized picture of the organization. All the interviewed case workers are experienced and have a deep knowledge of the overall organizational structure and of the instruments-services available for the users. It seems that every case worker, during her career, is involved in different positions with growing levels of complexity starting from the mere

[2] We are grateful to Anna Desanso who transcribed the interviews for WP6 and WP7.

front-office unemployment registration to the most articulated tutorship programs. The impression is that the greatest part of their professional training is made "on the field" and consolidated with daily experience. Confidentiality and anonymity of interviews was granted and it helped case workers to express honestly some personal opinions and feedbacks about the organizational efficacy and efficiency. Interviews with case workers were conducted in the work place during office hours.

Table 1 Interviews with case workers

	Organisation and Position	Gender	Educational background	Work tasks	Experience of case work (years)
1	AFOL – CPI unit- Manager	F	Education and Social Assistance	Coordination PES and front-office	<10
2	AFOL – CPI unit- Case worker	M	Accountant	Front-office, unemployment registration	<10
3	AFOL – CPI unit –Case worker	F	MA degree, major in Work Rehabilitation	Front-office and active policies- training rehabilitation programs	10
4	AFOL – PAL unit– Officer	F	MA degree, major Psychology	Front-office and targeted active policies programs	<10
5	AFOL – PAL unit - Officer	F	MA degree in Economics, major in Human Resources and Marketing	Front-office, work rehabilitation and business crisis unit	<10
6	AFOL- PAL unit – Officer	M	MA degree in Law, major in Work Legislation	Front-office and active policies programs targeted to disabled people	>10
7	AFOL- PAL unit – Case worker	F	MA degree in Phylosophy, major in Human Resources	Front-office and targeted active policies programs, gender policies	<10
8	AFOL – PAL unit - Officer	F	MA in Economics, major in Active Policies	Front-office and targeted active policies programs	>10

Seven interviews with long term unemployed were conducted (Table 2). Each interview lasted about an hour. All interviewed people were enrolled in an active policies training program, called "Ricolloca-MI"[3] aimed at their professional re-placement. Getting in touch with unemployed people was difficult because of managers' denial to share databases with us for privacy motivations. The interviewees were, therefore, selected, after a brief presentation of Localise project, on a voluntarily basis at the end of three training meetings made at AFOL between November and December 2013. Obviously there is a consistent selection bias coming from the fact that all the interviewees shared some common professional background in order to participate to the project "Ricolloca-MI". By consequence, all the job-seekers interviewed have more or less the same professional background (mechanical- technical drawers) albeit with

[3] "Ricollocami" in Italian means "replacement".

different experiences or qualification. One of them, even if not long-term unemployed, was selected and enrolled in the project and has been interviewed. The fact that many active policies programs do not target exclusively long-term unemployed is significant and sheds some light on the fact that Italian policy makers tend to frame projects according to some specific issues (work rehabilitation, school-to-work transition, work-family balance) rather than segments of population. This point will be discussed later in the report (Paragraph 1.6).

The focus of the interviews on active policies and individualized services narrowed the range of selection, because only a slight part of the registered unemployed people undertakes active policies paths. This due to the fact that these programs are usually targeted to individuals with defined professional or socio-demographic characteristics (age, residence, educational background) and have just few places available. There is a considerable *ex ante* selection process made by case workers on the huge unemployment lists to find, contact and screen the "right" people to be enrolled in every project.

Table 2 Long-term unemployed interviews

	Gender	Age	Referring Organization	Time in unemployment (since last job)	Education and work experience	Family situation
1	M	31	AFOL Milano Project "Ricollocami"	4 months	Industrial mechanical adept	Lives with partner, not married
2	M	28	AFOL Milano Project "Ricollocami"	2 years	Mechanical expert	Lives with parents
3	F	40	AFOL Milano Project "Ricollocami"	More than 2 years	Mechanical expert	Single. Shares a flat with others
4	F	29	AFOL Milano Project "4 Passi per il lavoro"	1 year	Bachelor Law	Lives with family
5	M	35	AFOL Milano Project "Ricollocami"	1 year	High-school scientific diploma. Worked as graphic designer	Lives with partner, no children, not married
6	M	52	AFOL Milano Project "Ricollocami"	Formally unemployed since 2008	Mechanical engineer. Worked in low qualified jobs since came in Italy	Married with 2 children, immigrated in Italy from Perù in 2007
7	M	37	AFOL Milano Project "Ricollocami"	Formally unemployed since 2010	Mechanical engineer.	Married with one child. Immigrated from Perù in 2010

3. Organizational and governance context

Since 1999, after Leg. Decree 469/97 and Law n.59/97, Activation Policies responsibility in Italy passed from the central Ministry of Labor to Regions and Provinces. Nowadays, Regions and Provinces have the power to help labor supply-demand mechanisms, to collect unemployment lists and to manage active policies projects and the relative monetary resources.

According to Italian labor legislation there are two types of unemployment benefits[4]:

- the ordinary benefit, called "indennità ordinaria" dedicated to involuntary unemployed people with at least 52 weeks of social deposits in the two years before dismissal, benefit payment is limited in time and proportional to the last wage;

- the reduced requirements benefit, called "indennità a requisiti ridotti" dedicated to unemployed people with short and discontinuous working experiences in the two years before dismissal, the amount is limited in time and proportional to the last wage.

Since 2006, AFOL-Milano and its territorial agencies placed on the Province are the formal venue for job-seekers who need to register in unemployment lists. AFOL hosts the "Centro per l'impiego" office (CPI) where users have to declare their immediate availability to work in order to obtain the formal status of "job-seekers". This registration allows unemployed people to take advantage of focused replacement services and, if formal requirements are satisfied, to receive monetary benefits according to Italian labor legislation. Once registered, a long-term unemployed has the obligation to attend every meeting organized by the PES office at which he/she is convened. If he/she skips a meeting, without a justification, he/she risks to lose the state of unemployment and the related benefits/services. As will be described later on in the report, there is variety of active policies programs and services targeting different users' typologies. Nevertheless, respect to the amount of people registered in the unemployment lists, resources are still inadequate to cover all the potential training and rehabilitation needs.

[4] More details available at: http://www.inps.it/portale/default.aspx?inodo=8127&bi=13&link=Indennit%C3%A0+di+disoccupazione+ASpI

AFOL goal is fourfold, as described in the Service Card leaflet[5]:

1) Prevent and contrast unemployment;
2) Improve employment quality;
3) Foster human capital growth;
4) Support local development.

In order to pursue these objectives, areas of integrated interventions are:

1) Training;
2) Career and vocational guidance;
3) Employment.

Guiding principles are : equality in rights, fairness, right of choice between service providers, active participation (with relative users' feedback and evaluation rights), efficiency and effectiveness.

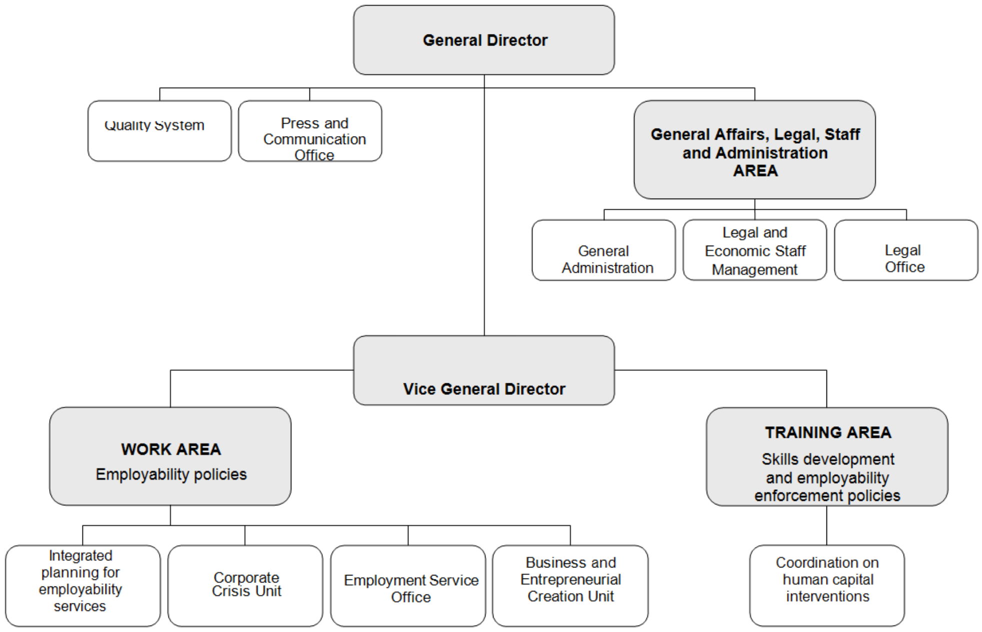
AFOL organizational structure is quite complex (Fig.1). The operative units are divided in two main areas: employment and training. Employment area is, in turn, divided into four administrative functional areas – CPI unit (CPI- Centro per l'Impiego), Corporate Crisis Unit, Integrated Planning for employability services (PAL unit – Politiche Attive per il Lavoro) – and a career advice area. Administrative offices have a first acceptance-registration function (separated for individual job-seekers and corporate massive layoffs[6]), whilst the career advice area develops and organizes both individual interviews and tailor-made active policies projects. The training area comprehends three big single-issue institutes – Bauer Institute (dedicated to photography and visual communication), Paullo Institute (for fashion and aesthetics disciplines) and Vigorelli Institute (dedicated to informatics, IT technologies and certification systems). These structures organize training activities for job-seekers, but also classes for high-school students and corporate employees needing professional update[7]. Moreover, job-seekers have the possibility to enable individual spontaneous actions finalized at job search using some free collateral services. Among these, "Città dei Mestieri" is an area near to CPI front-office where users can use laptops, have access to free Internet, can consult specialized newspapers containing job offers, can receive an help to update their CVs and improve their job search techniques. This service is free and accessible by everyone.

[5] See Annex 1 and 2.
[6] Layoffs coming from collective corporate dismissals
[7] These services are not free, but provided for a fee to schools, professional institutes or companies.

Another free and open service is provided in the area "ATIPICOinfonet" where workers with atypical fixed-term contracts can receive assistance and information about contracts' typologies, taxes and social rights in case of unemployment. Similar consulting services are offered by experts about parental leaves, family policies and entrepreneurship opportunities on weekly basis by appointment. Specific programs are dedicated to high-profiles work rehabilitation and disabled people.

AFOL offers targeted services also on the demand side of labor market, acting in certain cases as intermediary between job-seekers and employers. In particular, it offers companies looking for employees, some screening services and pre-selection interviews. On specific request basis, AFOL publishes job offers announcements on principal local and national newspapers, specialized magazines and dedicated areas. AFOL actions on demand side include also internship activation and arrangement.

Figure 2: AFOL- Milano organizational structure (June 2013)



After the liberalization of employment services following 90's labor market reforms, placement services and career guidance services are managed both by local PES offices and temporary work local agencies. Some active policies projects, as will be explained later, are managed by AFOL together with these agencies. AFOL and temporary work agencies, although having the same function (supply-demand of work matching), have slight different operating strategies (temporary work agencies directly hire workers and provide companies with workforce in order to fill fluctuations in the labor market), but sometimes act in a synergistic way on project and programs sharing respective competencies and resources.

AFOL interacts also with a large network of care public and private organizations when a user is recognized to be in need of specific support in other areas than work (health, education, social aid-assistance, social housing, immigration policies).

4. The governance structure of every day work

Trajectories

When a person remains unemployed, in order to receive benefits from the State, has to appear in some dedicated lists. These lists are filled in by case-workers through an online form, called in the case of Lombardy, Sistema "Sintesi". Once the form has been filled in, the person is formally classified as unemployed, according to the definition we reported before. At this point, he/she has the possibility to interact with AFOL through several actions. For example, the user, if formal prerequisites are met, might decide to apply for some training activities or to ask for some help in order to renovate the CV or consult job offers. In general, there aren't formal actions that the user must do after the registration is done. The real difference comes if the job seekers are selected by the case workers to participate in an active policy project. As we will describe in Section 5, the resources dedicated to these active policies projects are still very scarce respect to the number of people that are monthly enrolled in the unemployment lists. These resources come from the regional level or from the central government. Also the framework of these project is defined at these levels. Just organization and implementation are made at local level (Province). In case of project enrollment, the user must pass through several steps. Every project is different and, in the case of AFOL , there are usually three or four big projects organized every year with a different targets. We could think about AFOL's structure as a funnel. The first level, the CPI unit, involves every person who needs to be inscribed in the lists and, as it is easily predictable, numbers are huge. Once this first step is passed, there is a variety of alternative actions the user might undertake, but many of these depend on the legibility of the job seekers and are not universally provided. To sum up, we can distinguish two types of individual trajectories: the first involves all the jobseekers and it is a compulsory step in order to receive public social aid, the second and succeeding type of trajectory involves only a part of them and depends on several factors (legibility, individual availability and will to take part in these activities). Every targeted project is developed in several steps. Usually there is a first phase in which the user is asked to participate in some psychological and behavioral testing activities aimed at shaping his/her profile and a second phase during which training activities are performed (class activities, interview simulations, help in CV writing and updating etc…). A third step is sometimes present and consists in an evaluation of the program. As we will describe later, follow-up activities are rare with the consequence that it is difficult for the organization to have a precise idea on the effectiveness and cogency of actions put in place. As emerged from users' interviews, this organizational system risks to marginalize large segments of unemployed people and it shows a high level of fragmentation between the first formal-bureaucratic step, usually recalled as a negative experience, and the second more targeted and optional one, which is usually defined as positive and useful. As reported by one of them:

> "*There are big differences between the past and the present, the first time I came here my father helped me while I was queuing, I was a number, a human being with no name, I was not aware of what I was doing so I felt objectively a bit lost […]. I filled in the forms, they did not explain anything to me, it happened many years ago and, for this reason I abandoned. I had no clue of what I've done, I had no idea of what they wrote on my profile. […] I have never received any invitation till last week when I was convoked through the letter so I came here because I have nothing to lose.*"
> *User 4*

The segmentation of users' trajectories emerges from several interviews. In jobseekers opinion there are huge differences between the first step at CPI front-office and the second one, in which they are invited to take part in the process of activation.

In many cases, the individual trajectory is characterized by many attempts to being involved in these activation projects but since these are targeted and involve a selection process, many users' might wait for years before being called for a screening interview.

"At this time, I was lucky fortunately, I think that since I was enrolled in the unemployment lists for a long time and since the labor market requires technical experts, technical drawers… the problem is that previous experience is always required to get these jobs, but maybe they called me because they think I have studied and I am able to enter in this field."
User 2

"[…] Since the time I was enrolled in the unemployment lists I've always reported the same task – technical drawer, mechanical drawer, graphic designer. So before or after it had to happen. […] It was the CV I left three years ago."
User 5

<u>The role of the case worker and their everyday work</u>

Case-workers everyday's work is different according to their role. Case-workers employed in the CPI front-office are the ones who welcome users at their first venue. Their activity is linked mainly to the filling of an online database - called "Sintesi" - that collects information on the working history and occupational status of each user. Their activity is mainly a front-office one and the relative responsibilities are connected to the correct filling of the online database and to the bureaucratic forms confirming the occupational status of users. Meetings take place without appointment. There is an automatic system to divide queues according to users' needs. The high relational content of this task is recognized by case-workers as the main challenge of their work.

"Front-office, front-office, front-office…With this job you get always in touch with the public, you feel on the street, not in an office, you can encounter from the glass washer to the manager that comes from a big company that closed, there is a wide range of users and with the crisis the amount of people increased a lot.[…] You feel like in a TV show, you click and you don't know what might happen. I like it, you could think that our job is boring, but every person is a story […]. It depends a lot on your attitude with the public, many people

tell me that they have never seen a public office this cozy, many operators are cold, they can't wait to go home at 4.30 pm."

Case-worker 2

Other positions are more distributed across front-office activities, back-office practices and coordination actions. It is important to underline that there is an evident difference in professional profiles of CPI front-office and activation policies experts. The former have usually less specific professional and educational backgrounds respect to the latter. CPI case-workers seem to develop some soft skills through experience on the job place. The case-workers who organize and manage activation plans are usually graduates in Political or Social Sciences with Masters in HR Management or Psychology. Their everyday activities are much more dynamic and various than the ones carried out by the CPI front-office clerks. Meetings and interviews are usually held on individual basis, by appointment and they can last even two or three hours.

> *"I conduct interviews, they can last even three or four hours, mainly in the morning, depending on the project, the reference target activities can be various. Substantially, all the activities carried out are career guidance activities more or less deep according to the project, so we talk about competences budgets and behavioral tests that can take place during several different meetings during which we write some documents with the users, documents about their professional experiences, technical competencies. We try to conduct an analysis on what could be a potential rehabilitation to work or update according to labor market requests."*
>
> *Case-worker 8*

Training activities and classes are conducted by external experts hired by AFOL according to the specific competencies needed. Even in the case of activation projects, case-workers have the responsibility to fill in many formal documents (described in detail in Section 6) for each step of the project. Despite this, in our view, a high degree of discretion emerges from the interviews. In particular, this discretion involves activation projects. Jobseekers involvement is demanded to a large extent to case-workers selection process as we will describe in Section 6 regarding legibility and categorization.

Terminology

Interestingly, terminology used to denote jobseekers changes according to the service they are involved in. As for CPI front-office – where the first registration takes place – the most used definition is "utente". In Italian, the word "utente" is the most common term used to describe someone who's using a public service and its quite formal. As for activation projects, the word used is not "utente", but "beneficiary". "Beneficiary" means literally "a person who draws advantage from a specific service". To take part in a project, unemployed people have to undergo a selection process, so it make sense to consider the enrolled ones as "beneficiaries". Moreover, some projects, like the one called "Dote unica lavoro" (in English "endowment") foresees the possibility to invest predetermined amounts of money per each individual. In this sense, the definition "beneficiario" seems to be well-fitting.

The word "utente" is more undefined, while "beneficiario" assumes the existence of some "non-beneficiaries", in other words, of some individuals that are not getting advantage from the projects.

Relations between users and case-workers

A high level of responsibility is present among case-workers. They feel more responsible towards the users rather than towards their managers. They feel as jobseekers' professional lives depend on their actions and on their ability to reallocate them in the labor market. Even in the case of CPI front-office, workers we observed have an high level of self-perceived accountability. Case-workers seem to be empathic with their users and aware of the situation they are living.

> *"We are not front-office clerks, we are a kind of psychologists, in the sense that the person who arrives tells us everything, we are a sort of first outburst. Some colleagues find it annoying, it happened also to me that a person started to cry. Sometimes you have to recall the form to be filled in because they are telling you the story of their life, but I like it. Some of them [...] look at you as a confessor, they ask you to help them for a large range of problems."*
>
> *Case-worker 2*

Even if in the majority of activities carried out in AFOL, there is not a follow-up process to monitor the effectiveness of the reallocation, once a case-worker hears that a person he managed to help, succeeds in finding a new occupation he/she feels responsible for this success and feels kind of rewarded.

> *"[...] When we succeed in obtaining some occupational insertions it's a big celebration, for me it is like a victory, it is a personal gratification that goes well beyond economic benefits. Receiving a letter or an email with 'I passed the screening interview...I start to work the...' or seeing in the online system that a person has been hired is the greatest gratification I could bring home."*
> *Case-worker 8*

Many times the aid required by jobseekers goes well beyond the field of employment.

> *"Yes, yes we always try to support them* (the users), *many times they ask you for some help for things that go beyond the project "Dote[8]", for example, how [...] can they act in order to receive unemployment benefits or other similar questions that may not recall the project but that recall our sense of responsibility [...]".*
> *Case-worker 4*

The psychological trauma of job-lost is usually a distinguishing trait of the relation between case-workers and jobseekers.

> *"Absolutely yes* (feels responsible, ndr) *the relation that we build with people is fundamental, we meet very angry people, people that collaborated for years in a organization and at a certain point they are thrown out. It is a real mourning. We are the first impact with reality they have."*
> *Case worker 8*

[8] "Dote" is the name of one specific project dedicated to the reallocation of unemployed. This project entitles every users who takes part in a certain amount of money that is used to finance training and career guidance activities.

As for users, the general sensation coming from the interviews is that the first impact with CPI front-office is not always positive:

> *"The first meeting was terrible, I had no hope because, in practice, there was a long queue of desks, with single persons that made you sit down and asked you to describe your experiences while trying to fill in an attitudinal and professional profile […]. Some of them were smart, as the ones who sit near me, but the one that talked to me was the worst. He was an idiot who asked me just a few questions and, in fact, I was wondering what he could have written in that profile, nothing in practice and he let me go very quickly, so that when I came back to AFOL, when I did the same thing with the girls here, it was the type of action I had to do back in the 2009, very detailed, well done, it had a sense, but the first meeting was a terrible experience."*
> *User 3*

A deeper and trustful relation is eventually built later on, if the user undergoes a further process of career guidance, training or tutorship. These projects imply a number of face-to-face meetings and every person is followed by a unique case-worker till the end. By consequence, the effectiveness of these projects depends on large extent on the quality of the relation between users and case-workers and on the ability of the latter to understand needs and potentialities, especially in the most individualized programs.

> *"In this case […] it was principally her* (the case-worker, ndr) *who tempted me to participate in the project, because I arrived with a very upset attitude because of my personal experience […], so she was very convincing and at the end, she convinced me because removing the obstacle represented by low trust in things…The fact that she is part of a public entity… She listened to me, because the thing I cannot stand, especially in temporary work agencies, is the fact that there is not a real listening of people you have in front […] there is not a real understanding of people needs."*
> *User 2*

"They live things in first person, my tutor is 35 years old, prepared and very learned, thing I cannot say about the person that I encountered when I applied for the subscription in the unemployment list. She is very attached to reality, she perfectly understood my situation, I think, and we suddenly established a, let's say, almost personal relationship."
User 3

Monitoring and control systems on case-workers actions

AFOL organizational structure comprehends a unity dedicated to quality monitoring. Every organizational unit has to follow a defined procedure written in a manual. Every unit is given certain goals to follow, but these goals pertain mainly the way case-workers have to behave with users, not the number of users they are supposed to reallocate successfully in the labor market. In the case of CPI front-office the Manager closely follows the actions carried by her team. Every year, each case-workers is convened by the Manager in order to discuss his/her performance through a form, called "Pagella[9]". This evaluation form, containing some indicators as commitment rate or absence rate, is filled in by the Manager and it is subsequently discussed with each case-worker. Based on the overall evaluation, the Manager can decide to reward the entire unity or not. At CPI front-office level there are not individual rewarding system. Job-seekers, after registration in the unemployment lists, are also asked to fill in a feed-back questionnaire that partly serves to monitoring activities. A strong evidence comes from the fact that almost every interviewed case-worker is well aware that he/she is providing a public service, a service whose objective is not a monetary one, but a qualitative one. Since the registration list serve as an instrument to deliver unemployment benefits, an external examination on the procedures correctness is held every two years.

"(The supervisor") *comes every two or three years and controls if forms are filled in the correct way. He selects randomly some forms and controls them. But generally we refer to our boss Francesca who is disposable for every problem we have. Moreover, there is the advice office targeted to users with special needs who can go directly there when we are not able to give the information they need."*

[9] "Pagella" is the Italian word used to indicate school reports in which marks are presented for every subject.

Case-worker 2

A slight different system is used to monitor and control case-workers involved in projects and programs financed by regional or national funds. In that case, there are formal commitments to be met (in terms of hours and resources used) in order to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of the resource management.

> *"We don't work by objectives, we don't work like that. If you think that our resource are the users, we cannot have a clear goal concerning them because it simply does not depend on us! Instead, if you speak about projects, there is a kind of economic evaluation, I think that managers…if you imagine that a project is headed by the Region…it has an economic value, I imagine that there is an economic evaluation and that goals are well defined. Always recalling that we are a public office, our goal is not the profit nor the earning."*
> *Case-worker 3*

In the case of projects, a large amount of documents have to be filled and serve as control and monitoring instruments. It is important to monitor the success and the reallocation rate for these projects because in many cases some partners (as temporary employment agencies or some companies) may gain an economic reward or incentive if they prove to hire some jobseekers.

As regards complaints, there is not a formal procedure for the users. Problems and protests are solved internally to each unit and discussed directly by the case-workers with the manager.

5. Individualization – standardization of interventions

It is important to specify that in AFOL the activation process of unemployed is managed by a specific organizational unit, called PAL[10] – Politiche Attive per il Lavoro. Next year, 2015, this function will be integrated with CPI unit because, after labor market reforms occurred in Italy and the European instructions towards the strengthening of employability services, a progressive process of harmonization between passive and active unemployment policies has been settled, with the implementation of a "stick-carrot" system, as in other European countries as Sweden or Germany.

> *"Starting from next year, If a jobseeker will come and ask to be enrolled in the unemployment lists in order to receive a passive form of financial aid, after the delivery of the certificate, he/she will be addressed immediately to the PAL office."*
> *Case-worker 3*

Activation process in AFOL, nowadays, takes place in the context of single projects. These projects are usually financed by regional funds and are targeted to specific types of jobseekers. It is important to stress that, even if in Italy long-term unemployment is a big social issue, we did not find dedicated specific projects. National unemployment policies contemplate the existence of some incentives for companies hiring long-term unemployed - as defined in Section 1 - and jobseekers enrolled in the so called "liste di mobilità"[11].

Ways and dimensions of standardization

As already described, the service offered at CPI – Centro per l'Impiego – consisting in the registration in the unemployment lists is the same for all types of jobseekers. Different paths emerge in a second phase, when they are eventually called back to enroll in activation programs. AFOL usually receives by the Region the financial and content framework for these programs, that are implemented according to the directions given. In this sense, the room of manoeuvre for the case-workers is limited and the extension of these services is framed by the targeting decided at a higher level in the governance structure. The activation

[10] In the organization chart, this unit is labeled "Integrated planning for employability services".
[11] In Italy, when workers are dismissed collectively from a firm, they are enrolled in these "liste di mobilità" – mobility lists". The enrollment in these specific lists, once approved by the Regional Commision for Employment Policies, gives right to a certificate sent directly to job-seeker domicile.

services provided are, by consequence, standardized. Adjustment and individualization occurs inside the project framework when local case-workers have to develop actions and plans for an effective implementation. Project design usually imposes the allocation of time and financial resources: for example, a certain project might foresee a minimum of three hours dedicated to psycho-behavioral tests, two hours for CV updating and fifteen hours for training activities or classes. The same is made with financial budgeting: for example, case-workers know that they can spend the 20% of the available per capita resources in the development of soft skills, the 40% in training activities and the remaining 40% in other activities etc…

During autumn-winter 2013, when the interviews were conducted, there were four projects activated. One is called “Ricollocami”[12] and is dedicated to people living in Milan, unemployed by more than six months or inscribed in “liste di mobilità”. There are not age or educational prerequisites. The project comprehends three steps: screening, training activity and, finally, career guidance and introduction to labor market. The project covers one entire year, but it is divided in several slots, in order to target different types of jobseekers according to the training needed. In fact, the training sessions consist in class activities concerning specific professional profiles changing every month. To sum up, every month there is a selected group of jobseekers starting an activation process through “Ricollocami”, attending some training activities about a specific professional figure. Every month, according to the field of professional training provided, case-workers pre-screen the database in order to find individual profiles matching with the training. Once a good number of potential participants is found, case-workers start the real screening via face-to-face interviews. At the end of this process, small groups of ten or eight jobseekers are able to be involved in the project “Ricollocami”.

Another project is called “Quattro passi per il lavoro”[13] and it is far less targeted than “Ricollocami”. It is directed generally to jobseekers enrolled in unemployment lists and it has the aim to present the range of services provided in AFOL and to define individual occupational-training needs. The four steps recalled title are: group meetings, knowledge of services provided, definition of occupational needs through individual interviews and, finally, utilization of innovative online employment services. Case-workers send invitations to a large number of people identified through the registration system “Sintesi”, but the response rate is not very high. Over 1000 invitations sent, just 100 jobseekers answer and attend the meetings. Respect to “Ricollocami”, this project is far less binding for participants and the service

[12] In English “ricollocami” means “re allocate me”.
[13] In English, “Four steps for work”.

provided, apart from the analysis of individual needs, is highly standardized with a general informational aim.

A third project, is called “Talenti at work” and it is targeted to young graduated people. This project is organized in several steps in collaboration with temporary work agencies. The principal aim of this project is to ease high-skilled profiles’ first entrance in the labor market. This project comprehends also supply-demand matching activities in collaboration with temporary work agencies operating on the Province of Milan area.

The less standardized project is called “Dote unica lavoro” and it consists in the possibility for a jobseeker, enrolled in the unemployment list, to have a certain amount of money disposable to start an individualized and integrated process of investments in employability[14]. Jobseekers can apply for the project if some prerequisites are met: these prerequisites change every year and are settled by the Region. The project involving year 2013-2014 targeted young people (less than 29 years old), job-seekers enrolled in unemployment lists or “liste di mobilità” and also unemployed people working through the Cassa Integrazione Guadagni (CIG)[15]. The various interventions are planned together with a single case-worker who is in charge of following the person from the beginning to the end of the project. The first step consists in an explorative interview finalized at explaining the overall project to the potential participant. Once the jobseeker agrees to be enrolled in the project, an acceptance form is signed together with a PIP – Piano Intervento Personalizzato (Personal Plan of Intervention). We will describe in next Section how these individualized interventions are planned and bargained with the beneficiary.

To conclude, as it possible to understand, there are various levels of standardization that do not depend on the local employment agency strategy. There are frameworks coming from the regional level limiting local case-workers’ range of actions.

[14] “Dote unica lavoro” is the project that involves the largest part of resources coming from the Region. For the year 2013-2014, the financial resources dedicated to “Dote unica lavoro” corresponded to 48.600.000 euros.

[15] The CIG is a policy instrument used in case of company crises that allows workers to work part-time or to stay at home without being dismissed maintaining a share of their original salary. This avoids collective dismissals and allows the firm facing difficult periods to be flexible in the productive process.

"Most of times we don't write projects, we "undergo" them, in the sense that who writes them does not have the sensation of the operational part and sometimes it happens that it is difficult to find participants [...]. There are some objective prerequisites...you can engage at your maximum level, but if the project itself has some defects it becomes complicated..."
Case-worker 8

"The less useful instruments are the regional forms, they don't fit well the various types of users, for example the form for "Dote unica lavoro" dedicated to young people having less than 29 years old. It did not fit people who were entering the labor market for the first time. We had to revise it because it was built for people who have been working since a long time, with already some working experiences, sometimes some instruments are rigid, the content is more or less the same, the final report has to be revised because is very synthetic...it is more a questionnaire than a real report about the emerging profile of the user. [...]. It should be revised and improved".
Case-worker 4

Individualization and case-workers' flexibility

When projects allow for individualized actions, case-workers room of manoeuvre reaches medium-high levels.

"I would say it is medium (level of individualization of services) *[...] we always try to respond to users' needs but we have some standards to respect, in the sense that we have a certain amount of people to process every month, a certain amount of hours to dedicate and this could disadvantage the beneficiary. For the rest, no...as for training activities we just have some compulsory training hours to provide to the person, we have to guarantee an amount of hours...but we are relatively free to decide"*
Case-worker 4

"Yes, there are individualized services. The taking in charge form for the project "Dote unica lavoro" is called PIP and is written down after an orientation activity, a sort of welcoming activity. After the specific individual needs are understood, then a Individualized Plan of Intervention, the PIP, is written down […]."
Case-worker 5

"I would say high (level of services individualization), *highly individualized and personalized. There are so many projects that we are able to manage their content."*
Case-worker 8

The main instrument to provide individualized service is the PIP. This document represents the formal agreement through which case-worker and users plan the activation process. This document is crucial for the implementation of these activities because it proves that the jobseeker has agreed to undertake a process of activation tailor-made around his/her specific needs. Before writing down the PIP a long interview takes place. During this interview, the project is described together with the range of activities the user can take advantage of. Moreover, the user is asked to discuss his/her needs in term of training useful to a fast rehabilitation in the labor market. At the end of this interview, the user can sign the PIP.

"The way in which the PIP is written down comes from the analysis of user's needs. You can say you need to work, no matter what your professional experience was, or you can say that you don't have a urgent will to re-enter the labor market because you would like to reallocate and reposition yourself respect to the profile you are coming from. The first analysis you make, is a needs analysis: the time the person needs to re-enter the labor market, you write the personal profile and together with the person some steps are decided. In my opinion it is a document where you say: where I have to start from? Where am I going? To whom will I send my Cv? Or, for example, through the balance of competencies analysis I discovered to have a certain gap to fill with some training to reach my professional goal.

So, the awareness it's crucial. The timing is up to the user, who has the possibility to establish the timesheet to reach his/her goal."
Case-worker 8

In the PIP (see Annex 3) a tutor is assigned to the user and a table, containing the planning of services - divided in "job services" and "training services" - is filled in. For each section, there is an indication of the period of execution, of the subject providing this service, of the eventual third parties involved and of the amount of hours dedicated. There also an interesting sort of score, called "valorizzazione" (in English "Value") that assesses the relative importance of that specific activity on the overall process (the score is given in percentage values on a total of 100%). Another part of the PIP describes how financial resources are allocated across different service providers and it reports also the cost per hour together with the total one. The last part of the PIP provides a list of the monitoring and evaluation instruments. These are usually : the timesheet, the presence register, the stage record form and the service output (formal confirmation that the services were really provided).

<u>Unemployed perceptions on choice and voice opportunities</u>

According to case-workers opinion the general attitude of users, when they're about to start a process of activation, is to trust case-workers' suggestions.

> *"Generally people's attitude is to be trustful, tutor's role is not to impose, but to identify…to make a person autonomous. It is a bit like a role game, the person tends to be trustful because he/she thinks you have the right answers to his/her situation and his/her needs […]. You cannot give every type of action to people."*
> *Case-worker 3*

The perception coming from the interviews is that the role of unemployed people and the level of satisfaction respect to AFOL actions increases with the level of individualization of the project they are involved in. Jobseekers just enrolled in the unemployment lists, who have not undergone any type of activation program, have a totally negative opinion on AFOL's effectiveness in listening to their real needs. They feel abandoned and anonymous, sometimes they feel that the front-office operator has even not understood their personal situation.

> *"I would need more help, I have the necessity to conduct an analysis of my competencies because they told me that is useful. I need to know what are my strengths and my weaknesses. I will do it, if it's done for free."*
> *User 4*

The empirical evidence slightly changes when the same questions are asked to projects' beneficiaries. Among them, the level of satisfaction and of perceived service personalization, increases according to the projects they're involved in. As for "Quattro passi per il lavoro", the most general and least individualized one, the sensation is in general of discouragement. Users feel that a greater knowledge of innovative tools and services won't help them to find a new job. When users enrolled in "Ricollocami" are asked these questions about the possibilities to address the service received, despite the high levels of satisfaction, they don't feel really able to influence the PIP contents.

> *"Yes, I would love to have a more personalized course because I have been using Autocad*[16] *for twenty years, I know how to use it in a very advanced manner [...] but I understand that some people attending classes have never used it."*
> *User 5*

> *"I think* (the project, ndr) *is good. In my opinion, if you look at whom is participating at the training, you notice that they are all suitable to the activity because they have more or less the same professional experience. It was very well done, I did not expect it [...]. I was not proposed alternative actions, just "Ricollocami". [...]. I would have preferred another type of project, but, looking at the current situation and the times we're facing, there was not an opportunity. I will ask my tutor if there is the possibility to be involved in other projects."*
> *User 3*

[16] The software the beneficiaries were instructed during class activities in the project "Ricollocami" in the period of our field work.

6. Categorization and legibility

Working tools and routines

The main activity conducted by the unit CPI (Centro Per l'Impiego) consists, as already explained, in the filling of the personal record form on the online platform called "Sintesi". This online platform is used by front-office case-workers to update the CV, the personal and professional profile of job-seekers and release the unemployment certificate useful to apply for unemployment benefits (see Annex 4) together with the declaration of work availability (see Annex 5). The platform "Sintesi" is very simple to use (see Annex 6): there are several thematic windows that open up different parts of the online report. The majority of information are filled in by clicking on predetermined boxes, just some comments or notes can be added voluntarily by the case-worker. This system is highly standardized and synthetic not allowing to provide a precise description of users' skills and competencies. A person can update his/her profile online using a special access card that is delivered the first time he/she interacts with the CPI front-office (see Annex 7).

The details gathered through this platform are visible by all the employment agencies present on the Province of Milan area. Also firms have access to it in order to fill some compulsory communications about dismissals that are matched with jobseeker's declaration of unemployment during the enrollment in the lists. Parallel to "Sintesi", there is another database, called "IDO – Incontro Domanda Offerta" (in English: supply-demand matching) in which professional profiles and job announcements are merged together. This database collects informations on a regional basis and public employment agencies act as intermediaries between firms, looking for professional figures, and jobseekers. At national level, there is the project to create a unique database gathering together all the communications and announcement coming from the regional level. Nowadays, there are two levels of online tools, one is hold at regional level and the other is a national database, called "Click lavoro", managed by the Ministry of Labor and still under construction. It does not comprehend all the communications collected by local employment agencies. The bureaucratic process pertaining the enrollment in unemployment list and the consequent matching with the labor market is still fragmented. For example, the professional form and the status of unemployment of a person resident in the Province of Milano , looking for a job in the field of mechanical engineering is not visible in the national database nor in the other regional ones.

"We are still experiencing these two different levels, but we are moving towards a unique solution, nowadays we have these two levels. […]. We have to keep the communications coming both from the National level and the regional one, because on labor issues it is the Region that legislates as foreseen by the norms. I think that also in other countries there is a national level with various modalities and a regional level that varies a lot across territories, so that a user who moves here from another region, at least at bureaucratic level, could find very different situations."
Case-worker 1

The big affluence of people coming to AFOL to register in the unemployment list, brought to the creation of a "Sistema Saltacode" (in English: queue skipping system), a system of numeration given to the users according to the service they need. When a user arrives at AFOL is given this number (see Annex 8) with the indication of how many people are queuing before him/her. The attempt is to avoid complaints about long waiting lines.

A totally different set of tools is used by the PAL unit (Politiche Attive per il Lavoro), the unit in charge of managing the range of activation services. The complexity and number of formal documents to be filled in is relevant, because there is a strong demand for accountability since projects need to be monitored and controlled as regards services and costs. As already said in the previous Section, the main bureaucratic tool used in individualized projects is the PIP – Piano Intervento Personalizzato - a sort of contract stating that the jobseeker accepts the rights and the obligations provided in the project (see Annex 3). The first attitudinal interview, usually conducted by a psychologist or a behavioral expert, provides the use of some psychological tests whose aim is to understand user's point of strength and weaknesses. Sometimes some virtual simulations of job interviews are used by to investigate how the jobseeker would behave in a specific setting. These tests are commented together with the experts that provide some practical suggestions. The document coming from this phase of attitudinal analysis, is the Competencies Balance (Bilancio delle Competenze), a tool used assess individual capabilities (hard and soft skills) and to define professional goals (see Annex 9). Usually, information coming from this balance is used to update and expand parts of the CV. All projects involving targeted and individualized actions expect the filling, in the final phase, of several attesting documents. Usually, an activity report or timesheet (see Annexes 10 and 11) has to be filled in and signed both by the case-worker and by the beneficiary. This activity report or timesheet reports a brief description of the activities carried on during the project and the relative amount of days and hours. Together with this report, the case-worker has to write down a final paper summarizing the activities, the goals and the results obtained by the user. Sometimes, there is also a sort of diary to be kept during the project, describing day by day activities and user's feedbacks. If a final internship is provided, it has to be documented in a specific document signed by the beneficiary, the case-worker and the employer. Case-workers usually use internal checklists to remember to gather all these documents (see Annexes 12 and 13). After a project is concluded, beneficiaries are called back after two weeks to fill in a Customer Satisfaction Survey used by the managers to evaluate actions' effectiveness and quality. Even in this case, as for the standardization of procedures, documents are mostly provided by higher governance levels and cannot be modified in their content by case-workers.

> *"Our output depends a lot on the process. [...]. As regards the instruments used to produce this output, large freedom is left to case-workers to use the instruments that are considered most appropriate, in the sense that we all have different educational background [...]."*
> *Case-worker 8*

Categorization and legibility in case-workers' perceptions

As for categorization and legibility, there are not specific criteria of people-labeling used by the CPI front-office. As regards, PAL unit a first categorization comes from the design and targeting of the projects. Categories and criteria of legibility vary every time according to the range of people the project want to be directed to. The Balance of Competencies serves as a further screening and assessing tool to help in the operationalization of some soft skills in order to build a final individual score used to give right, according to the project, to a different range of services.

> *"There are 4-5 objective criteria that give origin to a score that helps to identify the belonging of a person to a determined help segment. This help segment can be low, medium and high. According to these categories people are entitled the right to receive some services. In case the score is low, it means the person is semi-autonomous and needs just a help to build up the balance of competencies and to match*

labor supply and demand. If the score is medium or high there are several activities provided ranging from career guidance, counseling, tutoring, coaching […]. The Individual Plan of Intervention (PIP) is exactly that: understanding, through the analysis of competencies, what specific services are deserved by a person."
Case-worker 3

Assessment and legibility in users' perceptions

Some projects, as "Ricollocami" provide a first session in which jobseekers convoked undergo a process of further screening. For example, the first day fifteen people are invited to take part to a group meeting, during which motivation and attitudes are investigated, and at the end of the session just half of them are selected to continue with the project. By consequence, the beneficiaries have a strong awareness of having passed a sort of double selection process: the first step consists in being selected from the huge database "Sintesi", the second one occurs during the first day of the project.

"I think that (the legibility criteria, ndr), *first of all, they look at the type of training, at the capability of living stressful situations, because the class is concentrated in a short time, but it is complete […] , I think that even the occupational status is relevant because job positions, related to this particular professional figure, are specific, involving shift work and weekend working hours. It is important, as well as I understood, to be available immediately."*
User 3

"I understood it (to have been selected, ndr) *looking at their faces* (case-workers', ndr), *I think they've selected the youngest persons, those having at least a minimum of experience concerning mechanical drawing […]."*
User 1

> *"[…] These people* (case-workers, ndr) *are more than psychologists, because they understand you, they categorize you, after two days of interviews they explain you how to improve your CV, how to behave, also submitting an incredible number of tests […]"*
> *User 5*

They also realize the importance of psycho-behavioral testing and they recognize its usefulness, but there is no clear idea on the categories used by the case-workers. There is a general intuition on the soft skills that are appreciated and rewarded, so sometimes answers to the psychological-attitudinal tests are kind of biased.

7. Responsibilization and agency

Obligations and sanctions

The Italian normative system, as regards labor legislation, does not have a rigid "stick-carrot" regime establishing clear obligations and sanctions towards job-seekers taking advantage of social benefits and activation services. Next year, in the 2015, at least in AFOL, there will be an organizational and functional adjustment to link services provided by CIP – Centro per l'Impiego and PAL – Politiche Attive per il Lavoro. When this reorganization will be implemented, people registering in the unemployment list, benefiting from any kind of public monetary aid, will be redirected immediately to active policies office in order to start a process of rehabilitation. If the person refuse to take part in activities he/she is convoked to take part in, he/she will be sanctioned and will risk to be deleted from the unemployment list, losing the relative benefit.

Nowadays, the norm foresees the obligation for unemployed users to take part at least at the 70% of classes, when they are involved in highly individualized programs as "Dote Unica Lavoro" or "Ricollocami", programs in which every user is selected to participate and in which AFOL spends large amounts of money. Before a project starts, the users is asked to sign some documents (as the PIP) that constitute a sort of contract, stating rights and obligations of the parts involved.

Moreover, when PAL or CPI convokes a user for a meeting, an update or an important communication and the user does not show up without a justified reason, he/she is liable of being deleted from unemployment list, but this seems to be a very extreme solution, rarely applied in reality.

Perception of responsibilities for unemployment and current situation (users)

Interviewed users don't appear very aware of a personal responsibility for experiencing unemployment. Younger users attribute a great part of the responsibility to the State and to the old political class' ideas. Another aspect underlined by almost all the interviewed users, is the lack of transparent information about the labor market and the activation services provided by local employment agencies. The principal action undertaken to look actively for a job, is contacting temporary work agencies present on the local territory. The feedback about temporary work agencies usefulness is usually negative: job-seekers feel abandoned and they feel as they are a small drop in a huge sea made-up of people with the same needs. The general feeling is a feeling of discouragement and mistrust.

> *"In general the State* (is the responsible, ndr) *considering all the political array, honestly you cannot expect in a young future if legislators are over-sixty year old. [...] Nobody thought about taking in charge a young person in order to train him/her, they always want to dwell the working period for people already in the labor market because it is less costly respect to train a new and young worker. All these aspects were determinant, there would not be such a level of youth unemployment."*
> *User 2*

> *"I don't feel responsible for my personal situation, all these agencies that come out from the blue and close…it's pure economic interest, they exploit people and, at the end, they leave you at home. […]."*
> *User 3*

As for the older users, they seem to be less "angry" towards institutions and politicians than youngsters. They don't feel personally responsible for their situation, but they recall some unfortunate episodes of their personal lives (divorces, transfers, illnesses) that, at end, brought to social exclusion and unemployment. A clear distinction emerge between young and adults' attitudes: the former are far less disposable to accept any kind of job is proposed, while the latter are more flexible and ready to accept even suboptimal working positions.

> *"[…] I am always disposable to accept every type of job, even if they are very distant from my professional background and preparation, I don't feel absolutely ashamed in working as a waitress, thing that I've already done, or the cleaner, the work is sacred and I think that a lot of firms are not in the condition to create new jobs…[…] we are just numbers, numbers that are extracted randomly and used till they are ok and, at the end, they are thrown away."*
> *User 3*

In general, responsibility for being unemployed is not brought back to personal or professional deficiencies or mistakes. Some evidences of auto-analysis emerge after the psycho-behavioral tests or the Balance of Competencies are conducted with the experts. To sum up, the awareness of what activation means and involves is still far from being well imprinted in jobseekers' mind. Even the knowledge of labor market functioning and of the tools used to match supply and demand, is very low and confused. The majority of interviewed jobseekers do not have a strategic plan of actions to look for a job nor a project of further training or education when the program they're involved in will come to an end.

<u>Convergences and divergences</u>

Divergences are marked between case-workers and jobseekers ideas on responsibilities' allocation. As described, job-seekers tend to assume a victimized attitude and to accuse the Government, the State and the economic system in general for their situation. This is perceived also by the case-workers who, many times during the interviews, report this attitude of pretence among jobseekers.

> *"[…] Many times users expect from us things that are not in our duties or in our possibilities, it is obvious the sensibility…for example it happens that a person sits down and says: 'You don't give me a job!'. The person looks at you as the first person he/she meets and he/she claims something from you, he/she waits for something that is not in your function or in your possibilities."*
> *Case-worker 3*

Other times, case-workers complain about the fact that some users arrive at the employment office without any idea of where they are or what they have to do. According to case-workers' opinion, this usually happens with immigrants or youngsters: for the former, the main obstacle consists in comprehension and speaking difficulties; for the latter, sometimes, the problem comes from their laziness.

> *"Many youngsters come here, with the bonnet on the head, while looking at the mobile phones..You ask some questions and they just give you some yes-no answers. You ask them what kind of job they are looking for and they answer is : no matter. Sometimes you ask why they came here and they tell you because their mom told them. There is a big debate over economic crisis, over job places need but they really don't look for a job, they don't want to work."*
> *Case-worker 2*

Conclusions

Italian labor market in the last years has undergone a process of big reforms regarding the labor market. However, this process has created a labor market structure with a high level of flexibility for certain marginal categories (youngsters, immigrants, women, first entrants in general) . This process of flexibilization has not been accompanied by a further enlargement of social aid and protection. Together with this phenomenon, local employment agencies are trying to merge passive and active policies actions in order to end up with an integrated system with clear incentives and obligations for the jobseekers. Nowadays, the general attitude of unemployed people is to register in unemployment lists in order to receive economic public aid and exploit it for the entire period of duty, without starting any active rehabilitation process. Just a small part of the jobseekers are aware of the range of services they could exploit and, on the other hand, quite paradoxically, case-workers find difficulties in the recruitment of beneficiaries for activation projects. Organizational and governance structures are still segmented and the various levels (national, regional and provincial) do not communicate. Databases are usually built on a regional basis and supply-demand announcements are not shared farther than the regional level. Collaborative networks seems to be effective among public employment agencies and temporary work agencies, since the latter have a stronger connection with the labor market. Every-day work is well structured and defined, but the system of control and monitoring seems to be weak and it is based mainly on the strength of interpersonal relations. The role of unit managers is crucial since they are the point of reference in case of problems. Jobseekers' individual trajectories are well defined in the first steps, but after the registration procedure is done, there is still not an effective system of prompt job rehabilitation, with the consequence that they face a high risk of long-term unemployment and social exclusion. The inexistence of strong obligations, moreover, acts as a disincentive towards activation. As regards activation process, the room of manoeuvre for case-workers is limited. Project and programs are designed and framed at regional level, so local case-workers have to follow their structure. Moreover, financial and budgetary limitations, together with the insufficient amount of personnel, constitute severe boundary to the expansion of individualized services. Tools and instruments are sometimes rigid and unable to describe narrowly individual situations. The extent projects foresee individualized actions is still narrow. The number of jobseekers, involved in individualized programs, is still very low. According to our opinion, the core organizational problem lies in the net separation between first acceptance services (CPI unit) and subsequent activation processes (PAL). The screening grid is too dense creating an unbalanced relation between the registered job-seekers and the activated ones.

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Appendix A - Interview scenario case-workers

Chiedere informazioni riguardo:
- Obiettivo dell'intervista
- Come saranno gestate le informazioni (confidenzialità)
- Chi userà i risultati e come
- Dove verranno pubblicati i risultati

Annotare caratteristiche socio-demografiche, come:
- Età
- Genere

Chiedere informazioni circa caratteristiche socio-demografiche, come:
- Background educazionale e professionale
- Training speciale riguardo disoccupati di lungo periodo
- Anni di esperienza come operatore (se rilevanti, chiedere informazioni riguardanti i cambiamenti nel tempo nel lavoro con gli utenti
- lavoro full o part time

1.Informazioni contestuali sull'organizzazione

- Mi dica come percepisce la funzione principale dell'organizzazione?
- Qual è il ruolo di questa organizzazione?
- Quante persone sono impiegate nell'organizzazione?

2. Informazioni contestuali sulla struttura del lavoro quotidiano

- Per favore, mi racconti la sua giornata lavorativa tipo.
- Quanti utenti incontra ogni giorno? Quanto tempo può dedicare a ciascun utente in media?
- Ha il tempo necessario per preparare gli incontri individuali?
- Quali altre responsabilità ha in capo (per esempio: compilazione di moduli, domande per progetti etc…)?
- Come gestisce tutti questi compiti? C'è qualcosa che non riesce a svolgere per mancanza di tempo?
- Come vede il Suo ruolo in relazione all'utente? E in relazione all'organizzazione?

- Cosa accade quando un utente contatta per la prima volta la vostra organizzazione? Che cosa succede dopo?
- Chi incontra l'utente?
- Esiste un operatore specifico che segue il percorso di ciascun utente?
- Esiste un operatore che monitora che cosa succede all'utente?
- Quante persone, in media, lavorano con i disoccupati di lungo periodo all'interno dell'organizzazione?
- Esiste un numero prefissato di disoccupati che siete tenuti ad incontrare ogni giorno/mese?

- Può cortesemente descrivermi un tipico meeting con un disoccupato di lungo periodo?
  - Come sono organizzati e programmati questi meeting?
  - Quanto tempo durano?
  - Chi li inizia (disoccupato, operatore)? Quanto spesso hanno luogo?
  - Dove avvengono gli incontri?
  - Le capita di contattare gli utenti anche al di fuori di questi incontri, ad esempio, al telefono o via email? In quali situazioni?

3.Monitoraggio e controllo all'interno dell'organizzazione

- Come viene monitorato il vostro lavoro dai superiori/managers?
- Quali sono i criteri di valutazione che vengono utilizzati? Esistono degli indicatori di performance / qualità che siete tenuti a rispettare? Che cosa misurano? Chi li definisce?
- Che cosa accade se non vengono raggiunti questi obiettivi?
- In che modo gli strumenti di controllo misurano il Suo lavoro di ogni giorno?
- Esistono dei sistemi di premialità per il buon lavoro? Come funzionano?

- E’ mai successo che Lei o qualcuno dei Suoi colleghi venisse rimproverato? Per che tipo di azione? Qual è la Sua opinione su questo?
- In che modo questi strumenti di controllo e monitoraggio influenzano il lavoro quotidiano con i disoccupati?
- Che cosa succede se un disoccupato formalizza una lamentela formale riguardante l’operato dell’operatore?

4. People-processing

- Quali strumenti utilizza mentre lavora con i disoccupati di lungo periodo (formulari amministrativi, guide per le interviste, test psico-attitudinali, piani di azione individuale)?
- Qual è il loro ruolo?
- Come giudica la loro utilità? Come giudica l’aiuto che questi strumenti danno nel lavoro con gli utenti? Quali strumenti preferisce utilizzare? Perché?
- E’ possibile per Lei modificare o influenzare questi moduli? Come li adatta al lavoro quotidiano?
- Esiste un piano di incontro, un modello o una lista di domande che Lei utilizza durante gli incontri con i disoccupati di lungo periodo?
- Come vengono preparati questi piani? Li utilizzano anche altri operatori? E’ obbligatorio il loro utilizzo?
- Che cosa pensa del loro contenuto? Come vengono utilizzate le informazioni raccolte in questo modo?

-Il disoccupato di lungo periodo deve compilare qualche modulo/ test psico-attitudinale/altro documento?
- Se sì, che tipo di documento? E che tipo di informazioni include?
- Qual è la funzione di questo/i documenti? Sono obbligatori? Che cosa pensa del loro contenuto?
- Ha mai discusso il risultato di questi test con un utente? Come, questi test, aiutano un disoccupato a valutare la propria situazione?

- Lei personalmente prende note o appunti duranti gli incontri o raccoglie informazioni riguardanti l’utente? In che modo?
- Che cosa includono questi appunti? Ci sono altre persone con le quali condivide queste note? Lei come utilizza queste informazioni successivamente?
- Discute casi individuali con i colleghi? Può, per piacere, approfondire questo punto?

Situazioni difficoltose e atipiche

- Esiste una lista preparata di domande che viene utilizzata durante gli incontri? Se esiste, succede mai che sia difficile rimanere fedeli alle domande/piano?
- Quali tipi di difficoltà possono emergere durante gli incontri con i disoccupati di lungo periodo? Come gestisce queste situazioni?
- Le persone “problematiche” hanno qualche caratteristica in comune? Riesce a caratterizzarli?

Categorizzazione degli utenti

- In che termini, Lei parla dei disoccupati con i quali si trova a lavorare? Che termini vengono utilizzati per identificarli? (useri, beneficiari, utenti, consumatori, cittadini)?
- Vengono mai effettuati degli incontri specifici di counselling con i disoccupati?
- In caso affermativo: come vengono organizzati questi incontri? Chi è presente?
- Può darmi qualche informazione sul contenuto di questi incontri? Come procede un tipico incontro di couselling? Mi può fornire cortesemente un esempio?
- Che tipo di test vengono utilizzati? Se rilevante: Qual è obiettivo di questo test? Che moduli vengono utilizzati per documentare i risultati di questi test?

Aspetti della vita personale rilevanti per l’attivazione

- Quali caratteristiche di un utente sono prese in considerazione per stilare un piano individuale d’azione (personalità, educazione, skills di apprendimento)? Perché?

- Ha detto che raccogliete informazioni sulle persone in cerca di impiego che si rivolgono a voi. Quali aspetti problematici della vita personale possono aumentare la difficoltà di trovare un lavoro, ad esempio mancanza di fissa dimora, problemi di salute? Quali opzioni avete per rispondere a tali problematiche?
- In che modo è rilevante l'"employability" di una persona? Quali sono le dimensioni che caratterizzano l'impiegabilità di una persona?
- In che modo possono contribuire gli altri operatori della Sua organizzazione? E presso altre istituzioni ed organizzazioni?

5. Il processo di attivazione

- Come viene pianificata l'attivazione di un disoccupato di lungo periodo?
- Viene stilato un piano individuale d'azione per ogni individuo? Può descrivere che cosa prevede questo piano?
- Quali informazioni contiene un PAI (Piano Azione Individuale)?
- Come vengono concordati i piani? Nella Sua visione, qual è il ruolo di questi piani?
- Che cosa viene proposto agli utenti? In base a quale criterio variano le proposte?
- Come descriverebbe i passi successivi dell'attivazione? Qual è l'arco temporale dei progetti?

- Qual è il ruolo che un disoccupato ha nella pianificazione del processo?
- In che misura gli interventi e i programmi sono individualizzati per gli individui? Qual è l'ambito di scelta per gli individui?

- Esiste un livello di flessibilità nell'adattare i programmi ai bisogni e interessi degli utenti? Può descrivere come?
- Utilizza spesso questa libertà di pianificazione? In che modo gli utenti possono influenzare specifici aspetti degli interventi?

- Come sono impostate, nel processo di attivazione, le responsabilità delle parti? (Esistono obblighi anche per l'organizzazione o solamente per gli utenti?).

- Durante il processo di attivazione, quali sono i requisiti che un individuo deve soddisfare per ottenere assistenza? Esistono azioni obbligatorie? Esistono operazioni di valutazione e follow-up sulle azioni delle persone in questo senso?
- Quali sono le sanzioni applicate?

6. Trasferimento di informazioni tra organizzazioni

- Quando si tratta dell'attivazione dei disoccupati, vi capita di cooperare su base giornaliera con altre istituzioni/organizzazioni su base giornaliera? Quali?
- In che cosa consiste la collaborazione?
- Come colpisce i disoccupati di lungo periodo? Come influenza le loro possibilità di trovare un impiego e il livello di benessere?
- Dal suo punto di vista, la cooperazione con le altre organizzazioni è ben funzionante? In caso negativo, perché no?

- Quali sono le sfide/difficoltà/incomprensioni risultanti dalla cooperazione con altre organizzazioni/istituzioni che Lei ha menzionato?
- Da dove provengono questi problemi? Come vengono affrontati?
- Cortesemente, potrebbe raccontarmi la sua esperienza in merito?

- Le capita di informare i disoccupati di lungo periodo circa le attività di altre organizzazioni/istituzioni e i servizi offerti? In quale situazione Le capita di indirizzare gli utenti direttamente presso queste istituzioni/organizzazioni?

- C’è qualcosa che Le piacerebbe aggiungere?

Grazie per il Suo tempo e per la Sua cooperazione!

Appendix B - Interview scenario long-term unemployed

1. La situazione di vita dell’intervistato

- Può cortesemente raccontarmi brevemente la Sua situazione personale?
- Dove vive e in che tipo di casa? Qual è stata la Sua esperienza professionale? Quale percorso scolastico ha effettuato? Come descriverebbe la Sua esperienza in termini lavorativi da quando ha lasciato la scuola?
- Qual è stata la sua ultima posizione lavorativa? Per quanto è stato impiegato in quel posto di lavoro? Che cosa è successo dopo?
- Per quanto tempo è rimasto senza lavoro successivamente?

- Questa è stata la prima volta che ha fatto domanda ai servizi per l’impiego?

In caso di risposta negativa: quando è stata la prima volta? Perché allora decise di contattare i servizi per l’impiego? Che cosa si aspettava? Ha mai fatto domanda ad altre organizzazioni per supporto economico o assistenza?
In caso di risposta positiva: in quali circostanze? Perché ha deciso di contattare il servizio? Che cosa si aspettava?

2. Incontri con il Servizio per l’Impiego

a) Struttura delle relazioni

- Parliamo dei Suoi contatti con i servizi per l’impiego. Può descrivermi gli incontri?
- Da quanto tempo è iscritto al Servizio? Quanto spesso si è recato in AFOL durante questo periodo?
- Chi ha incontrato?

- Di cosa trattavano questi incontri? Può farmi degli esempi?
- Sono stati utili per Lei? In che modo?
- Si sente incoraggiato a porre delle domande all’operatore? Le risposte che riceve Le sono utili in qualche modo?
- In che modo si rivolgono a Lei gli operatori (Sono gentili, d’aiuto, indifferenti, maleducati)?
- Ha mai sentito qualche tipo di pressione da loro? A che cosa si riferiva?

- Può descrivermi un incontro tipico con un operatore?
- Come descriverebbe la Sua relazione con l’operatore?

b) Diagnosi e categorizzazione

- Dal Suo punto di vista, pensa che gli operatori del Servizio per l’Impiego comprendano appieno la sua situazione personale?

In caso di risposta negativa: Quali informazioni mancano, secondo Lei? Perché?
- Mi interesserebbe avere qualche informazione aggiuntiva sugli incontri durante i quali gli operatori Le chiedono informazioni per pianificare le future azioni. Si ricorda la situazione? Quando è stata?

- Che cosa Le hanno chiesto? Le domande riguardavano la Sua formazione/carriera professionale/vita privata?
- Le hanno fatto domande riguardanti le Sue aspettative?
- Le hanno chiesto che vuole fare professionalmente?
- C’è stato qualche elemento sorprendente in queste domande? Che cosa?
- Le sono stati spiegati gli obiettivi di queste domande?
- Le è stato spiegato in che modo sarebbe stato fatto uso delle Sue risposte?
- Le è stato chiesto di compilare alcuni moduli/format?
- Le hanno spiegato lo scopo di questi documenti?

- Ha mai preso parte a qualche tipo di test delle competenze e delle abilità?
In caso affermativo: che cosa ha coinvolto questo test? Qual è la Sua opinione sui test utilizzati? Sono utili in qualche modo secondo Lei? Sono problematici? E' mai stato invitato a commentarli in qualche modo?
- In che modo ha commentato? E in che modo i Suoi commenti hanno influenzato il risultato della valutazione?

c) Servizi e condizionalità

- Concorda con l'operatore sul piano individuale a Lei dedicato e sulle azioni pianificate?
- Potrebbe dirmi qual è il contenuto di questo piano d'azione? E qual è stato il Suo ruolo nella stesura di questo piano di azione.
- Questo piano è stato steso per iscritto?

- Era un "Piano di Azione Individuale"?
- Come sono esplicitate le Sue responsabilità per trovare un impiego? E' stato obbligato a firmarlo?
- Che cosa sarebbe successo se avesse rifiutato di firmarlo? E' stato informato preventivamente sulle conseguenze di un eventuale rifiuto?
- Le è mai capitato o è stato vicino al rifiuto?

- Che tipo di offerte ha ricevuto dal Servizio per l'Impiego? Che cosa ne pensa? Hanno soddisfatto le sue aspettative? Hanno soddisfatto i suoi bisogni? In caso di risposta negativa: perché?
- Le è mai stata data l'opportunità di scegliere tra più offerte? O Le è stata proposta un'unica soluzione?
- Lei è stato in grado di scegliere il tipo di impiego e il datore di lavoro?
- E' mai stato coinvolto in programmi di formazione obbligatoria? In caso positivo, qual è stata la sua esperienza?
- C'erano particolari requisiti che doveva soddisfare per ottenere assistenza?
- E' stato obbligato a fare qualcosa individualmente per ricevere supporto?
- Esistono procedure di follow-up al fine di valutare se Lei ha soddisfatto gli obblighi previsti per ottenere benefits monetari e il supporto di cui ha diritto?
- Vede positivamente queste procedure?
- Hanno un qualche tipo di effetto negativo su di Lei?
- Ha mai avuto la sensazione che l'operatore stesse forzandola in qualche modo a partecipare a programmi che Lei non voleva seguire? (In caso affermativo: può apportarmi degli esempi?)
- Sono mai capitate proposte da parte del Servizio per l'Impiego a cui Lei non ha fatto caso? Che tipo di offerte? Perché? Ci sono mai state conseguenze?

d) Agency

- In che modo è stata capace di influenzare l'assistenza che sta ricevendo? Quali aspetti sente che può influenzare? Mi può dare alcuni esempi?
- Sente di poter tutelare e far presenti i propri interessi nei confronti dell'organizzazione? Perché sì o no?
- E' mai successo che Lei volesse qualche tipo di servizio, ma per qualche motivo non Le fosse data questa possibilità? Può dirmi qualche cosa in più in merito? Che cosa ha fatto?
- Le è mai successo di trovarsi insoddisfatto del servizio offerto? Che cosa ha fatto?
- Le è mai successo di trovarsi in situazioni spiacevoli/conflitto con il manager? Che cosa ha fatto?

3.Responsabilità e responsabilizzazione

- E' stato in grado di ottenere le informazioni cercate da parte dell'ufficio?
- E' stato facile per Lei entrare in contatto con le persone che doveva incontrare?
- Sente che Le sono stati dati dettagli a sufficienza sul processo di re-inserimento e sui responsabili?

- Dal suo punto di vista, quali circostanze hanno causato la Sua perdita dell'impiego?
- Si sente responsabile per il Suo stato di disoccupazione? In che senso?
- Cosa, eventualmente, sente che avrebbe potuto fare in modo differente per non ritrovarsi disoccupato?
- Chi o cos'altro è responsabile?

- In termini di responsabilità, quale pensa che sia la visione di AFOL? Sua o loro responsabilità?
- Che cosa pensa sia necessario fare, personalmente, per trovare un impiego?

- Quali sono le responsabilità di altri soggetti o enti coinvolti?
- Quali sono le responsabilità dell'agenzia locale per l'impiego, secondo il Piano di Azione Individuale?

4. Relazioni con operatori di altre agenzie

- E' mai stato indirizzato ad altre organizzazioni? Quali? Qual è stata la sua esperienza in merito?
- La ha aiutata in qualche modo? O ha complicato le cose?
- Qual è la Sua impressione sulla collaborazione tra AFOL e altre organizzazioni?

5. Valutazione del trattamento degli utenti, impatto sul benessere e rappresentanza

- Secondo Lei, qual è la rilevanza del supporto offerto da AFOL? Come valuta l'offerta di servizi?
- Pensa che stanno tenendo in considerazione i suoi bisogni? In che modo/ perché no?
- Pensa che stiano considerando ciò che Lei vuole o è stato costretto ad accettare un insieme di servizi?
- Nella Sua opinione, è utile un Piano di Azione Individuale? In che modo?
- In che modo è migliorata/peggiorata la Sua vita dopo che è entrato in contatto con AFOL? E qual è stato il ruolo di AFOL in questo cambiamento?
- Il supporto ricevuto come ha cambiato la fiducia e il sentimento generale che Lei ha di sé stesso?
- In che modo pensa che i servizi offerti possano migliorare per rendere maggiormente positiva l'esperienza ed i risultati?
- Per concludere, vorrei chiederLe in generale come valuta la sua esperienza con AFOL?

Grazie per il Suo tempo e per la collaborazione!

Annex 1- Service Card Leaflet

Annex 2 – International Informative Leaflets

Employment Centre

This is the Employment Centre

The Employment Centre (what was once the Job Centre) is a public utility with a network of area-wide services aimed at local workers and companies.

We provide:
- exclusive certification and administrative services
- free services that bring together supply and demand in the job world

The administrative services are managed exclusively by the Employment Centre, and are a fundamental requisite for gaining access to welfare support and receiving work-related consultancy.

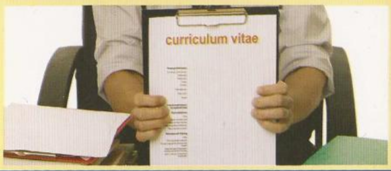
The services based on job supply and demand are aimed at individuals and companies; a form of job search support, free of charge.

Disabled citizens can count on a range of services focusing on their entry into the job world.

The Employment Centre works to bring out the best in people, and guide them in the definition of their professional plans. It also provides tools useful for fighting the weak points of the job market.

All the Employment Centre's services - for both individuals and companies - are totally free of charge.

What can you do here?



If you are a **citizen**, only at the Employment Centre can you:

- declare your immediate availability for work, and obtain unemployed status
- enrol on the unemployment lists, to get information about incentives and protection and how to obtain welfare benefits
- access the services for specific job placement opportunities for the disabled (L. 68/99)
- take part in selection procedures for opportunities in public administration.

In addition, and always free of charge, you can:

- enter your data in a file outlining your educational and professional background
- define an effective job-hunt strategy with the aid of a guidance interview
- access the databanks containing job vacancies and apprenticeships
- obtain information about the job market, professional profiles, and the current legislation
- obtain information about setting up a business
- obtain personalised services via the "work dowry" (as envisaged by regional decrees)
- obtain information about the various types of flexible contract.

Free, exclusive services

If you are a **company**, only at the Employment Centre can you:

- obtain technical assistance relating to compulsory communications (including the hiring of domestic workers)
- obtain assistance for administrative paperwork, hiring incentives, and welfare benefits
- receive support for the entry of disabled people into the world of work.

In addition, and always free of charge, you can:

- obtain information about the current contract regulations
- promote your search for personnel, and obtain a list of candidates selected on the basis of the profile supplied
- obtain technical assistance for the entry of apprentices into the world of work
- receive assistance for managing employment downswings resulting from redeployment, reorganisation, or company discontinuance.

Annex 3- PIP (Piano di Intervento Personalizzato)

Dote

Unione europea
Fondo sociale europeo

RegioneLombardia

fse per il tuo futuro

TITOLO INIZIATIVA
(P.O.R. F.S.E 2007-2013 - ASSE xx – NOME ASSE- OBIETTIVO SPECIFICO X - CATEGORIA DI SPESA XX)
DI CUI AL DECRETO DELLA UO/STRUTTURA DEL gg/mese/anno N. XX

PIANO DI INTERVENTO PERSONALIZZATO PIP

Destinatario

Cognome Nome
Sesso
Codice Fiscale
Nato a Il
Residente a Via N.
CAP Prov.
Domiciliato a Via N.
CAP Prov.
Indirizzo email
Recapito telefonico

Esperienza formativa

Titolo di studio dettaglio
Conseguito il presso

Operatore

ID operatore
ID unità organizzativa
Ragione sociale

Responsabile unità organizzativa

Cognome Nome
Codice fiscale
Ruolo Indicare se Resp. UO o RL

Tutor individuato dall'operatore

Cognome Nome
Codice fiscale
Titolo di studio Dettaglio
Anni di esperienza
Esperienza nel settore

Profilo del destinatario

Nel presente riquadro va inserita la scheda individuale degli ambiti di sviluppo risultante dal colloquio specialistico, in cui si descrivono anche le problematiche e le caratteristiche del destinatario, nonché le sue esperienze.

Attività previste

Nei successivi riquadri vanno indicate tutte le attività che l'operatore e il destinatario si impegnano comunemente a svolgere. All'elenco delle attività qui segnalate l'operatore dovrà fare riferimento nel monitoraggio dell'avanzamento del Piano.

A) Servizi al lavoro

Tipologia delle attività	Periodo di attuazione delle attività	Operatore che eroga il servizio	Soggetti terzi coinvolti	Ore	Valorizzazione
Servizio 1			n.a.		
Servizio 2			n.a.		
...			n.a.		
Servizio n			n.a.		

B) Servizi alla formazione

Tipologia di attività	Periodo di attuazione delle attività	Operatore che eroga il servizio	Soggetti terzi coinvolti	Ore	Valorizzazione
Titolo Corso 1			Si/no		
Titolo Corso 2			Si/no		
...					
Titolo Corso n			Si/no		
Tutoring ed accompagnamento allo stage			n.a.		

Operatori coinvolti (specificare se in partenariato o delega)

- Indicare ragione sociale operatore, Codice Fiscale, indirizzo (via, CAP, Città, Provincia), referente e, se delegato, motivazione e importo complessivo dell'acquisizione
- Indicare ragione sociale operatore, Codice Fiscale, indirizzo (via, CAP, Città, Provincia), referente e, se delegato, motivazione e importo complessivo dell'acquisizione
- Indicare ragione sociale operatore, Codice Fiscale, indirizzo (via, CAP, Città, Provincia), referente e, se delegato, motivazione e importo complessivo dell'acquisizione

Articolazione della dote: budget di previsione	*Ore*	*Costo ora**	*Importi*
Servizio 1			
Servizio 2			

Servizio n			
Totale			
Totale indennità di partecipazione/altri incentivi			
Totale			

Gli strumenti e le modalità di monitoraggio dell'avanzamento del piano e di valutazione dei risultati sono:

- compilazione timesheet
- compilazione registro formativo e delle presenze
- compilazione scheda stage
- output di servizio

Luogo______, li ______

L'Operatore ______________
Firma del rappresentante legale o di altro soggetto con potere di firma

Il Destinatario ______________
Firma leggibile del destinatario o di chi ne fa le veci

Annex 4 – Occupational status declaration

Provincia di Milano
Settore lavoro
Centro Impiego di Milano,
Via Strozzi s.n.c.
Tel.02 7740 4040 - Fax 02 7740 6445 - Email
centro.impiego.milano@provincia.milano.it

STATO OCCUPAZIONALE

Protocollo num.: 2813778 del: 10/12/2013

Ai sensi dell'art.15 della Legge n.183 del 12 novembre 2011, il presente certificato non puo' essere prodotto agli organi della Pubblica amministrazione o ai privati gestori di pubblici servizi

Dati Personali

Codice fiscale [redacted] Sesso (M/F) M

Cognome [redacted]

Nome [redacted]

Comune di nascita MILANO Provincia MI o in alternativa Stato di Nascita

Data di Nascita 19/06/1981 Cittadinanza ITALIA

Stato civile

Stato Occupazionale

Centro per l'impiego: Centro Impiego di Milano

Classe: Disoccupati

Stato occupazionale: Disoccupati

Decorrenza stato attuale: 10/12/2013

Dati di anzianità

Decorrenza 10/12/2013 Termine Mesi anzianità 0

Dati inerenti la sospensione

Data inizio Data fine Mesi sospensione 0

Note:

Il Responsabile del Centro Impiego

L'operatore addetto

DANIEL PIERO LANCINI

Data, 10/12/2013

Annex 5 - Declaration of work availability

LAVORO SUBORDINATO + INTERINALE + PROGETTO

Agenzia Formazione Orientamento Lavoro
MILANO
Centro per l'Impiego

Prot n° __________ del ____________

DICHIARAZIONE DI DISPONIBILITA' AL LAVORO 297 legge

(Dichiarazione sostitutiva di certificazione ai sensi del D.P.R. 28 dicembre 2000 n. 445)

Ai sensi e per gli effetti dell'art. 2 comma 1 del Decreto Legislativo n. 181 del 21 aprile 2000 relativamente allo "stato di disoccupazione", il /la sottoscritto/a

Codice fiscale ____

Cognome ____________________ Nome ____________________

Nato a ____________________ Prov. ______ Data di nascita __________

Residente in ____________________ Prov. ______ CAP __________

Indirizzo ____________________ Telefono __________

Domicilio ____________________ Prov. ______ CAP __________

Indirizzo ____

Consapevole che chi rilascia false dichiarazioni ad un pubblico ufficiale o presenta false documentazioni è punito a termine degli articoli 495 e 496 del Codice Penale,

DICHIARA

☐ DI ESSERE IMMEDIATAMENTE DISPONIBILE ALLO SVOLGIMENTO DI ATTIVITA' LAVORATIVA

Dichiara altresì
(barrare le caselle che interessano)

☐ Di essere attualmente OCCUPATO e di non superare il reddito minimo personale escluso da imposizione;

☐ Di non aver mai svolto attività lavorativa come lavoratore subordinato, autonomo o con ritenuta d'acconto ed essere alla ricerca di un posto di lavoro da più di 12 mesi o da più di 6 mesi se giovane (inoccupato);

☐ Di essere DISOCCUPATO dal __________ a seguito di cessazione di rapporto di lavoro subordinato, autonomo o con ritenuta d'acconto ed essere alla ricerca di un posto di lavoro da più di 12 mesi o da più di 6 mesi se giovane (disoccupato):

☐ Altro : ____

☐ Di essere in età tra 16 e 18 anni e non essere soggetto all'obbligo scolastico (adolescente);

Agenzia per la formazione, l'orientamento e il lavoro
della Provincia di Milano

Centro per l'impiego

Via Strozzi snc
20146 Milano

Tel 02 7740 4040- Fax 02 7740 6445
C.F. - P.I. 05694280966
REA Mi - 1841114

Azienda speciale della
Provincia di Milano

- [ ] Di essere in età tra 18 e 25 anni compiuti ovvero fino a 29 anni compiuti se in possesso di diploma di laurea (giovane);
- [ ] Di non rientrare nelle due categorie precedenti (adulto);
- [ ] Di essere in possesso di diploma di laurea/laurea;
- [ ] *Di essere donna in condizione di reinserimento al lavoro* (precedentemente occupata che intende rientrare nel mercato del lavoro dopo almeno 2 anni di inattività).

Dichiara di aver svolto le seguenti attività lavorative:

Iniziata il ______________ **terminata il** ______________
(gg-mm-aa) (gg-mm-aa)

Qualifica professionale ______________________________
Descrizione qualifica ______________________ **livello** __________
Ragione Sociale ______________________________
Tipologia rapporto di lavoro ______________________________

Iniziata il ______________ **terminata il** ______________
(gg-mm-aa) (gg-mm-aa)

Qualifica professionale ______________________________
Descrizione qualifica ______________________ **livello** __________
Ragione Sociale ______________________________
Tipologia rapporto di lavoro ______________________________

Iniziata il ______________ **terminata il** ______________
(gg-mm-aa) (gg-mm-aa)

Qualifica professionale ______________________________
Descrizione qualifica ______________________ **livello** __________
Ragione Sociale ______________________________
Tipologia rapporto di lavoro ______________________________

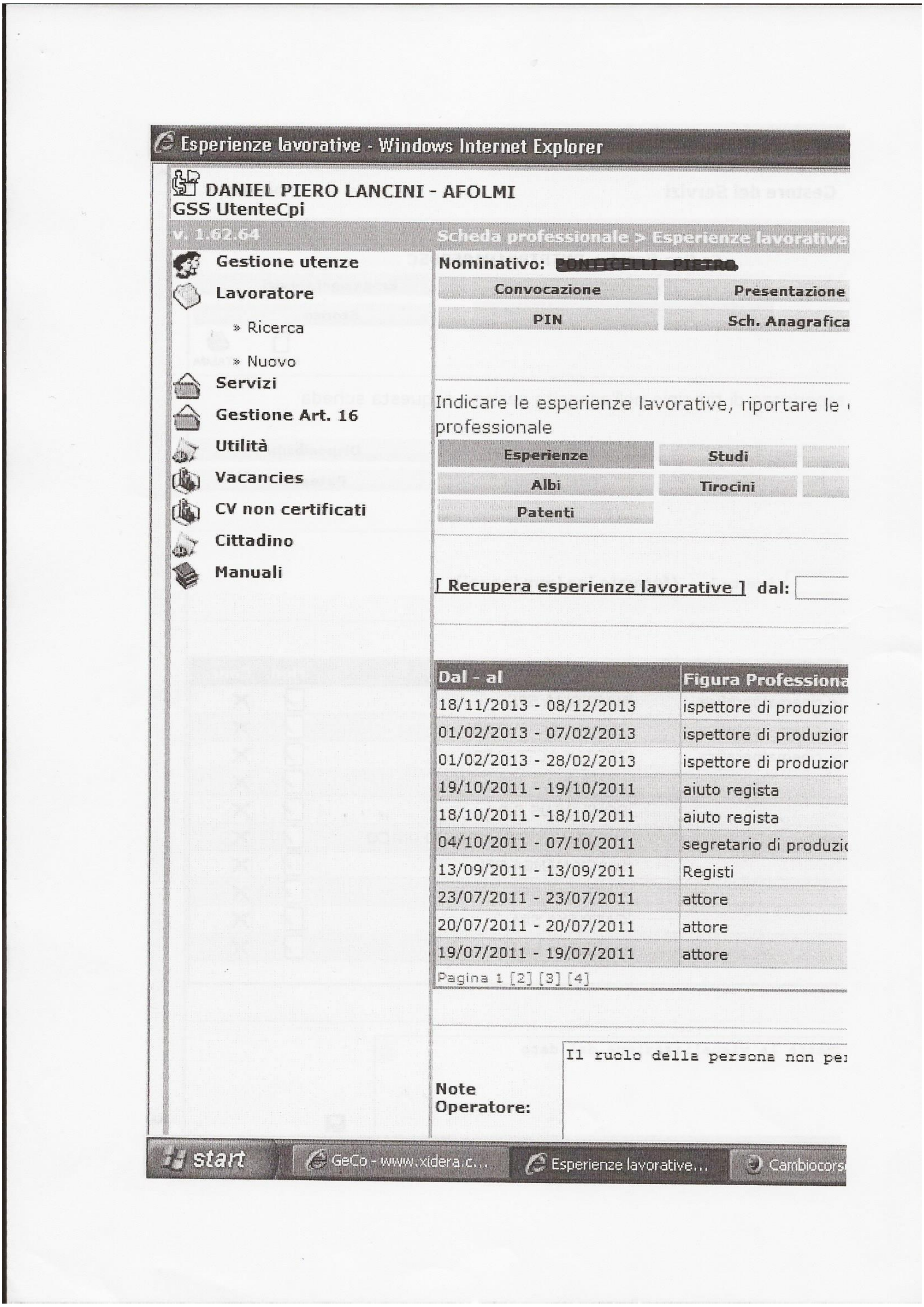
Milano, ______________ **In fede** ______________________

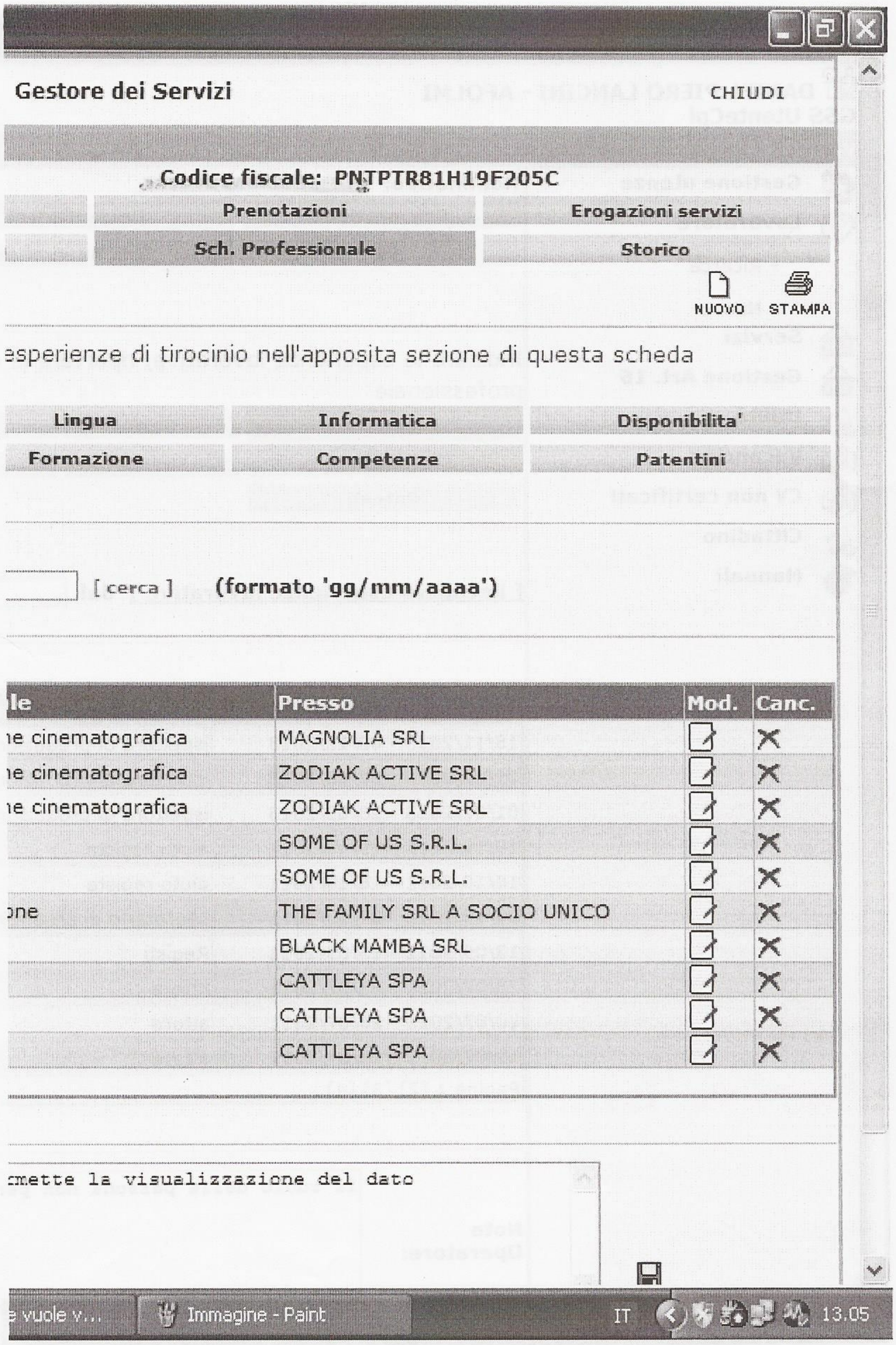
Dichiaro di aver ricevuto l'informativa ex art. 13 del D. lgs. 196/2003. **In fede**

RISERVATO AL CENTRO PER L'IMPIEGO

Decorrenza stato occupazionale ______________________
Centro per l'Impiego di ______________________

Annex 6 – Online system “Sinstesi”




Gestore dei Servizi
CHIUDI
Codice fiscale: PNTPTR81H19F205C
Prenotazioni
Erogazioni servizi
Sch. Professionale
Storico
NUOVO
STAMPA
esperienze di tirocinio nell'apposita sezione di questa scheda
Lingua
Informatica
Disponibilita'
Formazione
Competenze
Patentini
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BLACK MAMBA SRL
CATTLEYA SPA
CATTLEYA SPA
CATTLEYA SPA
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Immagine - Paint
IT
13.05

Annex 7 - Personal access card to "Sintesi"

Annex 8 - Queue skipping system

Annex 9 – Competences analysis form

Ministero del Lavoro, della Salute e delle Politiche Sociali
Direzione Generale per le Politiche per l'Orientamento e la Formazione

Unione europea
Fondo sociale europeo

RegioneLombardia

fse

Bilancio delle Competenze

La presente scheda individuale è il risultato del servizio di "Bilancio delle competenze" e, pertanto, sintetizza gli esiti di un percorso di analisi delle esperienze formative, professionali e sociali, finalizzato ad individuare le competenze e gli elementi valorizzabili del destinatario e a progettare un piano di sviluppo professionale per il raggiungimento di specifici obiettivi.
Il servizio deve essere svolto da figure aventi i requisiti professionali previsti dalla normativa sull'accreditamento.
Il documento deve essere firmato in ogni foglio dal destinatario.

Destinatario (Cognome, Nome,)

Operatore

Professionista

Tutor

LUOGO e DATA Milano

L'Operatore ______________
Firma leggibile o CRS del rappresentante legale o di altro soggetto con potere di firma

Il Destinatario ______________
Firma leggibile

- 1 -

INFORMAZIONI GENERALI

1. E' stata acquisita la seguente documentazione obbligatoria:

☒ CV formato UE
☒ Copia del titolo di studio

2. Il Destinatario ha un obiettivo di inserimento professionale già articolato?

☐ No
☒ Sì

Se Sì, specificare l'obiettivo ed articolare seguendo i punti successivi.

3. E' stato individuato dal Destinatario un macro settore di riferimento?

☐ No
☒ **Sì**

Se Sì, indicare quale.

4. Il Destinatario ha segnalato una o più aziende di riferimento?

☐ No
☒ **Sì**

Se Sì, indicare quali.

SEZIONE A

APPROFONDIMENTO PERSONALE

5. Qual è il livello di conoscenza del mercato del Destinatario?

☐ Ottimo
☐ Buono
☐ Scarso

6. Per quale contratto di lavoro il Destinatario è disponibile?

☐ Stage
☐ Tempo determinato
☐ Apprendistato
☐ Part time
☐ Tempo indeterminato
☐ Altro
☐ Full time
☐ A progetto

Se Altro, indicare quali.

7. In quali orari e giorni della settimana il Destinatario è disponibile per svolgere le attività lavorative?

8. Quali caratteristiche sono essenziali per un lavoro che possa dare soddisfazioni?
(* Indicarne almeno tre, in ordine di preferenza)

☐ Possibilità di carriera
☐ Gratificazioni
☐ Rapporti sociali
☐ Potere
☐ Creatività
☐ Cultura aziendale
☐ Altro
☐ Benefit
☐ Posizione geografica
☐ Spirito di gruppo
☐ Autonomia
☐ Certezza delle regole/procedure
☐ Immagine
☐ Incentivazioni economiche
☐ Clima
☐ Visibilità sociale
☐ Competizione
☐ Settore appartenenza
☐ Innovazione

Se Altro, indicare quali.

9. Disponibilità alla mobilità:

☐ Trasferte sul territorio nazionale	☐ 0-3 mesi	☐ 3-6 mesi	☐ 6-12 mesi	☐ Oltre 12 mesi
☐ Trasferte all'estero	☐ 0-3 mesi	☐ 3-6 mesi	☐ 6-12 mesi	☐Oltre 12 mesi
☐ Trasferimenti sul territorio nazionale				
☐ Trasferimenti all'estero				

10. Riportare eventuali informazioni aggiuntive.

SEZIONE B

PERCORSO FORMATIVO

11. Descrivere il percorso di studio (istituto, corso, durata, principali conoscenze/competenze acquisite).

12. Descrivere brevemente le motivazioni che hanno portato alla scelta del percorso di studi del Destinatario.

13. Descrivere ulteriori esperienze formative effettuate dal Destinatario (istituto, tipo di seminario/corso, durata, principali conoscenze/competenze acquisite, principali motivazioni che hanno portato alla scelta).

14. Le aspettative del Destinatario hanno trovato conferme nel corso del percorso formativo effettuato? Perché?

15. Quali sono gli aspetti positivi/negativi riscontrati nel percorso formativo?

16. Compilare la tabella di riepilogo delle competenze linguistiche del Destinatario (Livello Ottimo/Buono/Base). Elencare eventuali certificazioni linguistiche conseguite (*).

Lingue	Lettura			Scrittura			Conversazione			Comprensione		
	Ottimo	Buono	Base	Ottimo	Buono	Base	Ottimo	Buono	Base	Ottimo	Buono	Base
Italiano	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(*) Allegare le certificazioni linguistiche, laddove presenti.

17. Compilare la tabella di riepilogo delle competenze informatiche del Destinatario (Livello Ottimo/Buono/Base). Elencare eventuali certificazioni conseguite (*).

Moduli	Competenze		
	Ottimo	Buono	Base
Concetti teorici di base	☐	☐	☐
Gestione dei documenti	☐	☐	☐
Elaborazione testi (es. Word)	☐	☐	☐
Fogli elettronici (es. Excel):	☐	☐	☐
Basi di dati (es. Access)	☐	☐	☐
Presentazioni (es. Power Point)	☐	☐	☐
Reti informatiche	☐	☐	☐
Linguaggi di programmazione (**)	☐	☐	☐
Altro (**)	☐	☐	☐

(*) Allegare le certificazioni ECDL, laddove presenti.
(**) Specificare quali e il relativo livello di conoscenza.

18. Elencare ulteriori eventuali esperienze formative (corsi, soggiorni all'estero, corsi privati inerenti all'ambito lavorativo e non, ulteriori esperienze di studio (Allegare certificazioni rilasciate, laddove disponibili

SEZIONE C

PERCORSO PROFESSIONALE

19. Se attualmente impiegato, descrivere settore, azienda, posizione all'interno della stessa e attività svolta.

20. Descrivere le principali competenze acquisite nell'ambito dell'attività svolta.

21. Esprimere un'opinione sull'attività svolta, sulle potenzialità di crescita e sul livello di soddisfazione nell'ambiente lavorativo.

22. Quali sono i principali vantaggi e svantaggi della presente occupazione?

23. Nel caso in cui il Destinatario abbia inviato curricula o effettuato colloqui di selezione a scopi di assunzione, quante aziende a cui il Destinatario ha inviato un curriculum (o che ha contattato in forma differente) hanno risposto proponendo un colloquio?

☐ Nessuna
☐ Meno della metà
☐ Circa la metà
☐ Oltre la metà
☐ Quasi tutte

24. Quanti colloqui affrontati hanno avuto buon esito?

☐ Nessuno
☐ Meno della metà
☐ Circa la metà
☐ Oltre la metà
☐ Quasi tutti

25. Indicare eventuali esperienze lavorative passate, specificando durata dell'esperienza, settore, azienda, posizione ed attività svolte.

26. Descrivere le principali competenze acquisite nell'ambito dell'attività svolta.

27. Se presenti, esprimere un'opinione sull'attività svolta e sul livello di soddisfazione raggiunto in ciascuna esperienza lavorativa.

28. Quali sono i principali vantaggi e svantaggi delle suddette esperienze?

29. Quali sono le motivazioni per cui le esperienze precedenti si sono concluse?

SEZIONE D

APPROFONDIMENTO DELLE CAPACITÀ DEL DESTINATARIO

30. Indicare almeno tre punti di forza e tre punti di debolezza di natura caratteriale.
PUNTI DI FORZA:
PUNTI DI DEBOLEZZA:

31. Descrivere le competenze tecniche e le aree di miglioramento individuate dal Destinatario.

32. Descrivere le competenze organizzative e le aree di miglioramento individuate dal Destinatario.

AREE DI MIGLIORAMENTO:

33. Descrivere le capacità relazionali e le aree di miglioramento individuate dal Destinatario.

AREE DI MIGLIORAMENTO:

SEZIONE E

OBIETTIVI PROFESSIONALI

34. Breve descrizione degli obiettivi professionali definiti dal Destinatario con il supporto del professionista.

35. Descrivere brevemente le motivazioni che hanno portato alla definizione degli obiettivi professionali del Destinatario.

36. Descrivere brevemente le aspettative del Destinatario rispetto al proprio obiettivo di inserimento professionale.

37. L'obiettivo professionale del Destinatario è compatibile con le caratteristiche del Destinatario? *[Tabella da compilare a cura del professionista]*.

	Coerenza con l'obiettivo professionale	
Capacità/Competenze/Caratteristiche	Si	No
indicare le caratteristiche caratteriali		
indicare le competenze tecniche		
indicare le competenze organizzative		
indicare le competenze relazionali		
[altro]		

	Coerenza con l'obiettivo professionale	
Capacità/Competenze/Caratteristiche	Si	No
indicare le caratteristiche caratteriali		
indicare le competenze tecniche		
indicare le competenze organizzative	-	
indicare le competenze relazionali	-	
[altro]		

SEZIONE F

RELAZIONE RIASSUNTIVA DEL BILANCIO DELLE COMPETENZE

-da compilare a cura del professionista-

38. Valutazione del percorso formativo effettuato dal Destinatario e dei risultati ottenuti articolata in base ai punti di forza e di debolezza.

39. Individuazione di prime ipotesi di progetto/aree di professionalità del Destinatario da esplorare in funzione del percorso individuale effettuato.

40. Valutazione dei punti di forza e di debolezza del Destinatario rispetto alle eventuali aree di sviluppo professionale.

DATA 12/10/2011

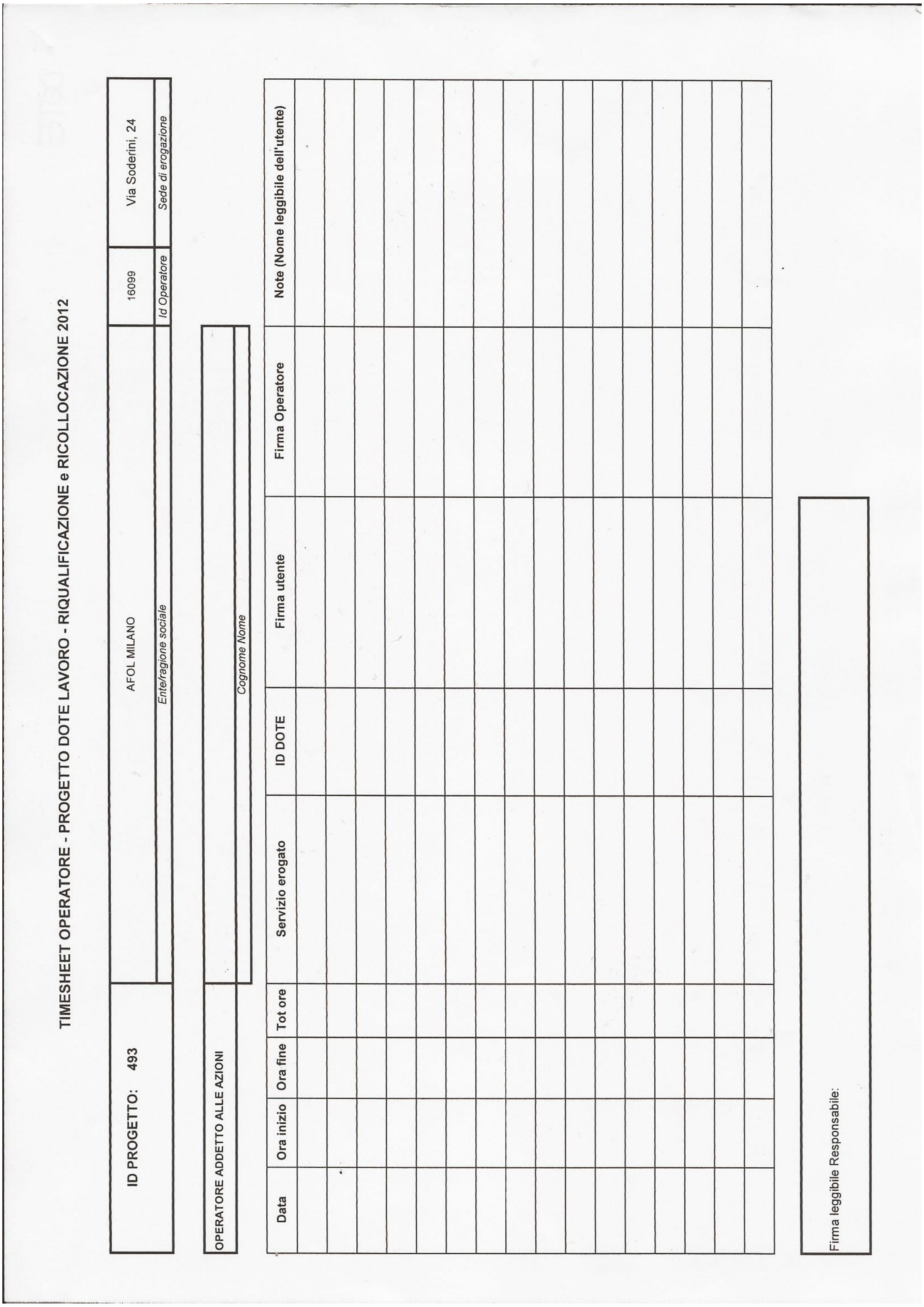
(Firma Professionista)

Autorizzo al trattamento dei dati personali ai sensi del D.lgs. 196/2003.

DATA 12/10/2011

(Firma Destinatario)

Annex 10 – Timesheet sample



TIMESHEET OPERATORE - PROGETTO DOTE LAVORO - RIQUALIFICAZIONE e RICOLLOCAZIONE 2012

ID PROGETTO: 493	AFOL MILANO	16099	Via Soderini, 24
	Ente/ragione sociale	*Id Operatore*	*Sede di erogazione*

OPERATORE ADDETTO ALLE AZIONI	
	Cognome Nome

Data	Ora inizio	Ora fine	Tot ore	Servizio erogato	ID DOTE	Firma utente	Firma Operatore	Note (Nome leggibile dell'utente)

Firma leggibile Responsabile:

Annex 11 - Activity final report sample

REPORT ORE ATTIVITA'

ENTE	
PROGETTO	
TITOLO CORSO	
ID	
APL	
DATA AVVIO	
DIPENDENTE/COLLABORATORE	

PERIODO DI RIFERIMENTO

DATA	dalle	alle	dalle	alle	ORE	DESCRIZIONE ATTIVITA' SVOLTA

TOTALE ORE DEL PERIODO	0

sede abituale di lavoro:

ORARIO GIORNALIERO	dalle	alle	dalle	alle

FIRMA DELL'INCARICATO

FIRMA DEL RESPONSABILE:

Annex 12 – Internal documents checklist , sample 1

CHECK LIST FINALE DOTE

□ FIRMATARIO (firme acquisite)

□ TUTOR (caricato e firme acquisite)

DATA CHIUSURA:

□ TIMESHEET TUTORAGGIO

NOTE: ....

- □ copia documento di identità / permesso di soggiorno
- □ copia codice fiscale
- □ busta paga
- □ documentazione prevista per la tipologia di target
- □ dichiarazione del destinatario attestante l'assenza di altri contributi pubblici a copertura della stessa spesa
- □ domanda di partecipazione all'avviso dote
- □ scheda anagrafica professionale SINTESI
- □ format regionale Colloquio di II livello
- □ curriculum vitae in formato Europass
- □ comunicazione di accettazione PIP
- □ copia del PIP
- □ copia della DRU (dichiarazione riassuntiva unica)
- □ relazione di dettaglio

- □ relazione finale di sintesi dei servizi erogati
- □ documenti di conclusione PIP (comunicazione chiusura, cruscotto, diario di bordo)
- □ TIMESHEET COLLOQUIO FIRMATO
- □ frontespizio appuntamento
- □ documentazione relativa all'attività di tutoraggio e inserimento lavorativo

EVENTUALE DOCUMENTAZIONE AGGIUNTIVA:

- □ autocertifica della variazione occupazionale avvenuta nel corso di una prima dote ricollocazione o al termine della stessa (allegato B.7)
- □ eventuale autocertifica con motivazione per richiesta di anonimato del cv su BLL
- □ eventuale documentazione relativa alla comunicazione di anomalia di invio/invio non riuscito inviata a Regione Lombardia
- □ eventuale dichiarazione di rinuncia alla dote

Annex 13 – Internal documents checklist, sample 2

APPUNTAMENTO: OPERATORE:

DATA ACCOGLIENZA:

ACCOGLIENZA DOTE RICOLLOCAZIONE – avviso 493

COGNOME: ……………………………………

NOME: ……………………………………

□ MOB in der	□ copia domanda di mobilità presentata all'INPS □ copia della DID sottoscritta presso INPS
□ MOB 236; □ MOB 223	□ copia della lettera di licenziamento □ copia del certificato di mobilità / autocertifica
□ CIGD (Gefo SI – NO); □ CIGD proroga bando 493	□ copia informativa Allegato 3 □ copia accordo sindacale /accordo ministeriale □ copia pagina gefo con stringa del nominativo utente
□ CIGS	□ autocertifica della messa in CIGS con le relative causali - CAUSALE …………………………………… □ Lettera dell'azienda con comunicazione di messa in cassa
□ copia documento di identità / permesso di soggiorno □ copia codice fiscale □ curriculum vitae in formato Europass □ busta paga	

□ E' STATO VERIFICATA CON L'UTENTE LA SCELTA DEL PERCORSO?

□ E' STATA VERIFICATA L'EVENTUALE ATTIVAZIONE DI DOTE PRESSO ALTRO OPERATORE?

□ AUTOCERTIFICA VARIAZIONE OCCUPAZIONALE

□ PERIODO CASSA/MOBILITA': ……………………………

AZIENDA: ……………………………………………………

QUALIFICA: ……………………………………………

RECAPITO TELEFONICO: ……………………………

INDIRIZZO E-MAIL (curriculum): ……………………………

NOTE: ……………………………………………………………………

LOCALISE

The Local Governance of Social Cohesion, WP6

Poland Country Analysis

Karolina Sztandar-Sztanderska

Individualisation of Risk and Responsibility: Activation Policy in Poland

Warsaw, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

I would like express my gratitude to all our interviewees who decided to share their personal experience and knowledge. Without their commitment, this endeavour would not have been possible. I also would like to thank Justyna Zielińska and Sławomir Mandes for their involvement in research.

1 Introduction

The aim of this report is to analyse what forms individualisation of activation policy can take locally in a country like Poland, where welfare provision is not only severely sectoralised and dominated by public bureaucracy, but also minimalist, when it comes both to the quantity and quality. These conditions might be regarded as unfavourable to the development of any activation policies and their individualisation if we understood these processes as intrinsic to new modes of governance, tailoring services to individual needs, increased citizen's participation in policy planning and delivery. However, taking as a point of departure the findings of Borghi and van Berkel that "concrete manifestations of individualised service provision are often based on various interpretations of individualisation" and therefore "gaining insight into the precise content of individualisation (...) requires a study of delivery and implementation processes, and of the interactions between service providers and service users" (Borghi and Van Berkel 2007: 413, 421) might lead us to a different analytical angle. Instead of defining *a priori* what "individualisation" and "activation" are and what "individualisation" and "activation" are not, we propose to adopt the anthropological perspective to the study of public policy and analyse what is said and done in the name of both (Wedel, Shore et al. 2005). Adopting this bottom-up perspective enables us to capture not only the "diversity of forms of individualisation" and activation "realised in practice" – to use Borghi and van Berkel's words, but also to see how these concepts are translated into surprisingly unexpected way and contribute to shape, control and regulate heterogeneous populations in a welfare context which diametrically differs from what is assumed to be necessary to make them efficient. In the understanding of performative power of these concepts, we found Polish scene to be particularly interesting: it reveals that their power to shape subjects is not dependant on a certain level of state capacity in welfare provision, but can also take place in modified forms in a state, where welfare provision is characterised as "emergency", "residual" and "sectoralised" (Inglot 2008).

The study will concern the relations between street-level bureaucrats responsible for welfare provision and activation delivery and long-term unemployed individuals, who are their target group. Particular attention will be paid to the actions street level bureaucrat perform in the name of state and meanings they assign to activation and individualisation. Moreover, we will analyse the tensions that accompany 'policy in practice' from the point of view both street-level bureaucrats and vulnerable clients as well as their practices in response to them.

The case study was conducted in a city X (NUTS4 level), which is situated in a territory (NUTS3 level) with a relatively good economic situation, compared to average economic unemployment rates in Poland and regional GDP figures, yet lately deteriorating during economic crisis. What is more, city X has a specific administrative status making easier inter-sectoral cooperation, because contrary to most territorial units in Poland, it fulfils simultaneously the functions in the respect of both labour market policy and social assistance for the unemployed (for details, see Organisational and governance context). Other rather relatively advantageous characteristics for policies' development and delivery are the relatively strong public support for local government, trust between main institutions resulting from long-lasting cooperation (Mandes 2013: 7, 11) and still high but significantly lower than average caseload in Public Employment Service (MPiPS 2013). However, despite all these local specificities, this case study of 'policy in practice' gives insight into peculiarities of the Polish welfare system as a whole. On the one hand it demonstrates typical work organisation and practices of frontline staff in response to constraints such as lack of adequate resources for income support and activation, uncertainty of future funding, heavy caseload, sectoralisation of policies. It also shows how bureaucratic environment changes under influence of new information technologies that might be used as new tools of control of population and street-level bureaucrats. On the other hand, the results show that these conditions contribute to individualisation of risks, responsibilisation and clients' superficial compliance in contact with public officials.

2 Methodology

The report is based on two types of methods: 1) in-depth interviews (IDIs) with long-term unemployed and street-level bureaucrats working with this target group; 2) documentary analysis. Qualitative methods were required to analyse policy in practice as an interactive process that takes place in a concrete setting between concrete individuals and which is often structured by working conditions and use of working tools (such as administrative forms, IT, etc.) instead of being a de-contextualised and top-down implementation of law.

IDIs were at the core of the case study methodology[1]. We have conducted 20 of them[2]. They took from 47 to 208 minutes. They were performed in 5 rounds, which gave us a chance to obtain missing information and deepen our knowledge in respect of main research themes. Selection of interviewees reflects the effort to meet requirements of data triangulation (Denzin 1970). On the one hand, we included frontline staff employed in various organisations providing benefits and services for long term unemployed, financed from the public funds: Poviat Labour Office (i.e. Public Employment Services in Poland, pl. *Powiatowy Urząd Pracy*, PUP), Municipal Family Assistance Centre (i.e. social assistance organisation for, among others, the unemployed people, pl. *Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Rodzinie*, MOPR) and one Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) (see annexe, for details on interviewees). These workers have direct contact with vulnerable individuals at various points of activation and play different roles in it (e.g. placement agent, vocational counsellor, social worker). What is crucial for the purpose of study, they are all responsible for the allocation of resources, which gives them authority to exert power over individuals, who seek assistance in their organisations.

On the other hand, we focused on these among their clients, about whom we might suspect that their barriers against participation in the labour market are multiple. For that particular reason, their "successful" activation demands tailoring services. We operationalised this group according to the national administrative criteria of long term unemployed in all countries where the studies were conducted in the frame of work package 6 & 7 of Localise project. In the Polish case, this definition refers to people, who were registered as unemployed in PUP for more that 12 months during the last 2 years (excluding duration of being participant of apprenticeship, if relevant) (2004). In the city under study, 44% of the unemployed met this criterion in the end of 2012 (50% in Poland).

[1] Use of participant observation was not possible due to problems of access to the field and budgetary constraints.

[2] Initially there were 22 interviews. In 1 interview with a social worker in MOPR, there were moments when another social workers started to answer questions as well. 2 client interviewees revealed not be officially long term unemployed. We decided to exclude these two from the analysis. 5 interviews (including the above-mentioned 2) were financed from other resources than Localise, among others, funds of Institute of Sociology of University of Warsaw and a research grant for young researchers (DSM 105200).

Table 1: Registered unemployment and long-term unemployment in city X (end of year)

			2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
City X	Unemployment rate		6	8,5	8,2	8,1	9,5
	No of unemployed		5 589	7 653	7 481	7 380	8 808
	Long-term Unemployed	No	3 264	2 958	2 878	3 022	3 886
		%	58%	39%	38%	41%	44%

Source: MPiPS-01 by PUP X (2008-2012)

The long-term unemployed were recruited through all 3 organisations, where interviews with staff were conducted: PUP, MOPR, NGO. In the premises of PUP, we interviewed: 1) 3 long term unemployed, who had obligatory appointment the day we conducted the study and who agreed spontaneously to talk with us without being previously foretold about research; 2) 3 long term unemployed who were currently having apprenticeship in PUP. As far as clients of MOPR are concerned, we have received their contact details from social workers, who previously asked for their agreement. These interviews were scheduled in advance and most of them[3], where conducted in a college, which was a neutral place for them. Additionally we have decided to interview 1 long term unemployed, who had opportunity to participate in a more comprehensive programme called Social Integration Centre implemented by a NGO. All interviews were transcribed and complemented by a short description of situation of interview.

Moreover, we analysed the content of various working tools used by frontline staff during their encounters with long term unemployed. Using Localise funding, we analysed:

- a document containing information on PUP for people registering as the unemployed [later referred as D1][4]
- blank registration form for an unemployed person (PUP) [D2];
- computer printouts of personal records indicating types of information on clients stored in an electronic data basis (PUP) [D3]
- a blank individual action plan (PUP) [D4]
- a sheet for assessment of work performance of job placement agent [D5]

Thanks to additional funding[5], we have extended the study by incorporating the following working tools:

- a national manual entitled "Seeking for a job" (pl. *Szukam pracy*, 794 p.) for 3 weeks training in Job Club in all PUP in Poland (Liwosz, Nowak et al. 2009) [D6]
- a simplified version of 10 individual action plans, signed with unemployed in PUP, accessible *via* this electronic data basis [D7].

Finally, several stipulations have to be made. First of all, it was generally difficult to conduct interviews with long term unemployed. Some of them, at least at the beginning of interviews, were reluctant to discuss their private life. Questions concerning place of living, family or the problem of responsibility for their life-situation visibly caused many emotions. One interviewee asked not to touch upon these issues at all, by saying: "*I'd rather not tell about it...*" [UNEMPL 2][6]. Second of all, it was more challenging to conduct interviews in the premises of PUP. The location itself as well as the

[3] Except one interview, that took place at the apartment of interviewee at her request, because she had no possibility to leave her children with someone else.
[4] When we refer to specific sources that were gathered and analysed during research, we will use square brackets. Letters "D" indicate documents: e.g. "[D1]" for document 1.
[5] These tasks were financed from a research grant for young researchers (DSM 105200).
[6] All interviews were attributed acronyms and numbers: e. g. UNEMPL1 for a first unemployed person interviewed, PUP SLB4 for a fourth street-level bureaucrat interviewed employed in PUP, while MOPR SLB7 for a seventh street-level bureaucrat interviewed employed in MOPR.

spatial organisation of the room, where interviews[7] with the unemployed were conducted limited interviewees' sense of comfort and made their narratives more official. Also one of our staff interviewees suggested at the beginning of conversation that she would speak more freely, if the interview had a private character and took place outside the office [PES SLB2]. However, these two negative effects were partially neutralised by the effort of interviewers who – judging by the quality of material – succeeded to obtain crucial information, especially when it comes to the course of activation and the nature of contact with street-level bureaucrats. We also took into account this limitation during the analysis, by paying particular attention to discourses that rather touch upon everyday life experiences than interviewees' general opinions. Finally, we have reasons to believe that – especially when it comes to the interviewees recruited through Municipal Family Assistance Centre – we met individuals who were in neutral or positive relations with case workers and not the most vulnerable among long term unemployed. One of clients of Municipal Social Assistance Centre mentioned that when she was hesitating whether to agree to take part in the research, a social worker persuading her to do so said: "*If not you, who else will agree*". However, taking into account, generally critical overtone of results and possibility to grasp some mechanisms, which seem consistent with previous finding on people-processing in Polish PES, we don't treat above-mentioned limitations as a research flaw (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). Moreover, the overrepresentation of long term unemployed who are not on the very margins of the spectrum when it comes to their vulnerability was consistent with criteria adopted by all research teams.

3 Organisational and governance context

Even though the long term unemployed are defined in the legislation as a distinct administrative group of the unemployed, they fall under the same public organisations as all the other unemployed:

- PUP when it comes to Labour Market Policy (LMP)
- Municipal Social Assistance Centre (sometimes called Municipal Family Assistance Centre, MOPR) as regards the problem of poverty.

Their treatment does not essentially differ from the one received by other job seekers, who decide to register in PUP in order to apply for the status of unemployed and all related rights. PUP is the main PES in Poland that deals directly with the unemployed. PUP is usually a part of *powiat* administration (i.e. upper local territorial unit, NUTS 4), while social assistance for the same target group is usually provided by *gmina* (i.e. lower local territorial unit, NUTS 5). However, this case study concerns a city with a particular legal status: so-called 'a city with *powiat* rights' (pl. *miasto na prawach powiatu*). Similar to other 64 cities in Poland, it combines these two local territorial levels (*powiat* and *gmina*) in one. It means that both PES and social assistance are part of the same municipal administration, which is a factor facilitating cooperation.

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Despite the fact that formally PUP has been a part of local administration for more than a decade, LMP is considerably standardised by national legal acts. Policy instruments, target groups, electronic data basis at disposal of frontline staff as well as standards of services are centrally defined. Moreover, the funding received by PUP from the national Labour Fund (including funding from

[7] Interviews with the unemployed were carried out in an open space room, where obligatory appointments take place. Even though, each stand is isolated by Plexiglass wall, the privacy is limited and one can hear other people talking.

European Social Fund, which is partially calculated as a part of Labour Fund) cannot be spent on other purposes. It constraints considerably margin for manoeuvre of frontline workers[8].

Official mission and practical constraints

PUP's aim is to assist people in finding a job and – if it reveals impossible – to help them by income support and vocational activation. Its tasks consist of implementation of both passive (PLMPs) and active labour market policies (ALMPs). However, official image differs considerably from practice.

First of all, even in localities with relatively better economic situation – as it is the case of city X – frontline workers encounter problems with placement due to:

- a low number of job offers obtained by PUP workers compared to a number of people, who register as the unemployed (e.g. in the end of November of 2013, there was on average 60 unemployed per 1 job offer) (PUP X, MPiPS-01, November 2013)
- structural unemployment, i.e. a mismatch between the skills needed by employers and skills possessed by the unemployed. Interviewees gave examples of people difficult to place such as graduates of human sciences department of the local university or people losing their job after a long tenure in production company [PUP SLB1, 4].

Second of all, PLMPs are very residual and consist primordially of healthcare insurance, that gives the unemployed free access to public healthcare[9]. This link between heath and labour market policies has been often criticised, because it creates incentives for registration as unemployed for people, who seek access to healthcare and not necessarily employment (e.g. Góra 2007). Polish specificity is also low coverage rate (Sztandar-Sztanderska 2010). Only a narrow group of the unemployed is entitled to the unemployment benefit. In the city under study, its recipients constituted 18% of registered unemployed, which is slightly above the national average (17% at the end of 2012) (PUP X, MPiPS-01, 2012).

Box 1: Unemployment benefit (eligibility criteria)

a) unemployed person has worked on the basis of work contract or any other contract for at least 365 days during the last 18 months, earning at least a minimum salary;

b) during this work period unemployed person and his/her employer have covered all foreseen contributions from at least minimum salary.

Source: "Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions" from 2004 with further amendments

The majority of the long term unemployed do not fulfil these criteria. Therefore in PUP they can only benefit from allowances, if they participate in ALMP other than job placement and vocational counselling. For this reason, some of the ALMPs – mainly, various forms of subsidised employment – might be used as a form of income replacement and not necessarily a tool of activation [MOPR SLB 8, UNEMPL13] (Góra and Sztanderska 2006).

[8] Self-governments of *powiats* can only influence a division of the financial resources between different ALMPs that is left after payment of flat-rate obligatory benefits. They can also encourage their PUP to apply for additional resources when, for instance the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy or Voivodship, opens a competition for additional funding (so called Ministry or Voivodship reserve).

[9] Health insurance means mainly a right to see a doctor without paying for visit or a right of being hospitalised or having medical treatment (in all cases waiting time might be long) and not necessarily refunds of medications (a list of refundable medications is precisely defined).

Third of all, theoretically PUP implements a wide variety of ALMPs: among others, vocational and active job search training, apprenticeships, various forms of subsidised employment, business start-ups. However, due to a decrease of funds for this purpose from the Labour Fund, participation in ALMPs other than job placement, job counselling and short workshops is not a given. We find this systemic problem locally (see table 2). Interviewed frontline workers complained about the fact that they have to conduct severe selection among applicants, who fulfil formal criteria and are motivated to participate in ALMPs [SLB1, 2]. According to our interviewees only the unemployed who apply at the very beginning of year when there are still funds available [SLB 1, 4, 5] and predominantly those among them, who are capable of preparing convincing application or finding a potential employer vouching that they will be hired afterwards have a chance to participate [SLB 1, 2, 3]. Moreover, some ALMPs (including apprenticeships) do not always play their role, because they are used by employers to lower labour costs instead of searching for candidates (Wóycicka, Sztandar-Sztanderska et al. 2008). This remark concerns particularly uses of ALMPs in some of public institutions, which – as one of our interviewees – take trainees every your for this purpose only [PES SLB1].

Table 2: Number of participants in selected ALMPs in city X (2009-2012)

Year	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Apprenticeship (i.e. a type of the on-the-job training)	741	564	360	686
Training	1285	203	215	499
Business start-up grant	165	28	90	101
Refund of costs of employment	132	86	113	124
Socially useful works (i.e. a cheap form of subsidised employment organised by communities, working time up to 10 hours/week)	133	5	126	91
Intervention works (i.e. subsidised employment)	41	13	13	34
Public Works (i.e. a subsidised employment in communities, municipalities or non-governmental organisations)	23	3	4	4
Other forms of subsidised employment	30	3	38	51
Vocational education of adults /Vocational preparation in a workplace* (i.e. a type of the on-the-job training)	1	6	7	0
Total	2551	911	966	1590
Number of participants during year compared to number of unemployed at the end of year (%)	33%	12%	13%	18%

Source: MPiPS-01 (2009. 2010, 2011, 2012), according data on reasons of deregistration as unemployed
* An instrument of 'vocational preparation in a workplace' was changed into 'vocational education of adults' in 2010, by adding theoretical component

Organisational structure

In order to improve cooperation between frontline staff, all PUP should have created Occupational Activation Centre (pl. *Centrum Aktywizacji Zawodowej*, CAZ). Theoretically, it regroups all staff responsible for ALMPs, among others, job placement agents, job counsellors, specialists of vocational development. However, many offices have created Occupational Activation Centre without significantly modifying their prior organisational structure and workers' routines (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). This is also the case of the PUP under study. This office is divided into the following departments: Organisational & Administrative, Records and Benefits, Job Placement, Vocational Counselling, Vocational Development, Labour Market Instruments (which is responsible for remaining ALMPs) and a division responsible for raising European Funds. Three of them – Job Placement, Job counselling, Vocational Development – form Occupational Activation Centre. However, as we will indicate further, employees of each department focus mostly on carrying out their specific tasks and their cooperation is of secondary importance.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Official mission and practical constraints

In city X social assistance for the unemployed (as well as other legally defined groups) who suffer from poverty is provided by MOPR. It consists of income and in-kind support for the unemployed. However, the official mission of MOPR goes far beyond that. It aims not only "*fulfilling current needs"* but also "*integration with environment*" and support on the way of achieving "*life in conditions corresponding to human dignity*" of "*becoming independent*" [website of MOPR X]. The main instrument is social work. Since 2008, social assistance organisations also carry out activation programmes, financed mainly from European Social Funds.

However, this ambitious ideal is distant from reality. Social workers do not have means to deal with all problems they are faced with and they are held responsible for failures of other policies: '*social assistance – as they say – is this last chain link that is responsible for things which are being get rid of because are not being solved elsewhere*' [MOPR SLB6]. In their eyes, it is difficult to implement social work that relies on close contact with families due to a plenty of paperwork and heavy caseload (approximately 100 families [MOPR SLB6]). Whereas activation programmes are still kind of novelty and – as our interviewee explain – are too short (e.g. 3 months) to have a real impact on people, whose problems have lasted for several years [MOPR SLB6].

Moreover, the level of allowances and national entitlement criteria do not protect against poverty. The legal threshold qualifying for financial assistance is almost the same as the absolute poverty line (counted as income necessary to survive biologically) and much below the relative poverty line (counted as 50% of average wage) (GUS 2013). The average monthly temporary allowance was approximately 62 € per an unemployed person in Poland in 2011 (274 PLN) (MPiPS)[10]. However, in households with more family members, total financial support might be similar to minimum wage, which is demotivating factor for taking up legal employment. For this reason, social workers find this low support too high and they wish its distribution was more discretionary [MOPR SLB8].

Some interviewed unemployed commented the level of public support as far from satisfactory, while others were happy that they receive anything at all:

> **An unemployed man living alone**: '*I get 260 PLN* [11][62 € - K.S.S.] *and I'm curious, who would survive on that'* [UNEMPL11]

[10] The calculation according to exchange rate of National Bank of Poland in the end of 2011.
[11] The calculation according to exchange rate of National Bank of Poland of 1st December 2013.

An unemployed single mother of 5 children: '*what I get from MOPR it is enough. It is not a luxury, but it is possible to make both ends meet. I'm satisfied to receive this than rather nothing at all*'

The low level of benefits forces many recipients to work illegally to obtain additional means of livelihood. Women usually work as baby sitters, while men perform occasional or seasonal works. Their social workers are usually aware of this fact.

Organisational structure

MOPR in X has a complicated structure, since it carries out tasks usually assigned to two offices: one at the level of *gmina*, which provides social assistance for various target groups and the other at the level of *powiat* (with responsibilities, among others, in the respect of family allowances and services for disabled). For the purpose of the report, it is enough to say that social workers in direct contact with the unemployed are organised into district branches and are responsible for families living in the neighbourhood. MOPR also has a department of crisis intervention and specialist counselling, which, among others, provides psychological counselling (for instance, therapy for people having problems with aggressive behaviour).

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES

PUP and MOPR share many clients, because being registered as unemployed is one of the condition of access to social assistance However, for a moment, there are no permanent collaborative structures between two offices and interaction between social workers and PUP frontline staff is rare: only one among our staff interviewees has discussed with social workers about individual unemployed [PES SLB4]. City officials demanded from the management of PES and social assistance to develop a pilot project aiming at creation of cooperation standards, but it is still a question of future, since the project hasn't started yet [PES SLB5]. The only permanent tool of coordination between offices is an electronic platform that enables social workers to have access into personal records of the unemployed that are kept in the data basis of PUP (for more, see Categorisation & Legibility). The access to information is one way, i.e. PUP workers does not have access to MOPR files. Social workers find this IT platform very useful. However, at the same time it found it responsible for decreasing daily contacts between staff from both offices [MOPR SLB8].

4 The Structure of Everyday Work

WORK ORGANISATION IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Frontline workers responsible for ALMPs focus on carrying out their regular tasks related to their specialisation. Generally speaking, cooperation intra-specialisations when it comes to individual unemployed is limited to the use of the same nationally constructed data basis called *Syriusz* (as previously mentioned also available for social workers from MOPR). In *Syriusz* workers can verify information concerning an unemployed person and her/his contacts with other staff (for details, see Categorisation & legibility). Unemployed people are not assigned case workers, who are responsible for planning and coordinating activation of an individual. Instead, frontline workers might refer selected clients one to another, when their '*intuition'* tells them that this particular person needs specific information or a specific type of treatment [PES SLB4]. The only workers having regular, but rare, obligatory meetings with all the unemployed are job placement agents, which is why particular attention will be paid to their work routines.

Table 3: Front-line staff specialisations in PUP X

Name of position	**No of workers employed**	**Main tasks**	**Clients/workers ratio** (30th November 2013)
Job placement agent	15	Individual meetings with the unemployed and employers	631:1
Vocational counselling	8	Individual and group counselling Assessment of candidates for training and other ALMPs organised in the frame of ESF Preparing individual action plans Preparing candidates for employers	1184:1
Specialist of vocational Development	5	Organisation of group training (planning, tenders, recruitment of participants, etc.) Organisation of individual training (e.g. assessment of applications)	1894:1
Job Club Leader	3	Short information meeting for newly registered unemployed 1 weeks' job search training Short thematic sessions	3157:1

Job placement agents are divided into working groups of three. Each group is assigned a number of the unemployed, selected alphabetically. Every week between 7.30 am and 2 p.m., two workers of every group occupy service posts, that are located in an open space room on the ground floor. They meet there with the unemployed, who were summoned to appear in the office that day (under threat of losing the unemployed status) as well as other people coming on their own initiative. The third worker from each group of job placement agents meets with employers in order to obtain job and activation offers (also subsidised employment and apprenticeships). They switch after two weeks, which is an organisational solution aiming at – on the one hand – being informed about employers' needs and being able to '*have a rest from people*' as one of the interviewee put it [PES SLB5]. All job placement agents have also paperwork duties, which are time consuming [PES SLB5]. This work organisation means that an unemployed person might meet any of two out of three agents staying at office that day and this is not necessarily the same worker everytime.

Since there is no possibility to have an appointment with job placement agent for a specific hour, all of unemployed have to wait in a queue on a first come, first served basis. According to law, the first meeting have to take place no longer than 7 days after registration in case of unemployment benefit recipients or no longer than 30 days after registration in case of the unemployed without entitlement right (for more on the obligatory steps of the unemployed, see table 4). Later obligatory meeting are appointed usually once per three or four months. The period in between cannot be longer than 120 days in order to meet legal standards.

Depending on the affluence, job placement agent might have between 30 and 50 clients to talk to a day, which makes time per meeting short [PES SLB4], ranging from approximately 8 to 13 minutes per client. However, when a person does not want to talk, a meeting can only take a minute or two. In a crowded day, both staff and clients feel '*a pressure of crowd*' [PES SLB4]. This sensation is magnified by the spatial organisation of room: service posts are only partially sectioned off by a Plexiglas wall from the open space. Waiting people fill the open space in the middle of the room and if a meeting does not end quick, one can hear a murmur of discontent or unpleasant comments: '*Why are you talking so long, why don't you* [two – K.S.S.] *go for a coffee?*' [PES SLB4].

Table 4: Obligatory steps of the unemployed (without benefit entitlements) according to PUP staff

Time frame	**Obligatory steps for all**	**Obligatory steps for unemployed who also belong to other specific groups**
Approx. 7 days after registration*		Information meeting about services provided by PUP for the unemployed registered for the first time
Max. 30 days after registration	First meeting with a job placement agent	
Every 3 or 4 moths (max. 120 days later)	Meeting with a job placement agent or with other staff if needed	
If registered 180 days continuously		Individual Action Plan for selected members of 'people in special situation on labour market': • less than 25 years old • more than 50 years • without qualifications or experience • ex-prisoners

* Contrary to other steps, this obligatory step is not a result of national standards, but is a specific solution adopted locally.

The first meeting with job placement agent starts with questions concerning professional career: qualifications, work experience, circumstances of losing previous job. A street-level bureaucrat has access to *Syriusz* and during interview s/he verifies if all relevant information was included during registration in a personal electronic record (details on this subject, in a part on Categorisation & Legibility).

If there are any suitable job offers (for legal definition, see box 5) for this person, s/he might issue a formal referral and a person is obliged to go to the employer and come back with this document within 7 days. Usually job placement agents decide to send maximum 7 people per one offer a day to avoid imposing costs on the unemployed, if their chances are small and to save them unnecessary disappointment [PES SLB5]. It means that job offers are available on a first come, first served basis for these who obtain information only from PUP staff. Usually it is also possible to find employers' contact details on the webpage and a information board in the premises of PUP. However, the rule the faster, the better applies to apprenticeships and subsidised employment offers (not announce elsewhere), which are at the job placement agent disposal. At the beginning of the year, when recruitment for ALMPs is officially open, the new people decide to register as unemployed [PES SLB1] and the office gets crowded.

During next meetings a job placement agent verifies if anything has changed. S/he asks if the a person was looking for an employment on his or her own, where, whether s/he finds any job or activation offer at PUP disposal interesting and so on. S/he does not initiate conversation on other then work-related issues and even if a person herself starts to talk about her private life, some frontline workers are rather reluctant to pursue this subject: '*Some people open up, but I always wonder whether to go deeper. Conditions are as everybody sees. If it is like this* [he indicates at the empty and quiet room that day – K.S.S.], *then we can talk. But if there is one person standing on another, they peep into here, then it is a tough case. It happens that people have dilemmas, they cry, the despair is deep I must say. And then it is difficult sometimes to hold these people back'* [PES SLB5]. In such a case, a job placement agent might decide to appoint an obligatory meeting for this person with a job counsellor. These meeting are also usually appointed if a person lacks motivation, work experience, qualifications or there are other difficulties that demand a closer look.

Vocational counsellors have more comfortable working conditions, both in terms of time pressure (they can devote approximately between 20 minutes to more than one hour per person) and spatial organisation (they have singe rooms securing privacy, but making them more vulnerable in cases of aggression [PES SLB6]). However, they also face time constraints, because of unexpected clients and busy administrative periods [PES SLB2]. Counsellors provide assistance in career planning. Despite the fact they do not officially work as psychologist, their work has strong psychological component: '*our job consists mainly of supporting* (...) *making somebody stronger in order to make him willing to act instead of giving up, to make him go searching* [for a job – K.S.S.] [PES SLB2]*"*. Counsellors have also several other responsibilities besides individual and group counselling for people directed to them by the job placement agent or coming on their own. They summon people, who have been registered for 6 months and who according to law are obliged to sign an individual action plan (see table 4). They also assess people, who apply for other types of ALMPs such as vocational trainings, job search training in a Job Club or ALMPs organised in the frame of smaller projects financed from ESF. Their assessment is taken into account during a selection process.

Psychological support and providing information is also a task of job club leaders. They conduct, among others:

- two hours' long information meeting for newly registered unemployed about services provided by PUP;
- 3 weeks' long training for people who face multiple barriers hindering their economic activity (usually 4 times per year, depending on funds availability). Despite official aim of learning how to find a job, this training is to a larger extent devoted to learning people change their life: being independent and solving their life problems, not necessarily work related (for detail, see "Responsibilisation and agency").
- short thematic sessions on a broad range of subjects invented by leaders on their own.

Tasks of specialists of vocational development's consist more of the organisation of training (planning, tenders, assessment of the unemployed applications) than on having direct contact with clients. However, they also answer questions of the unemployed people concerning, for instance, application process, etc.

WORKER-CLIENTS RELATIONS IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Rare contact with job placement agent, caseload, time pressure and spatial organisation translate into rather impersonal and superficial relations with the unemployed.

The unemployed have special names for this kind of meeting:

> '*I was* [in PUP] *today* [i.e. December 19th -K.S.S.] *and now I have* [to go on- K.S.S.] *14th April to thick my name off*' [PES SLB2]
>
> '*you only go there, shit, for a next date, shit, please come and thick your name off. And goodbye* [...] *No* [job - K.S.S.]] *offer. Nothing*" [PES SLB14].

As observed in previous research on PES in Poland, this wording ('*getting* a *date*', '*having a date*' '*thicking your name off*') refers to a disciplinary exercise, useless from the point of view of job seekers: coming to the office for an obligatory appointment and signing the document confirming the unemployed person's '*job readiness*' (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). The frequency as well as a way of using these words by the long term unemployed suggest, that it is a part of '*everyday knowledge*' the clients of PUP share – to use Berger's and Luckmann's notion (Berger and Luckmann 1966). If the office did not succeed to help the individual with solving the problem s/he comes with, this particular experience is usually generalised into the overall opinion about public employment services (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming), no matter if a person has used anyhow PUP's services (for instance, data basis of job offers available through PUP' website or have participated in a training or apprenticeship [e.g. UNEMPL4]).

In previous researches on Polish PES, we found out that worker-clients relations might differ, if a person had a closer contact with one of the PUP employees, probably either a vocational counsellor (in case of multiple individual sessions of counselling) or a job club leader (in case of participation in 3 weeks long training). However, in PUP under study counselling sessions conclude usually after only three or four meetings and a person does not have an opportunity to see any vocational counsellor afterwards unless she is registered for another several months. For this reason some of the unemployed suggested that this contact should be closer and continuous:

> '**Researcher:** *Is there something* [in PUP – K.S.S.] (...) *that might be improved?*
> **Unemployed**: (...) *I think that maybe a cooperation between a counsellor and a* [job – K.S.S.] *seeker, a more frequent contact, not once in a while, but a more often contact. And an interest*: *whether you found a job or maybe there is a possibility in other direction or* (...) *there is possibility for changing qualifications*'. [UNEMPL 10]

The only person, who reported a close contact with PUP staff was a person, who in frame of apprenticeship works in PUP as a caretaker. During a few months, he comes to the office everyday for a whole working day and has a chance for a more personalised treatment. He talked about frontline staff and himself as '*us'* (instead of '*them'*) and he was able to indicate one person playing for him a role of case manager, that supports him all along the process of job search [UNEMPL 1].

WORK ORGANISATION AND WORKER-CLIENTS RELATIONS IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

One whole day a week and every morning during the remaining days, social workers have office hours. Rest of the time they spend – as they call it – '*in the field*', conducting '*environmental interviews*' at households and reacting to some emergency situations. Despite broader social work objectives, the focus is on paperwork, which is crucial for legitimising decisions on attribution of benefits [MOPR SLB6].

In case of social assistance worker-client relations are of different nature due to a character of social work and a repetitive contact with all families in their environment over a longer period of time that might even reach several years. Social workers are emotionally invested in the private life of their '*clients'* and '*chargees'*[12] (pl. *podopieczny*) – as they call social assistance recipients and are sometimes personally affected by their life tragedies (such as illnesses, accidents, etc.) [MOPR SLB6]. Unemployed people, having contact with both offices, usually contrast them. They describe general contacts with PUP staff as '*impersonal'*, '*cold'*, while these in MOPR as '*human', 'sincere*', '*down-to-earth*' in MOPR [e.g. UNEMPL8] or – they value PUP's staff for their '*professionalism'* while MOPR is depicted as discretionary in the sense that too much depends on a particular worker and his or her mood [e.g. UNEMPL2]. However, it is rather this first description that is prevailing.

[12] A word '*podopieczny'* (here translated as 'chargee') originates from '*pod opieką'*, meaning "in somebody's care", "in somebody's keeping", "in somebody's charge". This naming suggests a close, personal but visibly hierarchical and paternalist relationship. When it comes to the PUP staff, they don't use one specific term to denote people, who come to the office: they talk about them as '*unemployed*', '*clients'*, '*cases*' or simply '*people'* or '*persons'*. Compared to other Polish PES they rarely use a wide-spread term "*claimant*" [pl. *interesant*, *petent*]. The latter one has either negative or neutral connotation. It means a person, who comes and wants something from the administration and who is in a subordinate position.

5 Individualisation – Standardisation of interventions

The opposition between individualisation and standardisation does not fully enable to describe practices of people-processing in the context of uncertainty of resources and defragmented organisational structure. I will therefore supplement the analysis of different dimensions of individualisation and standardisation, by providing general information on organisation of people-processing necessary to understand its bureaucratic logic.

One has to remember that in PUP X as well as other PES in Poland (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming), the work of frontline staff is not centred around individual unemployed. Rather than practising case management, they carry out their specific tasks separately with little of coordination. For instance, instead of looking for offers that might suit an individual, job placement agent presents to the unemployed, who come to PUP this particular day, previously acquired offers of (normal or subsidised) employment and apprenticeship that match more or less his or her profile. Other example: instead of thinking what training might be adapted for a specific person, the task of specialist of vocational development is to watch over a smooth organisation of group training, i.e. finding in a due time the exact number of trainees as previously planned. As one of our interviewees summed it up: '*if we would like to do this properly, then it should be done from the other side. It should start from the unemployed person. This person needs something and we are looking for a post of apprenticeship for her. Not the other way round. So we actually assign people to posts and not posts to people'* [PES SLB5]. In other words, individual must fit in the current PUP offer and this offer is not prepared to fit concrete people. While individualisation understood as tailoring services would demand not only modification of legal framework and working conditions, but also different work organisation and change of staff's practices. We will provide details on the this subject.

First of all, legal regulations define available instruments. It means that nobody in PUP has decision-making power to use other measures, even though they might be crucial for finding or keeping employment[13]. For these reasons, frontline staff cannot deal with various manifestations of 'poverty trap'. For instance, our interviewees observed such barriers as repugnant physical appearance or poor health condition:

> "*First of all, I would replace them all* [missing – K.S.S.] *teeth* (...). *I can talk a lot about motivation, opportunities, but if somebody lacks central incisors... there is no point, isn't it?* [PES SLB1]".
>
> "*They might be motivated, have difficult family situation. You would like to help such a person, but then if you don't change certain things* (...) *Besides, you know what: a lack of teeth, this is not only a question of neglecting* [your appearance – K.S.S.], *it is a question of finances. If you have 5 children, difficult situation. I cannot tell her: Mrs. you don't have any chances* [for employment- K.S.S.] *in trade or even restaurants, if you don't do something about it...*" [PES SLB2].

There is no cooperation in this respect with social assistance, which theoretically might use special allowances for this purpose (pl. *zasiłek celowy*). Even if it was, there would probably be no money for that purpose. According to long-term unemployed interviewed in this study, they currently receive financial and in-kind support from municipal family assistance centre that is not sufficient for basic needs, such as food, rent, medicine.

[13] With the exception of finding other funds for this purpose, which is very rare, because local authorities are either not able or not eager to finance it.

Moreover, street-level bureaucrats having more personal contact with the vulnerable unemployed complain about a lack of '*intermediary instruments*', making possible a '*rehabilitation'* [PES SLB1]. By which they refer to tools that will enable to continue activation process in a longer perspective for those, who have to change a lot in their life before entering labour market. Three weeks of job club training or monthly sessions with a counsellor are not enough for them to make them ready for contact with employer. Meanwhile, they are left on their own with job search: '*They actually start to believe that they are capable of finding a job, they visit employers, go... And we see this person uplifted... And later after 3 months she comes back and says: I went to a number of companies, I submitted so many applications* (...) *And motivation goes down, very often a person starts to feel low. So sometimes we wonder, that this boosting up of their self-confidence and then this drop...*' [PES SLB2]. Without continuation of support, the effect might be contrary to intentions. The same problem concerns activation programmes carried out by MOPR: '*projects are too short for me* (...) *you should work for a very long time with such a person, who is for a long time embedded in something* (...)*. If this situation lasts for long, then it is not possible to change it in three months*. *We shouldn't deceive ourselves, three months project won't change anything. Even if with, by force, put into employment, for instance we will fix him employment, but he is not mentally ready, than he hill probably lose this job* [MOPR SLB6].

Second of all, caseload is too heavy (for data, see table 3) and resources for ALMP too scarce in order to systematically adapt services to the unemployed needs. Instead of tailoring services, frontline staff rather impose costs on the clients of so-called 'free services' and in this way they ration access to scarce resources (Prottas 1979; Lipsky 1980). In PUP under study we observe similar phenomena as in other Polish PES: meeting formal criteria of access to ALMP is not enough and unemployed have to compete in order to participate in more expensive and more popular ones (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). This '*competition*' [PES SLB1] involves:

- checking (online or in person) ALMPs offers in order not to miss the interesting ones the moment they become available. PUP staff rather do not inform on their own initiative about new offers in between rare appointments (phenomenon observed in: Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming) [PES SLB4],
- waiting in an extremely long queue to get an obligatory summon from job placement agent in case of apprenticeships and subsidised employment the day the offer becomes publicly available [PES SLB4],
- filling in an application form for training, business start up or project financed from ESF in a way that demonstrates they know the labour market and persuade that their chances for employment are high (or even finding potential employer eager to certify that will employ them in case of more expensive training or guarantor of a loan in case of business start-up subsidies) etc. [PES SLB1, 2, 3] (phenomenon observed in: Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming).

Job club leader observed that people, who participated in her workshops, who are '*still so distant from labour market*' yet motivated have smaller chances in this competition. Exceptions are rare: during collective assessment of candidates a vocational counsellor might try to argument in favour of one vulnerable unemployed person coming from '*patological family*', while other candidates will be probably selected according to their chances of finding employment. This dilemma between equity and efficiency is often pronounced [PES SLB 1, 2]. This subject appears in the context of future reforms of Polish PES, which will increase impact of indicators measuring quick employment and will decrease a room for taking into account precarious life circumstances [PES SLB2]. At present, some indicators exist and are taken into account during frontline staff assessment in PUP under study. However, they hasn't played important role so far. On the other hand, difficult life situation together with motivation might be a factor facilitating access in case of MOPR activation programmes.

Similarly to other Polish PES, during years of decrease of funds on ALMPs these above-mentioned organisational solutions work in favour people having certain skills (e.g. writing application, persuading employer) and resources (e.g. access to Internet, money for bus ticket), advantageous life situation and time (e.g. having vs. not having care responsibilities) (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). They are often unequally distributed, which leads to 'creaming and parking' or even 'social reproduction' to use more sociological terms (ibid.).

What is striking here is that there is no effort to combine services for one unemployed person, if it is necessary for changing her chances for employment. We will demonstrate this phenomenon by showing how individual action plan is used (pl. *Indywidualny Plan Dzialania*, IPD). IPD was introduced in 2010 as an obligatory instrument that aims to diagnose a person's problem and group together various ALMPs that are necessary in order to achieve her employment. In PUP X, it is mostly based on a single or many interviews with a person, rarely followed by psychological tests [PUP SLB6]. An interview includes the following dimensions: education, professional experience, health condition, social and economic conditions [D4]. After analysis of a particular situation, a summarised diagnosis comes down to 3 dimensions with standardised answers and a possibility to include other aspects: choice of profession, training and employment (for details, see box 2)

Box 2: A summarised diagnosis of a client's situation included in Individual Action Plan in PUP X

In each of the following sections vocational counsellor might thick off the relevant answer among the following ones or fill in an empty space "Others (what?)". Then IPD is signed by the client.

Choice of profession:

- ☐ Client has a limited or no work experience and for the first time he wants to make a choice of profession
- ☐ Client has a limited or no work experience, he made a choice of profession, which seems wrong for him - he wants to make another choice of profession
- ☐ Client has work experience, but wants to or has to change his profession, he considers this option, because of external factors.

Training

- ☐ Client plans to supplement knowledge and professional skills

Employment

- ☐ Client plans to start up a business and he expects assessment of odds of this endavour
- ☐ Client has difficulties with professional adaptation
- ☐ Client has deficits in regard to job search skills

Source: [D4]

IPD should enumerate what actions will be undertaken by the unemployed person herself and what actions might be undertaken by PUP within a fixed time frame. The idea behind IPD is generally accepted by frontline staff: '*the idea is great. Because* [IPD – K.S.S.] (...) *assumes close cooperation of all departments, most of departments of Labour Office. It brings together work for a client's good – so to say. Dates are being fixed, period of implementation, the conception is ideal* [PES SLB6]. However, its feasibility has been contested since the beginning, mainly, due to shortage of frontline staff compared to a number of the unemployed for whom IPD was obligatory (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming).

Box 3: Groups with whom PUP is obliged to sign Individual Action Plan

Currently, individual action plan must be signed with all unemployed belonging to one of the following categories, provided that they are registered in labour office continuously for more than 180 days:

- ☐ the unemployed below 25 or over 50 years old or
- ☐ without professional qualifications or work experience,
- ☐ ex-prisoners, who had not taken up job after being released from a prison.

Interviews in PUP X reveal other factors making this tool difficult to enforce. In fact, a job counsellor preparing IPD cannot make any promises about services a person will have access to. She cannot also verify if a person redeems what she had promised to do. We will provide longer excerpts of interview with counsellors for illustration:

> ‘*De facto it does not have the character of contract. Surely this was its intent. However in such a big (...) office (...) we are not able to implement it as a contract. As far as we can* [formally – K.S.S.] *oblige a person to take up concrete actions, we have no opportunity to enforce these actions and vice versa. If I indicate in Individual Action plan that (...) the most suitable form of support for her is an apprenticeship, then she should do it. Unfortunately, it is incredibly difficult to carry it out due to a number of the unemployed, due to the resources we have at our disposal, due to such a complicated structure*’ [PES SLB6].

> ‘*It is difficult to stick to* [what is planned in IPD – K.S.S.], *because I can have in control my calendar, my work* (...) *and group counselling, actions that are carried out in my department. However, when it comes to the implementation of apprenticeships or other forms* [of ALMP – K.S.S.], *funds come into play. And their implementation depends on their availability. So I often don't know when something will be implemented, when there will be such an opportunity* (...) *Maybe if the resources for concrete labour market instruments were always available, maybe this task* [of IPD – K.S.S.] *would look completely different. But at the moment we get money in tranches, all actions are implemented according to their schedules, in stages. So I often don't know, when it will be implemented, when it will be possible* (...) *So I guess what makes implementation difficult is this unavailability, this lack of financial fluidity when it comes to delivery, not what counsellor or job placement agent do, but delivery of labour market instruments'* [PES SLB6].

In other words, lack of possibility of long-term planning due to uncertainty of resources for ALMP and defragmented organisational structure make uses of IPD superficial. Frontline staff signs it to obey to law, but – as they all say – it does not change in any way what they used to do [PES SLB2, PES SLB4, PES SLB6]. Its routine character is probably one of the reasons why all long term unemployed interviewees do not remember at all signing this contract, even though for some of them, it was obligatory according to the law. Another possibility – suggested by one of the street level bureaucrats – is that obligatory contracts are not signed with all legally defined groups due to too heavy caseload.

What is also interesting: working conditions consisting of financial uncertainty and heavy caseload legitimise defragmented organisation of people-processing. Staff invoke them in order to justify why tailoring services is not implemented. They did so during interview when they were asked detailed questions that assume other organisational possibilities. Following Lipsky, we might interpret it as psychological coping response in reaction to tensions between capabilities and objectives (Lipsky 1980: 140-156). However, it is not only psychological but also social phenomena. They treat their working routines and existing organisation of people-processing as ‘obvious’, ‘taken for granted’ – to use sociological terms (Berger and Luckmann 1966). And other solutions ‘*have never crossed* (..) [their] *mind*’ [PES SLB1] – to use expression of one interviewee, who realised during interview that she herself might organise work differently in order to answer individual needs.

Summing up**,** instead of adapting services to specific needs individualisation takes mainly form of individualisation of risk and – as we will show latter (see the part on Responsibilization and agency) – it means responsibilisation of the unemployed for changing their life situation. In these working conditions, standardisation is still understood mainly in bureaucratic terms as following the law when it comes to regulating access to services (depending of administrative categorisation) and as initiating certain actions in a due time (e.g. having at least one obligatory meeting during 120 days, signing IPD after 6 months of registration with selected categories of the unemployed). However in practice, official categorisation do not determine a type of treatment, because target groups are too broadly defined (this subject is developed in part on Categorisation and legibility). Other informal categorisations seem to play a role: e.g. 'a promising' client in terms of future employment. On the other hand, street-level bureaucrats seem to have problems to carry out even their legally defined responsibilities when it comes to obligations towards the unemployed.

6 Categorization and Legibility

COLLECTING OFFICIAL INFORMATION ON THE UNEMPLOYED IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

A client who comes to PUP is made legible through documentation. At the registration desk an individual is obliged to present many official documents mainly concerning education and professional career, but also residence permit, medical certificate (if a s/he is not able to perform some jobs or has a disability certificate) or other documents in specific cases. S/he also provides additional information in a form of official declaration concerning, for instance, a number of children s/he maintains or a fact that her or his spouse is also unemployed [D1]. In principle, this information is then put into the electronic data basis (*Syriusz*), which is available for PUP frontline staff and also for social workers from MOPR. However, as we went through some personal records, there were no data on family included, so we might assume that data other than employment and education-related might not always be in the system.

Syriusz also contains data on a course of current and previous registrations, among others, time of registration, obligatory and not obligatory meetings in PUP, proposed job offers, reaction (acceptance, rejection) and result (employment or not), participation in ALMPs, reasons for deregistration (e.g. taking up employment, sanctions, etc.) [D3]. Electronic data basis works as an external memory. Frontline staff might also include there short notes, for instance, on the content of meeting and use it during next appointments: '*job placement agent also reads here his entries, what he has... about this person... what was written, what happened with her*' [PES SLB5].

CATEGORISING AND MAKING LEGIBLE

Syriusz serves also as an instrument to classify a person in terms of administrative categories that are related to official criteria of access to benefits and services. Some services – such as various forms subsidised employment or apprenticeship – are restricted for specific groups of the unemployed. The most important among them are so-called 'people in special situation in labour market' (for, details see box 4). The long-term unemployed are part of this administrative category. However, this group is very broad: it covers approximately 90% of the unemployed in Poland (MPiPS 2013: 3). Hence, it is hardly any targeting tool at all. Yet, official categorisation matters, when PUP organises additional programmes financed from the ESF. They usually target selected representatives of this group. Therefore, people 'in special situation in the labour market' have generally easier access to ALMPs.

Introduction of electronic data base has economised the processes of official categorisation, since it is automatically performed by the system after data input: '*This is really a sort of labelling people. Because here we know – now he has registered – and we have all information and now (...) job placement agent goes through it (...) And here it will come out, if it is a person in a 'special situation'* [in the labour market – K.S.S.]. *So it is already here, system sees it and detects it*' [PES SLB5].

Box 4: Vulnerable unemployed according to legal acts

A person is considered as being 'in a special situation in labour market' if s/he fulfils at least one of the following criteria:

- unemployed aged under 25 and over 50 years old,
- long term unemployed;
- unemployed women, who have not returned to work after a birth of their child;
- unemployed people without professional qualifications;
- single-parents;
- ex-prisoners;
- the disabled.

Moreover, information on educational and professional career is used by frontline staff to decide which job offers available in PUP's catalogue should be presented to such a person and what other types of treatment might be relevant: for instance, if she lacks experience, the first choice will be to suggest her to apply for an apprenticeship or if she lacks specific qualification, she might be directed to vocational counsellor in order to decide on possible career choices and an application for training might be suggested. In this process, the official information is usually complemented by a judgement based on street-level bureaucrat's experience and a close (yet usually short) observation of a person's behaviour.

IT AS TOOL OF CONTROL AND REPRESENTATION

What is different compared to paper files, is that IT opens new possibilities of reading clients' behaviour and controlling their activity. This opportunity is completely new for MOPR employees, who have access to PUP electronic files since 2 years[14]. For example, social workers might verify whether an unemployed is entitled to allowance for participation in ALMPs without every single time requesting PUP for information. Such an allowance is too high compared to income threshold in social assistance and it disqualifies a person from receiving financial support in MOPR. Electronic system economises the control. It enables to detect cases of withholding this kind of information, which are usually interpreted as attempt to deceit social worker and abuse the system [MOPR SLB8].

Permanent access means also constant visibility to use in Foucault's line of thinking (Foucault 1998). The minute a social worker decides to verify client's status in PUP, a person risks losing the entitlement to social assistance, if she had lost unemployed status in PUP in consequence of sanctions. Social worker gives the example of a young man: he was entitled to a temporary benefit for a period of 3 months, '*meanwhile he might be simply deregistered* [as a result of sanction for not fulfilling formal obligations – K.S.S.], *while the only reason for which it was decided that he was granted support was the unemployment* (...) [Then – K.S.S.] *we can* (...) *refuse him support, because he has lost simply the only argument why he could benefit from social assistance'* [MOPR SLB8]. In consequence of this permanent visibility, unemployed people applying for social assistance have lost their margin for manoeuvre resulting from delays and misunderstandings in official communication between offices. In this particular case, it means immediate financial consequences instead of postponed ones. Before, the client would probably have received temporary allowance till the end of 3 months' period, now it is more probable he will lose it before.

Syriusz is also a technology of representation of an individual: what actions she undertakes and what is her/his deservingness. It gives an immediate insight into "self" represented in temporal forms: not only educational and professional career, but also all contacts with PUP that might go several or several dozen years back. Central categories used to interpret traces of interactions with frontline staff are (besides intention to abuse system) person's '*activity*' and '*motivation*'. Street-level bureaucrats pay attention, among others, to such manifestations of '*activity'* recorded in the files as

[14] PUP staff had had other electronic data base beforehand.

visits in PUP initiated by the unemployed and various attempts to deal with joblessness, no matter their final results:

> '[S]*ocial worker, he sees everything, whether you came to me, whether you have asked about job offers, whether you are active. He sees all*'. [PES SLB4].
>
> '*I check all history from the first registration. And sometimes I haven't even known many things about these people. For instance, for me a person disappeared* [from MOPR – K.S.S.], *but meanwhile he received funds* [from PUP – K.S.S.] *(...) for opening a business. In principle, it went bankrupt very soon. Because usually these people are not very resourceful, unqualified. Somebody helped them to create a business plan. It didn't work out, but from this history – we can tell – that they were doing something*" [MOPR SLB8].

On the other hand, *Syriusz* is also a technology that enables Panoptic form of observation of PUP frontline staff: what they do and what is their quantitative and qualitative performance. First of all, their actions leave traces in the electronic files. Second of all, they become quantifiable. If a supervisor knows how to use IT, then s/he might generate reports on giving him/her insight into, among others, the following issues [PES SLB5]:

- whether a frontline worker meets legal standards (e.g. concerning the frequency of obligatory meetings with unemployed),
- how many clients s/he has meetings with,
- how many individual action plan s/he signs (in case of vocational counsellor) or how many formal referrals to employers s/he issues (in case of job placement agent),
- how many unemployed found a job thanks to a job referral,
- what is a time of '*realisation of job offer*' (in case of job placement agent) i.e. how much time was needed to find a candidate for a vacancy who is accepted by an employer,
- what is the performance of referrals to employers (i.e. how many candidates were obliged to go to see an employer, before s/he hired someone).

For a moment, this control function is used only by few supervisors and mainly to give a broad picture of the work performance of a department as a whole [PES SLB5]. This limited use is a result of a number of factors. First of all, the system is still quite new. Frontline staff and the management are still learning how to use it and some of them lack technical competences. Second of all, despite the fact IT was centrally implemented, there are no clear guidelines how to use it, so practices differs in case of individual workers and offices [PES SLB6]. Staff don't know how the IT translates their actions into statistics, which results in statistical inaccuracies: '*I don't know if I click here in this box, it will be reflected into, for instance, annual statistics or maybe monthly. It happens that our monthly statistics differ from the annual ones. We don't know why*' [PES SLB6]. Finally, relationship between staff salaries (including bonus) and work performance is far from clear. For instance, several of above-mentioned aspects are included into workers' evaluation sheet together with qualitative assessment (e.g. attitude towards clients, ability to communicate about PUP services, personal involvement) [D5], but workers don't really know how it affects a final decision made by the head of department [PES SLB1]. It seems that more important when it comes to the level of bonuses is the worker's specialisation (e.g. vocational counsellors have higher bonuses that job placement agents).

OFFICIAL *VERSUS* UNOFFICIAL INFORMATION

While indicators seem not to affect frontline staff practices, potential accessibility to *Syriusz* by other people surely change the way they work: "*it also influences our decisions concerning quantity and quality of information transferred. So I always try to think, that there is perhaps somebody who reads, what we write.* ' [PES SLB6]. Consciousness of permanent visibility by an "anonymous power" (Foucault 1998) together with a right of a client to access his/her files lead workers to depersonalise and generalise entries:

> '**Vocational counsellor**: *but I don't know* (...) *who reads* [it- K.S.S.]. *So my information will always be very general.*
> **Researcher**: *So what you said, things like social-economic factors* [which are part of IPD will be included in *Syriusz* – K.S.S.]?
> **Vocational counsellor**: *No, absolutely not. No. Neither that Smith came to me drunk and that he always comes drunk*' [PES SLB6].
>
> '**Vocational counsellor**: *There are some things, that I note* [in paper files], *but I don't want to and I can't even put it to Syriusz* (...). *When somebody tells me something about an illness or family situation, so I think, that I shouldn't share it* (...) *and, in fact, there are* [unemployed – K.S.S.] *persons, maybe not so many, that demands to print them Syriusz* [file – K.S.S.], *what was written in it* [PES SLB2]'.

Street-level bureaucrats censor all information, which they qualify as '*private'*, '*intimate'*, '*confidential'*, but also things that cannot be easily proven or something they have no professional authority to judge upon. For instance, they can write that a person has a light disability, if they have a document of confirmation, but they are not allowed to precise what kind of disability it is. Generalisation of entries makes difficult transfer of information necessary for activation to other members of staff. For the purpose of communication, entries are coded and deciphered by those who know the code. For instance, if they suspect that somebody has severe psychological problems and they want to warn other workers about it, the entry might say: "*difficult mental contact with client*' [PES SLB6].

Generally speaking, main function of these records – what is typical for contractual relations (Garfinkel 1967) – is neither to contain information on the unemployed necessary for successful intervention (as the example of information on disability indicates), nor to reflect actual interactions, but to prove that actions undertaken towards a client were in conformity with law:

> '**Vocational counsellor**: *I keep both paper documentation and the second one in electronic form.* (...)
> **Researcher**: *Is it the same?*
> **Vocational counsellor**: *Not really, this electronic on will have different character, it will show rather, the character of counselling talk, on whose initiative* [it was - K.S.S.], *what are the links between the counselling and other* [PUP – K.S.S.] *activities, so all* [things] *according to standards, recommendations, resulting from rules. This will be the element which will formalise my work* [PES SLB6]".

Detailed information on individuals, which is not included in *Syriusz* files, might be remembered by staff, noted in paper files (e.g. files of vocational counsellor, IPD) or simply forgotten. Some workers – like job club reader – choose not to write anything down in order to gain trust of clients they interact with and respect their right to privacy.

BEING THE OBJECT OF PEOPLE-PROCESSING

Interviewed long-term unemployed seem not to pay attention to the process of collecting information about them and categorising them by PUP. They barely recall it, since it resembles other administrative routines: presenting relevant documents, being given a big number of forms to sign, signing list of presence, etc. The answers we received resemble one another:

Researcher: *What kind on information you had to give in order to register in* (...) *PUP?*
Unemployed*: I had to go there with my papers, yes? With work certificates and to fill in there a form, yes. And a lady there she has checked if there were no job offers, so she already gave me a date of next visit.*
Researcher: *Have you been proposed, I don't know, a meeting with a vocational counsellor or participation in job Club?*
Unemployed: *Yes, yes, yes. I was there (...)*
Researcher: *And was you obliged some forms, sheets, or not? Or you just fixed the date of a meeting.*
Unemployed*: I mean I filled in something. I filled in a form, but there was a basic information* (...)
Researcher: *And during these meetings (...) every four months when workers are proposing you job offers, do they ask you about your expectations? What kind? Before they propose a job offer , do they ask you what do you expect, what kind of work?*
Unemployed*: You know it is already marked* [in the system – K.S.S.], *yes? Eventually what kind of work I might expect, yes?* (...)
Researcher: *And when you went to a vocational counsellor these two or three years ago, then you were asked to fill in some tests, something like that?*
Unemployed: *Oh my! I don't remember. No, I guess not. Maybe a list of presence.* [UNEMPL8]'.

Researcher: *And when you applied for* (...)*training, were there any forms you need to fill in.*
Unemployed*: No, not so much..*
Researcher*: There was not?*
Unemployed*: No, there were no big procedures. Something, I don't recall, I've filled something in* [UNEMPL2].

What they rather emphasised is that communication in PUP is focused on work-related issues: for instance, staff tries to feel out whether a person is looking for a job independently from PUP. The interviewed unemployed share a general impression, that no matter if PUP knew their life situation or not, it would not affect their treatment.

'**Researcher**: *Do you have impression that public officials have an overall idea of your situation?*
Unemployed *No.*
Researcher: *No, they don't? And what do you think what else should they know? What information is missing?*
Unemployed *Maybe this: do I have something to spend on food? Whether I have for bills, rent. Do I have a place of living (...) Do I have money for ticket to the office. I always say, that I came on bike. They smile* (...) *But on the other hand, if they knew, then what. Computer will show them there is no work and that's it. What else can they do?* [UNEMPL4].

Unemployed: *And a person will not open up in front of a worker of Labour Office, because, I guess, they will listen up and then do something else.*
Researcher: *So you have this feeling that...*
Unemployed: *Yes, yes.*
Researcher: *That they don't encourage, really*.
Unemployed: *No, no, they don't. This is like: you have searched for work on your own? No? And why not? No, because there are no offers of this type. That's it* [UENMPL10].

The unemployed, who had contact with social workers, contrasted approaches of staff from these two offices. Social workers were described as those who know their life situation. They are depicted as these, who care, because they ask about their kids, health problems, family issues. Nobody openly considered social workers behaviour as a control and violation of privacy, even though their questions concerned also a way of spending money from temporary benefits paid by social assistance. Two interpretations of this behaviour are equally possible. These excessively positive responses might be an effect of recruitment of interviewees *via* MOPR. They also signify that benefit recipients interiorised a weaker position in relations of power. They accept the imposed rules and rationale behind them: who pays dictates the conditions. We will provide a quotation confirming this last interpretation: '*in* [social – K.S.S.] *assistance, then yes, they* [accounts for – K.S.S.] *responsibilities, you know, if a person obtains money, then* [there is] *explanation on what it was spent on*'

7 Responsibilization and Agency

FORMAL RESPONSIBILITIES ATTACHED TO GETTING ACCESS TO THE SERVICES AND SANCTIONS

Officially responsibilities attached to the access to the unemployment status include obligatory visits in PUP, acceptance of offers of '*suitable employment*' as well as readiness to participate in ALMPs.

Box 5: Legal Definition of 'suitable employment'

Suitable employment is defined according to the following criteria:

- Employment or remunerated work, subject to payment of social contributions;
- Unemployed person possesses sufficient qualifications and professional experience to perform the job, or will be able to perform it after training;
- Her health condition makes it possible to perform the job;
- Journey to work and back home does not exceed 3 hours and can be made by means of public transport.
- The gross income should equal at least the national minimum wage, if it is a full-time job (or should be calculated proportionally to the time of work).

Source: **"**Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions" from 2004 with further amendments.

However practice differs considerably from this official image. A small number of job offers and scarce resources for ALMPs make it difficult to test a person's '*job readiness*' and apply sanctions in case of refusal. Staff might theoretically issue a job referral for an individual, who seems not interested in (subsidised or normal) employment, apprenticeship or oblige a person to participate in other ALMPs. In the first two cases, a person is obliged to visit employer and come back to the office with an official response of the employer: if s/he decides to employ this person or if a person refused this job offer. However, obeying literally the law by staff is counterproductive. It deteriorates already tense relations between public employment services and, by doing so, it punishes the unemployed who actually seek for a job (Sztandar-Sztanderska 2009):

> '*I don't send people* [to employers – K.S.S.] *by force, I don't like to do this, even though I have means. I hate to do this, because it has the opposite effect. A moment later I have a call from the employer: who have you referred to us? Employers turn their back on us. They don't inform us about* [new job – K.S.S.] *offers, because they don't want to deal with people, who come just to get the stamp* [on the document of referral confirming that a person actually met the employer – K.S.S.]. *So there is such a possibility to refer* [by force- K.S.S.]*, but it is not the point*' [PES SLB4].

In the case of other ALMPs, a person might be force, for instance, to participate in a training in order to keep the unemployment status and the right to health insurance. However, street-level bureaucrats treat a forced participation as a waste of scarce resources, which otherwise might be used for supporting those unemployed who seem genuinely interested in improving qualifications. In fact, according to interviewees the best option of testing deservingness is to appoint more frequent obligatory meetings with staff and see if a person fails to come by:

> '**Vocational counsellor**: *If I see that a person works illegally, I can feel it. Besides, some of them come with dirty hands (...) the ones you see, that are directly from painting or bricklaying. Some can even come in overalls. (...) Then without scruple I appoint an* [additional- K.S.S.] *date* [of meeting - K.S.S.] *(...)*
>
> **Researcher**: *But you have means that you can quickly* [appoint – K.S.S.] *the next date, make him fell out of register* [of the unemployed – K.S.S.]?
>
> **Vocational counsellor**: *Yes and we sometimes do that. It is enough to sign him for activation course* [in job club – K.S.S.], *three weeks long*. *And then he gives up, he chickens out. But you know, this is unfair, because this course* (...) *it incurs costs.*
>
> **Researcher**: *And you lose a vacant place* [in a training – K.S.S.]...
>
> **Vocational counsellor**: *Which might be useful for somebody more in need. Just to motivate him, and then he will drop out or he will still work illegally, and he blocks a place, for somebody who might make use of it* [PES SLB2 XII 2013].

The statistical data confirm these findings: among all people who stopped being unemployed in PUP X, there were 4% for whom a reason of deregistration were sanctions applied in case of job or LMP refusal, while 27% were deprived of unemployed status in consequence of non-show up for an appointment (MPiPS-01, 2012).

The long term unemployed people when asked about their responsibilities, they, first and foremost, mention coming to the office for the obligatory appointments. The official name of these meeting is '*confirmation of job readiness*', the informal one '*coming to thick one's name off*' or simply '*a date*' – as we already mentioned. These, who have longer period of registration or who had been previously registered, also add that some time ago these obligatory meetings happened twice more often, which they correctly interpret as a sign that the number of job offers has decreased [e.g. UNEMPL6, PES SLB]. They are also perfectly aware of the unwritten agreement that they have to maintain appearances of compliance and pretend to meet formal obligations. This is how the interviewee, who do not believe that PUP help her to find a job, explains these implicit requirements:

> '**Long term unemployed**: *I have given the office up, their support. I'm just coming to thick my name off as they wish...*
> **Researcher**: *So you can give up like that?*
> **Long term unemployed**: *I mean... Giving up... I come to the appointments, yes? I thick my name off. They don't call on their own. I come here myself to ask about jobs, because sometimes there is something missing on the webpage. Besides, I have never got any job through the office* (...) *So today* [i.e. in December]*, great, I thicked my name of and I have the next date in April. Meanwhile I search myself*' [UNEMPL4].

Only exceptionally somebody mentions additional responsibilities, like a woman, who was required to demonstrate her own activity in a job search in between 3 or 4 meetings she had with a vocational counsellor:

> '**Long term unemployed**: *there was this talk: and how is the job search? (...) I told her everything and I brought her...* [confirmation – K.S.S.] *with stamps and signature, because it was the requirement*.
> **Researcher**: *That you have seen the employer?*
> **Long term unemployed**: *That I was asking* [about vacancies – K.S.S.] *and where I was asking. Yes* (...) *it was required'* [UNEMPL6].

Similar expectations – however we are not sure how much formalised – concern participants of the job club training or people signing IPD.

If any of the formal requirements is not fulfilled, a person risks losing a status of unemployed and all related rights. A period of deregistration was extended to 120 days in case of the first refusal or absence, 180 days in case of the second one, 270 days in case of following ones. For people, who have no other basis for obtaining health insurance for themselves and their family members[15], sanctions are experienced as severe. For illustration we will provide an excerpt of interview with a 56 year old woman, who by mistake came to the meeting 10 days after the appointed date:

> '*I was once punished. I won't forget it (...) and it broke my heart, so many years they have me* [in the register of unemployed – K.S.S.]*, they know that I always come* [to the appointed meetings – K.S.S.] *(...) I care, because I have... If I wasn't here, where would I be treated. I'm in the computer*[16] *so I go to the doctor, so they have me there and with me, there is also my son as long as he learns, right? So why would I risk it? (...) And this punishment, 3 months (...) I prayed during that period (...) I don't know what if a hospital, suddenly and automatically I have nothing. I don't know what then... privately, but paid how? If a person doesn't work*' [UNEMPL6].

RESPONSIBILISATION & AGENCY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

Limited resources for activation and heavy caseload work in favour of a narrow definition of staff responsibilities. Frontline workers do not only impose costs on the unemployed for the access to officially 'free' services (e.g. by work organisation that makes obligatory queuing), but also they shift the responsibility for both accessing ALMPs and job search activities on individuals. Sometimes it takes delicate forms. An illustration might be a job placement agent's expectations concerning an unemployed person's behaviour. Despite the fact that job placement agent's main role is to present a person with job offers that might fit her, he wishes that a client went through job ads (displayed at webpage or on the board in the office) before this person meets him [PES SLB4]. Another example: a person who wants to take part in training has to check regularly to know when a recruitment starts (because it is unlikely that somebody will inform her in a due time) and then apply for it.

Some of the unemployed people, who will prove their self-reliance and initiative, might be rewarded by the exceptional access to services answering their individual needs. For instance, if somebody cannot find a suitable offer of apprenticeship among the ones at job placement agent disposal, s/he might be encouraged to search for offers on his/her own. S/he might get a chance for the apprenticeship s/he has chosen for herself/himself on two conditions. First, there are still funds available. Second, s/he has to persuade the employer to vouch that s/he will be hired in the company afterwards.

In case of more vulnerable unemployed, more responsibilities are put on individuals: the unemployed are taught to be left on their own and they should act as everything depends only on them. Therefore, since there is no "carrot" in a form of financial support or services, we might say that a division of responsibilities between staff and clients is imbalanced. Almost ideal-typical example of this approach is a training in a job club. This is how job club leader explains what is her role:

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[15] Some unemployed have other options of access to free healthcare for them and their family members, because anyone might be insured by a working spouse or a working parent (in case of children below 18 years old or below 26 old if they continue education).

[16] She refers to the IT system that concerns healthcare.

> *'I always say at the beginning* [of 3 weeks long training in Job Club – K.S.S.]: *"You won't be given a fish, you won't be given a fishing rod neither (...) I will just show you a fishery. And a fishing rod... You do it yourself from a bamboo or other branch and then fish alone". I'm not able to give them a fishing rod, because I will not give them a participation in a* [vocational – K.S.S.] *training or anything. So I don't promise it. "I will show you where and then you have to keep an eye on it. If you keep an eye on it, then your ability to make decisions will improve*' [PES SLB1].

The idea behind the job club training, which is addressed mainly at people with multiple problems that hinder labour market participation, is to change the participants themselves with mostly their own individual or collective resources. This aim of "people-changing" (Hasenfeld 1983) is explicitly stated in the standardised manual used nation-wide [D6]. The training is not only about getting knowledge on labour market or about learning skills necessary for job search, but mainly about changing their very subjectivity. The training contains many exercises that might be considered "technologies of the self" to use Foucault term (Foucault 2000; Gutting 2012). This term originally refers to technologies (such as confession), which are used by individuals to transform themselves. By using only their own means, they perform operations on, among others, their bodies, thoughts, way of being in order to achieve happiness, perfection, immortality etc.[17] Limited length of the report allows us only to describe main characteristics of "ideal citizen" the training aims to produce and only few exercises serving transformation into this ideal.

The training is considered successful, if people become flexible and open for change (e.g. participants '*will avoid relying only on the things they knew*' [D6, p.15]), also when it comes to openness to learning new things (e.g. they '*will eliminate barriers making learning difficult'*) [D6, p. 14]. The exercises related to each subject often consist of the component, which aims at making people realise about their specific potential. For instance, when it comes to learning, they firstly discuss their learning patterns. By answering a quiz, they find out whether they are visualizer, audile or kinetic type (i.e. whether writing, listening or moving is the way they more easily remember new things). Then they receive tips according to their learning style [D6, p. 63-63].

Promoted flexibility is also identified with readiness to lower initial expectations concerning professional life, because – as the manual explains – nowadays professional success means '*continuous employment'* and not necessarily promotion or high professional position [D6, p. 13]). If the group is heterogeneous, the participants are asked to describe their ideal employment and then – confronted with different opinions – they might change their initial beliefs. The other example with the same aim is the following: participants are asked to prescribe various types of employment for hypothetic cases of unemployed and argument their choice.

Another characteristics of ideal citizens is to be able to make their own decisions, thanks to discovering in themselves inner capacities. In other words, participants should become self-governed or inner-directed instead of being governed by somebody else , which will make them '*feel in control of their life situation*' [D6, p. 14]. Manual provides many exercises aiming at self-consciousness when it comes to professional potential or values. In order to boost their self-confidence, participants also self-evaluate their progress in terms of planning and time management techniques, motivation, information acquired, etc. As job club leader remarks they are very happy to find out that some skills – like those related to planning – seem to increase even though the thematic session on this subject is covered during later sessions [PES SLB1]. They might use these self-evaluation sheets later.

Job club is also a kind of self-help group: they practice dealing with everyday problems using all of participants resources: "*All the time I emphasise that they should help each other. In order to link them together. When they write application documents and I hear that somebody doesn't have a computer or a printer I say: 'Arrange how you will meet'. If they are shy, I look for brave ones to make them go (...) It concerns* [private] *employment agencies, for instance, that nobody never tried it. So: "Listen, who goes? It is close, next corner". So they go in twos (...) An that a shy one encouraged the other one*" [PES SLB1].

The other aspect of 'self', they are encouraged to improve, are their bodies. When a job club leader provides us with example of training impact on participants, she is particularly proud of changes that concern physical appearance and physical condition, like a fact that some participants might start fitness classes or nordic walking together or that one young man decided to shave after three weeks of persuasion. The leader considers this physical aspect, which is generally not taken into account in the frame of LMPs, as crucial for both finding and keeping employment. Neglecting it might be a reason a person makes bad impression during a job interview or is not able to meet physical requirements of full-time job.

RESPONSIBILISATION & AGENCY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED

When it comes to the long-term unemployed, they generally feel to be left on their own, when it comes to finding employment and dealing with their life problems. Except one person, they don't believe that PUP might help them in it. When it comes a sense of influence on a planning of activation, we found out that the vast majority doesn't have any impression that there is anything planned about it:

> '**Researcher**: *So when you registered, I guess not, but if you were presented with any plan of action? This is what Individual action plan is for, but even without it... what next: now you will meet vocational counsellor, then something and then something else. Were you presented with such a plan of "career"?*
> **Long term unemployed**: *No. "You will be given a date, please come to thick your name off". "Here, on the board, are job offers" and so on. This kind of statements.*
> **Researcher**: *And do you remember, how was it during this first meeting for thicking your name off... What they were asking for? Were they asking about anything?*
> **Long term unemployed**: *No.*
> **Researcher**: *No? You just show them your identity card?*
> **Long term unemployed**: *Yes. You know, automatically. Everything is done automatically'* [UNEMPL4].

Even when it comes to services provided by PUP such as job placement, training, apprenticeships, the interviewed unemployed emphasise that a crucial factor is getting relevant information on time. However, this is them, who have to search for information, since staff doesn't inform them about new opportunities in-between rare obligatory meetings, which is similar to other Polish PES (Sztandar-Sztanderska forthcoming). According to some of them, job placement agents don't take into account their life situation, by proposing offers with requirements they cannot meet: e.g. shift work for a single mother. Moreover, in their experience, information on vacancies is often out-dated, but only one of our interviewees decided to complain about it. However, even she gave up and didn't pursue this subject later on, because there was nothing to gain. Other cases of appeal in the office concerned sanctions for not coming to the obligatory meeting. The unemployed, who filed an appeal, claimed that they either were given a wrong date or made a mistake, while writing it down. Despite the fact that it was their first case of disobeying the official rules, no appeal was examined with a positive result.

Some of them also interiorised a sense of guilt for their situation: e.g. a person who felt guilty that she went to hospital the moment she was supposed to start a job [UNEMPL9]. However, most of them did not have any idea what to change in order to improve their situation or how to do it. When asked about what might cause problems with job search one interviewee said '*I don't know I guess I don't have luck*' [UNEMPL9] while others pointed out on problems they feel they have no influence on (e.g. childcare, lack of vacancies, health problems, etc.). The only positive effect reported was the psychological empowerment in case of several women, who participated in training in PUP or MOPR. They were happy they had to leave home, meet other people, open up, face their fears.

8 Conclusions

This case study of "policy in practice" shows, on the one hand, limitations of the activation model in Poland. Top-down reforms of law were supposed to contribute to activation and individualisation of welfare provision, by initiating organisational changes (e.g. creation of Centre of Vocational Activation), introducing new tools (e.g. Individual Action Plan) and making sanctions for non-compliance more severe and forms of control more sophisticated (e.g. IT). However, as our analysis reveals, the effects of these reforms were far from the intentions, because they have not influenced elements of broader welfare context that actually shape resources and create constraints for frontline staff. Lack of adequate funds and their cyclical accessibility as well as heavy caseload make impossible tailoring services. They translate into short-term and project-based planning, massive and fragmented people-processing instead of individualised case management. In these conditions, both frontline staff of PES and social assistance institutions are focused on performing their specific tasks and rationing scarce resources, which make their actions a typical example of 'eligibility-compliance culture' described by Kane and Bane (1994). Most of the vulnerable clients' are not regarded as validated partners of frontline staff and have a limited influence on people-processing and later intervention. When it comes to a disciplinary component, only IT seem to play a significant role, by limiting a margin of manoeuvre of clients and gaining control over information on the junction of PES and social assistance. Whereas, formal punishment such as deprivation of the unemployment status and all related rights for refusing activation offer or 'suitable' employment is difficult to enforce, when these offers are so scarce. Therefore, frontline workers decide to discipline only those, who do not even give minimal appearances of compliance.

These practices seem similar to the general features of street-level bureaucracy, identified by, among others, Prottas and Lipsky (Prottas 1979; Lipsky 1980). However, what is specific about the front-line staff-unemployed relations in a Polish welfare context is a degree of precariousness, caused by these mechanisms. In other words, the stakes are different. Instead of risking financial support, people registered in Polish PES (and in some cases also their families) might be deprived, first and foremost, of healthcare insurance. The long waiting time for ALMPs participation and rare possibility to combine various activation measures for one person also prolong duration of unemployment spell of the most vulnerable individuals. This minimalist welfare provision also means that street-level bureaucrats generally lack tools that might overcome poverty trap and serve as positive incentives in activation process. Moreover, in this context some ALMPs are used, *de facto*, as a financial support instead of encouraging activation. What is interesting is that Polish state do not successfully fulfil neither a function of "people-sustaining" nor the function of "people-changing" (Hasenfeld 1983).

On the other hand, we might interpret these research result from a different analytical angle. Instead of pointing out what does not work well in this welfare context, we might think of analysed practices as a way of controlling, shaping and regulating population. First of all, citizens facing these welfare and activation policies do not believe in a state and do not count on it, when they find themselves in a difficult situation such as unemployment. Therefore, they are prone to interiorise certain convictions about individualisation of risk and individual responsibility. Second of all, they adopt a strategy of minimal compliance to the rules. Using, Lipsky terms: it is forced compliance and not utilitarian one (1980). Third of all, they are reluctant to protest, since they don't think in collective terms, while individually they don't see what they can gain when the state is so inefficient. Finally, by keeping appearances of compliance, they contribute to maintaining a policies status quo.

9 Appendices

BASIC INFORMATION ON INTERVIEWS WITH STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

Number of interview	Institution	Position	Years of work experience in this type of institution	Gender	Age	Educational and professional background	Duration of interview
1	Poviat Labour Office	Leader of Job Club	17	Female	Approx. 35-40 years	Administration + Psychology	104 minutes
2	Poviat Labour Office	Vocational counsellor	6	Female	Approx. 45 years	Unknown	62 minutes
3	Poviat Labour Office	Specialists of vocational development	7	Female	Approx. 30 years	Unknown	69 minutes
4	Poviat Labour Office	Job placement agent	9	Male	39 years	History teacher Job placement agent	98 minutes
5	Poviat Labour Office	Job placement agent and supervisor of job placement agents	12	Female	Approx. 38 years	Teacher with specialty of social work	140 minutes
6	Poviat Labour Office	Vocational counsellor	19	Female	Approx. 40-45	Pedagogical studies	95 minutes
7	Municipal Family Assistance Centre	Social worker	16	Female	Approx. 42 years	Social work studies	86 minutes
8	Municipal Family Assistance Centre	Social worker	25	Female	Approx. 47 years	Social work studies (2 years)	208 minutes
9	NGO	Social worker	2,5	Female	30 years	Social work studies	78 minutes

BASIC INFORMATION ON INTERVIEWS WITH LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED

Number of interview	Age	Gender	Education	Registration time	Assistance from MOPR for unemployed	Duration of interview
1	54	Male	General secondary	More than 1 year	No	56 minutes
2	54	Male	Vocational secondary	3 years	Yes	56 minutes
3	46	Female	General secondary	More than 1 year	No	57 minutes
4	26	Female	General secondary	2 years	No	47 minutes
5	26	Female	Higher education	Approx. 1 year	No	64 minutes
6	56	Female	Probably primary	5 years	Yes	64 minutes
7	46	Female	Vocational secondary	More than 5 years	Yes	79 minutes
8	43	Female	Vocational secondary	At least 10 years	Yes	79 minutes
9	32	Female	Primary or general secondary	14 years (with breaks)	Yes	66 minutes
10	49	Female	Unknown	14 years	Yes	72 minutes
11	58	Male	Primary	Approx. 9 years	Yes	56 minutes

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CASE WORKERS (IN POLISH)

SCENARIUSZ WYWIADU Z URZĘDNIKIEM

Uwaga: na niebiesko zaznaczono wskazówki dla osoby prowadzącej wywiad.

Poinformuj Rozmówcę:

- jaki jest cel wywiadu
- o zachowaniu anonimowości
- że zebrany materiał stanowi część badania prowadzonego przez Instytut Socjologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego i wyniki będą wykorzystane w celach naukowych i do sformułowania rekomendacji praktycznych.

Zanotuj informację o cechach demograficznych Rozmówcy:

- Wiek
- Płeć

Zapytaj o:

- Wykształcenie i zawód
- Doświadczenie w pracy z osobami długotrwale bezrobotnymi i specjalistyczne szkolenia w tym kierunku
- Staż pracy w urzędzie i na tym stanowisku (jeśli dotyczy, pytamy o zmiany w czasie pod kątem pracy z bezrobotnymi)
- Wymiar etatu (pełen/część)

I. Informacje kontekstowe o organizacji

(Zależy nam na zrozumieniu roli urzędu, liczby pracowników, specyficznej roli danej osoby w urzędzie, by móc dopasowywać dalsze pytania do Rozmówcy)

- <u>Co Pana(i) zdaniem jest głównym zadaniem urzędu pracy?</u>
- <u>A jaka jest Pana(i) rola w urzędzie pracy?</u>
- Jak dużo osób pracuje w urzędzie?

II. Informacje kontekstowe o strukturze codziennej pracy

(Zależy nam na zrozumieniu czynników, które kształtują relacje miedzy pracownikami a klientami i mogą utrudniać indywidualizację: m.in. liczba osób przypadających na jednego pracownika, inne zadania (poza pracą z klientem), które ma do wykonania (np. papierkowa robota), sposoby radzenia sobie z presją czasu, sposób rozumienia swojej roli i wspólpracy, struktura interakcji z klientami)

- <u>Proszę opisać jak wygląda Pani/a typowy dzień pracy?</u>
- Ile osób dziennie Pan/i obsługuje? Ile czasu ma Pan/i przeciętnie dla jednej osoby? Czy ma Pan/i możliwość przygotować się do takiego spotkania?
- Co jeszcze wchodzi w zakres Pana/i obowiązków (np. praca biurowa, zadania sprawozdawcze, przygotowywanie projektów)? Na czym one polegają ?Ile czasu musi Pan/i na poszczególne zadania poświęcić?

- Jak udaje się Pani/u te wszystkie zadania pogodzić w ciągu jednego dnia? Na co szczególnie brakuje czasu?
- Czy jest określona z góry liczba osób bezrobotnych, z którymi powinien/nna Pan/i sie spotkać dziennie lub miesięcznie?

- Na czym polega, Pan/i zdaniem, Pana/i rola w stosunku do osób bezrobotnych? A w stosunku do urzędu?
- Czy czuje się Pan/i osobiście odpowiedzialny/a za osoby bezrobotne, z którymi Pan/i pracuje?

- <u>Co się dzieje z osobą bezrobotną, gdy po raz pierwszy trafia do urzędu? Co się z nią/m następnie dzieje?</u>
- Do jakiego/jakich pracownika/pracowników trafia? Od czego to zależy? Jak wygląda współpraca między poszczególnymi pracownikami?
- A jak to wygląda w przypadku osoby długotrwale bezrobotnej?

- Czy jest jeden pracownik odpowiedzialny lub monitorujący co się dzieje z osobą bezrobotną?
- Jak dużo osób w urzędzie pracuje z osobami długotrwale bezrobotnymi?

- <u>Proszę opisać mi jak wygląda typowe spotkanie z osobą długotrwale bezrobotną.</u>
- Czy jest wcześniej ustalona data i godzina takiego spotkania?
- Jak długo trwają?
- Kto je inicjuje (osoba bezrobotna, pracownik urzędu)?
- Jak często mają miejsce?
- Gdzie się odbywają? (w miarę możliwości zanotuj jak zaaranżowana jest przestrzeń: pozwala na zachowanie prywatności *versus* bezosobowa, nastawiona na szybką obsługę, nie sprzyja bliższym relacjom)
- Czy również kontaktuje się Pan/i z osobami bezrobotnymi przez telefon lub email? W jakich sytuacjach?

III. Monitoring i kontrola w urzędzie

(Chcielibyśmy się dowiedzieć w jaki sposób kontroluje sie pracowników, poprzez dokumentację, wskaźniki, ankiety, ciała zawodowe). Co podlega kontroli (legalność działań, skuteczność/efektywność zdefiniowana poprzez wskaźniki, wypełnianie standardów zawodowych)? W jaki sposób sprawowania kontroli wpływa na pracę z klientem? Co robi się, by mieć dobre wyniki?)

- <u>W jaki sposób Pana/i praca jest monitorowana przez przełożonych?</u>
- <u>Według jakich kryteriów ocenia się Pana/i pracę?</u>
- Czy mają Państwo w urzędzie jakieś wskaźniki, które musi Pan/i osiągnąć lub wykazać ich realizację? (Jeśli to możliwe, zbieramy puste formularze oceny)
- Jakie to są wskaźniki? Co one mierzą?
- Kto je ustala?
- Co Pan/i na ich temat sądzi?
- Czy są istotne w Pana/i pracy?
- Co się dzieje, gdy trudno je zrealizować?
- W jakim stopniu te wskaźniki pozwalają sprawować kontrolę nad sposobem wykonywania codziennych zadań?

- Czy może być Pan/i nagrodzony/a za dobrze wykonaną pracę? Jak?
- Czy zdarzały się w urzędzie przypadki negatywnej oceny pracowników? Za jakiego rodzaju zachowanie? W jaki sposób ich karano? Co Pan/i na ten temat sądzi?

- W jaki sposób system oceny i wskaźniki wpływają na sposób pracy z osobami bezrobotnymi?

- Co się dzieje, gdy bezrobotny złoży skargę na pracownika?

IV. People-processing

(Chcielibyśmy dowiedzieć się jak w pracy z osobą bezrobotną używa się różnych narzędzi czy procedur, takich jak formularze, komputerowa baza danych, podręcznik klubu pracy, indywidualne plany działania, różnego rodzaju wytyczne, testy psychologiczne. Jaki wpływają one na relacje miedzy urzędnikami a bezrobotnymi).

- Czy są jakieś narzędzia, których używa Pan/i w pracy z bezrobotnym? Chodzi mi np. o formularze, bazę danych, testy psychologiczne, indywidualny plan działania, podręcznik lub różnego rodzaju wytyczne... (Jeśli to możliwe, zbieramy puste formularze, wydruk z bazy danych, ksero wytycznych itd.)
- Do czego one służą? Jak się ich używa?
- Jak Pan/i ocenia ich przydatność? W jaki sposób pomagają w pracy z przychodzącą do urzędu osobą? Które z nich Pan/i woli? Dlaczego?
- Czy może Pan/i zmieniać ich formę? Jak Pan/i dostosowuje je do codziennej pracy?
- Czy ma Pan/i z góry przygotowany scenariusz spotkania z osobą długotrwale bezrobotną? Zestaw pytań, które chce Pani zadać? (poprosić o taki zbiór pytań) Co zawiera?
- Jak powstał ten scenariusz?
- Czy inni pracownicy też go używają? Czy jego stosowanie jest obowiązkowe?
- Jak Pan/i ocenia jego zawartość?
- Jak używa Pan/i informacji pozyskanej w ten sposób?

- Czy osoba bezrobotna musi wypełnić jakiś dokument, formularz, test psychologiczny? (dopytać o każdy oddzielnie)
- Jaki? (poprosić o niewypełniony egzemplarz)
- Jakie informacje zawiera?
- Do czego służy ten dokument? Czy jego używanie jest obowiązkowe? Jak Pan/i ocenia jego zawartość?
- Czy omawia Pan/i z osobą bezrobotną te dokumenty/wyniki testu? W jaki sposób może on być/mogą one być przydatne dla osoby bezrobotnej?

- Czy robi Pan/i notatki ze spotkania z osobą bezrobotną lub w inny sposób zbiera informacje na jej temat? (w miarę możliwości proszę poprosić o pokazanie takiej notatki, jeśli jest na zestandaryzowanym formularzu prosimy o taki formularz) Jak?
- Czego one dotyczą? Czy to są tylko informacje dla Pan/i czy też się z kimś Pan/i tymi informacjami dzieli? Z kim?
- Jak Pan/i później korzysta z tych informacji?
- Czy dyskutuje Pan/i z innymi pracownikami o jakimś przypadku/konkretnych osobach? Proszę mi więcej o tym powiedzieć.

(W tej części chcielibyśmy dowiedzieć się jak pracownicy radzą sobie z „nietypową" sytuacją. Jakiego rodzaju trudne sytuacje napotykają? Komu poświęcają więcej czasu? Jak radzą sobie z „trudnymi klientami", „skomplikowanymi przypadkami"? Chodzi o to, by zrozumieć co dzieje się jeśli nie daje się łatwo pasować sytuacji klienta w administracyjne ramy, związane z narzędziami pracy lub rutynami pracowników. Taka sytuacja może częściej mieć miejsce w przypadku osób w trudnej sytuacji życiowej i uwzględnienie takich osób pozwala wysuwać nam wnioski na temat indywidualizacji.)

- Jeśli jest scenariusz/lista pytań: – Czy zdarzają się sytuacje gdy nie daje się trzymać zaplanowanego toku spotkania. Proszę opowiedzieć mi na konkretnym przykładzie jak taka nietypowa sytuacja może wyglądać. Co Pan/i wtedy robi?
- Czy zdarzają się spotkania z osobami bezrobotnymi, które są z jakiś powodów trudne? O jakie sytuacje chodzi? Na czym polegają trudności? Jaki Pan/i sobie radzi z takimi sytuacjami?
- Czy może Pan/i scharakteryzować klientów, którzy sprawiają trudności? Na czym w szczególności polega trudność pracy z wymienionymi przez Pana/ią klientami?

(W tej części interesują nas kategoryzacje klientów, używane w dyskursie organizacyjnym lub wpisane w narzędzia pracy oraz aspekty życia bezrobotnych uznawane za istotne przez urząd. Jeśli to możliwe przeglądamy tablice w urzędzie lub wywieszki na drzwiach, by sprawdzić jakie określenia się pojawiają.)

- W jaki sposób mówi Pan/i o bezrobotnych, z którymi Pan/i pracuje ('interesanci', 'petenci' 'klient', 'strona', 'beneficjent' itp.)?

- Czy prowadzi Pan/i rozmowy doradcze z bezrobotnymi?
- Jeśli dotyczy: Jak takie rozmowy są zorganizowane? Kto w nich uczestniczy?
- Jeśli dotyczy: Czego one dotyczą?
- Jeśli dotyczy: Jak wygląda taka typowa rozmowa doradcza? Proszę mi o tym powiedzieć na przykładzie.
- Jeśli dotyczy: Czy używa Pan/i w tym celu jakiś testów?
- Jeśli dotyczy: Jaki jest ich cel?
- W jaki sposób dokumentuje Pan/i wyniki?

(W tej części zależy nam na zidentyfikowaniu jakie sfery życia osoby bezrobotnej są faktycznie brane pod uwagę przy planowaniu i realizowaniu aktywizacji. Do rozwiązywania takich problemów prócz urzędu, w którym pracuje nasz Rozmówca mogą być zaangażowane inne instytucje i organizacje. Nie uwzględnienie jakiś obszarów może mieć kluczowe konsekwencje dla powodzenia aktywizacji, np. bezdomność, zdrowie, sytuacja rodzinna, postawy, wykształcenie, umiejętności, itp.)

- Jakie cechy osoby bezrobotnej lub elementy jej sytuacji życiowej są brane pod uwagę, by zaplanować jej aktywizację (np. osobowość, wykształcenie, umiejętność uczenia się, itp.)?
- Dlaczego właśnie te?
- Mówił/a Pan/i, ze zbiera informacje o ... (odwołaj się do cech i aspektów wymienionych przez Rozmówcę)? A co z innymi problemami, które mogą zmniejszać szanse na znalezienie pracy, np. problemy zdrowotne, trudna sytuacja rodzinna, bezdomność (odwołaj się do cech i aspektów nie wymienionych przez Rozmówcę)?
- Jakie ma Pan/i możliwości działania w odpowiedzi na takie problemy?

- Co mogą zrobić w tej sytuacji inni pracownicy urzędu? A inne instytucje i organizacje?
- Co Pan/i robi, gdy coś wykracza zakres obowiązków tego urzędu?
- Czy używają Państwo określenia zatrudnialność?
- W jakim stopniu szanse znalezienia pracy/zatrudnialność (w zależności od odpowiedzi na poprzednie pytanie) są/jest kluczowe w Pana/i pracy? Jakie elementy składają się na szanse znalezienia pracy/zatrudnialność (w zależności od poprzednich odpowiedzi)?

V. Przebieg aktywizacji

(Zależy nam na zrozumieniu w jaki sposób pracownicy decydują o kolejnych działaniach podejmowanych wobec bezrobotnego, kolejności działań, ramach czasowych, wymaganiach stawianych tej osobie (ang. *conditionality*), możliwościach wyboru, które ma jednostka).

- Jak planuje się działania wobec osoby długotrwale bezrobotnej?
- Czy każdej osobie długotrwale bezrobotnej przygotowuje się indywidualny plan działania/kontrakt socjalny (używamy właściwej dla danej organizacji nazwy instrumentu)? Proszę powiedzieć mi na czym to polega?
- Jeśli nie: Czym się różni układanie IPD od innych działań?
- Jeśli tak: Jakie informacje zawiera taki plan/kontrakt?
- Jeśli tak: Jak się coś takiego uzgadnia?
- Jeśli tak: Jak jest, Pana/i zdaniem, sens podpisywania takiego planu/kontraktu?
- Co Pan/i proponuje takiej osobie? Od czego to zależy?
- Jak wyglądają kolejne kroki?
- Jakie są ramy czasowe?
- Jaką rolę ma osoba bezrobotna w planowaniu tych działań?
- W jakim stopniu te działania są skrojone do potrzeb jednostki?
- Jakie ma ona możliwości wyboru?

- Czy ma Pan/i możliwość dopasowywania działań do potrzeb osoby? Proszę opisać mi jak to wygląda. (Jeśli nie, pytamy dlaczego)
- Jak często korzysta Pan/i z tego marginesu manewru?
- W jakim stopniu bezrobotni mają coś do powiedzenia przy podejmowaniu decyzji jakie narzędzia zastosować (Jeśli nie, pytamy dlaczego)

- Jeśli IPD/kontrakt: Jakie obowiązki mają obydwie strony tego planu/kontraktu? (Czy ten proces nakłada jakieś obowiązki na urząd czy tylko na bezrobotnego?)

- Jakie warunki musi spełnić osoba, by otrzymać pomoc? Czy wymagania dotyczą też jej zachowania? Jeśli tak: jak sprawdza się wywiązanie się z tych warunków?
- Czy którekolwiek z działań, mających na celu aktywizację, są obowiązkowe?
- Jakie są sankcje? W jakich sytuacjach się je stosuje? Czy są jakieś wyjątki?

VI. Przepływ informacji między instytucjami/organizacjami:

(Chcemy wyrobić sobie wyobrażenie na temat współpracy z szeregowymi pracownikami innych organizacji, w jaki sposób ta współpraca wpisuje się w codzienne rutyny, kiedy kieruje się osobę do innej instytucji/organizacji, na czym polega podział obowiązków miedzy nimi)

- Czy w swojej codziennej pracy współpracuje Pani z innymi organizacjami/instytucjami zajmującymi się pracą z osobami długotrwale bezrobotnymi?
- Z jakimi?
- Czego dotyczy ta współpraca? (*dopytujemy szczegółowo o każdą organizację*)
- W jaki sposób ta współpraca wpływa na osoby długotrwale bezrobotne? Jak wpływa to na ich szanse znalezienia pracy i sytuację życiową?

- Czy w Pana/i odczuciu, mają Państwo dobrą współpracę z innymi instytucjami/organizacjami, jeśli chodzi o pracę z indywidualnymi przypadkami?
- Dlaczego nie?

- Jakie są wyzwania/trudności/nieporozumienia wynikające ze współpracy z wymienionymi przez Pana/ią instytucjami/organizacjami?
- Z czego się one biorą? Jak Pan/i sobie z nimi radzi?
- Proszę powiedzieć mi o swoich doświadczeniach w tej kwestii...

- Czy informuje Pan/i osoby długotrwale bezrobotne o innych instytucjach/organizacjach świadczących wsparcie/usługi? W jakich sytuacjach je Pani do nich kieruje?

- Czy chciałby Pan/i coś dodać?

Bardzo dziękujemy!

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED (IN POLISH)

SCENARIUSZ WYWIADU Z OSOBĄ DŁUGOTRWALE BEZROBOTNĄ

Uwaga: na niebiesko zaznaczono wskazówki dla osoby prowadzącej wywiad.

Poinformuj Rozmówcę:
- jaki jest cel wywiadu
- o zachowaniu anonimowości
- że zebrany materiał stanowi część badania prowadzonego przez Instytut Socjologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego i wyniki będą wykorzystane w celach naukowych i do sformułowania rekomendacji praktycznych.

Zanotuj informację o cechach demograficznych Rozmówcy:
- Wiek
- Płeć

I. Sytuacja życiowa

(Chcemy ogólnie dowiedzieć się o sytuacji życiowej Rozmówcy, m. in. o cechach demograficznych, jego profilu społeczno-ekonomicznym, historii kontaktów z instytucjami publicznymi i innymi organizacjami, świadczącymi wsparcie)

- <u>Proszę powiedzieć mi kilka słów o sobie …</u>
- Czy ma Pan(i) rodzinę?
- W jakiej dzielnicy Pan(i) mieszka? Jak określił(a)by Pan(i) swoje warunki mieszkaniowe?
- Jakie ma Pan(i) wykształcenie?
- Jakie ma Pan(i) doświadczenie zawodowe?
- Na jakim stanowisku ostatnio Pan(i) pracował(a)?
- Ile czas był Pan(i) zatrudniony? Co się stało później?
- Od jak dawna jest Pan(i) bezrobotny?

- Czy to był pierwszy raz, gdy zarejestrował(a) się Pan(i) jako bezrobotny(a)?
- Jeśli nie: <u>proszę powiedzieć mi w jakich okolicznościach po raz pierwszy miał(a) Pan(i) styczność z urzędem pracy? Dlaczego zdecydował(a) się Pan(i) pójść do urzędu pracy? Czego Pan(i) od urzędu pracy oczekiwał(a)?</u>
- Czy kiedykolwiek ubiegał(a) się Pan(i) o wsparcie z innych instytucji publicznych lub organizacji (np. ośrodka pomocy rodzinie/ośrodka pomocy społecznej, organizacji pozarządowych, agencji zatrudnienia)?
- Jeśli tak: <u>w jakich okolicznościach miało to miejsce? Dlaczego zdecydował(a) się Pan(i) z nimi skontaktować? Jakie były Pana(i) oczekiwania?</u>

II. Kontakty z urzędem pracy

a) <u>Struktura kontaktów</u>

(Chcemy dowiedzieć się jaka była ścieżka osoby bezrobotnej w urzędzie pracy i innych organizacjach, struktura kontaktów z urzędem pracy oraz charakter łączącej ich relacji. naszym celem jest zrozumienie jak wyglądają relacje między urzędnikami a bezrobotnymi z perspektywy osoby w trudnej sytuacji życiowej oraz czy takie osoby mają możliwość sformułować swoje potrzeby i znaleźć rozwiązania swoich życiowych problemów.)

- Porozmawiajmy o Pana(i) kontaktach z urzędem pracy. Czy mógłby(aby) mi Pan(i) opisać jak wyglądają spotkania z pracownikami urzędu?
- Od jak dawna jest Pan(i) zarejestrowany(a) w urzędzie pracy?
- Jak często w tym czasie chodził(a) Pan(i) do urzędu pracy?
- Z kim Pan(i) się tam spotykał?

- Czego dotyczyły te spotkania? Proszę mi je opisać na przykładach...
- Czy były one w jakiś sposób dla Pana(i) przydatne? Dlaczego tak/nie? W jaki sposób?
- Czy pracownicy urzędu zachęcają do zadawania im pytań?
- Czy odpowiedzi, które dają pracownicy urzędu są dla Pana(i) przydatne?
- W jaki sposób pracownicy urzędu się do Pana(ią) zwracają (Czy są pomocni, uprzejmi, obojętni, nieprzyjaźni?)
- Czy kiedykolwiek odczuwał(a) Pan(i) nacisk ze strony pracowników urzędu? O co w tej sytuacji chodziło? (Pytamy o każdy rodzaj wywieranej presji: pozytywnej czy negatywnej)

- Czy mógłby(aby) Pan(i) opisać przebieg typowego spotkania z pracownikiem urzędu, z którym miał(a) Pan(i) najczęściej styczność (dopytujemy czy jest to odpowiednik angielskiego *case managera* – czyli osoby odpowiedzialnej za planowanie i koordynowanie działań wobec danego klienta)?
- Jak opisałby(aby) Pan(i) swoją relację z tym pracownikiem?

b) Diagnoza & kategoryzacja

(W tej części zależy nam na zdobyciu informacji o spotkaniach, w trakcie których z bezrobotnym prowadzono rozmowę, która miała na celu zaplanowanie wobec niego działań , podejmowanych ze strony urzędu – np. indywidualny plan działania w PUP, kontrakt socjalny w MOPR/OPS. Interesuje nas w jaki sposób i przy pomocy jakich narzędzi dochodzi do kategoryzacji jednostki, jakie tematy porusza się w trakcie takiego wywiadu, jakie pytania się tej osobie zadaje, które sfery życia są istotne z punktu widzenia pracowników urzędu, a które problemy się pomija.)

- Czy Pana(i) zdaniem pracownicy urzędu/pracownik urzędu, z którym najczęściej ma Pan(i) styczność (w zależności od poprzednich odpowiedzi) mają pełen obraz Pana(i) sytuacji? Jeśli nie: Jakich informacji im brakuje? Dlaczego tak się dzieje?
- Chcielibyśmy dowiedzieć się więcej na temat spotkań, w trakcie których pracownicy urzędu/pracownik urzędu, z którym najczęściej ma Pan(i) styczność (w zależności od poprzednich odpowiedzi) pytał o Pana(i) sytuację, by zaplanować dalsze działania. Czy przypomina Pan(i) sobie taką sytuację? Kiedy miała ona miejsce?
- O co się wtedy pytał?
- Czy jego pytania dotyczyły edukacji? Kariery zawodowej? Sytuacji rodzinnej? Życia prywatnego?
- Czy pytał Pana(ią) czego Pan(i) oczekuje?
- Czy pytał Pana(ią) co chciałby(ałaby) Pan(i) robić zawodowo?
- Czy w tych pytaniach było coś zaskakującego? Co takiego?
- Czy wyjaśnił cel tych pytań?
- Czy wyjaśnił w jaki sposób będzie korzystać z udzielonych odpowiedzi?
- Czy prosił Pana(ią) o przedstawienie jakiś dokumentów? Jakiego rodzaju były to dokumenty?

- Czy prosił Pana(ią) o wypełnienie jakiś druków/dokumentów? O co w nich chodziło?
- Czy wyjaśnił jaki jest cel tych druków/dokumentów?
- Czy kiedykolwiek brał(a) Pan(i) udział w testach, sprawdzających np. Pana(i) umiejętności, predyspozycje, mocne i słabe strony, itp.?
- Jeśli tak: na czym ten test polegał?
- Co Pan(i) sądzi na jego temat?
- Czy w jakikolwiek sposób był dla Pana(i) przydatny? W jaki sposób?
- Czy coś w związku z nim budziło Pana wątpliwości? O co chodziło?
- Czy proszono Pana(ią) o skomentowanie jego wyników?
- Jeśli tak: W jaki sposób to zrobiono?
- W jakim stopniu Pana(i)komentarze wpłynęły na ostateczne wyniki testu?

c) Usługi & warunkowanie (ang. *conditionality*)

(W tej części chcielibyśmy się dowiedzieć czym zaowocowały spotkania z urzędnikami i czy stawiano tej osobie jakieś warunki. Czym skończyły sie te spotkania? Jaki był ich wynik? Czy osoba znalazła informację, której szukała? Czy dostała wsparcie, którego szukała? Czy przedstawiono jej alternatywne rozwiązania jej problemu? O co ją później proszono? Czy była do czegoś zobligowana? Czy zastosowano jakieś sankcje?)

- Czy zgadzał(a) się Pan(i) z pracownikami urzędu co do planu kolejnych działań?
- Może mi Pan(i) powiedzieć co zawierał ten plan?
- Jaka była Pan(i) rola w przygotowywaniu tego planu?
- Czy został on spisany?

- Czy był to Indywidualny Plan Działania (w przypadku PUP)/kontrakt socjalny (w przypadku MOPR/OPS)?
- Jakie z Pana(i) strony przewidywał obowiązki co do poszukiwania pracy?
- Czy był Pan(i) zobowiązany(a) do podpisania go?
- Co by sie stało, gdyby Pan(i) odmówił podpisania go? Czy był Pan(i) poinformowany o konsekwencjach odmowy?
- Czy kiedykolwiek cos takiego sie Panu(i) zdarzyło lub było blisko takiej sytuacji?

- Jakiego rodzaju oferty/propozycje otrzymywała(a) Pan(i) ze strony urzędu pracy? (chcemy wiedzieć o ofertach pracy, szkoleniach, zajęciach w klubie pracy, poradnictwie zawodowym, świadczeniach i innych formach pomocy np. stażach, pracach interwencyjnych, robotach publicznych, pracach społecznie użytecznych, przygotowaniu zawodowym, udziale w projekcie, itd.)?
- Co Pan(i) na ich temat sądzi? Czy spełniały Pana(i) oczekiwania? Czy odpowiadały na Pana(i) potrzeby? Jeśli nie, dlaczego?
- Czy dawano Panu(i) wybór, czy była to tylko jedna propozycja?
- Czy miał(a) Pan(i) możliwość wyboru projektu/możliwość wyboru oferowanych usług? W przypadku szkoleń: czy miał(a) Pan(i) możliwość wyboru instytucji szkoleniowej? W przypadku stażu, prac interwencyjnych, robót publicznych, itp.: Czy miał(a) Pan(i) możliwość wyboru pracodawcy?
- Czy brał(a) Pan(i) kiedyś udział w obowiązkowym szkoleniu czy projekcie nastawionym na zdobywanie doświadczenia zawodowego (np. staż, przygotowanie zawodowe)? Jeśli tak, jak Pan(i) to odbierał(a)?
- Z jakiego rodzaju wsparcia/usług Pan(i) korzystał(a)? (Dopytujemy o różne rodzaju wsparcia)
- Czy, by moc z nich skorzystać trzeba było spełnić jakieś wymagania? Jakie?

- Czy, by móc z nich skorzystać, musiał(a) Pan(i) podjąć samodzielnie jakieś działania?
- Czy w jakiś sposób ocenia się czy spełnił(a) Pan(i) wymagania/wywiązuje się z obowiązków i uzależnia od tego dostęp do świadczeń lub innych form wsparcia?
- Czy Pana(i) zdaniem jest to dla Pana(i) dobre rozwiązanie? Dlaczego?
- Czy ma to jakieś negatywne efekty dla Pana(i)? Jakie?
- Czy kiedykolwiek miał(a) Pan(i) wrażenie, że urzędnik w jakikolwiek sposób naciskał, by wziął(ęła) Pan(i) w czymś udział?
- Jeśli tak: Proszę mi o tym opowiedzieć?
- Czy ze strony urzędu były jakieś propozycje, z których Pan(i) nie skorzystał(a)? Jakiego rodzaju? Dlaczego? Czy były z tego tytułu jakieś konsekwencje?

d) Sprawczość (ang. *agency*)

(W tej części zależy nam na poznaniu jaki osoba miała margines manewru oraz w jakim stopniu jest zależna od urzędników i urzędu i jej działania są zależne od reguł i informacji, które od nich pozyskuje) .

- W jakim stopniu miał(a) Pan(i) wpływ na rodzaj wsparcia, który Pan(i) otrzymuje? Na jakie kwestie ma Pan(i) w tym względzie wpływ? Proszę o przykłady.
- Czy ma Pan(i) poczucie, że jest w stanie bronić swojego interesu w relacji z urzędem? W jaki sposób? Dlaczego nie?
- Czy kiedykolwiek zdarzyło się, że zależało Panu(i) na jakiejś formie wsparcia, ale z jakiegoś powodu jej Pan(i) nie uzyskał? Proszę więcej mi na ten temat powiedzieć... Co Pan(i) wtedy zrobił(a)?
- Czy kiedykolwiek zdarzyło się, że nie był(a) Pan(i) zadowolony z poziomu świadczonych usług? Proszę więcej mi na ten temat powiedzieć... Co Pan(i) wtedy zrobił(a)?
- Czy kiedykolwiek miał Pan nieprzyjemną sytuację w urzędzie/spięcie z pracownikiem urzędu? Czego to dotyczyło? Co Pan(i) wtedy zrobił(a)?

III. Odpowiedzialność & przypisywanie odpowiedzialności (ang. *responsibilization*)

(Interesuje nas, z jednej strony, jak osoba rozumie swoją rolę w całej sytuacji, czy czuje się odpowiedzialna za swoje położenie i znalezienie pracy oraz jakie jej zdaniem mają na ten temat pracownicy urzędu, z drugiej.)

- Czy był(a) Pan(i) w stanie zdobyć informacje, których Pan(i) potrzebował(a) ze strony urzędu?
- Czy łatwo było uzyskać dostęp do osób, z którymi chciał(a) się Pan?(i) spotkać?
- Czy ma Pan(i) wrażenie, że wie Pan(i) jak wyglądają poszczególne działania ze strony urzędu i że wie Pan(i) kto jest za co odpowiedzialny?

- Pana(i) zdaniem co spowodowało, że jest Pan(i) bezrobotny(a)?
- Czy w jakikolwiek sposób uważa się Pan(i) odpowiedzialna za brak pracy? Jak?
- Czy jest cokolwiek co zrobiłby(aby) Pan(i) inaczej, by nie być bezrobotnym(ą)?
- Kto lub co jest jeszcze za to odpowiedzialny?

- Co na temat odpowiedzialności za znalezienie Panu(i) pracy uważają, Pana(i) zdaniem, pracownicy urzędu? Że oni są za to odpowiedzialni czy Pan(i)?
- Co, Pana(i) zdaniem musi **Pan(i) sama** zrobić, by znaleźć pracę?
- Jaką rolę mają w tym inne osoby/urząd(ędy)?

- Jeśli dotyczy: Według Indywidualnego Planu Działania/Kontraktu Socjalnego za co jest odpowiedzialny urząd?

IV. Kontakty z pracownikami innych instytucji/organizacji

(Chcemy dowiedzieć się czy osoba była kierowana do innych instytucji czy organizacji w celu rozwiązania jej problemów i jak postrzega współpracę między PUP a tymi instytucjami/organizacjami. Chodzi o to, by sprawdzić czy usługi świadczone lokalnie są zintegrowane i czy odpowiadają na różnorodne problemy)

- Czy kiedykolwiek był Pan(i) kierowany(a) do innych instytucji/organizacji? Których? Dlaczego?
- Jeśli tak: Jakie ma Pan(i) doświadczenia wsparcia ze strony tych organizacji/instytucji?
- Czy kontakt z nimi był w jakikolwiek sposób pomocny? W jaki sposób?
- Czy sprawiło to jakieś trudności? W jaki sposób?
- Jakie ma Pan(i) wrażenia na temat współpracy między urzędem pracy a ... (nazwa instytucji/organizacji wspomnianych przez Rozmówcę)?

V. Ocena *people processing* przez Rozmówcę, wpływ na jakość życia i sprawczość (ang. *agency*):

(Chcemy się dowiedzieć czy i w jaki sposób sytuacja życiowa osoby uległa zmianie w konsekwencji kontaktów z PUP i ew. innymi instytucjami/org. i otrzymanego przez nie wsparcia. Czy udało się znaleźć rozwiązania problemów życiowych? Co uległo poprawie? Co uleglo pogorszeniu?)

- Pana(i) zdaniem jakie znaczenie miały dla Pana(i) kontakty z PUP/z innymi instytucjami, organizacjami (jeśli dotyczy to tej osoby)? Jak ocenia Pan wsparcie/propozycje oferty z ich strony?
- Czy uważa Pan(i), że biorą one pod uwagę Pana(i) potrzeby? W jakim zakresie? Dlaczego nie?
- Czy uważa Pan(i), że biorą pod uwagę to, na czym Panu(i) zależy? Czy też był Pan(i) zmuszony(a) do korzystania z gotowego zestawu propozycji?
- W Pana(i) opinii czy Indywidualny Plan Działania/Kontrakt Integracyjny (jeśli dotyczy to tej osoby) jest pomocny? Dlaczego tak/nie?
- Czy może mi Pan(i) więcej powiedzieć o Pana(i) obecnej sytuacji życiowej i zawodowej?
- Czy Pana(i) życie uległo poprawie lub pogorszeniu od momentu kontaktu z urzędem pracy? W jaki sposób? Jaką rolę odegrał w tym procesie urząd pracy?
- Czy kontakt z urzędem wpłynął w jakiś sposób na Pana(i) poczucie pewności siebie czy wyobrażenie na swój temat?
- Co należałoby zmienić w urzędzie pracy, by trafiający tam ludzie mieli lepsze doświadczenia w kontakcie z nim oraz by były lepsze wyniki tego kontaktu?
- Na sam koniec, chciał(a)bym zapytać jak ogólnie ocenia Pan(i) swoje doświadczenia związane z urzędem pracy?

Bardzo dziękujemy!

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LOCALISE
The Local Governance of Social Cohesion, WP6

The Individualisation of Interventions

Sweden Country Analysis

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1.1 Introduction

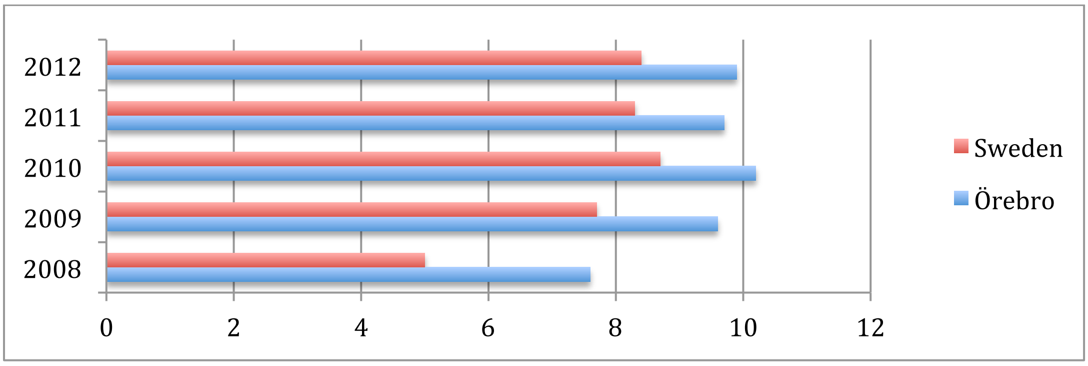
Individualisation is a powerful discourse in contemporary labour markets. Against this background, the aim of this report is to assess the extent to which interventions directed at long-term unemployed are actually individualised and tailored to their needs or interests. We are also interested in other ways that individualisation may play out in the local practices in relation to long-term unemployed, such as a possible individualisation of risk and responsibility. Thus, aspects of individualisation versus standardisation of services for long term unemployed are focused, as well as issues related to responsibilisation and individual agency. Following the theory paper, three hypotheses are to be explored. The *first hypothesis* is that the organizational practices/governance systems applied set limits for the actual scope for individualised interventions. The *second hypothesis* is that inter-organizational (inter-agency) boundaries (and interests) also limit the actual scope for individualised interventions. The *third hypothesis* is that interventions individualise responsibilities for employment, while they lead to the standardisation of new collective categories of job-seekers.

Örebro was selected as the most innovative of the three cases studied in WP 4. Örebro municipality is the administrative centre in the region of Örebro, and has 138 000 inhabitants and is situated in the inland of Sweden, 200 kilometres west of Stockholm. In Örebro, there are well established collaborative structures between local PES office, SSIA and municipality. Meetings at management level, intermediate level and case worker level are arranged regularly, and there are many attempts to align services offered by the organisations in the field of unemployment services. In addition to this, the municipality has developed methods to improve the chances for long term unemployed to enter the labour market; one example of this is social aspects included in procurement procedures. Also in relation to the third sector and private sector, there have been innovative measures where the municipality has shown a strong commitment to involve both third sector and private sector actors in the efforts to improve transition from unemployment to employment.

1.2 Methodology

In Örebro municipality the unemployment level was slightly higher than the national average over the last five years.

Diagram 1. Open unemployment in Örebro municipality and Sweden 2008-2012



Source: Public Employment Service (PES)

Long term unemployed is, according to national definition used by the Public employment services, a person who has been registered as unemployed for a period exceeding six months (for unemployed below the age of 25 three months) and *not taking part in an activation* program during this period. However, as will be discussed in the report, a large proportion of all who register as unemployed are referred to some kind of activation, removing them from the official PES statistics as openly unemployed. In December 2013, over 3 500 individuals were categorised as open unemployed. In addition to this, over 3 200 individuals were activated in one of the programs offered by PES. One fifth of all who were registered as unemployed in Örebro municipality, had been unemployed more than 24 months. About 80 per cent of those who took part in activation/labour market programs offered by PES were enrolled in either Job and development guarantee, or the Youth and job guarantee. Only three per cent took part in training (*arbetsmarknadsutbildning*) (www.mstatkommun.arbetsformedlingen.se).

Data collection:

From September to December 2013, twelve interviews with case workers and eight with long term unemployed were carried out. Interviews with case workers lasted between one and two hours (average 1.5-2 hours); all were recorded and transcribed.[1] Access was given by the local management of the SSIA, the PES and the municipality.[2]

Table 1. Interviews with case workers

	Organisation	Gender	Education	Work tasks	Experience of case work (in years)
1	PES	F	Occupational therapists	Work rehabilitation	10 – 20
2	PES	M	Secondary school	Work rehabilitation	> 20
3	PES	F	MA in social sciences	Work rehabilitation and Direct service	10 – 20
4	PES	M	Secondary school	Direct service	10 – 20
5	PES	F	Vocational and career counsellor	Job and development guarantee	< 10
6	PES	F	Social worker	Social investigation (consultancy)	> 20
7	Municipality	F	Social worker	Social assistance	> 20
8	Municipality	F	Social worker	Social assistance	> 20
9	Municipality	F	Social worker	Social assistance	10 – 20
10	Municipality	F	Vocational and career counsellor	Investigation (consultancy)	10 – 20
11	SSIA	F	Secondary school	Health insurance and coordination	> 20 years
12	SSIA	F	MA in European studies	Health insurance and coordination	< 5

The case workers were highly experienced and knowledgeable about routines of the organisations and confident in relation to their work. This was an advantage as many of the questions were related to every day routines, control and categorisation procedures. However, the informants highlighted that due to high turnover of staff, many unemployed would in fact not meet experienced case workers. Therefore, it is important to note that the sample does not necessarily give a representative picture of the work performed by case workers in general in each organisation. The informants´ high knowledge of support systems available, experience with direct work with clients with complex life situation and personal network with other professionals most likely facilitates a holistic approach in client work. Another, slightly different, consideration of the biased selection is the informants' identification with the employing organisation. The case workers could be seen as the "faithful servant", selected by

[1] We are greatful to Anja Johansson who transcribed all of the interviews for WP 6 and 7.
[2] The access was facilitated by previously established contacts (during WP 4 and 5).

the management to give an idealised picture of the organisation. However, our perception is that the case workers took an independent role, highlighting discrepancies between policy and practice, and discussed barriers to an individualised approach in the work with clients. Confidentiality was granted, which affected the willingness to discuss openly for some of the informants. The interviews took place in the office of the case workers and in the meeting rooms where case workers meet clients. Two of the informants have a slightly different role than a regular case worker, and were used as (internal) consultants.

Eight long term unemployed were interviewed. Interviews lasted between one and one and a half hour, all but one were recorded and transcribed.[3] Two programs for long term unemployed were selected, one focusing job coaching and cv-writing skills and one on work rehabilitation. The Coordination union ran the rehabilitation project and a local housing company ran the project focusing CV-writing and job search. Resources from the PES and the municipality funded both projects. It remains an open question to what extent the participants can be seen as representative for the over all population of long term unemployed in Örebro. However, it is clear that the content of the CV-writing program is very much in line with other similar activation programs, and the rehabilitation projects stands out as a program for more vulnerable individuals with a need for work rehabilitation and individualised support. Most informants were approached directly by the interviewer, during extended study visits.[4] One interview was organised by the project manager. All interviews were carried out on the premises of the projects. It should be noted, that most interviews were challenging and emotional; most of the informants had a very complicated life situation and problems that seriously affected their general well being.

[3] One of the informants did not want to be recorded, and the interview was written down during the interview (intervieweer taking notes directly in a worddocument during the interview).
[4] Access was facilitated by excellent cooperation of the project management.

Table 2: Long term unemployed

IP	Gender	Age	Referring organisation	Time in unemployment (time since last employment)	Education and previous work experience	Family situation
1	F	60-64	PES (and SA)	> 10 years	Secondary school, administrative work.	Single (adult child)
2	M	40-49	PES	< 5 years	Low qualified jobs in transport sector.	Single (no children)
3	F	50-59	PES	< 5 years	Occasional work in care sector and in family business.	Single - (five children, four adult)
4	M	50-59	PES	< 5 years	Various work experience from mainly unqualified work.	Married, 2 children.
5	F	25-29	PES	< 5 years	Work experience mainly through activation programs.	Single, no children.
6	F	30-39	PES	> 10 years	Some experience from domestic work.	Single, two children (no custody).
7	F	30-39	PES	< 5 years	Some internships related to university degree in administration.	Married, two children.
8	F	40-49	SSIA	< 5 years	Work in elderly care.	Married, two children.

Unemployment spells varied between 1 and 20 years. Four of the informants had a history of migration. Informants were between 25 and 62 years old, and a majority of those interviewed were female. Woman and men did not interact to a greater extent in the daily activities, and the ”female spaces” was more easily accessible for me as a woman, which explains the sample. The long term unemployed received financial compensation from the SSIA, activation support. However, they all had a financially constrained situation and to manage costs for living, they relied heavily on economic support from spouses, children and/or parents. Informants, who lacked this kind of family and network support, instead received means tested social assistance.

1.3 Organisational and governance context

The public employment service (PES) has the overall responsibility for activation of long term unemployed. In order to qualify for financial compensation (unemployment insurance, activity support and social assistance) during unemployment a registration at the local PES office is required. Compliance with the action plan developed by the PES case workers is a condition for receiving the compensations.

The municipality is responsible for the means tested social assistance, and organises activation for unemployed clients. The activation is considered a complement (and not a substitute) to the activation programs offered by PES, and the Social service act stipulates for the case worker to consult PES before referring to a municipal activation program. There are a number of activation programs offered; some are run as a regular activity within the municipal organisation, others are run as projects with funding from for instance the European social fund or the Coordination union.

The SSIA is responsible for administrating the sickness insurance. However, SSIA also has the responsibility to coordinate involved actors in the process of transition from sick leave (back) to the labour market. The coordination responsibility implies a close cooperation with health care actors and the PES, if the person is without employment. This responsibility has been emphasised through the introduced time limits in the sickness insurance, and the introduction of the rehabilitation chain in 2008. The rehabilitation chain means a gradual transfer from the SSIA to the PES, a process that is done in close cooperation between case workers from PES and SSIA in "mutual assessment" *(gemensam kartläggning)*.

So, in Sweden, case workers from the PES, the municipality and the SSIA work directly with long term unemployed. Type of compensation claimed by the unemployed decides which organisation(s) conduct direct work with the client. Hence, a person who is long term unemployed can have two, or possibly even three, case workers at the same time, depending on health related circumstances and financial situation. The case workers are responsible for decisions affecting the right to financial compensation for the unemployed and work towards the goal of financial independence of the unemployed, either through employment or education.

1.4 The governance structure of everyday work

Trajectories:

When registering at PES, in the first meeting with a case worker, information about previous work experience, educational background and field of interest (in relation to work) is gathered and documented in the internal computer system. An action plan is made, and most unemployed will proceed to individual job search. On a regular basis, the unemployed will have to report to the case workers which jobs he or she has applied, in order to keep financial benefits (unemployment insurance or activation support). The case worker will also send suggestions on suitable vacancies, based on the information gathered.

In the initial phase of unemployment, PES offers a range of open services, such as such information meetings, employers´ fairs, seminars on cv-writing skills and so forth. There is a national hot-line where issues can be raised with case workers, and there is an open floor called *Direct service* in the local PES office, open from 10 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday where case workers can be consulted. There is also extensive information available on the website of PES. The unemployed is expected to apply for relevant jobs and report these to the case worker, according to the action plan. The case worker can suggest available (and suitable) vacancies, and to keep the financial compensation, the unemployed has to apply for these. There is an emphasis on the responsibility of the individual to search for employment on his or her own.

When the person is enrolled in the *Job and development guarantee*, normally after fourteen months after registration at PES, or when a person has been receiving unemployment insurance for 300 days, efforts to support the individual are intensified. The time limit for the Job guarantee for youth (below 25 years old) is only three months. In Örebro municipality, one third of the participants in the Job and development guarantee have reached the third phase (mstatkommun.arbetsformedlingen.se). Complementary actors that have been procured by PES on national level conduct most of the job coaching. In Örebro however, there are also actors who are not procured, and instead funded directly by PES and municipality, or the Coordination union. Placements on work places can have different purposes, either as job training (*arbetsträning*), or as a way to estimate a persons work capacity *(arbetsprövning)*. If the time in the guarantee exceeds 450 days, occupation organised by a complementing actor is the only available option.

If a case worker suspects that the unemployed has a reduced work capacity, investigations can be made leading to more intensified support. This can be initiated in any stage of unemployment period, but in order to facilitate for early detection, a question on "reduced work capacity" is asked the unemployed upon registration. Specialists (social workers, psychologists and physiotherapists), conduct investigations with the aim to assess the person's work capacity. If the person's work capacity is considered to be reduced, the unemployed is (if she or he agrees to) coded accordingly. The functional impairment code grants access to a more extensive set of services, such as *adaptions of the work place, wage subsidies (lönebidrag)*, *personal assistant (personligt biträde)* and a *special introduction support (särskilt introduktion- och uppföljingssstöd)* (see also Garsten & Jacobsson 2013). The latter means that someone can assist the person with reduced work capacity on the work place.

For an unemployed person who applies for social assistance, the first contact with the municipality is the reception, or intake. A brief investigation is made, and cases that are assessed to last for more than three months is sent to one of the teams, either adults or youth (18-25). Even before the assessment starts, the unemployed is referred to the *Road sign* (Vägvisaren). This is a municipal service offering counselling to unemployed. Within two weeks a meeting is scheduled, where previous work experience, education, own estimations on chances to find employment are discussed. This investigation is followed by a second, made by the assigned social worker. Based on the conclusions from these two investigations, the social worker refers the client to an activation program.

For the unemployed who is on sick leave, case workers at SSIA conduct a brief phone investigation within two weeks, and a personal meeting is to be scheduled within six months. Following the regulations of the rehabilitation chain, the case workers contact PES case workers for a *mutual assessment (gemensam kartläggning),* when the person is to start work rehabilitation organised by PES. The time limits of the rehabilitation chain do not apply for unemployed, as their work capacity is evaluated towards the entire labour market from the very first day of sickness leave. For those who have exhausted their right to sickness benefits, after two and a half year, a referral to Work life introduction, a three months program organised by PES is made. After this, if the person is still sick, a new period of sickness leave can be granted.

The role of the case worker and their every day work:

Case workers in PES, whose official term is *placement officer (platsförmedlare)* are responsible for supporting individuals on their way to employment. Case workers work primarily with specific groups of unemployed, defined by length of unemployment and need for work rehabilitation. For the unemployed, this means a frequent change of case worker. One exception to this, are the case workers working with rehabilitation cases. Another logic applies here; a change in case workers is considered unsuitable and efforts are made to avoid changes.

> *Say, I have a person, who is in activity. But, the question is, maybe we should keep them as my case anyway, in spite of that. Because, very often, they are really sensitive for changes in case workers. Well, it is, simply not very good to change (case worker). PES 1*

However, most case workers are responsible for unemployed only temporary. Tasks conducted by the case workers on an everyday basis are varied, and can consist of meetings with unemployed (individual and group), three or more party talks (coordination on case worker level SSIA and municipality), matching of unemployed with requests from employers, visiting employer and actors who are involved in the activation of unemployed, and administration. Administration refers to for instance decisions making in relation to interventions for unemployed (*fatta beslut om åtgärd*), daily notes (documentation), construction of action plans, control and follow up on decisions, control of activity of unemployed etc. The interviewees spend a considerable amount of time on administration; according to some informants as much as up to two thirds of the work day.

During the day, the case worker takes on, and moves between, different roles; from broker matching employer with unemployed, to bureaucrat protecting rules, to coach guiding unemployed to the labour market and so on. One informant describes his role as a bureaucrat following rules on reporting job-search of unemployed to the unemployment insurance.

We have an incredible system of rules that we have to follow; (for example, my comment) we have the responsibility to exercise control in relation to the unemployment insurance. PES 3

Another case worker describes her role as a promoter for subsidised employments, trying to convince employers to employ a person on work training with funding from PES:

And I bring all these really nice supports (subsidised employments, my comment) we have, and try to promote them (to the employer, my comment). PES 2[5]

Case load is high, sometimes well over two hundred clients per case worker. Most case workers from PES who were interviewed describe a situation where ability to prioritise and organise the work are central aspects of their work. However, much of the work is prioritized by the system, and by the ways which the work is organised, and not by the case workers individually. The documentation system used within PES is a tool that supports case workers in their planning, and the system does some of the prioritizing automatically; for instance, alerting the case worker when action plans have to be renewed and when follow ups are due. The time slots when case workers are scheduled for *Direct service,* meetings with case workers from other organisations and unemployed who call on their attention via phone or e-mail and so on are other activities that case worker have to respond to . The fragmented role of the case workers, and the internal division of work, reduce the possibilities for case workers to prioritize according to professional judgment and individual needs of the unemployed.

<u>Terminology:</u>

In PES, the official term used to classify the target group is *job-seeker (arbetssökande)*. In the interviews with case workers, unemployed are mainly referred to as *seekers (sökande)* indicating that job seeking is viewed upon as the main priority. Individuals who receive support from SSIA are referred to as *costumers (kunder)* in the official documentation and by case workers. There are no other alternatives for citizens than the SSIA in issues related to the sickness insurance, which renders some peculiarity to the terminology. (Several public agencies in Sweden has opted to use the costumer concept as a way to signal service-orientation.) In social services, the official documentation refers to unemployed recipients of

[5] Previous research also indicates that the sanction element makes it hard to establish trust between client and staff, and the staff has to balance between the role of 'welfare policeman' and 'compassionate officer' (e.g. Howard 2006; Hensing et al. 1997).

social assistance as *social assistance recipient* (*biståndsmottagare*), *unemployed (arbetslösa*) and *client (klient)*. The term used by the informants is *client (klient)* but also the *individal (individen)*. The different terminology used in the SSIA, the PES and the municipality gives an indication of what aspects of a persons life is in focus for case workers. By using the customer concept, the financial aspects of the relationship between unemployed and case worker is emphasised. The job-seeker concept leads us into assumption that the job-seeking (and not rehabilitation or training) is the main focus of the organisation. The client concept, used with social services, has a long history in social work in Sweden and other countries. The *client* concept has been contested by the term *service user*, but more so on a political than on practice level, at least in Sweden (Mc Laughlin 2009, Socialstyrelsen 2003).

Monitoring and control:

There are different systems of control within PES, SSIA and the municipality, and the case workers give different meanings to the systems of monitoring. For the SSIA case worker, control and monitoring constitute an important aspect affecting their day do day work, as well as for the case workers in PES. (Both these agencies are strictly governed by management by objectives and retrospective control.) In the municipality, control and monitoring seem to play, if not insignificant, at least a minor role. The more elaborated system of control in PES and SSIA leads to more restrictions on case workers, who are generally aware of the content of the control and possible sanctions if the work is not performed according to the regulations. The case workers at the municipality do have a system of internal control, but the knowledge on what aspects of their work is monitored is generally low. One case worker from the municipality explains:

> *Well, I hardly know. It is Pro Capita (the internal documentation system, my comment), the ones who are in charge of our system, they control... But, well, I don't know. They check us, and we get a mail that you have been in some way controlled during this month. Bla bla bla bla, and if you want to know more, you will have to ask your management, but nobody really cares. M1*

Another case worker describes how the control is often related to the work of the case workers, but rather to the *client*, with the aim to detect possible fraud. This, in fact, could be a way to understand the low interest in control mechanisms that case workers seem to have. Another factor is that the work performed by case workers in the field of activation, is not standardised the same way as the work in the national agencies. Even if there are outspoken policy intentions in relation to activation in the municipality, case workers do not use manuals or other standardised tools in their investigation.[6] This, of course, makes control more difficult to execute.

In the PES, control system is a central aspect of the work. Case workers are well aware of its relevance, not least since achieved goals are discussed in their monthly result dialogue, held with case workers and management. The control and monitoring is less elaborated for case workers who primarily work with work rehabilitation. One case worker describes:

> *Well, it is not really the case, when we work so intense with unemployed, because, we can talk about things. But my colleagues, they are measured on flow (flöde), how many they get into work, how many they get in to work placements, and if they have too few in activation when they are in the guarantees, they are measured on that. PES 4.*

This indicates, that the closer the case worker work with the client, the less is the work measured in quantity. Instead, room for discussions related to individual clients can be conducted with superiors directly, which is also a way to monitor and control the work but rather from a qualitative aspects. However, most of the work conducted in PES is evaluated and monitored in relation to the set goals. One case workers describes the dilemma when quantitative measures dominate; and little or no room is left for qualitative aspects of the work:

> *Well, I can feel, like it is only the hard aspects, the quantitative goals that are set up, that we count. If we have contact with employers, and… well. Because, if you write a good action plan, or an outstanding daily note, that is not visible, if you do not emphasise this yourself in a meeting with your superior when discussing salary, for instance. But, it is really only these hard… those visible things that can be counted. That is what we end up talking about. PES 1*

Another case worker describes a dilemma in these monitoring systems. The importance giving to quantitative data generates extra administration, as it leads to demands on the case worker to document in order to "satisfy the system".

> *The (administration, my comment) is not really made in order to be useful for us, I think. Some administration is done only to satisfy the system, and it is like, ok, we are measured on this, from above. That things look ok. (PES 2)*

The symbolic value of meeting the set goals is closely related to the on going political priorities. One case worker describes:

> *The activity reports (reporting applied jobs), it is a lot of activity reporting today. Everything is about this, right now. Actually, from our superiors, they have told us, that if you do the activity reports and early detection, you can forget the other things (goals, my comment), everything else will be forgiven. PES 3*

As discussed previously, case workers at PES are confronted with a huge variety of tasks, and high case loads and prioritizing the work is essential – and this includes goals that are measured. This shows the importance of the institutional environment on the case work – and the political dimensions for case workers implementing labour market policies. Legitimacy is maintained by complying with current high profile political issues.

In SSIA, also a national agency, monitoring aspects are essential to the every day case worker. As in PES, certain goals are highlighted as more important to comply with than others.

> *Right now, we have a goal that we have to have personal meeting with 75% of those who have been on sick leave longer than six months. SSIA 2*

These kind of standardised goals and monitoring system reduce the scope for professional judgement, and is a mechanism that enhances standardised procedures in individual case work.

Relation with clients: Reluctant case workers and demanding clients

The relation between case worker and clients is complex. The first aspect important to highlight is the uneven distribution of power. Case workers do possess power over the individual in important aspects; and their power is immanent in the organisational structures. Case workers have power to decide over the right to financial compensation for individuals. This puts the client in an inferior position from the very start, as financial aspects are of course crucial for those who lack employment. The case workers have authority do distribute other resources available within the organisation, such as rehabilitation, training, activation, investigations etc. These resources are (at least in some cases) attractive for the individual without employment.

The overall picture of the relation between case worker from PES and the unemployed, is the importance of the bureaucratic dimension of the relation, and the lack of social dimension. The frequent changes in case worker undermines any real chances to build a social relation; however, the expectations from the unemployed on the case worker are bureaucratic *as well* as a social. For instance, one of the informants discussed his expectations on PES, demanding information about a transfer to the third phase (occupation) in the Job and development guarantee. In spite his efforts to find out who his case worker was for the time being, and what the transfer meant for his financial compensation and possibilities to receive other kinds of support from PES, he was left unknowing. Not until the senior management at the local PES office was approached, he received answers on who his case worker was, and what kind of financial compensation he would receive. Others referred to the importance of decisions (*beslut*) made by case workers, in order to keep financial benefits. Both of these examples show *bureaucratic* expectations long term unemployed had on PES, and on their case workers. When expectations are not met, the frustration is immanent and often explained by the internal structure in the PES and the high case load for case workers. One long term unemployed describes:

> *Well, I do not care that you have lot to do. When people call, they should call back, I think. Well. I have so many… (…) I have 200 cases before I can take you, he said. (….) They are too few, too little staff. IP 2*

In terms of social expectations on the case workers, this can be understood as the clients' expectations on case workers ability to respond to their expressed needs in terms of information or support. A person who wanted assistance and information argues:

> *They have educations, but… When I asked if… I need help with this education. They just said, check for your self, you can check that for your self. I think this is a little bit bad, like, why does she say that to me? She is supposed to help me, in order to be able to apply for a training they have. I think that is somewhat negative, well, specially this person. IP 2*

Others see the lack of support from case workers as, not of flaw of the individual case worker, but as a sign of discrimination an unfair treatment:

> *Like, if I ask about a training, maybe she is a little bit negative, towards me. And not when she helps others.*
>
> *I: You mean, as if she would help others in another way?*
>
> *Yes.*
>
> *I: Why do you think so?*

Because, maybe, because I am an immigrant. And maybe she helps most Swedish people. For instance. IP 3

So, whereas limitations for the case worker to provide services to the unemployed might be immanent in the organisational structures, as part of the standardised services available depending on for instance length in unemployment, and time spent in the Job and development guarantee, the unemployed looks for other explanations.

From the perspective of the case workers, the high case load is a reason for not meeting clients, and to minimize the social dimension of the relation. A case load close to 300 makes it difficult to meet all clients. Instead, group meetings are organised, phone and e-mail is preferred as opposed to meeting in person, which would be more time consuming. So, the relation between case workers and unemployed is characterized by the case workers' attempts to *reduce* the interaction with clients and still comply with the organisational demands to meet set goals, and unemployed look for strategies to *increase* interaction with case workers in order to receive the help and support they believe they are entitled to.

1.5 Individualisation – standardisation of interventions

Interventions offered by the PES for unemployed follow two tracks, depending on the categorisation of the unemployed. One the one hand, the interventions offered long term unemployed are highly standardised, and duration of unemployment and available services are deciding factor for which services are made available for the individual. This is the case for the absolute majority of unemployed. However, if the unemployed is detected and categorised as a person with reduced work capacity, or if the person is referred to PES by another national agency, the interventions offered can be highly individualised[7]. However, the procedures leading to the interventions are seemingly standardised for all.

The standardised interventions:

Services available during the first period of unemployment, before the Job and development guarantee is due, are mainly open seminars in the local PES office, individual job search activities and consultation by case workers in the *Direct service*. The unemployed is expected to fend for him/herself with the general support available at PES. Meetings with case workers are scarce, and the information gathered about the unemployed relate to previous work experience and education, suitable future employers and issues related to financial compensation. This technical information has to be documented in the internal documentation system used at PES. The meetings are, in general, relatively short. One informant describes:

> *Everyone gets a case worker (handläggare), straight away. (...) And we can not sit for hours and do this; this is a fairly quick thing. (...) The system is, when a job seeker gets here, you have to consider these, different things, before you can even start to discuss, what kind of help a person actually wants. IP 3*

Depending on the aspects related to age, financial compensation, different action plans are made. The same case worker describes:

> *You have those who are below 25, and you divide them into two groups, those with unemployment insurance and those without. And those over 25, and those with unemployment insurance and those without. They all get different action plans. We have different templates for these groups, which we have to fill out. IP 3*

[7] The number of persons coded as functionally impaired has increased dramatically in Sweden. In 1992, 10 per cent of all registered unemployed at PES Sweden were coded as such while in 2011 the corresponding number was 25.3 per cent (see Garsten & Jacobsson 2013). Case workers have an incentive to use the code and clients to accept it, as a way to get individualised support.

Health related questions, or questions related to problems of a social dimension are not asked in this first contact with the PES. Even if questions of a more sensitive nature were to be asked, current legislation (on personal data protection) prevents documentation; for instance, information about criminal record or health condition. The only exception is if the unemployed himself/herself would raise the matter in relation to a question concerning reduced work capacity.

Based on the discussion above, case workers seem, in fact, not to have enough knowledge about the unemployed to offer individualised services, nor do they have access to required tools to be able to offer such. Individualisation of services is at this stage of unemployment restricted to the job suggestions made by the case worker to the unemployed. In case jobs that are suitable considering previous experience and education are suggested, we could talk about an individualised service.

When the unemployment period exceeds the time limits for the guarantees, the person is categorised as long term unemployed. This implies that the Job and development guarantee is due, and for those below 25 the Youth and job guarantee. There are major changes in the interventions available for the unemployed, however doubtful to what extent services are individualised and/or tailor made for the individuals needs. The long term unemployed person can be offered work training, placements, job-coaches, courses in cv-writing skills, as well as training.

One of the case workers describes that group meetings have replaced individual meetings, due to the heavy case load. In these meetings long term unemployed are asked to consider what kind of activation they prefer; training, work placements or job-coaching offered by complementary actors. Case workers consider training and work placements as the better options:

> *In the group meeting, we want them to find options; like, can they arrange a work placement on their own. Do you have any contacts? Or, is there a training that you have been waiting for, or that might interest you. Then we would prefer these two options. Because, that is what we see, these go into employment faster. Work placement is the intervention I find most people go into employment. PES 2*

Despite this, the most common track is job-coaching offered by complementary actors. Work placements and training are resources that are not always readily available (Liljeberg et al 2013). That available resources, rather than individual needs or professional considerations, decide what services are given is a serious problem for many human services organisations, and PES is no exception. In this case, the activation can be understood in terms of the symbolic value to the organisation, fulfilling expectations shaped by a strong activation discourse.

Once the unemployed is participating in an activation program, the case worker has merely a follow up responsibility for the job seeker. This means that there are in fact two strong motivational factors for case workers to refer clients to programs, even if they are not always considered the preferred option. Case workers reduce their pile of active cases by referring them to activation programs. One case worker who works with unemployed in the guarantees, explains:

> *Of the 70 unemployed that I am responsible for, 60 per cent have to be in some kind of activity. They should not be here, at PES, on me. Because actually, according to the rules, I would have to meet all of them on a daily basis, all the time. PES 2*

The second incentive for the case worker is related to the goals set up by PES centrally, stating that 60 per cent of all clients in the guarantees should be in activation. Monitoring is an important part of the work in PES, and meeting the set goals important for case workers, not least since this discussed in individual result dialogues, held with superiors.

In terms of the services offered by the complementary actors for long term unemployed in the Job and development guarantee, these are described as standardised and similar in their methodological approaches.

> *You have to be in activity in 450 days. Activity, followed by activity, followed by activity. You can be at one place in three months, and then, you will get a new plan. Three months at another place. So, it is really like a roving (flackande), actually. And, well, I think, what is really different… In what way do they offer different things? Actually, it is pretty much the same.*
>
> *I: Can you give an example?*
>
> *Well, it is, we have work training. We have something that is called "Job of the day", and there is Örebro Manpower (Örebro bemanning). They work pretty much the same way. It is coaching. We coach you; we try to find a work placement. But we call it something different. (…) And I call the job seeker and ask how things are going. And no, it is the same thing, all of it! Coaching, and things like this. So, maybe it is all the same, but the provider tries to find a certain profile. And, I guess, it is pretty much the same. So, I believe all interventions are somewhat alike. But I also think, maybe there are not so many ways this can be done. Maybe there are no exciting ways that you can do this. PES 3*

Even if the programs are standardised in content, the ratio staff – unemployed is quite different in the activation programs than in the regular work within PES. This gives at hand far better opportunities for the staff in the job-coaching programs to get to know the unemployed and, possibly, to see and take consideration to their individual needs. This is also described by the long term unemployed interviewed; the support offered in the job-coach programs is perceived as being more personal, more individualised and more qualitative than the support they receive from case workers at PES. However, the unemployed follow a standardised schedule, where attendance is compulsory. Most of the programs offer, apart from job-search and cv-writing, lectures by actors, such as debt counselling, health related issues, union and workers right and study visits. This kind of information could be seen as a way to meet individual needs of long term unemployed, even if conducted in a standardised way. An important note to this, however, is the very different background and conditions of participants in the job-coach programs. The selection of participants to the complementary actors are highly standardised; a computer decides which program the unemployed should attend. Participants in programs offered by complementary actors are selected by chance, according to the procurement procedures that have been done by PES centrally.

> *No, the job seekers do not choose (program, my comment), the system chooses. It follows the results of the procurement, and there is a "next in line" system. The procurement states that first we have to fill the places in Kompensia (on of the four complementing actors mentioned by the case workers, my comment.) and that is done by the computer. PES 3*

These standardised selection procedures, based on chance rather than individual needs and situation, contribute to a situation where groups can be quite heterogeneous. For instance, in the program where most interviews for this study was conducted, the group consisted of about 30 participants; some with university degrees and others with no reading or writing skills, some expressing very high motivation and strong expectations to find employment labour market, others who had resigned and saw no solutions in their job search.

Individualised interventions:

If, however, the unemployed is detected and categorised as a person whose work capacity needs to be clarified, or, if the person is referred to PES by another authority, interventions seem to be all but standardised. Work psychologists and social workers can refer the client to further investigations. These investigations aim to clarify if the unemployed has a reduced work capacity, deriving from the psychological or social problems. This can, for instance, be learning disabilities, a criminal record, substance abuse, a difficult family situation or other social problems. However, a reduced work capacity should not be seen as an objective assessment based only on the problem of the unemployed; a reduced work capacity is also defined in relation to the actual demand on the labour market (Garsten and Jacobsson 2013). The investigation aims to estimate the person's ability to work, and to assess the need for support and adaption of work place, as well as need for coordination with other authorities. The information gathered by the consultants is different in character than the information documented by case workers. The regular case workers do not document information that can be considered as sensitive (such as criminal record, social problems), due to legislation on data protection. This implies, that in most cases, the case workers would only know the personal situation of the unemployed if a) the client tells the case worker, b) if an investigation has been made. Case workers are frequently changed, meetings with case workers are scarce and often short, it seems unlikely that case workers have knowledge about other problems than those directly related to the unemployment (such as level of education, previous work experience and so on). The long term unemployed, according to the interviews, are generally not asked about their private situation and nor do they feel inclined to tell the case worker. One informant describes answers a question whether the PES case worker has a good grasp of the situation she is in:

> *Well, I don't know actually. I have not had him for such a long time. So he does not know me really that well. (…) He has the file, maybe it is written a lot in the file.*
>
> *(…) K: Well, ok. Has he ever asked about your previous work experiences or you private life? Your situation, your life situation?*
>
> *No, he has not done that. (IP 1)*

Another informant who has been in a very turbulent domestic situation, explains why she has not told her case worker about her problems:

> *It was of a more private character. I did not know that I could actually tell PES, that I had had a difficult situation.*
>
> *I: Did you not want to?*
>
> *No, I did not realise that I could… My case worker writes, what have you done, and I said, well, I have sent (the applications, my comment).*

However, the logic is the reverse in the investigations made by the consultants, and different areas of life are discussed in the assessment. If a persons work capacity is considered being reduced, there are highly individualised interventions available. Adaption of the work place could possibly be the most individualised intervention found within the interventions for unemployed; as the adaption is entirely based on the individual needs of the client in order to perform the work tasks – all according to the investigations made by social workers and work psychologists. The case workers who worked with rehabilitation all described situations where the unemployed were offered services well beyond the standard interventions from PES. For instance, one job seeker who did not manage to go on public transport because of social phobia was accompanied on the bus to and from work by a personal assistant paid by PES. Others, with alcohol problems, were given the chance to go to rehabilitation during working hours, and yet others were. Important to note, is that most of these cases referred to have some kind of subsidised employment, where the PES pays a large percentage of the salary. This kind of individualised support is also available to those who enter PES via SSIA. Work life rehabilitation can mean a highly individualised system to support the individual back to the labour market.

So, the way that a person becomes a target person/client of PES has significant importance in relation to standardisation and individualisation of interventions offered to the person. A person who registers by him or herself as unemployed, follows a highly standardised track (if he or she is not detected as a person with suspected reduced work capacity) with standardised interventions. Unemployed who start their enrolment at the local PES office by referral from another authority, such as the Prison and probation services or SSIA, have access to individualised services and support through for instance work rehabilitation programs or subsidised employments. The case workers working with this group have another view on access to tools and resources than the case workers working with "regular" unemployed, stating that resources at hand give good opportunities for individualising interventions.[8]

This, of course, raises serious questions on issues related to process of how the individual needs of the unemployed are detected (and not detected), and where the boundaries are drawn between "regular unemployed" and "unemployed with reduced work capacity". One case worker from PES working with rehabilitation (unemployed with codes on reduced work capacity) argues:

> *I think I have really good conditions to offer interventions according to the need of the individual (skräddarsy). The big problem is the great mass, well, the great mass*

[8] This reflects general trend of dualisation of labour market policies based on a classification of 'normal job-seekers' and 'at risk clients' (e.g. Caswell et al 2010,, Garsten & Jacobsson 2013).

that is never identified, or detected. It is an issue on rule of law (rättsäkerhet). Those that we do not find. That is a big thing, and, well, it is really sad. PES 4

Based on the interviews, the role of the case workers is an important factor for how trajectory of long term unemployed, but also the role of the unemployed. If the unemployed is successful in describing his or her personal needs, the chances improve for the person to get individualised help. However, the system is complex and knowledge about resources available from PES is generally low based on the interviews with both case workers and long term unemployed. This lack of information, on behalf of the long term unemployed, constitutes a barrier for the unemployed to express needs and place demands on the PES.

<u>Individual action plans</u>

Case workers at PES should, according to regulations, construct action plans for all unemployed. In the action plan, the obligations of the unemployed are to be documented; for instance, job search or participation in an activation program. However, the action plans seem to have more of a latent than a manifest purpose. The content of the action plan is not described as an important, neither by case workers or unemployed. Some of the long term unemployed are unaware of the existence, and those who are, do not talk about the content of the plan. The plan has implications for the unemployed only when it is to be renewed – a renewal of a plan means a possible meeting with a case worker. One long term unemployed explains:

I: How often do you meet your case worker at PES?

Well, I guess when my action plan is to be renewed. Hardly even then. IP 4

Another informant describe his view on the content of the plan:

I: What does it mean for you, when you get your plan renewed?

To me it means nothing. I keep on searching for jobs like I always do. IP 5

For the unemployed, the most important documents from the case workers are the *decisions* (beslut). The decisions state what kind of activation the unemployed should participate in, and the unemployed is dependent on the decisions to take part in activation, in order to receive financial compensation/activation support. It the case worker fails to make relevant decisions, this is a problem for the individual:

And, when I was in this activity, she (the case worker, my comment) had not made any decisions. So, I had to mail her, and check. IP 3

So, several of the interviewees were unaware of the existence of their action plan, and did not see the lack of one as a problem – quite the contrary to the decisions. The lack of, or delay of, decisions from the case workers were considered a major problem.

For case workers, the important documentation in relation to the unemployed is not put down in the action plan, but in the "daily notes" documented in the computer system of the PES, AIS. It is through the *daily notes*, that the case workers can follow a case. One case worker explains:

I feel I can get more from a good system of daily notes, and a proper system of reminders (påminnelser). We have these tools, as well. But many end up doing double work (daily notes and action plans, my note), and many write (only) daily notes and do not care about the action plan. PES 3

An important difference between the action plan and the daily notes is the way the unemployed gets access to the information. The action plan is a document that is signed and printed, and given to the unemployed. The daily notes are not, and are only handed out on direct request by the unemployed.

Perception of activation by the unemployed

The unemployed, in general, have a positive view of the activation program they attend. Staffs are considered to be helpful, friendly, dedicated and knowledgeable. The social dimension of being part of a group is highlighted as an important aspect of activation. Most of the informants, the mere fact of having something to do and some where to go seems to be a justification in itself for the activation.

Well, you meet other people, you discuss, and you learn form others. How they think and what they do. Just to get out and meet a lot of people at the same time, instead of sitting at home and become isolated. IP 5

The content of the program was not questioned, not even the parts where it is not obvious in what way the activities would facilitate the reintegration of the labour market or increase their competencies. One example is for instance a boule tournament compulsory for all participants, and study visit in the library for a person with substantial knowledge of literature search and other resources available at the public library. Even if most participants do express a positive view on the current program they participate in, some have a more dejected attitude to activation programs in general.

> *I: The activation programs you have participated in, do you feel that they have increased your chances in finding employment?*
>
> *R: No, not at all. It is like artificial respiration.*
>
> *I: Artificial respiration?*
>
> *R: Yes, exactly, you do have something temporarily, you have something to do. But it has not brought me any further.*
>
> *I: And what has it been like, taking part in the programs?*
>
> *R. No… Well, disconsolately, sometimes. Most of the time they do not give anything. Because all these things I have participated in, it has not led to anything. (IP 1)*

The lack of obstruction or questioning of the program has to be understood in the light of the subordinate position of the long term unemployed. The connection between financial compensation and activation creates a system of "obedient citizens" where objections and non-compliance will lead to sanctions. One participant, highly qualified with a university degree in economics, describes how she would never question the activation, as loosing the activity support would seriously affect her financial situation. Being responsible for two small children, this was simply not an option. The strong normative aspects in relation to activation and the work line concept also contribute to the "non obtrusiveness" of participants. Many of the participants compare the activation programs with a regular work, and demand from themselves and from fellow participants to be on time and to participate in planned activities.

1.6 Categorization and legibility

At the PES, there are several tools that case workers use in their every day work with unemployed. One of the most important categorisations made within PES, is the distinction between unemployed with normal work capacity, and unemployed with reduced work capacity. Other categorisations are age, job sector affiliation (*branch tillhörighet*), time in unemployment etc. However, length in unemployment and division between regular unemployed and unemployed with reduced work capacity are the most important distinction in terms of what services can be offered by the PES.

When a person registers at the PES, a file is opened. Personal data, previous work experiences, unemployment insurance etc. is collected, and documented in the internal computer system of the PES. Recently a special assessment support (*bedömningsstöd*) was introduced; in order facilitate early detection of unemployed with special needs risking long term unemployment. The unemployed is asked if he or she has in any way have a reduced work capacity. The willingness of the unemployed to highlight aspects that could reduce their chances of regular employment cannot be taken for granted. As the case worker is supposed to support the individual in the matching process, and to find a suitable vacancy, it is likely that the unemployed emphasises strengths and competencies, rather then weaknesses. The unemployed is an active part in the construction process, and there is an immanent need for clients to construct themselves in relation to the services they wish to receive. Several of the case workers highlight what they perceive as a problem, when unemployed overestimates their own capacity in relation to the labour market. One case worker describes:

> *It is about self-awareness, and self confidence. Some, they believe they can do much more than they actually are able to (mäktar med). PES 1*

There is also certain reluctance on behalf of the case worker to categorise the person with increased risk of becoming long term unemployed. One case worker explains:

> *No, most of them will not get an early intervention, because, you think, or you hope, that based on their previous experience, if they have completed secondary education, that they have a professional training, that they will get a job. But that is not reality today, because many might go up to 250 days, and get a warning from the unemployment insurance that the time soon is up. And of course, if we get a signal there, well the risk is increased, they we can go and make an early intervention, to do something to prevent long term unemployment. And to reduce the risk of exhausting the unemployment insurance. PES 3*

Considering the huge emphasis on activation programs to enhance the motivation of unemployed, this is a very interesting finding. This seemingly mis-match between analysis of problem and solutions presented, emanates from the normative pressure on the organisations. The "standard stories" (Tilly 2002) and widespread belief that unemployed could – if they only want to – get a job, are deeply rooted in modern society. For organisational survival, it can be far more important to meet the expectations from the institutional environment than to act upon the problems such as they are understood by the case workers.

The assessment support used when registering unemployed, is described as fairly basic, and in the end, the professional judgement of the case worker is an important factor in detecting clients with special needs. This emphasises, yet again, the role of the case worker. For instance, it can be easier for a more experienced case worker to ask sensitive and personal questions of a sensitive; for instance concerning substance intake and other social problems.

Other tools to assess the unemployed are used by the social workers and work psychologists who can be consulted by case workers. If the person is categorised as having a reduced work capacity, a new range of labour market policies become available. In the social investigation, questions related to the entire life situation of the unemployed are asked. These include family situation, substance intake, and interests of the unemployed. However, there is always a tight connection to the labour market in that sense that the case workers have to consider the chances for the person on the labour market.

> *A case worker always has to do an assessment in relation to work, is it at all reasonable to think work? Could this person handle a work situation? And, for instance, the person could think that it is, but at the same time come to my office intoxicated. And, well, then I think this is not really the right thing. PES 5*

Only one of the long term unemployed can actually relate to investigations being made in relation to work capacity. This is a person who has been on sick leave for a very long time, and has taken part in various investigations. She is in general pleased with the investigations as such, but is highly critical of how the results of the test have been used. For instance, several investigations have come to the conclusion that she is in need of psychological therapy, but she has been offered none. Her financial situation does not permit her to purchase this kind of therapy on her own. To her, the meaningfulness of investigations is directly linked to what kind of support can be given to her, based on the investigation.

Most of the interviewed long term unemployed had not, to their knowledge, experienced any assessment tools being used by PES case workers. This can have many explanations. First of all, the informants might not actually be aware of tests or assessment tools that possibly have been used. One case worker describes this in following way:

> *They can actually have been in some of these interventions, but they just choose not to tell you. Or, they might actually not be aware. In my work, I do not tell seekers, "we are going clarify your conditions for work, and I will use a specific method." No, I would not say like that at all. PES 4*

The overall knowledge of what "was going on" in the cases was generally low among the informants. Thus, assessment might have been done, but the unemployed has understood this as a normal part of the procedure and not taken any notice on this as a "different" experience. Another explanation is, in fact, related to the sample. The majority of the long term unemployed interviewed participated in a job-coaching project, and *had not been* categorised as clients with reduced work capacity or special needs. Instead, they were very much treated as regular unemployed, following the standardised interventions schemes in the Job and development guarantee.

To sum up, there are two aspects that are important for the process of categorisation and detection of clients with special needs and in the risk of becoming long term unemployed: First of all, unemployed with ability (and willingness) to "self diagnosis". Those unemployed who articulate to the case workers their special needs have increased chances of being detected. Secondly, an observant and experienced case worker can more easily detect problems had have the courage to bring up sensitive issues. However, case workers draw a line when they argue that the problems of the unemployed are so severe that work is not considered an option. If this is the case, the person is no longer considered belonging to the target group of the organisation and instead referred to other organisations, such as social services or health care.

Municipality: In social services, investigations made cover a range of areas of a person's life. Case workers document aspects that are part of the investigation process, and inherent in the documentation system, on background, previous experiences, health, social situation and personal goals of the unemployed. However, when doing so, they do not follow a manual; rather, the informants describe that experience and "gut feeling" are important in their investigation methods. Assessments of the work capacity of individual clients are made, but not so much by using tools and assessment forms, but rather by placing individuals in activities that are supposed to give answers to a persons ability to work (arbetsprövning) and by discussing with clients. It is hard to draw a line to those areas of life that are important for the case workers of social services. One informant describes how this is related to case worker - not all would see the same things, and not all would act the same way. Some would draw the line earlier, and some would have a more flexible approach to this. She describes an episode from her work like this:

> *Right now, there is a group from criminal, organised, gangs that I have as cases. They have connections between them, and they have become my clients. There is, of course, a reason for that. To sum up, they are in my lap. You have a background of drugs, criminality. They want a job and activation, but maybe they would like to combine these two worlds… But. And you suddenly become homeless. And, well, you have had a bad treatment (bemötande) from (other parts of, my comment) social services. Well, it gets really personal, and they want me to be there. To accompany them, to the probation office, for instance. M1*

In this description, fairly all aspects of the individual life sphere appear to be relevant for the case worker. There is also a willingness to support the individual in other areas – which are not directly related to work or financial situation, for instance accompany the client to the probation office. This indicates a much more holistic approach than taken by the case workers from the PES and the SSIA, where such a treatment appears highly unlikely. Room for manoeuvre and professional judgement is significantly higher for case workers within social services, than in PES and SSIA. The lack of control (from superiors) is one explanation, but also lack of standardised manuals and guidelines in relation to the every day work with clients. Even if evidence based social services has been heavily enforced by for instance the National board for health and social services; this has not (yet) spread to the work with social assistance. The municipal self governance, as well as strong(er) professional groups within social services are other background factors that matter.

1.7 Responsibilisation and agency

<u>Lack of compensation and the threat of being expelled:</u>

By non compliance on suggestions made by PES and social services in the area of activation, there is always an immanent threat of loosing the financial compensation. This was discussed in the previous section. Only one of the informants had direct experience of becoming expelled from the unemployment insurance; and also from social assistance. She had been expelled by the unemployment insurance; reasons unknown to her. The case worker in the municipality denied social assistance, arguing that she had not shown enough motivation and actively been seeking employment. It took more than half a year to get back into a system of financial compensation. During this time, she borrowed money from relatives and friends.

> *Well, it was the social services, I do not really know why, but they thought I did not have enough motivation in my job search. So, I did not get any money, and it was hard to get by. (IP 1)*

It should be noted, that during this time she was carrying the financial responsibility for herself and her teenage daughter. This shows, that financial sanctions can be very much a reality to unemployed.

<u>Knowledge and expertise - of clients and case workers</u>

The complexity of rules and regulations regarding both financial benefits and activation programs cannot be understated. The case workers highlighted the challenges in keeping updated with laws and regulations, and the importance of having a very good grasp of support systems in different policy fields. They do not think that the unemployed have a real chance in grasping the over all context, and some of the informants high light the problem with the terminology used by the PES. For someone who wants to access the services of the organisation, it is not all that easy to differentiate between work training, assessment of work capacity, work placement etc. The impression from the interviews with the long term unemployed were that most of them were not very familiar with overall policies and regulations of the respective public authorities. In addition to this, most of them had very little knowledge of what kind of information the case workers had access to, why (on what grounds) they received a specific financial compensation, why they participated in one program and not in another, where they should turn in case they felt a mistake had been made by the case worker and so on. They were, simply, very much in the hands of individual case workers. The system is highly complex, which leads to difficulties for individuals to claim their rights.

Scope for choice

The scope for choice, as understood by the participants, was limited in relation to activation through PES. The incentives for complying are obvious, as the financial compensation is at risk. One participant in the job-search project argues:

> *I: Who is responsible for you being here (in the project)?*
>
> *It is my… the case worker that I have. (…) He told me to start here. (…) I opposed, and said I have been in this type of activation program before. But he did not take any considerations to that. (…) And, if I want to get any money at all, I do get some, a couple of thousand each month, and I would not get anything if I would not agree. IP1*

The case workers from the municipality tend to have a more flexible approach to activation and more margin for individualised services than the PES. The methods of control are not as elaborated, and the room for professional judgement are higher within the municipal organisation than at PES. The PES has to uphold and defend the national policies and the work line, more so than the municipality. One of the long term unemployed who had had experience with case workers both from PES and municipality, and argues following:

> *Well, the social services have listened more to what I want (than PES, my comment). Or, I think she realises better that I will not get a job, the PES does not want to realise that. (…) Yes, those at PES, they do not want to admit, that I will not get anything. Because, they say, you can always get a job. Something might turn up, that is what they say (…) IP 1*

The PES has, as do all human service organisations, an immanent need protect the organisation and restrict resources – the demand by far exceeds available services. Increased agency for the unemployed, therefore, is not an obvious goal for the organisation. As shown in the previous text, clients executing individual agency do have advantages (see section on reluctant case worker and demanding client). If all unemployed were to be encouraged in terms of agency, however, this would lead to an intensified pressure on the case workers. As discussed previously, the case workers in PES are already under very high pressure with case loads between two and three hundred clients. Increased agency on behalf of clients could, for the case workers as well as the organisation, be considered a goal in itself *only if* agency meant a move away from the organisation and away from organisations resources. This is also a possible explanation as to why not more effort is put into simplifying the system and to "enlight" unemployed of the resources and services available at PES. Rather, for the organisation, a certain level of "confusion" can be positive, as it protects the organisation from demands and reduces pressure on case workers.

Responsiblisation through the work of the case workers

Case workers emphasise the responsibility of the indivudal to find their way back to the labour market. For instance, one case worker from SSIA discuss her role and her expectations on the client:

> *(It depends on), sometimes they are very talkative. And want to bring up everything in their life. But you have to steer them, we are no social workers (kuratorer), actually. Sometimes they want to open their heart completely, and in this first contact, you take them back to the path, in a nice way. And…Put some responsiblity on the person, actually.*
>
> *I: What do you mean by that?*
>
> *Well, have a contact with the employer, for instance. And that they should… Take contacts.. And maybe different questions, how they are going to do about getting back to the labour market.*
>
> *(…) They have to be part of their own rehabilitation. That is why I mean that you should put some responsibility on them. For instance, if you are unemployed; for that person early contacts and early activation (aktiviteter) is good. Like, to start to think about what you would like to do. Where would you like to… Work train (arbetsträna), which area, what, to tell, them, there is a tool on PES homepage where they can test themselves. What field of work they are closest to. I usually encourage those things, that they start to do things. SSIA 1*

All case workers who were interviewed, in PES, SSIA as well as municipality, had taken part in training in Motivational interviewing (MI). The method was initially used in therapeutic work with clients with substance abuse, and has become very popular in case work in Sweden. According to the National board of health and social services, empathy and reflexivity in listening, as well as conflict avoidance are main components of the methods. The method focuses on encouraging clients to belief in personal change. The role of the case worker is to help the client to articulate his or her problem, and find own arguments for a changed behaviour. The training in MI is 3-4 days, and no Swedish studies have been made on the relevance in the field of unemployment. However, the method clearly puts emphasis on the responsibility of the unemployed for finding employment, and is very much in line with the over all emphasis on the individuals' responsibility for finding a solution to their unemployment.

Responsibilisation and individualisation through activation programs

The average time between registering as unemployed and inclusion of the Job and development guarantee is two years (Liljeberg et al 2013). This means, that most unemployed will have very little support from case workers during the first two years of unemployment, as they are expected to fend for themselves in finding a job. However, many of the informants for this study had been unemployed for a much a much longer period, and most of them had participated in various activation programs, often with similar content. The activities in the program are mainly equivalent to full time employment, that is, 40 hours a week. The concept of 40 hours week activity is motivated by normative assumptions of a regular working life; the unemployed has to be able to demonstrate an ability to be active 40 hours a week, and should also become accustomed to this. There are very few exceptions to this rule, for instance, parents with small children (over one year) are required to participate full time, clients over 60 years old and so on. The following quote demonstrates the view on full time activation. This is a case worker from the municipality explaining the rationale behind activation.

> *I: How many hours a day do you want the person to be in (activity)?*
>
> *8 hours. It is just like an ordinary…*
>
> *I: Like an ordinary work day?*
>
> *Yes, exactly. That is what we aim for (…)*
>
> *I: But, what about specific circumstances, like if the person has small children? Do you say, well, we just demand part time, like 75 per cent of a full working week (in activation)?*
>
> *No, no, no. Absolutely not. That is not on the map. Absolutely not.*
>
> *I: So, that is not an option?*

No, and, why should it be? Why should we make a difference between a person who receives social assistance and a normal worker, or a normal person? We are all normal persons, all of us. So, I do not think that is an option. M3

So, full time activation is seen as a goal, and full time working hours is setting the norm. To comply with this norm, in fact, seems more important than the actual content of the programs. One exception to the full time norm, is when there is an outspoken need for work rehabilitation; hours of activity can be reduced according to the individual situation.

The daily activities in the activation programs, as well as the rationale explained in project applications and similar, very explicitly emphasise the individual responsibility for finding a job. For instance, shortcomings in self-confidence, lack of belief in work capacity and unwillingness to look for jobs in other regions and areas of work are described as reasons for long term unemployment (www.esf.se/sv/Projektbank/Sok-projekt/ - Dagens jobb). Much effort is put in changing the participants' behaviour in relation to job search. This is expressed by a project manager of an activation program in the local news paper:

We have the ambition, that the person who looks for a job should become more offensive in their job search, that he or she gets the courage to become more active and spontaneous. Even, as concrete, that you have the courage to knock on doors, says Karl Elfman (Lindenytt 2013-05-14).

This individualisation though activation is also found in the daily routines in the job-search project where most of the interviews were conducted. In the morning meeting, mandatory for all participants, the management of the project put much focus on encouraging individuals to become more active, and to show more initiative in contacts with potential employers. To become more persistent, to knock on the doors, to call the HR departments and so on was described as the key to success. Often, participants were asked to share their experiences of the jobs they had applied for recently. This was followed by questions on what they should have done differently; indirectly pointing out that the individual would, in fact, be responsible if the job was not offered.

Sport, and fitness, are often components of the weekly schedule in activation programs. The sport activities can, in part, be a way to fill out the time as activation is supposed to be equivalent to a working hour. Another aspect however, is sport activities as a tool for reinforcing individual responsibilisation. As an example of this, in one of the activation programs visited, the following scene played out in. A sport tournament was organised by the management of the project; a mandatory activity for participants. One participant, who suffered from severe pain in wrists and ankles, did not want to participate. She was persistent that she could not participate, but did at first not explain why. The staff from the project, as a response, argued that there is no such thing as ”can not”. Instead, an attitude saying “everything is possible” should be applied, in sports as well as in job search. The episode demonstrates in a very explicit way how responsibilisation and individualisation is ”created” in the daily activities of activation programs. Indicating to her, and other participants of the game, that “failure” to participate in the tournament was related to lack of motivation and “wrong” attitude, is directly transferable to the discussions on unemployment. By indicating that ”failure” on the labour market is related to lack of motivation and ”wrong” attitude, the individual is made responsible for the situation he or she is in.

The long term unemployed, however, have a different view. Almost all of the informants express a very high motivation in relation to work. Work, or employment, is described as the solution to many of the problems they have, and they describe how they have been actively seeking jobs for years. Rather than lack of motivation, the situation on the labour market is seen as the biggest barrier to their chances for finding employment; high unemployment and increased competition over available jobs. One informant explains how the procurement of services in the public sector dramatically changed his chances on the labour market. He had been working for the same organisation for years, delivering equipment and other goods to health clinics throughout the region. When the service was privatised and made subject to procurement procedures, another company was hired. He, and his fellow colleagues became unemployed. Since then, he has had big difficulties finding employment. He says:

> *And this was a really good job, I liked it. It was just a shame they lost the procurement. IP2.*

Other long term unemployed refer to different circumstances in their life, affecting their chances to find a job. For instance, one person lost his driving licence due to drunk driving. His financial situation prevents him from taking the exam for a new licences, which has effects on his competitiveness on a labour market where driving licence often is a minimum requirement. Other long term unemployed refer to migration, family situation and health issues preventing them from finding a place on the labour market. The responsibilisation through activation programs implies the intense focus on the indivudal, leaves no room for more structural explanations to unemployemnt (see Engstrand & Vesterberg 2012).

Downsizing of human capital

When interventions are standardised and the scope of choice is limited, activation programs to run the risk of reducing human capital, instead of reinforcing the same. Instead of supplying individuals with necessary skills and expertise, the programs risk moving participants further away from the labour market by focusing on for instance cv-writing instead of developing ad maintaining skills. In fact, participants are in danger of losing the very same competences they are referring to in their CV and applications.

> *My applications are not true, they were true 20 years ago, but not now. I can not do those things I write in my CV, I used to know them, 20 years ago. But not any more. IP* 1

Another long term unemployed refer to previous qualifications in trainings and educations becoming out dated, and that the currant activation does not supply her with new competencies, which makes her attractive on the labour market.

Other unemployed discuss the dilemma of standardised activation programs in relation to the time limits. Some of the informants consider their computer skills as too weak to be able to successfully apply for a job on the regular labour market. However, only when they entered the Job and development guarantee, participation in a daily CV-writing activity was made available for them. For the unemployed who consider structured support in job search corresponds to their individual needs, a long time period without structured activation can be counterproductive.

The informants give ample examples of how they have been enrolled in programs against their wish, but the need for financial compensation make them comply with the suggestions made by PES. Others have wished for specific interventions, such as training, but have bee denied. The informants are generally not aware of the reasons, but instead refers to “evil” or “bad” case workers. On the other hand, there are cases when the unemployed have the feeling of “taking things in their own hand” and have managed to get the kind of support they have wished for.

Another example when standardised activation is a barrier for investing in human capital, is related to education. When participating in an activation program, forty hours attendance is expected. One of the long term unemployed had articulated her desire to participate in a training in administration, rather than a CV-writing program. In the training, she would get access to a work placement, which she considered valuable for her future chances on the labour market. However, she was denied, and received no explanation by the case worker why this was not possible. Instead of the training in administration that she did not receive, she takes evening courses in order to qualify for university courses. She has a clear picture of what kind of human capital investment she needs in order into the labour market and, but instead, she is referred to a cv-writing program.

1.8 Conclusions

Four aspects of the findings are of special relevance for this report. First of all, standardisation of interventions characterise the activation for most long term unemployed. Rather than individual need, time in unemployment and available resources within PES decide what support is offered to the individual, and when the support is offered. The exception is long term unemployed who become categorised as having a reduced work capacity. The coding gives access to individualised services and, maybe just as important, to case workers who have time and knowledge about the specific needs of the individual. For the individuals it comes at the price of accepting to be labelled as functionally impaired (*funktionsnedsatt*), which is in itself a standardised collective category.

This brings us to the second point. The role of the PES case worker is highly fragmentised. The different roles case workers take on in order to meet set goals, in combination with a very high case load, enforces the bureaucratic dimension of the relation with the unemployed. Case workers, in order to protect themselves from an overwhelming work load, find strategies to restrict contacts with unemployed. For instance, one strategy is to organise group meetings instead of individual meetings. Another strategy is to restrict face to face meetings and encourage mail-contact or quick phone calls, which gives less room (and time) for unemployed to express their individual needs. This implies, less individualisation of services for long term unemployed.

The third point is related to knowledge, on behalf of both case workers and long term unemployed. On the one hand, the system of activation programs is highly complex. The information available on the webpage of PES is, if not endless, at least very comprehensive. For anyone who is not familiar with the rules and regulations, it is not always easy to understand the differences between the programs, and what makes a person qualify for specific services. There is a problem of transparency. On the other hand, the life situation for long term unemployed can be very complex. The case workers do not document, are not obliged to (and do not seem to have the time) to ask about individual problems. So, the unemployed do not know enough about the services available in order to be able to claim them. And the case workers do not know enough about the individual needs of the unemployed to be able to offer appropriate support (even if it was available). Instead, services are offered according to standardised procedures, as rituals that make sense in an otherwise all too complex world.

The fourth point is related to agency and the subordinate position of the long term unemployed. The financial aspects of the relation reinforce the uneven power distribution between case worker and unemployed. Non-compliance in relation to suggestions made by the

PES case worker endangers the financial compensation; unemployment insurance, activity support as well as social assistance. Thus, long term unemployed have to cooperate in order to keep the financial compensation, even if the activation, according to the unemployed, does not increase the chances for finding employment.

The fifth point is related to the very strong emphasis on individual responsibility for the unemployment. Most long term unemployed are referred to job coaching programs, where the motivation of the participants is at constant scrutiny. By reinforcing the activeness in job search, in contacts with employers and to demonstrate personal commitment and ambition, the programs make the long term unemployed responsible for their failure, or success for that matter, if they become employed.

To conclude, the voice and choice opportunities for the long-term unemployed are severely constrained due to the factors just described. The organizational practices and governance systems applied (including time and resource constraints) set limits for the actual scope for individualised interventions (hypothesis 1). Services are made available to long term unemployed primarily according to standardised procedures within the organisation; for instance, duration of unemployment, rather than individual need. Interorganisational boundaries prevent individualised services, when information is not shared and no formal coordinating structures exist (hypothesis 2). Individualised interventions are available primarily for weak groups or functionally impaired (*funktionsnedsatt*), where the individuals have to 'qualify' for those categories in order to access special support (hypothesis 3; see Garsten & Jacobsson 2013). Thus, individualisation plays mainly as an individualisation of responsibility rather than as individualisation of support.

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Appendix A – Interview scenario SLB

Intervju scenario med handläggare

Informera IP om:

- Syftet med intervjun
- Hur materialet kommer att hanteras (konfidentiellt)
- Vem kommer att använda materialet, och hur.
- Var resultaten kommer att publiceras.

Ta fasta på demografiska aspekter så som:

- Ålder
- Kön

Fråga om:

- Utbildningsbakgrund
- Yrkesbakgrund
- Särskilda utbildningar för att arbeta med LTU
- År – erfarenhet av att vara handläggare.
- Om relevant, fråga om förändringar över tid i arbetet med klienter.
- Heltid/deltid Full time/part time

I. Kontextuell information om organisationen

Syftet är att få information om de huvusakliga uppgifterna som organsationen har, ansvarsområden, antal anställda, specifik roll för den intervjuade handläggaren - allt för att kunna anpassa frågorna i intervjun).

- Kan du berätta mig om hur du tolkar den här organisationens uppdrag (Vill vi ha den lilla enhetens uppdrag? Arbetsgrupp/enhet/myndighet – hur "nära" den egna praktiken ska den här frågan vara? Jag utgår från att det är den egna arbetsgruppen.)
- Vad är din roll i arbetsgruppen/enheten (organisationen?)
- Hur många är anställda i den här enheten (organisationen) som du arbetar i?

I. Kontextualiserad information om strukturen på det vardagliga arbetet. Hur går det vardagliga arbetet till?

(Syftet är att få förståelse för kontextuella faktorer som skapar klient-handläggarrelationer och som har konsekvenser för individualisering. Ex. arbetsbörda, andra ansvarsområden (utöver klientarbetet – ex pappersarbete), sätt att hantera tidspress, antal klienter per handläggare, uppfattning om den professionella rollen, samarbete och strukturen på mötet/interaktionen med klienter.)

- o Kan du berätta för mig hur en typisk dag på ditt arbete ser ut?
- o Hur många klienter träffar du om dagen? Hur mycket tid har du i genomsnitt för en person?
- o Har du tid för att förbereda dig inför att du träffar en klient?
- o Vilka andra ansvarsområden har dusom tar upp din arbetstid? Pappersarbete (menar ni dokumentation när ni säger pappersarbete?) Projektansökningar, utvärderingar, uppföljningar med mera.
- o Hur gör du för att hantera dina olika arbetsuppgifter? Är det något du måste prioritera bort för att du inte har tillräckligt med tid? Vad prioriterar du främst?
- o Hur ser du på din roll i förhållande till klienten? Vad är din uppgift i förhållande till klienten? Och hur ser du på din roll i förhållande till organisationen?
- o Känner du dig personligt ansvarig för dina klienter?
- o Vad händer när en klient kontaktar din organstion för första gången. Vad händer sedan?
- o Vem möter han/hon?
- o Finns det en utsedd handläggare som är ansvarig för klienten/ärendet?
- o Är det någon som ”monitor” vad som händer med klienten?
- o Hur många personer inom din organisation arbetar med en långtidsarbetslös klient – i genomsnitt?
- o Finns det beskrivet någonstans hur många arbetslösa du ska träffa per dag/månad? Hur bestäms hur många ärenden du får?
- o Kan du beskriva hur ett typiskt möte med en arbetslös klient går till?
- o Är de här mötena inbokade?
- o Hur lång tid tar ett ”vanligt” möte med en arbetslös?
- o Vem initierar mötet – är det du, eller klienten, eller någon annan?
- o Hur ofta träffar du en långtidsarbetslös person?
- o Var träffar du den arbetslöse? (Om möjligt, anteckna den spatiala organisationen)
- o Kontaktar du klienter vid fler tillfällen än de planerade mötena? Till exempel via telefon eller mail? När gör du det?

III. Kontroll och monitoring inom organisationen.

(Vi vill veta hur handläggare kontrolleras i organisationen (ex genom dokumentation, indikatorer, uppföjlningar, ”professional bodies”.) Vad kontrolleras – om handläggarna agerar utifrån gällande lagstiftning eller inte? Om handläggaren möter fastställda indikatorer? Om arbetet ligger i linje med professeionella riktlinjer? Hur påverkar kontrollen arbetet med klienterna? Vad gör handläggarna för att få ”goda resultat”?

- o På vilket sätt kontrolleras ditt arbete av gruppchefer och andra överordnade?
- o Utifrån vilka kriteria bedöms ditt arbete? (När har du gjort ett bra jobb?)
- o Finns det vissa indikatorer som du förväntas arbeta för att uppnå? (Kvalitetsindikatorer, ex). (Om möjligt, samla in blanka formulär där kriterierna finns uppradade).
- o Vad är det som mäts?
- o Vem definierar/bestämmer vad som ska mätas?
- o Är de här indikatorerna/uppsatta målen relevanta för ditt arbete?
- o Vad händer om det är svårt att möta målen?
- o I vilken utsträckning upplever du att de här indikatorerna och specificerade målen påverkar vad du gör i ditt dagliga arbete?
- o Kan du bli belönad när du gjort ett ”bra arbete” (utifrån indikatorerna / de uppsatta målen). Hur blir du belönad?
- o Har det någonsin hänt att du, eller någon av dina kollegor, fått reprimander för hur ni utfört arbetet med klienter? Vilken typ av arbete handlade det om, vad hade du/han/hon gjort? Vad är din syn på det?
- o Hur påverkar målen och indikatornerna
- o Vad händer om en arbetslös person är missnöjd med en handläggare och lämnar in en (formell) skrivelse om det?

IV. People-processing

(Vi vill få reda på vilka verktyg som används i arbetet. Exempelvis administrativa formulär, intervju guider, psykologiska tester, individuella handlingsplaner med mera. Det handlar om verktyg som används i det direkt arbetet med klienten, procedurer och rutiner kring klientarbetet. Syftet är också att få reda på vilken betydelse dessa verktyg har på relationen mellan handläggare och klient.)

- o Vilka verktyg använder du dig av när du arbetar med personer som är långtidsarbetslösa? Formulär, intervju guider, psykologikska tester, individuella handlingsplaner med mera. (Om möjligt, be om att få ta del av kopior på ”blanka” dokument.)
- o Vilken funktion fyller de här verktygen?
- o Hur ser du på användbarheten, eller nyttan, av dessa verktyg (formulär, intervju guider, psykologiska tester, individuella handlingsplaner? Hur hjälper de dig i ditt arbete med klienter? Vilka instrument föredrar du? Varför?

- Kan du påverka hur de här verktygen är utformade? Hur anpassar du ditt arbete till verktygen
- Har du en plan för vilka frågor du ska ställa under ett möte med en långtidsarbetslös? (En mall, en lista med frågor eller liknande) (Om möjligt, samla in.)
- Hur har den här planen/mallen/frågeformuläret utvecklats? Av vem?
- Använder andra handläggare samma plan? Är det obligatoriskt att använda planen?
- Vad tycker du om innehållet?
- Hur använder du informationen som du samlar in?

- Ska den arbetslösa personen fylla i några formulär/tester/andra dokument?
- Vilken typ av dokument? (Samla in alla relevanta ”blanka” dokument.)
- Vilken information innehåller de här dokumenten (som klienten fyller i).
- Vad används de till? Är det obligatoriskt? Vad tycker du om innehållet?
- Diskuterar du reslutaten av de här testen/dokumenten med den arbetslöse? Hur hjälper de den enskilde att bedöma sin situation?
- Tar du själv anteckningar under mötet, eller på vilket sätt samlar du in information om klienten? Hur då?
- Vilken typ av information samlar du in? Har andra tillgång till informationen? Vem? Hur används informationen?
- Diskuterar du enskilda klienter med dina kollegor? Kan du berätta om hur det går till (vad pratar ni om, när pratar ni, med vilka pratar du)

(Nu vill vi veta hur handläggare hanterar ”ovanliga” eller ”komplicerade” situationer. Vilken typ av ovanliga situationer uppkommer? Vilka klienter får mer tid? Hur hanterar de komplexa ärenden/svåra klienter? Vad är ett komplicerat fall/svår klient? VI vill veta vad som händer när en perosns stiation och beteende inte passar in i de på förhand definierade kategorierna som verktyg, rutiner är uppbyggda kring. Det kan handla om ”sårbara” klienter och är relaterat till förutsättningar att arbeta individualiserat.)

- Om det finns en på förhand bestämd frågeformulär/plan för mötet med klienten: Händer det någonsin att det är svårt att hålla sig till de frågorna som finns i frågeguiderna?
- Vilka sorters problem upplever du att det kan uppstå i möten med långtidsarbetslös? Hur hanterar du det?
- Har personer med komplexa problem/svåra situationer något gemensamt? Kan du beskriva det för mig?

(Vi är intresserade av kategoriseringen av klienter som är inbyggd i organisationens struktur ochd diskurs – och som finns i de verktyg som används. Vi vill veta vilka dimensioner av en människas liv som uppfattas som relevanta för handläggaren.).

- Vilket begrepp använder du när du pratar om arbetslösa? Klient, sökande, brukare, medborgare… (Hur ser du på det begreppet?)

- Har du speciella stödjande (councelling) samtal med arbetslösa klienter?
- Om ja: Hur är mötena organiserade? Vem närvarar?
- Om ja: Kan du berätta om innehållet i dessa samtal?
- Om ja: Hur avlöper ett typiskt stödjande samtal? Kan du ge mig ett exempel?
- Vilka slags tester använder du? (Eller kan du be någon annan utföra någon form av tester?)
- Om ja: vad är syftet med de här testen?
- Vilka formulär anävnds för att dokumentera resultaten?

(Syftet är att ta reda på vilka livsområden som är relevanta för aktiveringen av huvudorganistionen och andra organistaioner. Att inte ta hänsyn till vissa områden kan vara avgörande för resultaten, till exempel bostadsitutaiont, hälso och sjukvård, ekonomisk situation, familjesituation, attityder, utbildning, erfarenheter och skills.)

- Vilka egenskaper eller individuella förutsättningar, har betydelse när man planerar en (aktiverings)åtgärd för den arbetslöse? (till exempel personlighet, utbildning, förmåga att lära sig saker etc.)
- Varför just dessa? (Vem har bestämt det – och varför är de viktiga)
- Du berättade tidigare att du samlar in information om dina klienter i xxx (refer to what your interviewee actually said). Hur ser det ut med andra problem som individuer kan ha – som kan minska deras chanser på arbetsmarknaden. Till exempel en svår familjesituation, hälsoproblem, hemlöshet, alkoholproblem med mera. (refer to life problems which were not mentioned)? Vilka är dina förutsättningar att kunna ta hänsyn till den här typen av problem när du arbetar med klienten?
- I vilken utsträckning är en persons ”anställningsbarhet” relevant i ditt arbete? Vad baseras en människas antällningsbarhet på – vilka dimensioner är relvanta (ex utbildning, erfarenheter, personlighet, skills)?
- På vilket sätt kan andra anställda inom din organistion underlätta för klienten att komma närmare arbetsmarknaden? Andra organisationer och verksamheter här i Örebro?
- Vad gör du om personen har ett problem som är utanför din organisations ansvarsområde? Har jag förstått frågan rätt?

V. Aktiveringen / åtgärderna / insatserna

(Syftet är att förstå hur handläggare beslutar om insatser och åtgärder för en klient, arbetsgången, tidsramar, villkorande och klientens möjligheter att själv påverka sin situation (valmöjligheter)).

- Hur planerar du för insatser/åtgärder för en långtidsarbetslös klient?
- Har varje klient en ”individuell handlingsplan”? (Vilket begrepp används.) Kan du beskriva vad som ingår i den individuella handlingsplanen? (Be om en kopia av en ”blank” handlingsplan.)
- Vad innehåller planen för information?

- Hur kommer man fram till vad som ska stå i handlingsplanen? Vilken roll/funktion fyller handlingsplanen, enligt dig?
- Vad föreslår du en arbetslös klient?
- Vad är det som avgör vad du kan erbjuda?
- Hur ser stegen ut – vad följer efter en åtgärd?
- Vilka tidsramar finns att ta hänsyn till?

- Vilken roll har den arbetslösa i planeringen?
- I vilken utsträckning kan man skräddarsy interventioner/åtgärder för enskilda klienter?
- Vilka möjligheter har den enskilde klienten att aktivt välja insats/åtgärd?

- Upplever du att du kan anpassa arbetet (vara flexiblel) utifrån ensklida klienters behov och önskemål? Kan du beskriva hur det går till när du gör det? (Vilka hinder finns det för att anpassa arbetet utifrån individens förutsättningar/behov/önskemål?).
- Använder du dig av ditt "handlingsutrymme"?
- I vilken utsträckning kan klienter välja eller påverka beslutet om insaser/åtgärder? Vad hindrar?

- Hur är ansvaret för respektive part formulerat i handlingsplanen? Vilket ansvar har du (och din organistion) – vilket ansvar har den enskilde?

- När åtgärder sätts in, vad måste den enskilde göra för att få hjälp? Är det några moment som är obligatoriska för den arbetslöse? Finns det rutiner för att kontrollera att den arbetslöse gör det den ska?
- Vilka sanktionsmöjligheter finns det – om klienten inte gör det den ska. När används sanktionerna?

VI. Information mellan organisationer:

(Syftet är att få en överblick över samarbetet med handläggare som arbetar i andra organisationer, hur samarbetet är organiserat i dagliga rutiner, när klienter hänvisas till andra organisationer, arbetsindlening mellan organisationer.)

- Samarbetar du med andra organistioner i ditt dagliga arbete med långtidsarbetslösa?
- Vilka?
- Vad består samarbetet av?
- Vilken betydelse har samarbetet för de arbetslsöa? Har samarbetet betydelse för deras förutsättnignar att få ett arbete? Öka deras välbefinnande?
- Tycker du att det finns ett väl fungerande samarbete med andra organistioner kring den enskilde klienten?
- Varför inte?

- Vilka är utmaningarna i samarbetet med andra organisationer?
- Hur uppstår problem i samarbetet? Hur hanterar du dessa?
- Kan du berätta lite om dina erfarenheter kring samarbete med andra aktörer – hur ser du på den här typen av samarbete?

- Informerar du långtidsarbetslösa klienter om andra organisationer/verksamheter som kan ge stöd och hjälp till arbetslösa? Vilka då (tänk vidare än bara FK och AF – även frivilligorganistioner, kyrkan etc.) I vilka situationer hänvisar du dem till dessa organisationer?

- Vill du tillägga någonting?
- Tack för din tid och din medverkan!

Appendix B – Interview scenario LTU

Intervjuscenario med långtidsarbetslösa.

Informera IP om
- Syftet med intervjun
- Hur materialet kommer hanteras (konfidentiellt)
- Vem som kommer använda materialet och hur (anonymt)
- Var kommer resultaten publiceras.

Uppmärksamma demografiska aspekter så som:
- Ålder
- Kön

I. Den intervjuades livssituation

(Vi vill få en övergripande bild av intervjupersonens livssituation; det vill säga demografisk bakgrund, socioekonomisk profil, tidigare kontakt med olika stödsystem i relation till situationen som arbetslös med mera).

- Kan du berätta lite om dig själv?
- Har du familj?
- Hur ser din utbildningsbakgrund ut?
- Vilka erfarenheter har du från arbetslivet?
- Vad var det senaste jobbet du hade? Hur länge var du anställd? Vad hände efter det?
- Hur länge har du varit arbetslös?
- Är det här första gången du varit i kontakt med arbetsförmedlingen?
- Har du fått hjälp tidigare från arbetsförmedlingen?
- If no: Kan du berätta om den första kontakten du hade med Arbetsförmedlingen...
- Har du sökt eller fått stöd och hjälp från andra organisationer än arbetsförmedlingen (socialtjänsten) för att få hjälp att hitta ett arbete? Andra organisationer, företag eller föreningar? (Här kommer personen sannolikt att prata om den insats dne deltar i – ex jobbpunkt väst och socialtjänsten).
- Om ja: hur kom det sig och vad hände?

II. Mötet med arbetsförmedlingen

a) Relationer mellan arbetslös och arbetsförmedling

(Vi vill veta om vägen in I arbetsförmedlingen, hur relationen mellan arbetslös och arbetsförmedling är strukturerad och vilken karaktär relationen har.)

- Nu ska vi prata lite om arbetsförmedlingen. Hur länge har du varit inskriven på arbetsförmedlingen?

- Hur ofta har du varit hos arbetsförmedlingen under den tiden?
- Vem träffade du, senast när du var där?
- Vad handlade mötet om? Kan du ge exempel på vad ni pratade om?
- När du är där, blir du uppmuntrad att ställa frågor till din handläggare?
- Svarar de på dina frågor på ett bra sätt?
- Och hur pratar din handläggare med dig (är han/hon trevlig, likgiltig, otrevlig)?
- Har du upplevt att du blivit pressad av någon på arbetsförmedlingen? Vad har det handlat om? (Upplevelsen kan vara både positiv och negativ – berätta och beskriv.)
- Kan du beskriva ett typiskt möte med en handläggare på arbetsförmedlingen?
- Hur skulle du själv beskriva er relation?

b) Diagnostisering och kategorisering

(Det här handlar om kontakterna mellan den arbetslöse och arbetsförmedling, I syfte att lära mer om hur den individuella handlingsplanen lagts upp. Vi är intresserade av hur den enskilde kategoriseras och vilka områden som diskuteras, vilka frågor som ställs, vilka livsområden som är intressanta för handläggaren, och vilka problem som ignoreras.)

- Tycker du att din handläggare som du träffar, har en bra bild av dina erfarenheter och kunskaper?
- Om inte: Vilken information har de inte?
- Jag skulle vilja veta mer om hur det går till när någon från arbetsförmedlingen frågar dig om din situation, för att bestämma vad du kan få för typ av stöd. Kommer du ihåg något sådant möte? När var det?
- Vad frågade han/hon om då?
- Fick du frågor som handlade om utbildning? Erfarenheter i arbetslivet? Ditt privatliv?
- Frågade hon/han något om dina egna förväntningar?
- Frågade han/hon vad du helst vill göra, vilken typ av jobb du vill ha?
- Var det något som du tyckte var konstigt, eller förvånande, med de här frågorna? Vad då?
- Förklarade hon/han syftet med frågorna?
- Sa han/hon något om hur dina svar skulle användas?
- Fick du fylla I några formulär (på papper eller I dator)? Vilka då, vad handlade de om?
- Förklarade han/hon varför du skulle fylla ut formulären?

- Vet du om du har gjort några typer av test som säger något om styrkor och svagheter (personlighetstest, färdighetstest etc.). Sådana test görs ofta av anordnare – det vill säga när personen är i en insats. Jag antar att flera kommer att referera till dessa, och inte direkt till arbetsförmedlingens tester. Men det är kanske inget problem?
- If yes: vad handlade testen om, vad var det för frågor?
- Hur upplevde du själv testet?
- Har testet varit användbart på något sätt? Hur då?

- Eller upplever du att testen är problematiska på något sätt? Hur då?
- Har du diskuterat resultaten av testen med någon, har du fått tillfälle att kommentera resultaten?
- Om ja; hur gick det till?
- På vilket sätt har dina synpunkter på testen haft betydelse för vad som hände sedan?

c) Insatser och villkorade

(Nu vill vi veta vad resultatet av kontakterna med arbetsförmedlingen blev, och vilken roll villkor spelar. Fick personen den information som han/hon ville ha? Diskuterades alternativa lösningar på problemet? Vad uppmanades den arbetslösa att göra efter kontakten med handläggaren? Var han hon/tvungen att göra något? Vilka sanktioner användes?)

- Var du överens med din handläggare om den fortsatta planen? (Nu är vi alltså tillbaks till kontakten med af – och inte med anordnaren).
- Kan du berätta vad planeringen bestod av, vad skulle du göra?
- Vem gjorde planeringen, var det du eller handläggaren, eller ni tillsammans?
- Skrevs planeringen ned någonstans?
- Var det här en individuell handlingsplan? Och här kommer det bli komplicerat –för sannolikt finns en handlingsplan hos af, en hos kommunen socialtjänst och antalgien också en handlingsplan hos aktören – insatsen. Kanske tre handlingsplaner, med andra ord. Är vi intresseradade av alla handlingsplaner, eller bara AF?
- Hur beskrivs ditt ansvar för att hitta ett arbete I planen?
- Har du varit tvungen att skriva på planen?
- Vad tror du hade hänt om du inte hade skrivit på? Berättade handläggaren något om det?
- Har det hänt dig någon gång, eller varit nära att hända (det vill säga sanktionerna).

- Vilka erbjudanden eller förslag fick du från arbetsförmedlingen (vi vill veta om erbjudanden om jobb, insatser, ersättningar etc.)
- Vilka valmöjligheter hade du? Eller var det bara ett erbjudande som du var tvungen att ta?
- Vilka stöd, insatser har du haft nytta av? Kan du berätta om stödet och på vilket sätt du haft nytta av stödet?
- För att få stödet (eller ersättningen) var det något som du var tvungen att göra?
- Måste du göra något själv, för att få tillgång till stödet? Vad?
- På vilket sätt kontrolleras om du har gjort det du ska för att få ersättning eller det stöd du har rätt till? Är det någon typ av uppföljningar, eller utvärderingar?
- Hur går kontrollen till?
- Hur upplever du det?
- Är det bra för dig? Hur då?
- Eller har kontrollen/uppföljningen snarare en negativ inverkan på dig? Hur då?
- Har du upplevt någon gång att du blivit “tvingad” in I en åtgärd, trots att du inte velat det?
- Om ja: Kan du berätta om det?

- Har du fått förslag eller erbjudanden från arbetsförmedlingen som du inte har utnyttjat? Vad då, och varför utnyttjade du det inte? Fick det några konsekvenser?

d) <u>Agency</u>

(Syftet är att få reda på den enskildes handlingsutrymme och beroende på handläggare, arbetsförmedling, regler och information)

- Upplever du att du kunnat påverka det stöd du får av arbetsförmedlingen? På vilket sätt, kan du ge exempel? (Eller är vi intresserade av vilket stöd han/hon får i insatesrn och ev av sociatjänsten också?)
- Kan du försvara dig (och dina intressen) mot arbetsförmedlingen? (se ovan)
- Om ja: Hur då?
- Om nej: Varför inte?
- Har du hänt att du själv fått reda på någon typ av stöd som du velat ha, men som du inte fått information från din handläggare om? Vad gjorde du då?
- Har det funnits tillfällen när du verkligen velat ha en viss typ av hjälp eller stöd, men inte fått det? Kan du berätta om det? Vad gjorde du då?
- Har det funnits tillfällen när du inte varit nöjd med de insatser som arbetsförmedlingen har gett dig? Kan du berätta er om det, vad gjorde du då?
- Har du varit osams, eller haft en konflikt med din handläggare någon gång? Vad handlade det om? Vad gjorde du? (bara af, eller även anordnare och socialtjänst?)

III. Ansvar & responsibilization

(Vi vil veta hur den enskilde upplever hennes/hans egna ansvar för den uppkomna situationen och hur den arbetslöse tror att handläggaren ser på samma fråga.)

- Har du fått den information du behöver av arbetsförmedlingen?
- Har det varit lätt att få tag på de personer du velat träffa/få kontakt med?
- Tycker du att du vet vad som händer, och vilket ansvar du har och vilket ansvar arbetsförmedlingen har i förhållande till handlingsplanen?
-
- Om du själv får beskriva orsakerna till att du är arbetslös, vad skulle du säga då?
- Finns det någonting du hade kunnat göra för att inte vara arbetslös? Vad?
- Upplever du att du på något sätt själv är ansvarig för din arbetslöshet? På vilket sätt då?
- Vem, eller vad, är ansvarig för att du ska komma ur arbetslösheten?
- Hur tror du att arbetsförmedlingen ser på vem som bär ansvaret för att du ska få jobb. Är det deras eller ditt ansvar?
- Vad tycker du själv att du behöver för att kunna få ett jobb?
- Vilket ansvar har arbetsförmedlingen (eller andra aktörer som är involverade – ex. jobbpunkt väst, socialtjänsten)?
- Vilket ansvar har arbetsförmedlingen, enligt den individuella handlingsplanen?

IV. Relationen med anställda på andra myndigheter/aktörer

(Syftet är att få reda på om den arbetslöse hänvisats till andra myndigheter/aktörer som en del av den hjälpen personen erbjuds. Och hur den arbetslöse upplever samarbetet mellan dessa aktörer.)

- Har du hänvisats till andra organisationer? Vilka? Varför då? (Ex socialtjäsnt, jobbpunkt väst eller andra anordnare).
- Om ja; Vad är dina erfarenheter av det stödet?
- Har det hjälpt dig? På vilket sätt?
- Eller har det komplicerat situationen? Hur då?
- Hur ser du på samarbetet mellan olika organisationer (det vill säga arbetsförmedling, socialtjänst, Jobbpunkt väst, Försäkrinskassan…)

V. Bedömning av people prosseing och påverkan på välmående och agency.

(Vi vill veta om, och på vilket sätt, den arbetslöses livssituation har förändrats utifrån det stöd/behandling som han/jon har fått. Harman kommit närmare en ösning på de upplevda problemen? Vad har förbättrats? Vilka områden har inte förbättrats? Vad har försämrats?)

- Utifrån din upplevelse, på vilket sätt har det stöd du fått betydelse för dig? Hur ser du på de erbjudanden du har fått från arbetsförmedlingen?
- Tycker du att (Jobbpunkt väst, socialtjänst etc.) tar dina behov på allvar? Varför, varför inte?
- Tycker du att arbetsförmedlingen tagit hänsyn till vad DU vill? Eller har du blivt tvingad att ta del av en viss typ av insats?
- Upplever du att den individuella handlingsplanen varit användbar? Hur då/Varför inte? Gagnar planen dina intressen? Varför inte?
- Kan du berätta lite mer om ditt nuvarande liv och din situation på arbetsmarknaden?
- Har det blivit bättre eller sämre sedan du kontaktade arbetsförmedlingen? Vilken roll har arbetsförmedlingen spelat? Och vilken roll har insatserna som du fått spelat? (Har de bidragit till att du kan få ett jobb? Eller är det på helt andra sätt och med hjälp av andra du kommer att få ett jobb, den dagen du får det?)
- Avslutningsvis skulle jag vilja fråga dig om hur du ser på dina erfarenheter med arbetsförmedlingen (och andra aktörer som varit involverade).

Tack för din tid och ditt samarbete!

The Local Governance of Social Cohesion in Europe

The Individualisation of Interventions

UK Country Analysis

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January 2014

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Outline

This report is the UK part of work package 6 of the Seventh Framework European Commission programme: Local Worlds of Social Cohesion (LOCALISE). LOCALISE is focused on the organisational challenges of integrating social and employment policy, partly in response to the radical changes in the local governance of social cohesion across many Member States of the European Union. The programme brings together six European countries and develops a common theoretical and methodological approach that guides the research in each of the work packages.

The report explores the structure of everyday interactions between advisors delivering employment services directly and clients receiving those services. The aim of the study is to shed light on the consequences of the individualisation of interventions of social cohesion policy on the social construction of social citizenship. This report is an analysis of one employment service organisation operating in the UK. The specific employment organisation was chosen based on the perceived innovation in its service delivery.

The report is based on 17 qualitative interviews with advisors (case-workers) and clients. Throughout the document when reporting information gathered from the interviews, advisors are referred to as ‘advisors’, while clients are referred to as ‘participants’. Whenever possible throughout the report those interviewed are allowed to tell their story in their own words, therefore the author’s narrative is interjected by the interviewees’ narrative as much as possible.

The report is structured as follows: after a short introduction to the report, the methodology is described. The organisational and governance context of labour market policy for the long-term unemployed is then presented, including the aims and structure of the organisation studied. The focus then turns to the advisors, i.e. the front line case workers in the organisation: their roles, routines, evaluation, etc. Interventions are then analysed in terms of the individualisation of services, flexibility of advisors, and clients’ choice. Clients’ categorisation and legibility are then explored, followed by consideration of responsibilisation and sanctions. The report ends with a conclusion chapter.

1. Introduction

There is an underlying assumption in the project that a process of individualisation is taking place in labour market policy development and implementation, and that this process has implications for social citizenship and for individual choice. This process is articulated in different forms according to different contexts and stems from various trends, including the increased turn towards activation in labour market policy. Individualisation would require changes in formal policy and in the operational governance of policy.

In the UK there has been a predominance of New Public Management (NPM) principles in the governance of labour market policies (Fuertes & McQuaid 2013a). In broad terms, NPM introduced marketisation and business-type managerial models in the provision of employment services. As a result of these trends, the regulation of employment services is increasingly based on competition and performance-based payment systems. In some instances, this has increased the standardisation of interventions, with goal-driven plans and services targeted to specific groups of individuals. Hence, the standardisation of services could be in contradiction to the discourse on greater individualisation of labour market interventions.

One of the tasks of the report is to critically investigate the extent to which the current practices and organizational routines in the delivery of labour market policy actually allow for individualised interventions. This investigation took place in one organisation providing labour market interventions (i.e. employment services) to long-term unemployed individuals. Since UK wide activation policy for the long-term unemployed comes under the Work Programme (WP), and since this policy is delivered by contracted organisations, it was necessary that the organisation under study was a WP delivery organisation. The requirement was to choose an organisation regarded as innovative, in the way of working and the cooperation structures with other organisations. Due to confidentiality assurances the organisation, locality and region will not be identified in this report, and anything that could identify the organisation has been deleted or changed substantially. The organisation operates in an urban locality in the UK.

2. Methodology

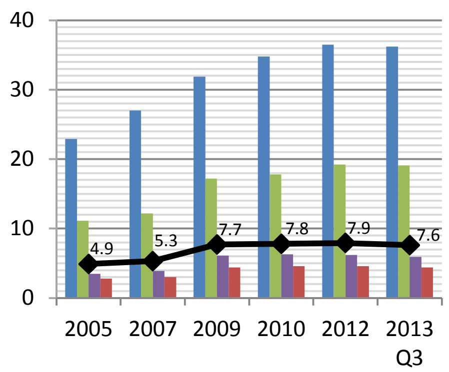
In this section, the UK's definition of, and trends in, long-term unemployment are presented first. This is followed by a description of the research method and sample, including participants' household and work circumstances.

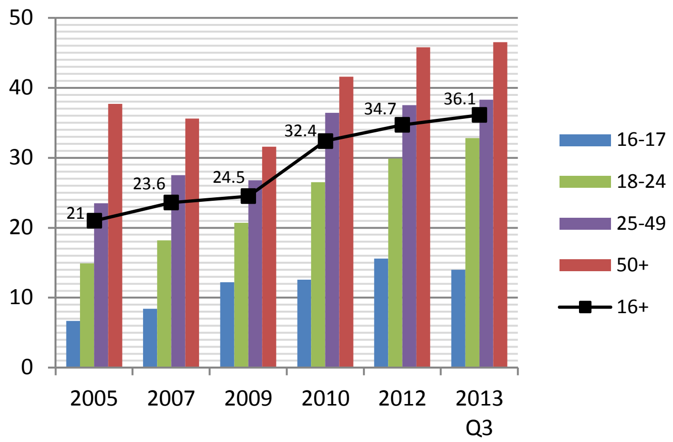
2.1 – Long-term unemployment in the UK

In the UK, the long-term unemployed are defined as those individuals aged 25 and over that have been in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) for 12 months or longer, and those aged 18 to 24 years-old in receipt of JSA for 9 months or longer.

The rate of unemployment and long-term unemployment in the UK can be seen in Figure 1. The graph on the left shows an increase in the rate of unemployment, as percentage of the economically active population by age group, for all age groups: until 2012 the greatest increase was seen amongst the younger age groups (16 to 17 and 18 to 24 year-olds), with more modest increases among those aged 25 and over, and levelling off among all age groups after 2012. In the same figure, the graph on the right shows that long-term unemployment rates (the proportion of the unemployed who have been unemployed for 12 months or more) have increased over the same period, although there was a slight decrease among 16-17 year-olds between 2012 and 2013. Higher rates of long-term unemployment can be seen for those unemployed that are aged 50 and over, compared to other age groups, even though their overall rate of unemployment is lower than for any other age group.

Figure 1 – UK unemployment rates (left graph) and long-term unemployment* rates (right graph) of total age group.





Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

** Long-term unemployed is defined as those unemployed for 12 months or more for all groups.*

2.2 – Sample, interviews and analysis

Eight advisors and nine clients were interviewed in this study. None of the quotes used in this report are labelled in any way, so as to protect confidentiality and anonymity. Deleted or amended information in the quotes, to protect participants and the organisation's anonymity, is designated using three dots inside parenthesis or words inside square brackets respectively.

Interviews with advisors and clients were pre-arranged by the office manager, and took place during two days[1]. Interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes, which was the time allocated for all interviews except for four advisors for which an hour was allocated. Some time [2] was dedicated to explaining and signing an agreement on procedure and confidentiality arrangements. Interviews were conducted in a private room within the organisation's offices. All interviews were recorded, professionally transcribed, and analysed using NVivo (software package for analysing qualitative data). As it is often the case in this type of research, data collected consist on interviewees' recollection of activities and actions (i.e. their discourse on those activities). Only in a few occasions (noted in footnotes) is the researcher able to observe those activities and actions.

Seven of the advisors interviewed have been employed by the organisation for over two years, while one advisor had been employed by the organisation for seven months. The majority of advisors did not have previous experience on a job similar to the one they were currently performing; however, all of them had some professional and/or personal experience on employability [3] and/or social assistance (health, care, youth activities) support.

The number of clients interviewed was nine. Seven interviews were pre-arranged by the office manager; however, two people were unable to attend. The other four interviews conducted, were not pre-arranged and clients agreed to be interviewed straight after being told about the research. Table 1 details some client characteristics.

Table 1 – Characteristics of clients interviewed.

Length in the organisation	Length of unemployment
22 months	3 years
12 months	13 years
2 months	11 years
22 months	2 years
3 months	Over 10 years
6 months	10 years
20 months	Almost 2 years
18 months	2 years (but 3 short-term jobs during this time)
12 months	18 months (but one short-term job during this time)

There were time constrains during half of the interviews with advisors and all interviews with clients, due to time allocation for both and to the high number of interviews conducted during the second day for the latter. The request to interview eight advisors posed a

[1] The interviews with advisors took place at the end of November and the beginning of January, and the interviews with clients took place at the end of November.
[2] Time dedicated for those explanations was an average of five minutes during interviews with advisors, and ten minutes during interviews with clients.
[3] McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) broad employability framework is used here (see Section 8, page 37). We refer to actions supporting people with different issues, such as finances or health issues with a focus on labour market integration.

dilemma for the organisation in terms of the amount of time that staff were to be away from operational matters in a busy period. The organisation agreed to four interviews, however, the it later on agreed to an additional four interviews once there busy period was over.

The need to maintain total anonymity of the organisation studied has to some extent reduced the detail and richness of the information presented in this report. However, the request for full anonymity is understandable as such detail of information created concerns over intellectual property and commercial confidentiality for the organisation studied.

3. Organisational and governance context

This section details the governance of activation policy for the long-term unemployed in the UK and describes the organisational structure of the public employment agency and other agencies within the governance context. The focus is then shift onto the organisation under study and its aims, service delivery, and collaborative structures are detailed.

3.1 – Activation policy for the long-term unemployed

There has been a common trend towards labour market activation in Europe. Although activation policies differ amongst countries, there are some common characteristics such as: redefinition of social issues as lack of participation in the labour market; integration of income protection and labour market activation; enlarged groups to be activated; greater emphasis on individual responsibilities and obligation; and individualisation of social interventions (van Berkel & Borghi, 2007: 278). This trend is changing the relationship between citizens and the state. Labour market activation in the UK has been accelerated since the 1990s. This has manifested itself in increasing support aimed at labour market participation through 'welfare-to-work' programmes and 'make-work-pay' initiatives, alongside increasing compulsion for unemployed and previously inactive groups to be activated, and the merging of the benefits and employment agencies into Jobcentre Plus (JCP) in 2002. It can be argued that the proposal of merging most benefits into a single payment (Universal Credit[4]), is another step towards activation.

Currently, national activation policy for the long-term unemployed is delivered through the Work Programme (WP). The WP was launched throughout Britain in June 2011 and replaced a number of previous programmes[5]. According to the DWP, it aims "to support people at risk of long term unemployment into sustainable employment. WP providers are paid

[4] A number of out-of-work and in-work benefits (e.g. Income Support, income-based Jobseeker Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.) are to be amalgamated into a single benefit, the Universal Credit, from April 2013 to late 2017.

[5] Previous programmes replaced are the Flexible New Deal and the Pathways to Work initiative for those in receipt of health-related benefits.

primarily for the results they achieve and they will be paid more for supporting people who are harder to help" (DWP, 2012a). As with previous welfare-to-work initiatives, the WP is mandatory for certain benefit claimants, primarily those defined as long-term unemployed but also other claimant groups[6]. Other benefit recipients can be voluntarily referred[7] but once in the programme, participation becomes obligatory (DWP, 2012a). The WP is mandatory for up to two years and sanctions are imposed by JCP for non-participation.

The WP follows the marketisation trend of previous welfare-to-work initiatives. Nevertheless, the process has been novel to some extent due to the requirement for organisations tendering to have no less than a £20 million annual turnover[8]. Due to this requirement, many private, public and mainly third sector organisations[9] were unable to compete in the tendering process, and it has been argued that this could contribute to a concentration of long-term provision by large, multi-national organisations. 18 companies have been contracted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the WP in the UK, which has been divided into 18 contract areas (see Figure 2). These companies (from now on labelled 'prime providers' or 'primes') hold contracts in one or multiple contract areas and are in competition with one or two other prime providers[10]. Primes were required to provide supply chains of sub-contractors in their bid, however, no specification on the use of suppliers exists thereafter (Simmonds, 2011).

Similar to other national initiatives, payment is by results, although the criterion to draw full payment includes a longer sustainability requirement, and there is also a clear differentiation in payments according to clients' classification based primarily on the type of benefit received by the clients, and in the length of unemployment and age group[11]. Referrals of clients to prime providers are carried out by JCP on a systematic basis, with the same number assigned to each prime. However, the prime provider with better results would get an increased market share of clients over time. The DWP places no procedural requirements on primes over service delivery, other than a minimum service agreement. Although a similar 'black-box' approach was characteristic of some previous programmes, it was considered over-specified (Fuertes & McQuaid, 2013b).

[6] These are: those receiving JSA who are according to the DWP 2012a at "seriously disadvantaged in te labour market, including some who have recently received incapacity benefits" and that have claimed benefits for the past three months; and some individuals in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Related Activity Group that will be required to attend when close to being fit to work.

[7] For example the ESA Support Group.

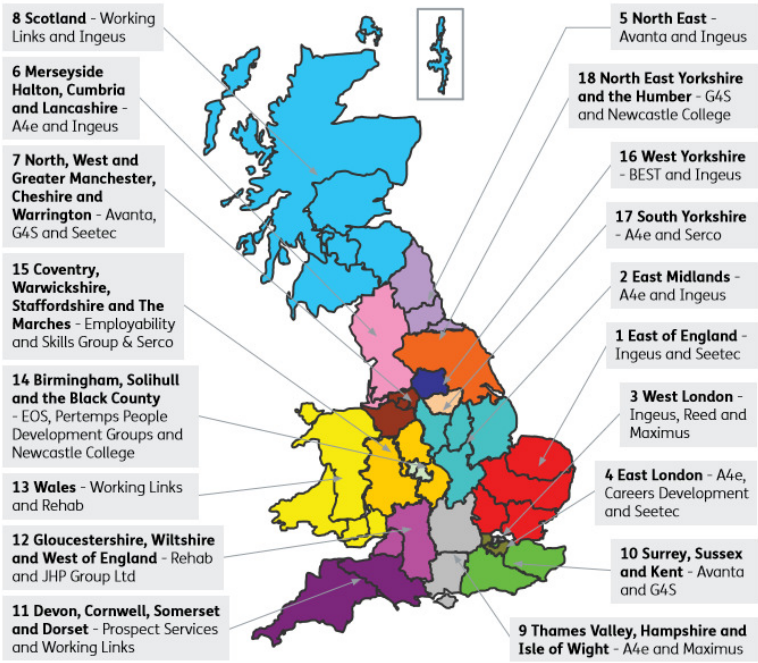
[8] The DWP launched an invitation to tender in August 2010 for organisations to be considered for the Framework for the Provision of Employment Related Support Services (Framework). One of the criteria to be considered for this Framework was to have a turnover of no less than £20 million per annum, unless robust evidence is supply that organisation can manage a £10 million annual value of the Work Programme as per the reward model. Successful bidders to the Framework were announced in November 2010 and in January 2011 they were invited to tender (ITT) for the Work Programme which commenced in June 2011.

[9] The concept of third sector organisations in this paper includes voluntary, charitable, and non-for profit organisations.

[10] Four contract areas have three prime providers, while the rest have two.

[11] Prime providers will receive a total minimum amount of £3,700 (e.g. £3,800 for a young person) to a total of maximum of £13,700 (e.g. for those receiving Employment and Support Allowance in the Support Group and that had recently received Incapacity Benefit) (Fuertes & McQuaid, 2013b).

Figure 2 – Work Programme's contract areas and providers.



Source: DWP, 2012b.

3.2 – Organisational structure of PES and other agencies

Labour market policy is a UK government reserved matter and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare and pension policy (DWP, nd a). Local government does not have responsibility for, or over, labour market policy, but they have responsibility for policies closely related to it such as employability, including skills and economic strategy.

Labour market policy is delivered by JCP, the public employment service, and by external service providers contracted by the DWP. JCP's role is to provide benefits and mainly basic job-matching services for the working-age short-term unemployed, and help employers to fill their vacancies (HC, 2007). JCP has been since its creation until October 2011, an executive (next steps) agency. JCP has a corporate mode of governance, in which employment services and processes are prescribed centrally with very little local discretion on provision (Zimmermann & Fuertes, forthcoming).

Most services offered to claimants ('Get Britain Working' initiatives) are contracted-out by the DWP to private or third-sector organisations through mostly centralised-market governance; providers' discretion over the services' goals and processes has being limited overall. There has been an increase in marketisation by contracting-out employment service provision, in particular for the long-term unemployed, and in June 2012, the Framework for the Provision of Employment Related Support Services (ERSS) was introduced.

3.3 – Employment service organisation

The organisation chosen in this study is one of the 18 prime contractors delivering the WP in the UK. The aim of the WP according to the DWP was described above, thus all prime providers fall under this objective. According to advisors interviewed, the aim of the organisation studied is to help and support people to find and sustain work, in order *"to change people's lives through sustainable employment"*. The importance of empowering people to find sustainable employment by *"giving them the skills that they need"* was stressed, as it was also the fact that peoples' needs are different and that *"people are at different stages and need different support"*. It was also mentioned that although some *"people may not move into employment"*, the aim is to *"move them closer"* to the labour market.

As mentioned before, the WP delivery model is a 'black-box' approach. It is termed as such by the DWP in order to denote that service providers (contracted by the DWP) are able to design service provision as they see fit[12]. In the words of the Minister for Welfare Reform *"The black box nature of the Work Programme means providers are completely free to design the support they offer in order to maximise success"* (Lord Freud, 2011). In the WP, each prime has *simply* agreed with the DWP to a Minimum Service Delivery[13]. Based on the interviews with advisors and participants, it would appear the organisation studied has met most (only one was not mentioned in the interviews) of its Minimum Service Delivery agreement (subsequent sections will explore this in more detail). Due to anonymity assurances to the organisation, the design of support cannot be reproduced in any detail. However, a number of areas of support can be seen in Figure 3. The organisation has different types or stages of support depending on clients' needs at different times. Type of support will be explored in more detail in subsequent sections.

Figure 3 – Areas of support (non-exhaustive).

[12] The Work and Pensions Committee in its second report (2009) on the DWP's Commissioning Strategy and the Flexible New Deal, refer in detail to the "black box" approach.
[13] Minimum Service Delivery agreements are specific to each prime providers (DWP, nd).

Advisors report high levels of satisfaction working for the organisation because of the organisation's values, the type of services provided and the manner of provision, and the way employees are treated. Services are provided is an open-plan office, with a number of private rooms which are used your for one-to-one appointments if clients *"feel uncomfortable in an open office environment"*, or if *"something is getting heated"* or when the support has to be one-to-one.

3.4 – Collaborative structures

The WP tendering process required that those tendering presented a tier 1 and 2 supply chain of subcontractors[14], which are expected to also include other one-off suppliers, to be dynamic and evolved, adapting themselves to labour market and clients' needs according to the DWP. As there are not any further requirements in relation to subcontracting, and also due to the lack of up to date data in this regard, it is difficult to ascertain the level and nature of supply chains. It is also difficult to ascertain if the number and type of sub-contractors mentioned in the bidding document at a regional level matches the current supply chain locality.

In the case of the organisation under study the number of sub-contractors in the locality was 31 per cent of the total number of sub-contractors cited in their bidding document. Advisors mentioned that services externally provided vary depending on the area of operation. This was said to be *"another great thing"* as *"each area can change things tailored to what the needs of the region are"*. Some of these subcontractors deal mainly, although in some instances not exclusively, with people with physical disabilities, mental health conditions, learning difficulties, criminal records, and/or substance misuse. Some also deal with all client groups but focus in a specific skills or employability area. Advisors mentioned that referrals to these sub-contractors were done on a case by case basis and according to clients' needs. Once a client is referred to these organisations, she/he secures a place and attendance is expected. Clients who do not engage (*"DNEs"*) are not referred to sub-contractors. Some advisors refer less due to the nature of their role or their caseload (either because their clients do not need it or because they have accessed these services before). Three participants interviewed had been referred subcontractors.

Advisors also suggest to clients other services/organisations that, although not sub-contracted by the prime provider, could be of benefit for clients (such as charities providing food free of charge, organisations providing counselling, or courses such as 'coping with depression', etc.) depending on their needs. However, approaching these organisations is entirely the decision of the client. In some occasions, advisors phone organisations or agencies on behalf of the client to ask for advice or make appointments (such as organisations offering debt or housing advice). It was said that clients usually have support from their GP (General Practitioner) or other professional. Participants mentioned that they

[14] Work Programme supply chains as per 12 August 2011 (DWP, 2011).

had contact with a number of external agencies (three people with their council social care services, one with a charity that offers holistic support, two with their General Practitioners, one with a community psychiatric nurse, and one with a drug support worker). Although there does not seem to be a systematic approach to this type of referrals, one advisor said they can access a list of local organisations electronically[15] and some advisors mentioned consulting with other colleagues when necessary. Although advisors would suggest the in-house support, they recommend this alongside external expert assistance. One advisor stressed that the reason for referring is that *"I can't help everyone but I can help them by knowing where they need to go"*. An advisor mentioned the following example:

> *"I have a girl who quite suddenly became pretty depressed, I would not want her accessing [support here] until she's spoken to her doctor about it first. So, [I] signpost to a doctor"*

Links with business or business development in order to access job opportunities, was seen as very important by advisors and clients. Business development is done by advisors in their free time, but there are dedicated advisors that focus on this. There do not seem to be links with education providers and advisors said that long-term education is not usually mentioned by clients, and if it has career effects then that option is explored. In the words of one advisor:

> *"If a client wants to do long-term training/education, they will be signposted to the colleges with encouragement, but also they will be reminded that they need to be considering "what is this going to do for me in terms of employment at the other end? Is it worth your while to take a year out of looking for work to get a qualification as a bricklayer when we are not building anything?""*

4. The governance structure of everyday work

In this section, the advisors' roles, daily routines, and responsibilities are described. The rest of the section focuses on the path that clients take during the two years they are with the organisation, the relation between clients and advisors, and the ways of monitoring and controlling the work of advisors.

4.1 – Advisors roles and responsibilities

The role of each advisor differed slightly depending on their specific position within the organisation. However, there are a number of common characteristics shared by the majority of advisors, some of which are: working with unemployed people (i.e. clients) in a mostly one-to-one basis; and acting as the main and primary case-worker for each of the clients assigned to them (i.e. their caseload). Most of the advisors in the organisation are

[15] It appeared to have developed as part of a mapping exercise done at some point.

case-workers, meaning that they are the main advisor for a client, responsible for her/his trajectory and support while the client is in their caseload. Other advisors in the organisation, the minority, would offer only short-term and focused assistance, such as providing a course or running a workshop (e.g. interview skills or IT). Unless otherwise specify, advisors mentioned in this report are also case-workers.

Participants confirmed having a main advisor, which changes depending on their needs or their trajectory. Usually, clients are seen by their advisor and only meet other advisors in exceptional circumstances, such as the absence of their advisor[16] or a client's emergency situation. Having the same advisor was said to be important in order to build trust, especially for clients with multiple barriers. During courses or referrals to other organisations, clients have other advisors (non-caseworkers), however, they maintain their case-worker. Only in the eventuality of the client losing their job will another advisor work alongside the case-worker for a longer period of time.

The advisor's role is to support and help people through different means to move closer to getting a job and ultimately move into sustainable employment. Job sustainability appears to be vital, and because there are *"lots of jobs which might not be sustainable"*, the advisors' task is about *"coming up with ideas*" as to how to *"ensure that people find sustainable jobs"*. Empowering clients was stressed as essential for job sustainability. Advisors' responsibilities vary as a result of their position and the nature of their caseload. For example: some advisors meet clients for the first time and decide the most suitable steps for the client; some deal with those closer to the labour market; some with those individuals with multiple barriers; and some with those clients that are near the end of the WP. Counselling is not part of the advisors' role and they will refer clients to suitable organisation according to their need. However, one advisor mentioned that there is a small degree of counselling because advisors *"are the kind of doorway to other things"*. Next sections explain in more detail the assistance offered by advisors and section 7.2 describes advisors' role regarding sanctions. As well as moving clients towards the labour market, in-work support was mentioned as an important part of advisors' job: *"it is not just a case of "there is a job, thank you and good bye" it is a case of making sure that it is sustainable employment and the person is managing to cope"*. All advisors, according to those interviewed, *"have time set aside"* to do in-work support for a period of time after a job-start; after that period, other in-work support is put in place.

Advisors appear to rely on other colleagues for suggestions and best practice, especially when a client is moved to another advisor. Advisors meet regularly to discuss issues such as: how the job market is; ideas on how to provide better support; what needs to be developed to move forward; new initiatives; statistics related to the WP regional/country performance; any issues with jobs or services that advisors have; how the team is working; arranging

[16] This happened during one of the interviews with an advisor, where the advisor being interviewed asked a colleague to take in the client for him.

team-building days at a regular intervals; also if an advisor is going to be absent other advisors will pick up her or his caseload for that period. It was said that meetings are led by different members and that they *"can choose, you know, an area to focus on and sort of brainstorm, if you like, as a team"*.

Some advisors, including one interviewed, also assist other advisors with corporate or special functions, such as liaising with external contracted-out providers by for example visiting contractors' offices.

4.2 – Daily routine

The working day usually extends from 9am to 5pm with an hour lunch. Of those advisors interviewed, at least two start early in order to carry out some administrative preparation such as review the day ahead, print CV or letters if necessary, etc. It was stressed that this is not a requirement and that *"every advisor is completely different to how they implement their own strategies and how they work with people".*

All advisors arranged 30 minutes meetings, although it was said to be normal for meetings to vary in length, depending on other pre-arranged appointments and on clients' needs in general or at specific times (for example if they have an interview coming up advisors will expend more time with that client)[17]. Participants confirmed that the length of the meetings tend to vary from 20 minutes to an hour. In the words of an advisor:

> *"If someone is really, really self-sufficient, it is kind of quite an informal chat because you know, it's not my job to teach them how to suck eggs. They know how to do it, I don't need to reinforce that. And in that way, I think they kind of appreciate that they are not being treated the same as everyone else, that it is what suits them."*

Advisors normally arrange appointments with 12 to 15 clients every day (higher if there is group-work planned), and attendance is around 75 per cent. In the case of non-attendance advisors can use that time to follow up those currently in-work, do business development, see clients that have come into the offices without appointments, etc. Within this typical number of appointments, advisors' daily arrangements vary depending on their preferences. For example, one advisor leaves some time without appointments one day a week in order to do administrative things (such as doing in-work support, following up people that did not attend meetings, etc.) and another advisor has one hour each day free, to do business development and administrative tasks and to see clients without pre-arrange meetings (i.e. drop in sessions). All advisors encourage clients to visit the office at any time, and will make an effort to contact and see, if necessary, clients with no pre-arranged

[17] Observations of meetings seem to correlate with the practices narrated by advisors interviewed: meetings observed lasted between 20 to 35 minutes.

appointments. This was confirmed by participants who use the office in a regular basis and have quick chats with their advisor on those occasions. One participant said:

> *"I wasn't due to see [my advisor] today but (...) if I catch her eye when she's walking up and down, she knows. I'd rather her come to me because I don't want to say, if she's busy with her clients you know, so I think it'd be unfair because I don't have an appointment to say "could you give me some time or can I have a chat?". So she's good, like today she came in and she was like, she came down and had a chat with me and stuff, you know, "how's things going" and so on".*

Advisors and participants mentioned that reminders are sent before a meeting, and in some cases text, calls or email are sent in order to alert clients of suitable jobs. Participants would also contact their advisor in between meetings if necessary.

Advisors caseloads vary from around 80 to 250 clients depending on the advisors' position. Due to advisors' caseload and to the number of appointment per day, it was stressed the importance of making sure that administrative tasks are completed. Although advisors have flexibility on their daily routine, keeping notes and preparing the day ahead seemed important to everyone.

4.3 – Client trajectory

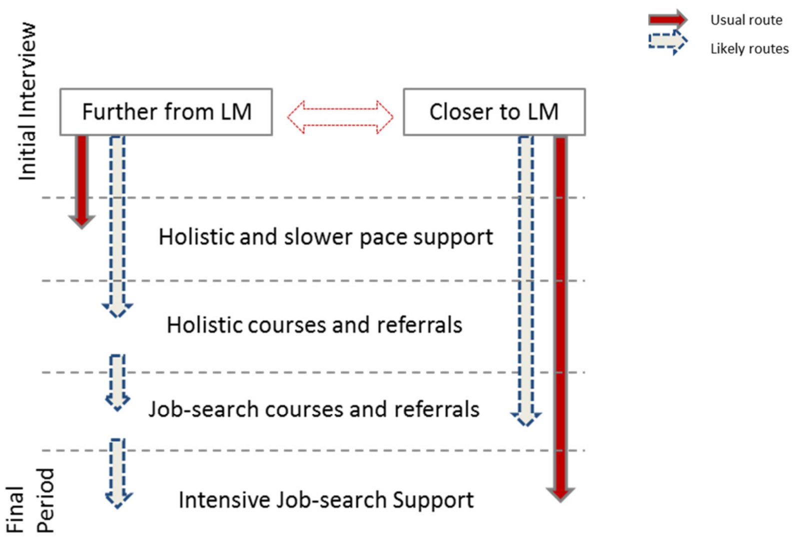
The DWP refer to unemployed people as 'claimants'. Claimants are classified depending on the type of benefit they claim and also in terms of length of unemployment, and certain specific characteristics such as young unemployed or NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training). The organisation studied refers to unemployed individuals mandated to the WP by the DWP as 'clients'.

When clients make contact with the organisation, their current personal and household situation, goals, and barriers to employment are explored in the first few meetings with an advisor. This advisor is not their case-worker yet; an advisors/case-worker will be assigned after these first meetings (when the next stage of support has been decided). These issues are explored through a standardise questionnaire. The data is entered into the organisations electronic systems as is part of the client's file. The answers to these questions, the advisor judgement, and the client's opinion will determine their next stage or type of support within the WP. Various forms of support are offered within the organisation as part of the WP. There are, what could be called, various stages to clients trajectory in the WP. Participants said they were aware of the different stages or type of support available during their time in the organisation, some of them having experienced a number of stages already[18]. However, they found difficult it to expand on this.

[18] Three participants are approaching the end of the WP period and another three have been in the programme for around a year.

Clients normally move stages or access different support as and when it is necessary, with some accessing various types of support at the same time, but there is, to some degree, a 'typical' trajectory (Figure 4): for example, those clients closer to the labour market or with less substantial barriers, will access some services which are more focused on job-search techniques. Clients which have more complex barriers or are further away from the labour market will receive job-search assistance but will also access courses –whether provided by the organisation or sub-contractors– with a focus on health, daily habits, and specific barriers that they have. The support to this group of clients seems to be at a different pace as *"they need a bit more time",* and will be more focused on addressing those barriers before they are ready to engage in intensive job-search. However it was stressed that the support, and pace depends on the individual circumstances and needs, such as: personal health (e.g. physical or mental illnesses or substance misused), household situation (e.g. having children in care, partnership/marriage breakup, etc.), housing issues (e.g. homelessness), other issues such as criminal records. It also depends on unexpected individual circumstances or other factors, such as family bereavements, health issues, etc. These factors will determine clients' needs and assistance at different times. Within this to broad categories (closer to and further from the labour market) there are many different individual circumstances and situations. There is specific support for those clients that are not ready to engage with an advisor in the office environment, and according to the organisation the number of clients accessing this support has increased since the start of the WP, from around 1 per cent of clients to currently 40 per cent of all clients in this category (most of which seem to be in receipt of ESA).

Figure 4 – Typical path of support (LM = labour market)



Meetings are the main service where support takes place and is planned. The advisors stated that meetings tend to take place once every two weeks. It was mentioned, however, that this proves difficult in some instances due to caseloads. The majority of participants met their advisor once a week. All participants seemed happy with the regularity of meetings, which had changed over time, but two clients mentioned that in some instances regularity of meetings depends on the advisor's availability. It would appear that clients who are *"more job-ready"* tend to be seen more regularly. According to a few advisors this was a *"necessity"* in order to maintain the client's activity and motivation. Those who were further away from the labour market were said to require a different pace and type of support in order to bring them closer to be ready for work, so meetings might be scheduled every two weeks or once a month depending on the other activities the client was engaged with (such as courses). In some circumstances (such as people who had to attend lots of hospital appointments) it was said that meetings could be arranged to take place every two or three months (that being the maximum time between appointments). It was mentioned by one advisor that there could be a temptation to focus on those nearest to the labour market, due to the target system, however it was stressed that a balance is required: so when those most ready to work move into a job, there are other clients that have been progressed to be nearer to the labour market. Advisors tend to support similar types of clients or tend to provide similar support; this is to secure clients' continuity and to preserve advisors' expertise. However clients can change advisors if it is thought that they would benefit from trying other ways of working, experience, personalities, etc.

Clients, however far from or close to the labour market, can access support or courses provided by the organisation or external contracted out provision, although attendance is not mandatory. Clients will be referred to these providers or courses according to their needs. The list of courses is easily available to clients. These courses are vocational and short-term; long-term education is not provided. Participants' attendance to courses varied (the majority of participants had attended at least one course with three people not attending any), but those who attended found them useful and locating them in the office very convenient. According to advisors, courses change depending on *"clients' needs, courses' popularity, labour market needs informed by [specific advisors] and availability of the facilitators"*. Advisors can also arrange and run courses for their clients.

4.4 – Monitoring and control

In terms of advisors daily workload targets there seems to be *"a kind of like a benchmark"* expected, which is around 12 to 14 people booked for appointments each day with each advisor or *"as much activity levels as we can, working with as many clients as we can, within reason"*. In terms of outcome targets, all advisors have individual targets, and as expected due to the financial structure of the WP, these are two-fold: targets for job-starts; and targets for job sustainability which in turn is divided into 13 weeks and 26 weeks sustainability. It appears that different advisors have different targets and although they could mention job-starts targets with certainty, they were unsure about their exact sustainability targets.

Advisors job-starts targets were said to be between 5 to 8 months. Targets for sustainability were said to be around 75 to 90 per cent, but these figures are based on seems to be very unreliable information. A target of around 150 job-starts in a month for the entire office was mentioned, however, it was stressed that targets vary and are dependent on business needs. It was mentioned that it is a challenge of these types of contracts to find a targeting system that balances effectiveness with practicality and that takes account of different situations. Following up people in-work is necessary in order to access sustainability payments from the DWP, however, it was said to be challenging, as clients think the organisation had done its job and would prefer that contact is not made

Most advisors said that targets do not hinder their job and that, although aware of the targets, they do not focus on them. The way to achieve targets according to advisors is to do the job properly: sustainability is achieved by finding the right job for the client. In the words of one advisor:

> *"I have very good sustainability with my clients, and it is because I always work with that person to find the job that they really want to do, which is what most, I would say, all the advisors in here do".*

Performance discussions were said to take place between the manager and the advisor during regular performance reviews, although advisors mentioned that they are able to discuss issues regarding performance outwith these meetings. Advisors performance of under 70 or 75 per cent of the expected targets would trigger *"performance support",* and the office manager and the advisor would agree to a plan to improve performance rather than being told *"this is what you just do"*. It was mentioned by one advisor that *"rarely has anyone been let go because of performance"*. Advisors stressed that poor performance is not discussed in public. However, good performance would be made public.

4.5 – Relation with clients

According to advisors, although clients have their obligations and what they can expect from the organisation made clear when they are seen for the first time, they do not have to sign an agreement. Clients are asked to sign some documents regarding data sharing/disclosure with third parties contracted by the organisation and the consent that the organisation makes contact with employers (e.g. in order to check the sustainability of employment or to offer employers support/incentives if available). Within the organisation, advisors record relevant information for each client and the information can be shared with other advisors in the organisation; this does not appear to require client's consent. A few participants, however, mentioned signing an "agreement" with the organisation when they first came into the WP. This agreement was described as general and basic about the things they would and would not do, but they could not say with certainty what it entailed and if the organisation laid out their responsibilities towards them. Clients are mandated to the WP and sanctions could be applied if there is no engagement or activity refusal. However, it was stressed that advisors prefer working on *"trust"* with clients, rather than using sanctions, as, according to them, it ruins the relationship and does not necessarily achiever better results. Participants corroborate this and mentioned that if they miss an appointment, their advisor would not reprimand them but will contact them *"to see if I'm alright and stuff"*. Advisors aim to give clients the skills necessary to move towards and into employment, therefore they stressed that building independence is vital. As one advisor mentioned, their assistance is about *"giving them options to make the decisions themselves about what they want to do"*. It was stressed that doing everything for clients is not desirable, and also is not possible due to caseloads.

> *"I don't chase them and baby them and make sure they are doing what I've suggested they do, they are adults. They will know the consequences of their behaviours and I remind them, but I don't have a go at people who don't do everything I tell them to do. It is counterproductive; it ruins the relationship that you have. It is far better to say you know kind of missed out by not doing that and explain why, than saying I am going to sanction you."*

Participants mentioned that even if job-search is the primary focus of the support received, advisors know and ask about their live circumstances and situation (for example, their housing situation, their depression, etc.), and try to help in different ways depending on what is needed. Therefore they stressed that their relationship with their advisor includes elements of friendship and general support. Advisors interviews support that view and mentioned that in some instances they offer emotional support, by listening but also if necessary by changing arrangements and plans that had been agreed with that client prior to the specific circumstances arising. This is one example given by advisors:

> *"I have a lady (...) who had just been diagnosed with cancer. She came in to me and she had a chat, we had a chat in this room [private room], and she was saying, "I don't want to put this on you, you're not my GP, you're not…" blah, blah, blah. But what I said to her (…) "anything going on in your life right now is something that I feel I have a direct input and responsibility into. (…) So if you need an appointment to sit down and have a chat about what's going on in your life, I'm quite happy to put the plans that we have for that day aside, and provide emotional support where necessary"".*

All participants said that advisors have a very good, positive, friendly, approachable and open attitude, which makes them feel welcome either during and outside pre-arrange meetings, and which they find helpful. While, in contrast, relationships with advisors from JCP or other employment agencies were said to be rather distant and include more pressure:

> *"I think the attitude of the Jobcentre is that they don't really care, you're just a number, you go in and sign on and you go. Whereas here, they're very... "what do you want to do, what do you need to do, what can we do for you to get you back into work"."*

In summary, it seems that participants and advisors view of their relationship match, and includes elements of job-search support, but also other elements of general support and assistance with clients' issues not directly related to employment.

5. Individualisation and standardisation of interventions

This section describes the standardisation and individualisation of interventions, including type of support, meeting place, and tools used. It considers whether interventions are planned using 'action plans' or other tools, looks into advisors' flexibility and clients' choice while devising and implementing interventions.

5.1 – Standardisation of interventions

There does not seem to be standardisation of interventions according to job-seekers categories per se. All clients experience two stages of support, at the beginning and at the end of the programme and although there seems to be a 'typical' trajectory that clients follow within the WP for clients with similar needs, people can access different support, at different times, during the two-year provision.

Type of support

In terms of standardisation of the support offered, it would appear that those with physical, mental or learning difficulties, those with specific needs, and those with drug/alcohol misuse or prison records can be referred to specific subcontractors for a period of time. Those wanting to become self-employed and having a realistic chance to do so, will be referred for external assistance.

The courses available in-house are the same for all clients. However, it does appear that advisors suggest, or clients request, attending those courses as and when necessary. It was mentioned by some advisors that courses also help them to manage their caseload.

Within each stage of support there is also some standardisation with regards to the type of assistance offered. For example the roles and responsibilities of advisors supporting those closer to the labour market are similar, and the same is the case for those advisors supporting those with multiple barriers.

Meeting

Meetings seem to be arranged to last 30 minutes, although this can vary. Meetings usually take place in the office, and in some occasions telephone meetings are carried out by advisors, for example if the client is waiting for something to arrive before the next steps of support can be taken, therefore the advisor would check over the phone if the client has arrived, etc. In-work support is often telephone-based.

Tools used

There are three standard tools/questionnaires used by all advisors: one that is used in all clients when they first join (and a review every so often), a scale of where the client is situated within the journey towards employment, and a better off calculation. These are standardised in the sense that they contain exactly the same information and that all clients experience the same tool. The format of recording clients' activities is also the same for all clients. Section 6.2 provides more detail on the tools used.

5.2 – Tailored interventions

According to advisors and participants, the service provided, in terms of the type of support offered and the regularity of meetings, is very flexible and tailored to clients' needs. Advisors stressed they will tailor their assistance to clients' needs and to a certain extent their wishes. In the words of one advisor:

> *"I try and be really, really flexible and just do what they need, if that makes sense. It is very much "what you want? what you need?" I will ask them "how frequently do you want to come in?"".*

Tailoring support to clients' needs and aims was mentioned by advisors as important in order for clients to take ownership of the decisions made, attain independence in the long-term, achieve sustainability of job-starts, build trust in the relationship, and openness to ideas that the advisor will suggest and explore.

Type of support

A number of participants mentioned that they are able to influence what happens in the meetings and advisors will adapt to what they need or feel they would like to focus on (e.g. practicing interviews). Advisors said that the organisation promote tailored support, by giving flexibility and autonomy to advisors, to do what they think it is best for their clients, in terms of the content and pace of support. Although there was recognition that there are targets and guidelines, there does not seem to be a *"set way in which we need to do [things]"*. The importance of having different stages or types of support was also stressed by one advisor, so there is a progression and results in clients having to experience different advisors and different styles of support. One advisor mentioned that it is about doing the right thing, at the right time and in the right way for each person. A number of examples of tailored assistance given to clients, were mentioned, for example the organisation buying clothes for clients, or dealing with specific issues as needed. An advisor gave the following example:

> *"[My client] had been for an interview over Christmas time and what they said was they were very impressed, (... but what) they were worried about was her health, her level of fitness. (...) in the next appointment I've planned out some activity that we are going to focus on, setting some goals around actually exercise and this is going to tie in with her job application. So she's going to be handing out CVs. I am going to buy her a pedometer so that we can count and set herself a challenge to try and increase that weekly. (...) to try and increase her level of fitness."*

One participant mentioned the following example:

> *"What actually happened was my passport had expired. (…). It was a nightmare so everything had to be put to one side, I couldn't continue with my training working in the company because I didn't have a valid passport (…). Yes so at the time I didn't actually have, it was like a hundred and ten pounds or something and then I had to get to [another city to get it], so I came down and spoke to somebody here, I think it was the manager at the time and yes, [clicks fingers] like that, on the same day, on the same day, you know, I told them the story, gave them the information of my kind of area manager, contact names, details and what was the situation. (…). Yes, so basically, gave me, you know a kind of a forwarding amount of money to, you know, get this."*

In-work support is carried out by all advisors but is also tailored to clients' needs, with variable levels of contact and support. It therefore appears to be *"fully dictated to by the individual's circumstances"*. Communication with employers rarely happens, however in some specific occasions advisors will contact employers at clients' request, for instance if their intervention would solve an issue that seem to be threaten the sustainability of the job:

> *"I have heard of an advisor who worked with somebody in a kitchen and the person's shoes went missing (…). He'd spoken to the advisor and said, "Is there any chance you could come in and try and sort this out for me, because I might end up losing my job because of this". And I think the outcome of it was that we went in and just had a chat and said, "Look, obviously there's a bit of a misunderstanding". I think we ended up funding the person with a second pair of shoes".*

This type of support is tailored to the job market which is seasonal: for example, due to the temporary nature of jobs around Christmas time, a group of advisors normally working with those that fall out of employment would be working with groups of clients closest to the labour market to try making temporary jobs become sustainable jobs.

The only issue mentioned, by some advisors and one participant, that could hinder tailor-made interventions, was the length and times of some courses that may not suit some clients, for example those with young children or without childcare after school hours.

Regularity and type of attendance

Advisors stressed that they are flexible in their approach to clients, in order to adapt to clients' circumstances and unexpected situations. This flexibility in terms of regularity and attendance to meetings was confirmed by participants. Clients are asked about how many times they want to attend meetings and in some instances it is decided that meetings should be stopped for a period of time for different reasons: one participant mentioned that his face-to-face meetings were stopped for a period of time due to health problems, while another participant did not have meetings until he felt comfortable coming into the office. Participants also mentioned that if and when things come up, advisors are very accommodating by re-arranging meetings. At the same time, it appears that this flexibility is established within some parameters, for instance: clients *have to* attend meetings and engage in some activity that increases their chances to finding sustainable work. One advisor gives an example:

> *"For example I had a woman in today with fibromyalgia who is in so much pain she was in tears and the fact that, and I could just see it you know in someone so tense and hard to speak and she was walking so slowly up the way. And I actually feel like we hold her back by bringing her into the office and it is making her worse, it is dangerous for her to drive here" (…) "You don't want people thinking you are the big bad wolf and you are here to make our lives miserable and force them to come in pain"*

Job sector and conditions

Advisors will ask the client what jobs they would like to do, and then they will explore those options and the reason behind these choices. This is done to make sure that clients' expectations are realistic, suitable and sustainable. Advisors will suggest sectors or areas of work to clients, and they will explore the suitability of the client for that job in terms of experience and skills, and at the sustainability of the job, financially and in terms of clients' predisposition. The hours, the distance, the sector, the temporal nature of the job is also discussed[19]. Participants corroborate this exploration of jobs, and the fact they are not pressured into applying or taking *any* job. This exploration and probing appears to be, according to advisors, very important in order to achieve job sustainability. In the words of an advisor:

[19] During the time in the office, the author had the opportunity to observe (from a distance and without being notice by either party) a meeting between and advisor and a client, where this exploration of the suitability of a specific job and then general suitability of that particular sector, took place.

> *"A lot of people will come in and say in the first appointment, "I want to be a customer service advisor," and you'll ask them, "Is there anything else you would do?" and they'll say, "Well, the Jobcentre says I have to be a kitchen porter or a cleaner." Then I would ask, "Do you really want to do that?" and the answer nine times out of ten is no. And you can tell, customer service and cleaning is completely different. I would rather spend four months trying to find the customer service job than saying to somebody, "Yes, go and do that cleaning job, just because you can." You know, it's "You really want the customer service job, so let's put a big focus on that, let's get a good covering letter, let's really strengthen your CV, let's work on your interview skills, then go and sell yourself." I believe that's a lot of where sustainability comes from".*

Advisors and clients mentioned that temporary jobs are considered and encouraged if clients want to apply for them. Two participants had temporary jobs during their time in the WP. In their opinion these jobs although temporary, would increase their chances of getting other jobs. According to an advisor, *"if somebody does want to take a temporary job, we will plan with them what we would do two weeks prior to the ending"*. Cumulative periods of employment can trigger Job Outcome Payments and there can be breaks in employment between Sustainment Payments (DWP, 2013).

In summary, advisors appear to have the autonomy and flexibility to decide what assistance to offer, depending on clients' needs. Therefore, it appears that services can be tailored to clients, within the constraints of what has to be done and the available resources.

5.3 – Advisors' flexibility

All advisors interviewed stressed that they have a high level of flexibility in adapting to clients' needs and wishes. Flexibility is related to individualisation, in that individualisation of service is possible to a certain extent as a result of advisors flexibility. Therefore individualised services require amongst other things flexible governance arrangements on service implementation. It was stressed that advisors *"are encouraged to be creative"* in the support they offer and, as one advisor mentioned, there is *"as much flexibility as we want, as long as it is sticking within the parameters of helping somebody into employment"* and complying with guidelines. Advisors appear to be autonomous and flexible in their daily routines and in the support given. For example advisors can go on industry visits, arrange group-work or courses (such as basis IT skills, interview skills, sector-skills workshops), or go out for a coffee or to hand out CVs with

Example box 1 – Advisors' flexibility

Retail/industry visits

"Somebody might go in and meet an employer, I might stand and look through the clothes, so I can hear what they're saying, and then go out with them. So then you can say to that person, "You said this really well, your body language was good," or, "You could maybe stand a little bit straighter, or smile when you speak to the manager, or a firmer handshake, or just sound more positive, sell yourself." By the end of that, the people are firmly standing on their own two feet. At the start you provide a lot of advice, towards the end you're like, "Brilliant, that was well done, you're listening to what I've said."

clients. They are encouraged to use a range of tools and to develop and devise their own tools as they see fit in order to help clients *"back into work".* These individual tools are shared amongst staff but there is not a requirement to use them.

A number of factors could make the service inflexible in terms of the type and pace of support given. The ones mentioned were: the performance targets alongside the caseload and pre-arrange appointments, the minimum standards of support. In the words of one advisor:

> *"You have to be very organised (...) because I've got so many clients, I book up about six weeks in advance... I would have to think "right, I want to start doing that, but I will start from March" because if I didn't, then I would have to re-arrange, ring around all my clients, re-arrange appointment, and that takes an awful lot of time."*

5.4 – Action Plans

There does not appear to be a standard or template 'action plan' that advisors have to use or produce, with or for clients. Participants mentioned talking about an *"action plan"* with their advisor at the very start of their involvement with the WP, but this seemed to be primarily focused around the stages or types of support that participants can access during their time in the WP.

> *"It is different for each client so there's not sort of structure of an action plan that you can sort of adapt for each person and I think every advisor works slightly differently as well".*

However, most advisors seem to prepare a plan of activity for their clients, usually called, by advisors and clients, 'action plan'. According to interviewees this action plan consists of planned actions that clients will do in between meetings, or during a longer period of usually four weeks, or it can be a bit of both. It will also include what subsequent meetings will cover. These plans usually focus on job-search preparation and/or activity, including applying for jobs, focusing on clients' weaknesses (e.g. skills gaps such as interview skills, IT, or others). However, in some occasion other activities could be included, such as making an appointment with a GP, etc. although advisors mentioned that their influence on some issues such as appointments with external agencies is limited as advisors *"can only kind of show them the door and they've got to walk through it"*. One participant explains:

> *"When I first came, she was like, "right, your plan for this week is to remake your CV", and you do that, and then the following week it was like the cover letter thing, and now it's "right, if we maybe send out ten CVs, and you can maybe make five or ten phone call, as well as doing some job-search". So we'll do it in like, a weekly basis, on what we're going to do, and to see what success we're getting from that, and then if that doesn't work, we'll sort of re-evaluate the CV, or we'll try some other way of contacting people, and finding work."*

Advisors and participants said that clients are not made to sign these action plans. Only one advisor asked those clients that are very *"ready to work"*, to sign a commitment to take up suitable and sustainable employment. It was mentioned by some advisors that these plans are helpful in measuring clients' trajectory and progress, and in some instances these plans are used as a way of motivating clients. Even if devising a longer-term action plan would mean extra work, the idea seemed beneficial.

In summary, these 'action plans' seem to revolve around job-search activities and are used as a way to structure and measure clients' activity and progress, thus they encompass an element of control of clients actions. However, as it will be seen in Section 5.5, there is an element of co-production[20] with the client (within obviously a pre-given frame, therefore are perhaps a 'constrained co-production') and an element of flexibility within the action plan.

Meetings

Meetings are the main service where support is provided or planned. Action plans appear to be regularly created and revised at these meeting. Action during these meetings revolves mainly around three different areas of assistance:

a) Personal circumstances. Questions in this area aim to ascertain clients' personal situation, or follow up on issues relevant to that person. When exploring this area, usually advisors let the client speak and do not constrain the conversation by using prepared questions, although in a few instances advisors use a check list to make sure a minimum of information has been covered. According to advisors every aspect of clients' situations that could be a barrier to work is considered when planning and/or providing support to individuals: including their health, housing needs, finances, childcare, also clients *"personality and likeability"* or in other words their communication skills and presentation. This is because, as advisors stated, clients' circumstance are fundamental in their chances of moving into employment. Personal circumstances are explored with all clients at the start of the programme but also at any stage because, as advisors mentioned, circumstances can change at any point.
b) Expectations. Assistance in this area focusses on exploring clients' goals and preferred jobs, challenging expectations, and suggesting and exploring other areas of work.
c) Employability and job-search methods. Support in this area consists mainly of: exploring clients' experience and skills including transferable skills, and finding solutions to skills gaps; learning and developing job-search tools and techniques (such CVs, covering letters, etc.); exploring and discussing job-searching methods

[20] Co-production refer to a relationship between service providers and service users that draws on the knowledge, ability and resources of both to develop solutions to issues that are claimed to be successful, sustainable and cost-effective, changing the balance of power from the professional towards the service user (SCDC, 2011)

and ways of applying for jobs (internet, personal, phone); and also discussion of interview skills and techniques, etc.

According to participants and advisors the action plan and the regular meetings are focused on job-searching activity, tools and techniques mainly looking at the methods, quality, and also intensity of applications. However, the focus will also depend on clients' specific needs at the time and it will vary according to the stage of support that the clients are at. Participants seem to remember that their first meetings were more about expectations and personal circumstances. However, all stages but one (which only focuses on area a) appear to cover areas a, b and c mentioned above.

5.5 – Clients' choice and agency

The type and level of support including frequency of meetings, according to advisors and participants, depends on clients' needs and aims and it is agreed through a dialogue between them. However, a few also mentioned that they come every week because they are asked to do that, although one stressed "*but yeah, I do like coming here, because there's a chance you could get a job"*. One participant summarised the common feeling stating that advisors ask, suggest, and encourage rather than order, and that at the end of the day it is up the individual to decide. In the words of one participant:

> *"They give me all the information, like how to apply, email, what hours, what they need, and then what they think I should go, their sort of view on it. But it's still up to you what you do, it's just what they think. And they're usually right."*

According to advisors, involving clients in the planning of, and decisions regarding, their support develops trust, motivation and independence. It appears that at different stages of the programme the shape of the advisor involvement is different: at some points it involves exploring clients' aims and choices, but also, challenging clients. However, all advisors try to involve the client, so the final decision is their decision. All participants stressed that advisors do not pressure them and that they do not feel they are forced to do anything. In some instances they mentioned being pushed out of the comfort zone in a *"coaxing"* way more than through pressure, and some feel that their advisor tries to *"drive"* activity or increase their motivation to keep activity levels up. Although participants said that there is an expectation from advisors that they will meet a certain level of activity regarding job-search, they stressed that there is not pressure. In the words of one participant:

> *"I feel that they are good in the way that they work with you, they work to your level, they don't pressurise you in saying "right, that's it, next week you've got to get a job, this is ridiculous". They are not like that. They go with how you are feeling and the way that you are coping."*

However, some mentioned that although they can refuse a suggestion from their advisor, they have to have a reason for refusing it:

> *"I can say no, but I would have to have a good reason for saying no. I can't just say no, I don't want to. They would expect you to have a reason for not doing something. Because you can't expect to go back to work if you're not going to help yourself. So there is the option of saying, I don't feel comfortable doing that, but you have to have a good reason why you don't want to do it."*

Type of jobs

With regards to the type of jobs that clients focus their job-search on, it was stressed by advisors that clients have a high degree of choice, because allowing choice promotes trust and achieves job sustainability. However, advisors also mentioned challenging clients' choices[21], either because they are unrealistic or because they will take some time to be accomplished. In the latter case, clients would be encouraged to develop realistic short-term expectations and devise a plan (e.g. *"a backward career plan"*[22]) on how to achieve their long-term aims. This challenging seems to be more common at some stages of the programme. In the words of one advisor:

> *"It's the person's right to choose what type of work... I mean, I think if it's something that I think is unrealistic, I will let them know and I'll try and steer them off that. But equally, I will explore all possibilities".*

One advisor mentioned a couple of examples where clients' choices are respected but at the same time advisor suggestions are taken up by the clients:

> *"I've got a client who wants to get into the police and the reality is she won't, because she doesn't have the right skills. But that's not my place to tell her. So we've investigated and we've looked into the tests, and I've got her to do a couple of the mock tests (…) which she hasn't passed, but she's determined to. So I've said to her, you know, "You continue doing this in your spare time", but we're looking at other options. So I think it's up to the person to realise what's realistic for them as well. I've got another client who wants to become a tattoo artist, and I'm supporting that, but I'm also saying, "you need to be applying for other things as well". Because the jobcentre put a lot of pressure on clients to meet their Jobseekers' Agreement as well, and there's a lot of people that are sort of coming in with sanctions and stuff. So really just, "Okay, we'll look into this, but we also need to be doing this"."*

This is corroborated by participants who stressed that advisors respect their choices in terms of desired hours of work or preferred sector, but that they are encouraged to explore

[21] Through observation of clients and advisors interactions, this was confirmed in one occasion, were the advisor was challenging the expectation of salary that the client had.

[22] A backward career plan works by taken the clients objective as a final aim and working what actions need to be done in order to achieve the final aim. The actions can consist in related jobs that are stepping stones to the final aim, or jobs that would build capital in order to start their own business, etc.

and then, if suitable, consider other areas. However, participants ultimately feel it is up to them[23] and that the advisor respect that they would not consider working in some jobs. In the words of one participant:

> *"If she found a job for me she would say "look at that and see if you feel it's for you, if you feel it's, you know, something you want to apply for", she'll email it and then the choice is mine whether I apply for it or not, I've certainly never been put under pressure to apply for a job that I would feel unhappy in, at any time."*

In summary, it appears that the level of clients' choice and agency is high, or at least it is described as such by advisors and participants. To some extent it could be said there is a degree of co-production in the development of the 'action plan' (content and pace of support).

6. Categorization and legibility

This section describes the working tools that advisors use during different aspects of their work, clients' legibility conditions, and dimensions considered by advisors for and while providing assistance.

6.1 – Working tools and routines

There appears to be only one or two mandatory tools that advisors have to use. However, it was said that there are multiple tools that advisors can use. Participants could not think of any tool (i.e. questionnaire, test, etc.) that they have been asked to fill in or that their advisor uses, with the exception of filling in travel reimbursement, answering a number of questions at the end of courses, and signing in when they come into the offices. Only one participant mentioned signing in with his advisor to have a record of attendance to meeting, similar to JCP attendance recording.

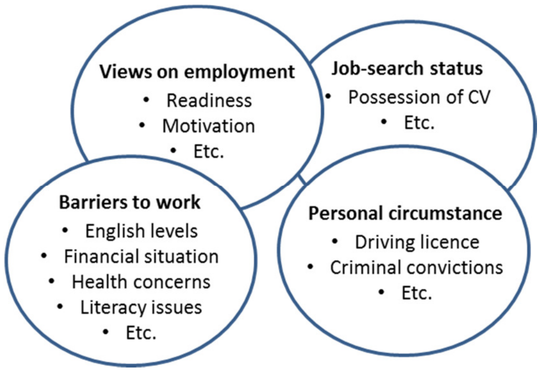
Categorisation and assessment

The initial questionnaire that all clients have to complete, during a period of some weeks, when they access the WP for the first time, is one of the tools that advisors have to use. It is used in order to assess the stage, with regards to participation in the labour market that the client is at and, based on this, the next stage of support for clients is decided. According to advisors, this decision takes into account advisor's and client's opinion. It was stressed that this tool is subjective, allowing advisors to decide in terms of their experience, and matching in some instances advisor and clients according to needs, expertise, and personalities.

[23] This was confirmed through observation of clients and advisors interactions in two occasions, where the advisor made suggestions, but the final decision was put to the client.

Some of the questions are mandatory and they are recorded in an electronic format, in most cases while clients are present. Advisors take clients through the questionnaire in a conversational way because, as advisors mentioned, they are very acquainted with it. The questions aim to understand clients' present situation and circumstances, their barriers to employment, and their future expectations. Some of the themes of the tool are presented in Figure 5, however, this is not an exhaustive representation as the questionnaire was never seen and interviewees could not mentioned systematically what it contained.

Figure 5 – Themes of the initial questionnaire to clients (non-exhaustive).



The same questions are asked later on during the WP, to review clients' situation (regarding expectations, barriers to work, etc.) and progress made (some of the questions required rank answers, e.g. how much of a difficulty is this from 0 to 6). It was not clear from the interviews, but it appears that this tool should be used before finishing or starting new stages of support, however, there does not seem to be any pressure on advisors to complete it. It was hinted, by one advisor, that questions are asked automatically without referring to the tool.

There is also a tool that advisors use to situate their clients in a scale of progression into work, and helps them with targeting the right support for clients and managing their caseload. Advisors were unable to cite all the categories and questions, but they appear to relate mainly to employability and job-search. Advisors mentioned using the tool and clients answers, but also their professional experience when assessing clients' stage on the scale. Advisor mentioned that they found it very useful to show it to clients in order to motivate them, but it could demotivate others:

> *"It is handy to have to show to a client and say "look, when you came here, you didn't have any of these things, so according to the framework ... you have done all these brilliant things, which makes you at the point where you are ready for work". A client would always probably say "no, you've done all this stuff for me, mate" and I am like, "well, no, you've done it. I've just suggested it, you've done all the hard work". And it shows somebody that they have actually progressed."*

It is the case that advisors *"screen"* and categorise clients, who have been already categorised by the DWP and JCP, based on the information given in the tools and in the framework for support. These tools are embedded in and underpinned by the organisation's objectives and model of support, and also by the objectives of formal policy. However, there seems to be scope for subjectivity and participants' input. Therefore it is difficult to see *only* 'mechanical objectivity' (Porter, 1995) taken place in the assessment of individuals.

Support

There are not mandatory tools that advisors have to use when supporting clients. From the information gathered it appears that the Better Off Calculation tool, is the most used by advisors. It shows clients how paid employment (depending on hours work) would affect them financially. According to one advisor there are tools for motivation and for coaching[24], and advisors can develop their own tools to help clients to move closer to or into employment. One advisor gave an example:

> *"I have a small thing that I implement myself, so for example when somebody doesn't have IT skills, I've created and Excel spreadsheet which coaches, teaches, allows somebody to practise mouse coordination. We have basic IT classes in place, but I use this with people who maybe just are not at that stage, they've maybe never turned a computer on before."*

One advisor and one participant mentioned having done tests that were required by a company when applying for a job.

Administration

According to one advisor, all actions related to a client are recorded: appointments, what has taken place during the meeting, what clients have to do between meetings, and what will the focus of the next appointment. Telephone calls, messages and any other activity such as mock or real interviews, applications done online or by phone, speculative letters, CVs, etc. can be added as notes or uploaded to clients' *"journal"*. Employer's details can also be added to the system. This information is needed to obtain evidence of a job-start in order for the organisation to secure one-off and sustained payments.

This journal is used by some advisors to keep track of clients' activity and to have some kind of benchmark of activity required to achieve specific aims. For example, one advisor will use the information in the following manner:

[24] Coaching according to one advisor is different from training as it is about *"allowing somebody to make choices as opposed to making choices for them"*.

> *"I can have an idea of OK, so for... you know, there were 2000 applications done, of which there was you know 8 interviews, or 20 interviews of which 8 people went into work. So again you have that information as factual to share with clients. So "it takes, you know, 200 applications to get 3 interviews and it takes 3 interviews to get one job so, is 3 applications a week going to be enough?". You know, again it is going to be different for the clients that you use it [with], [for] some people it is factual, some people it is challenging"*

It is also used by advisors when a client is accessing another stage or assistance within the WP, so they *"can see all this information before asking them any information"*. However, one advisor chooses not to look at previous notes until after meeting the client, so previous information does not pre-determine his judgement.

Only one participant mentioned advisors filling in the *"weekly diary"*, which includes what they have done, and what they need to do. Four participants mentioned advisors taking notes during their meetings, and they appear to know why these notes were taken: to follow up things that need to be done, to record what has been done, etc. They did not appear troubled about these notes being taken. One participant mentioned that his advisor encourages him to see the notes she is taking *"for my peace of mind".*

In summary, the job of advisors is not crowded with tools they are required to use. The ones that have to be used help to: decide the next stage of support for individuals (classification according to certain characteristics), keep a record of completed and future support and activity, and assist clients with support for their needs (identified by advisor, clients and by the organisation).

6.2 – Client legibility

As mentioned in Section 3.1, only certain categories of claimants are able to access WP provision: JCP refers claimants from the profiling categories to WP prime providers. One participant wanted to join the WP voluntarily because he wanted to access the services offered, but it was difficult to get his JCP advisor to agree to his referral to the WP as he was not part of the 'right' profile.

Once in the WP, claimants become clients of the WP prime provider. They are still classified according to the specific category, which determined their access to the programme and will also determine the amount of money the prime provider will receive for placing and sustaining the client into paid employment. However, in the organisation studied, claimants' categorisation does not determine the support offered. WP clients in the organisation undergo profiling which is based on their position with regards to labour market integration. The decision on clients' position, especially at the first few meetings but also at any other stage, will determine the support and assistance they will receive: more intensive job-focus support or less intensive support.

This profiling is done by advisors with the assistance of two 'categorisation' tools (these are detailed in Section 6.2). These tools are used by advisors at different points during meetings with clients. However, with the exception of the first few meetings with clients, advisors do have the discretion to use, or not, the available tools. It appears that the manner of profiling is determined by advisors' ways of working, and according to advisors by clients' answers to questions that act as a point of reference for profiling (see themes in Figure 5), but also by the advisors' judgement, and clients' opinion. Participants do not appear aware of the categorisation, although are aware of the various stages or type of support available during their time in the organisation. However, when asked about the reasons behind them accessing different stages, they found difficult to explain this.

In this profiling procedure, according to advisors, every aspect of the client's situation that could be a barrier to work is considered. These include their health, housing needs, finances, childcare, communication skills and presentation, motivation, job-search skills, etc. Advisors tend to let clients talk about what they perceive as barriers to work, without using a pre-structured questionnaire. In some cases advisors mentioned that they did not want to constrain the client by asking very specific questions. Advisors stressed that the client's circumstance are fundamental in their chances of moving into employment, and that barriers to work have to be tackled because *"actually there's no point in bashing on and applying for fifty jobs a week if actually the barrier hasn't been addressed"*. The client's situation and barriers are considered not only at the start of the programme, but also at every stage, as the client's circumstances can change at any point. Participants confirmed that the assistance and support given by advisors goes beyond job-search. According to them, advisors ask about their general circumstances and situation, and they try to help in different ways. The majority of participants thought that advisors knew enough of their circumstances and situation to help them adequately.

In some instances, in order to be eligible to access support from external organisations, clients have to belong to the particular 'target group' that an organisation works with. Therefore, clients are classified as fitting the require group (such as 'learning difficulties', 'mental or physical health conditions', 'criminal records', etc.). Courses and external support are not mandatory, but interviewees stressed that in order to be eligible for in-house and external support from sub-contracted organisation, clients *"need to be engaging and attending appointments"*. Therefore this is another manner of categorising individuals: those who engage and those who do not. This requirement is justified by advisors and participants in order to use resources efficiently. Advisors stressed that they decide to refer clients to the supply chain organisations depending on the client's goals and needs, including whether the client belongs to a 'target group'. On some occasions participants were unable to access specific training due to the costs and lack of funding available.

7. Responsibility and sanctions

This section describes how clients and advisors understand their responsibilities with regards to the unemployment situation of the client and the system of sanctions.

7.1 – Responsibility for the client's situation and the client's agency

Advisors stated that they do not feel it is their responsibility to find jobs for clients and that they see their role as supporting and helping clients to become independent (by coaching, allowing clients to make choices, giving them skills they lack, etc.). Advisors and participants see responsibility ultimately lying with the client. However, according to one advisor some responsibility on their part is felt if the client does not get a job, although advisors also stressed that not everyone will get a job, although *"they are always a lot closer to work than when we first met [them]"*.

The specific cause of current long-term unemployment is difficult to assess. Participants mentioned a number of issues that resulted in their current unemployment. In some instances two or more factors overlap and it would be problematic, without further research, to suggest a causal relationship between these factors and unemployment, and even between the multiplicity of factors that the participants mentioned. The reasons for unemployment mentioned were:

- Being made redundant was mentioned most often. Once participants were unemployed, the labour market situation and lack of skills were mentioned as barriers to finding jobs.
- Health issues such as substance misuse and mental health problems.
- Offending backgrounds.
- Care for dependents.
- Other circumstances such as: having problems with partner or ex-partner; child custody issues; having children in care which impacts on availability for work, due to visits to children and mandatory court appearances.

Participants were asked if anything would have helped to retain their job or go back to employment at the point of, or during, the latest unemployment situation; most responded negatively. A minority mentioned that the cause of unemployment was their personal circumstances (such as substance misuse). All participants interviewed mentioned that it is was their responsibility to find a job. This is the case for those who said that the cause of their current unemployment was due to the economic situation (e.g. being made redundant) and for those who mentioned personal circumstances (e.g. substance misuse). The majority of participants mentioned that the responsibility of the organisation was to support them and help them back into employment: providing the facilities, the knowledge, and the encouragement. Ultimately, however, they stressed it was their individual responsibility. In the words of one participant:

> *"It is entirely up to me, to be honest. I need to put in the work, I can't expect someone to go and find me a job, I should be doing it myself, you know. But they are just there to help, just for support, yeah."*

Participants often mentioned the economic situation and employment environment (500 or 800 applicants for one job) as a barrier to them finding employment. Advisors, however, mentioned that the economic situation is not a big factor, and that in many instances flexibility of the client regarding jobs and opportunities, knowledge of adequate job-search techniques and tools, and motivation, were important factors. It was said by one advisor that in many cases people that have been unemployed for a long time feel written off (parked by other organisations) and demotivated. Advisors stressed that in many instances clients just need the right tools and the right support to challenge perceptions and to find work. The assistance mentioned in those cases was information on job-search, support with job-search tools (CV, etc.), time to explore the situation, transferable skills, exploring aims and objectives, general support and encouragement. It was said that in some instances the barrier, or barriers, to labour market participation are very significant. In some instances it is up to the client to overcome those barriers (e.g. substance misuse), and in other cases the barriers were said to be external to the person (e.g. criminal convictions). However, advisors mentioned motivation as a key aspect to success.

In summary advisors and participants' views on responsibility seemed to converge, both placing responsibility for finding work on the individual jobseeker. It is interesting to observe that although most participants mentioned the economic environment as a factor in their lack of success when applying for jobs, all of them believe the responsibility to find work falls entirely on them. This is especially reflected in the ideas from advisors that getting employment depends on individual attributes (such as 'flexibility', motivation, etc.) which puts responsibility on the individual. However, it was also stressed that the right support is necessary to enable individuals to develop these characteristics.

7.2 – Sanctions

Attending the WP is for most clients is mandatory. Sanctions for non-compliance are imposed ultimately by the JCP. In order for the JCP to impose sanctions, the prime contractors (and therefore advisors) have to report clients' non-compliance with mandation to the JCP (this is a contractual requirement). However, it appears that actions are not mandatory per se, and that advisors have the authority to make actions mandatory (or not). According to advisors *"somebody can only be sanctioned for their benefit if they miss a mandatory activity"*, while those on health related benefits *"can only be mandated to attend appointments"*. Although according to advisors there are a number of clients who do not engage, it seems that sanctions (reporting the client to JCP to be potentially sanctioned[25]) are not the first recourse that they use to encourage clients to attend, and *"most advisors are very reluctant to do it"*. Non-engagement varies but advisors stated that there could be multiple reasons for it, and they have to be 'adaptable' in their approach to clients: *"there's a lot of people with a lot of chaotic lives, things happen. So sometimes you have to change plan, but that's okay".*

Mandation, for example making appointments or activities mandatory, is not often used unless necessary (for example by someone after the third non-show to an appointment or when a client is clearly uncooperative). Before mandation is used advisors try to be as flexible as possible with their clients. When a client does not attend or act on mandation, then advisors fill in JCP forms (e.g. entitlement doubt form) explaining the issues and it is JCP who makes the decision as to whether to apply sanctions. Advisors stressed that they prefer to work on trust and allow and encourage clients to take part in the decision making regarding the frequency of meetings, the type of support, etc. As one advisor stated:

> *"You are allowing them flexibility and a bit of freedom, and they are in turn giving you trust" (...) "with some people a huge amount of trust is needed there. If you take away the mandation of activities for that person, unless of course it is necessary, then that builds up trust."*

None of the participants interviewed had been sanctioned during their time with the organisation (although two knew someone that had) and most did not mention mandation at any point. However a few were under the impression that meetings with the advisors were mandatory, either because JCP or the organisation had said so. Participants stated that there is an expectation, and some mentioned an agreement, that they have to engage in regular job-search activity. However, participants had the impression that the organisation did not sanction or that advisors did not want to sanction.

Jobcentre Plus

The experiences described above contrasts with opinions and experiences of JCP. Some participants mentioned they had been threatened with sanctions, although only one had been sanctioned (albeit wrongly and they got the money reimbursed).

> *"The Jobcentre would sanction you pretty quick, but they [organisation's advisors] don't want to put you through to get sanctioned, because it'll make things worse."*

Sanctions imposed by JCP, according to participants, could occur if they do not apply for a specific number of jobs, or if they miss an appointment without reason. One participant

[25] Although advisors mentioned in their discourse that they do not use sanctions as the first option when client do not engage; advisor also stressed that they do not impose sanctions, it is JCP that sanctions.

explained that sanctions have very serious and unintended consequences for some people and can make people annoyed:

> *"It was a really bad shock and you think that's it, how am I going to have food, your light, your electricity and then your benefit I think it's the same as your rent, all of these things just come all at once you know and you do get a little bit annoyed, you know trigger happy I call it to do something like that just be being on the opposite, it's not an understanding case. I have had that thing where I've had to bite my tongue or sometimes I voice my opinion but in the calmest possible way"*

Complaints or challenging situations

Advisors stressed that *"there is a very clear complaints procedure"*. Clients are encouraged to give feedback. If a client is unhappy, advisors *"try and solve it themselves"*. Unhappiness was said to often come from sanctions, due to clients not wanting *"to engage and it is a defence mechanism, so they can walk away without engaging"* or it could be that there are a number of difficulties in their lives which provoke a challenging situation. In the case of non-engagement clients are reminded of their Jobseekers' Agreement and in cases of challenging circumstances advisors try to direct clients to the right kind of help, in-house support or support from other organisations.

Participants stated that they never have had any trouble or problems with any the organisation's advisors, although they had experienced challenging situations with other employment agencies previously.

8. Conclusions

This section touches on a number of issues developed in the report: employability and assistance; individualisation and flexibility; choice and agency; and categorisation, legibility and responsibility. It ends by reflecting on service implementation and best practice. The need to maintain total anonymity of the organisation studied has to some extent reduced the detail and richness of the information presented. However the request for full anonymity is understandable as such detailed information creates concerns over intellectual property and commercial confidentiality for the participant organisation.

Employability and assistance

The WP black-box' approach to service delivery allows the organisation to design service provision as they see fit in order to meet formal policy goals. Meeting WP aims set by DWP is necessary due to the WP financial model (payment by results). Although the organisation has freedom to devise service provision, it is constrained by formal policy goals and available finances (i.e. total payment expected for services and expected return).

The assistance given by the organisation could be classified in the same way that labour market policy is often classified: supply-side and demand-side assistance. The former encompasses general personal support and job-search and job-specific support. It includes (a) 'soft' and holistic help and (b) more 'hard' and targeted help. Demand-side assistance takes the form of, for example, securing work trials. The main focus of the assistance, on the surface, appears to be supply-side hard help; however, soft help is also offered. At the same time demand-side assistance was considered very important by participants and advisors. Using a broad employability framework (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005), the assistance provided by the organisation, touches on many employability factors such as: individual factors (assisting with employability skills and attributes, job seeking, health and well-being, and exploring adaptability and mobility); personal circumstances (trying to overcome some household circumstances, and assisting in some cases with access to resources); and external factors (trying to tackle some demand factors and providing enabling support). Job sustainability appears to be a central aspect of the assistance given. While the support provided could not be classified as a 'human capital approach' (Lindsay et al. 2007), it seems to be a departure from an absolute work-first approach.

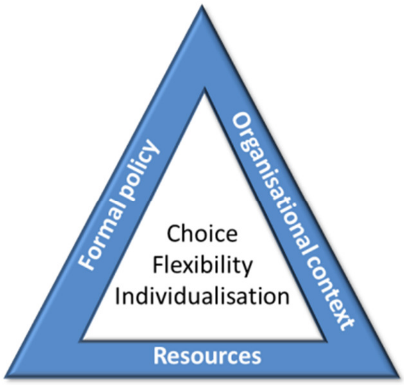
NPM characteristics such as target performance and measurement in the operation of the WP appear as a necessary as a consequence of the financial model of payment-by-results. These could put pressure on advisors to prioritise assistance for those closer to the labour market (creaming). Those closer to the labour market appear to receive assistance more frequently, however, information from advisors stressed that: although targets and indicators are an integral part of their performance they are not at the forefront of day-to-day practices; and that a balance on the advisor's caseload was required even if more constant support was "*necessary"* for those closest to the labour market.

Individualisation and flexibility

The goals of the organisation will determine service provision and resources (influenced as mentioned before by formal policy). Organisational context (goals, resource, rules and guidelines, etc.) will determine the service delivery of front-line workers, although individuals are able to interpret and implement organisational requirements in different ways (depending on many factors coming from the organisation, clients and casework themselves), and therefore advisors implementation could influence organisational context and formal policy (Rice, 2012).

There seems to be limited standardisation in the format and type of support in the organisation studied, perhaps surprisingly when considering the NPM governance characteristics of the WP. There is a typical pattern in terms of number of people seen by advisors, length and regularity of meetings, tools used, and the type of support available. Nevertheless, advisors appear to have a great degree of autonomy and flexibility during service implementation, in terms of their planning of the day, the pace and type of support, and the use of tools. This allows for individualisation within a pre-given framework created by formal policy, organisational context, and available resources (Figure 6). The operational governance of the work of advisors includes scope for advisors to use their autonomy and judgement to decide what assistance to offer, depending on the needs of the client. From the information given by interviewees, it does not appear that advisors have to ‘do things in the right way’ but are encouraged to do ‘the right thing’ (Garsten & Jacobsson, 2013).

Figure 6 – Constraints on advisor flexibility, client choice and individualisation of services.



It is important to mention that resources appear to greatly influence the individualisation of services: i.e. the smaller the range of assistance, the greater the standardisation of services (less individualisation and choice). It is difficult, due to the lack of data on WP service delivery to know if the organisation studied is offering more or less support compared to other organisations. National statistics show that targets for individuals on health related benefits are not being achieved, but without more research into the reasons for lack of progression into employment it is difficult to ascertain the type of support that is missing. Therefore, with this very limited picture, and with the limited information gathered in this study regarding range of support, a tentative analysis is that the support and assistance provided to those with health issues or multiple barriers is narrow. However important issues in this discussion are, amongst others: the type of support needed; the finance available to WP organisations from the DWP; and the role of external agencies. It is necessary to stress that participants interviewed, including those with multiple barriers, found the support they received extremely useful and were very grateful for this support.

Bearing in mind the caveats mentioned above, the elements that seem to make provision tailor-made to the needs of clients are:

- The choices and participation of clients shaping the pace and type of support.
- One-to-one and general support provided by advisors (including the relationship between clients and advisors).
- Advisor flexibility and effort to accommodate the needs of clients.
- Creativity in the support given depending on the needs of clients.
- Opportunity to explore different types of support.
- Sustainability factor within the support provided.

- Matching of advisors to clients.

Factors mentioned by advisors as possible hindrances to individualisation of services were hours of service provision, performance targets alongside advisors' caseload, and minimum standards of support. Objective factors that could hinder individualisation perceived during the study were the available resources: (a) the range of services offered, which is very influenced by the financial and contractual model of the WP; (b) the high caseloads of advisors; (c) performance based on targets could result in creaming and parking. The lack of individualisation as a result of these factors could affect more those service users with multiple needs; this is especially true for the effects that performance targets may have on individualisation.

Choice and agency

Claimants of out-of-work benefits have to sign a Jobseeker's Agreement in order to receive out of work benefits and employability support. Therefore the choice of the individual to refuse or modify the agreement is minimal. In the agreement they commit themselves to take certain actions, for example look for a specific number of jobs each week, etc. A breach in the agreement or the action plan can trigger sanctions[26]. WP mandated claimants do not have a choice about attending the WP or which prime provider to access.

In the organisation studied the agency of clients and opportunities for clients to have choice is high. To some extent it could be said that there is a degree of co-production in the development of the support. However, interventions could be creating empowerment and agency but within a pre-given framework (Figure 6). Therefore it could be argued that there is restricted agency and choice or a 'constrained co-production' (e.g. clients can suggest and decide the frequency of the meetings, within the framework of 'obligatory meetings').

Bearing in mind the caveats mentioned above, the elements that appear to provide choice and agency to clients' are:

- The choices and participation of clients shaping the pace and type of support.
- Lack of pressure to take jobs in certain sectors or with certain conditions (such as hours, distance, etc.).
- Final decision in many areas (jobs, pace and type of support) appears to rest with the client.

Objectives factors hindering choice and agency are the constraining frame within which 'available choice' is enacted. The constraining frame is for example: (a) service users inability to withdraw from the WP; (b) inability to change the provider assigned to them; (c)

[26] There are different levels of sanctions: e.g. non-compliance with rules, such as refusing leaving a job voluntarily, will bring loses of benefits for 13 weeks, 26 weeks and 3 years for the first, second and third failures respectively. Those sanctioned could apply for special "hardship payments" administered by local authorities (DWP, 2012c).

or unfeasibility of refusing to comply with WP activities, at least to some degree (e.g. the minimum for some clients is attending meetings).

Categorisation, legibility and responsibility

Claimants mandated to the WP have been categorised according to the benefits received and other characteristics (such as age), which, if outcomes are achieved for them, trigger different payments to the employment agency. It is the case that advisors 'screen' and categorise clients, by tools embedded in and underpinned by the organisation's objectives and model of support, and also by the objectives of formal policy. The classifications are focused on the distance of the client from the labour market. However, there seems to be scope for subjectivity and input from participants, not *only* 'mechanical objectivity' (Porter 1995) in the assessment of individuals. According to the advisors, their experience and their judgement are fundamental in deciding the next stages, pace and type of support. The classification of clients (with regards to their position to participating in the labour market) appears to be based on:

- The goals of the client.
- Current situation and barriers to employment.
- Job-search tools and techniques, and individual employability factors (such as attributes and skills).

For some years now, claimants have had to sign a Jobseeker's Agreement in order to receive employability support and out-of-work benefits. The agreement sets out responsibilities and commitments to be met by the unemployed person. As the unemployed person does not have the option to refuse or amend the agreement, it is not a co-produced tool between employment service agencies and the individual, but a tool to transfer, in writing, responsibility from JCP to the individual. Mandated clients have the right to receive WP services, and the obligation to attend and participate in the WP (different levels of mandation appear to exist for different claimant group). During the WP sanctions for non-compliance are imposed by JCP, but prime contractors have to report to JCP clients' instances of non-compliance with mandation. WP activities do not appear to be mandatory per se, therefore the prime contractor, and advisors in this case, appear to have authority of making actions mandatory. Mandation was said not to be used unless necessary, as it was said to affect the advisor-client relationship. Advisors prefer to explore other avenues to address the reasons behind non-engagement such as being flexible, working on trust and giving clients' choice.

Looking at public policies dealing with unemployment and its effects, it can be observed that over time, responsibility for unemployment has shifted, with increasing responsibility falling onto individual unemployed people. Interviewees put responsibility on finding employment solely within the unemployed person. Advisors specially, mentioned individual attributes such as 'flexibility' and motivation, as fundamental in order to gain paid employment.

However, it was also stressed that the right support is necessary for individuals to achieve some of these characteristics or attributes, and that some people have a barrier, or barriers, that stop them from participating in employment.

Learning from best practice

The operational design of the WP could present some issues regarding the possibility to learn from best practice and the level of transparency on how national policy is implemented. The lack of detailed information around the implementation of the WP is understandable due its financial and contractual model, in which intellectual property and commercial confidentiality for prime providers is fundamental.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Scenario for advisors

Questions are denoted by round white bullet points, while prompts are denoted by squared and black bullet points. The interviewer highlighted important questions or prompts by underlining those. Questions that are not underlined were of secondary importance and only asked where time permitted. Blue font writing denotes notes for the interviewer. Questions in brown font have been added to the interview template used by all members of the consortium. The interview template is divided in sections (black bold headings).

Inform Participant about:

- *The aim of the interview*
- *How the information will be handled (confidentiality and anonymity)*
- *Who will be using the results and how*
- *Where the results will be published*

Note:

- *Age*
- *Gender*

I. Contextual information on the organisation

- How long have you been working with the organisation?
- What was your previous job?
- Please tell me, in your own words what is the main task of the organisation?
- What is your role in the organisation?
  - How do you see your role in relation to the client? And in relation to your organisation?

II. Contextual information on the structure of everyday work

- Tell me, what does your typical day at work look like?
  - *How many clients a day do you meet?*
  - *How much time do you have on average for one person?*
  - *Do you have time to prepare for meeting with the client?*
  - *Is there a fixed number of unemployed you are supposed to meet a day or a month?*
  - *What other responsibilities do you have (e.g. paperwork, project applications, etc.)?*
  - *How do you manage to reconcile all these tasks? Is there something you cannot do because of lack of time?*
- Do you feel personally responsible for your clients?
- What happens when a client first contacts your organisation? What happens next?

- Who does s/he meet?

- Does a client have a specific advisor who is responsible for his or her?
  - *Is there one specific person who monitors what happens with the client?*

- What is your case load?

- Could you describe a typical meeting with a client?
  - *Are those meetings scheduled?*
  - *How long do they take?*
  - *Who initiates them (an unemployed person, a advisor)?*
  - *How often do they take place?*
  - *Where do the client meetings take place? (If possible, take note on spatial organisation: securing privacy versus focus on impersonal relations & massive processing)*
  - *Do you also contact clients outside of these meetings, e.g. by phone or email? In what kind of situation?*

III. Evaluation and Monitoring

- How is your work monitored?

- According to what criteria your work is evaluated?

- Are there any (performance/quality) indicators you are expected to meet? *(If possible, collect blank sheets with these)*
  - *What are they measuring?*
  - *Who defines them?*
  - *Are they relevant for your work?*
  - *To what extent do the performance measures control the content of your work at a daily level?*
  - *What happens if they are difficult to meet?*
  - *Can you be rewarded for good work? How?*

- How do the performance goals and indicators influence your everyday work?

- Have you or your colleagues been reprimanded?

- What happens if a client makes a (formal) complaint about a worker/advisor?

IV. Process of service delivery

- What tools do you use when working with clients (administrative forms, interview guidelines, psychological tests, individual action plans, etc.)? (If possible, collect these)
  - *What is their role?*
  - *Are they useful? Why? (administrative forms, interview guidelines, psychological tests, individual action plans, etc.)?*
  - *Are you able to influence their form?*
  - *Can you adapt them in everyday work? How?*

- How do they help you in your work with clients? Which instruments do you prefer using? Why?

- Are clients asked to fill in any forms/(psychological) tests/other documents?
    - *What kind of documents? (Collect all relevant blank documents)*
    - *What information do they include?*
    - *What are they for? Are they obligatory? What do you think about their content?*
    - *Do you discuss the results of these tests with an unemployed person? How do they help the unemployed person to evaluate his/her situation?*

- Do you have a meeting plan, a template, or a list of questions that you use during the meeting with your clients? (If possible, collect these)
    - *How is this plan prepared?*
    - *Do other advisors use it too? Is it obligatory to use?*
    - *What do you think about its content?*
    - *How do you use information collected this way?*

- Do you yourself take notes of a meeting, or do you in any other way gather information about your client? How?
    - *What does it include? Do others have access to it? Who? How do you use this information later on?*
    - *Do you discuss with your colleagues about individual cases? Please, tell me more about it.*

- If there is a list of questions/a plan of the client meeting: Does it ever happen that it is difficult to stick to your list of questions/plan of the meeting?

- What kind of difficulties might arise during meeting with a client? How do you handle such a situation?
    - *Do you have, lets say challenging, or difficult clients? (*check the terms they used*). Do they have something in common? Can you characterise them?*

- Do you have specific counselling talks with the unemployed?
    - *If relevant: How are counselling talks organised? Who is present?*
    - *If relevant: Can you tell me about their content?*
    - *If relevant: How does a typical counselling meeting proceed? Could you please give me an example?*
    - *What kinds of tests do you make use of?*
    - *If relevant: What is the aim of this test?*
    - *What forms are used to document the results of the test?*

- What characteristics of the client do you taken into account when planning their action plan (e.g. personality, education, learning skills, etc.)?
    - *Why these ones?*
    - *You have said that you gather information on an unemployed person's xxx (refer to what your interviewee actually said). What about other potential life problems that might decrease chances of finding a job like, for example, difficult family situation, health problems, homelessness (refer to life*

problems which were not mentioned)? What options do you have to respond to such problems?

- What are the dimensions of 'employability' that are relevant (e.g. education, skills, experiences, personality) when planning the action plan?
- Do you consult your colleagues in the organisation, why and when? Do you contact other organisations?
- What do you do if something is beyond the scope of responsibility of your organization?

V. The course of action - steps

- How do you plan the support for a client?
  - *Is an "individual action plan" set up for each individual? (Take note of the term used) Please describe what such a plan involves. (Ask to get a copy of a blank individual action plan)*
  - *What information does an individual activation plan contain?*
  - *How are they agreed upon? What is the role of this plan, as you see it?*
  - *What do you propose to her/him?*
  - *What decides what you can offer?*
- What are the steps on the plan of support?
  - *What is the time frame?*
- To what extent are the interventions/programmes tailor-made for the individual?
  - *What is the role of the unemployed person in the planning of this process?*
  - *What is the scope of choice for the individual?*
- Do you have some flexibility in adapting to the client's needs or interests? Describe how. (If not, ask why).
  - *Do you often use that room of manoeuvre?*
  - *To what extent can clients choose or have a say in deciding on the specific measures or interventions. (If not, why?)*
- How the responsibilities of the parties involved are laid down in the activation plan? (Does the plan impose obligations also on your organisation too or just on the job-seeker?)
  - *What are the requirements a client must fulfil to get support?*
  - *Are any of these actions (in the course of activation) obligatory?*
  - *Do they have evaluation procedures to follow-up on a person's actions, i.e. that s/he fulfils the obligations?*
  - *What are the sanctions? When are sanctions applied?*

- Do you have enough and the right resources to help your clients?
  - *Why not? What is missing?*

VI. Collaboration between organisations

- Do you cooperate with other institutions/organisations when it comes to activation of long term unemployed?
  - How often (daily, weekly, on a one to one basis, etc.)
  - Which ones?

- What does the collaboration consist of?
  - How is this collaboration established (who starts it, is there guidelines/contracts)

- How does it affect your clients? How does it influence their chances for finding employment and their well-being?

- In your view, do you have good cooperation with other organisations? Can you always find/access the support the clients need?
  - Why not?

- What are the challenges/difficulties/misunderstandings resulting from cooperation with the organisations/institutions you have mentioned?
  - Where do these problems come from? How do you deal with them?
  - Please tell me about your experience in this respect...

- Do you inform your clients about other organisations/institutions providing other types of support and services?
  - If not: why not?
  - If yes: In what situations do you refer /direct them to these organisations?

- Are there any organisations you would like to collaborate/link which are the moment you are not collaborating with?
  - What would you like from them?
  - Why there is not collaboration?

VII. Extra

- What do you think of the policies in place for the long-term unemployed? Do you think they are fit for purpose? Do you think they achieve what they were set to achieve?
  - What is missing? Why?

- What do you think of the support offer by your organisation?
  - Is there something missing?

- What do you think is the effect of your assistance/support on clients?

- If you had the opportunity to do anything you wanted to help your clients, what would the support look like?

End

- Do you have anything that you wish to add?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Appendix 2 – Interview Scenario for clients

Questions are denoted by round white bullet points, while prompts are denoted by squared and black bullet points. The interviewer highlighted important questions or prompts by underlining those. Questions that are not underlined were of secondary importance and only asked where time permitted. Blue font writing denotes notes for the interviewer. Questions in brown font have been added to the interview template used by all members of the consortium. The interview template is divided in sections (black bold headings).

Inform IP about:

- The aim of the interview
- How the information will be handled (confidentiality)
- Who will be using the results and how
- Where the results will be published
- Offer gift voucher (if accepted signed for it)

Take note of demographical aspects, like:

- Age
- Gender

I. The life situation of the interviewee

- Could you please tell me a little about your personal background …
  - *Do you have a family?*
  - Where do you live?
  - What is your professional experience?
  - What is your housing situation?
  - What education do you have?
  - How would you generally describe your experience in terms of work since leaving school?

- What was your last job position? How long were you employed there? What happened later?
  - How long have you been unemployed?

- Was it the first time you applied for assistance from employment services?
  - If no: please tell me a little bit about the circumstances of the first contact with PES. Why did you decide to contact them? What did you expect from them?

- Why did you approach the organisation? How did you approach the organisation?

- Have you ever applied for social welfare support or assistance from other organisations (NGO, municipal, private employment agencies, etc.)?
  - If yes: in what circumstances? Why did you decide to contact them? What did you expect from them?

II. Encounters with the Organisation

Structure of relations

Let's talk now about your contacts with the organisation:

- How long have you been with the organisation?
- How often have you been coming in this period?
- With whom have you met?

- What were these meetings about? Please give me examples ...
- Were they useful for you? Why? In what way?
- Are you encouraged to participate in the meetings, for example asking questions, saying what you would like to do?
- Does your advisor respond in a way that is helpful for you?
- What is the attitude of the staff here? (Are they helpful, polite, indifferent, rude?)
- Have you felt any kind of pressure from them? What has this been it about? (Ask more about any form of pressure put on an individual, positive and negative)

- Can you describe a typical meeting with the advisor?
- How would you describe your relationship with the advisor?

Diagnosis & categorisation

- In your view, do you think that your advisor has a good understanding of your life situation?
    - If not: What kind of information is lacking? Why is that?
- Does he/she ask about your situation in order to plan further actions?
    - Do you recall such a situation? When was it?
    - What was s/he asking you about?
    - Did his/her questions concern your education? Professional career? Your private life? Did s/he ask you about your expectations? Did s/he ask you what you want to do professionally?
    - Was there anything surprising about these questions? What?
    - Did s/he explain the aim of these questions?
    - Did s/he explain how s/he would make use of your answers?
    - Were you asked to fill in some documents/forms? What were they?
    - Did s/he explain the aim of these documents/forms?

- Have you taken part in some kind of testing of your assets and weaknesses (i.e. skills test, personality test)?
    - If yes: what did this/these test/s involve?
    - What are your views on the test(s) used?
    - Are they helpful in any way? How?
    - Are they problematic in any way? How?
    - Have your been invited to comment on the test results?
    - If so: How was this done?
    - To what extent did your comments influence the end result of the assessment?

Services & conditionality

- Do you agree with your advisor on a plan for further actions?
- Can you tell me what the content is?
- What was your role in making this plan?

- Was this plan written down?

- Was this an 'individual action plan'? (use the organisation term for the instrument)
- How are your responsibilities for finding a job laid down in it?
- Have you been obliged to sign it?
  - What would happen if you had refused to sign it? Were you informed about the consequences of refusal?
- Has this ever been close, or happened, to you?

- What kind of offers/proposals did you receive from the organisation (we want to know about job offers, services, benefits, etc.)?
- What do you think about them? Did they fulfil your expectations? Did they answer your needs? If not, why?
- Were you given a choice – or was there only one offer?
- Have you been able to choose the programme/the services? Have you been able to choose the provider?
- Have you been on any compulsory training schemes (or work experience schemes) and if so, what was your experience of them like?
- Which forms of assistance/services have you benefited from? (Ask for details about types of support)
- Were there any particular requirements you must have fulfilled to get assistance?
- Are you obliged/asked to do something on your own, to receive the support?
- Are there evaluation procedures that follow up on whether you fulfil your obligations in order to get the financial benefits and the support you are entitled to?
- Are these in any way good for you, in your view? How?
- Do they in some way have a negative effect for you? How?
- Have you ever felt that your advisor has pushed you to take part in a certain intervention that you did not want to participate in?
- If so: Can you give me an example?
- Were there any proposals/offers from PES that you did not use? What kind? Why? Have there been any consequences of that?

- Have you ever been sanctioned by the organisation? Why?
- Have you ever been sanction by other organisations or agencies?

Agency

- To what extent have you been able to influence the assistance you are getting? What aspects of it do you feel that you can influence? Please give me examples.
- Do you feel that you can defend your interest in relation to the organisation? Why/Why not?
- Has it ever happened that you wanted some kind of support or help, but for some reason you were not provided this? Please tell me more about it... What did you do?
- Has it ever happen that you were not satisfied with the service provided? Please tell me more about it... What did you do?
- Have you ever had any unpleasant situation/conflict with advisor? What was it about? What did you do?

III. Responsibility & responsibilization

- Have you been able to get the information you need from the organisation?

- Has it been easy for you to get access to people you need to meet with?
- Do you fell that you have been given enough information into the process, the steps of support and who is responsible for them?

- In your view, what circumstances caused your unemployment?
- Are you yourself responsible for your unemployment? In what way?
- What, if anything, could you have done differently in order not to be unemployed?
- Who or what else is responsible?

- In terms of who is responsible for getting you a job, what do you think is the view of the agency? Your responsibility or theirs?
- What, in your view, do you think that *you yourself* need to do to find a job?
- What is the responsibility of other parties/agencies involved?
- What are the responsibilities of the organisation, according to the individual action plan?

IV. Relations with employees of other agencies

- Have you been directed to other organisations? Which one(s)? Why?
- If yes: What is your experience with their assistance?
  - Has it helped you in any way? How?
  - Has it complicated things? How?
  - What is your impression of the collaboration between PES and other agencies involved?

V. Assessment of people processing by clients, impact on well-being & agency:

- In your view, what is the relevance of the support proposed to you by the agency? How do you decide which offers from the organisation to take up?
- Do you think that they are taking your needs into account? In what way/why not?
- Do you think that they are taking into account what *you* want? Or have you been forced to use a prepared set of services?
- In your opinion, is an individual action plan useful? How/why not? Does it serve your interest? Why not?
- Could you tell me more about your current life and professional situation, as it is now?
- How has your life improved or deteriorated since your contact with the agency? What is the role of the agency in changing it for better or for worse?
- How has the support affected your confidence and general feeling about yourself?
- How could the services be improved so that you would have a better experience and outcome?
- At the end, I would like to ask you, how do you generally assess your experiences with the agency?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!