

**Begleitende Evaluationsstudie des  
Wiener Pilotprojektes Step 2 Job.**

**Berufliches Unterstützungsmanagement  
für BezieherInnen der Bedarfsorientierten  
Mindestsicherung**

**Englische Kurzfassung**

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# Accompanying Evaluation Study on the Vienna Step 2 Job Pilot Programme

## Professional Support Services for Recipients of Means Tested Minimum Income

Final Report Summary

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The overall aim of the Step 2 Job pilot is to reintegrate employable recipients of means tested minimum income between the ages of 21 and 64 back into the labour market. The project participation period was limited to 12 months and participation was compulsory. Case Management Methodology was used to support the 802 participants of the Step 2 Job project.

#### **81% of the participants received support for over 3 months**

A variety of goals were set for the Case Management. One sub-goal, which defined that three quarters of the assigned participants should accept the offer of support and remain in the programme for a minimum of three months was satisfactorily achieved. The average length of time in the programme for all of the participants was almost eight months.

#### **A year after commencing with the programme, a quarter of the participants had been in employment for a minimum of 92 days**

The job placement goal for this project, which laid out that 30% of the participants required to be in fully insured employment (either on the common labour market or as part of a subsidised work placement programme) was almost (but not entirely) reached: One year after commencing with Step 2 Job 26% of the programme's clients achieved this goal. Almost half (44%) of the participants, however, achieved at least one day of employment and were able to accomplish (short-term) re-entry into the labour market.

#### **Achievement of Sub-Goals, Qualification and Stabilisation**

Upon analysis of the overall results of the consulting endeavours, it can be said that in only 13% of the cases no results could be achieved. Consequently, for the group of participants (one third), who remained without employment, it can be assumed that their employability was improved – 27% through training and qualification activities and 6% through stabilisation of their personal circumstances. A further 4% have retired or are incapacitated and approximately the same amount are on maternity leave or chronically ill, and therefore currently not available for work.

#### **Age, Qualifications and Nationality influence the Programme Outcomes**

Upon analysis of the results of the consulting process according to social indicators, i.e. a participant's gender, few disparities emerged. Women attained entrance to employment in slightly fewer cases and participated in training programmes somewhat more often. A more considerable divergence came to light upon examination of age, qualifications and nationality. Persons over the age of 45 are less likely to be integrated into the labour market and have fewer qualifications to offer. This group, along with persons with special needs and persons with low educational achievement, are (currently) not available for employment (retirement, incapacity, maternity leave). Programme participants of foreign nationality, and those who have at least attained a high school certificate (according to DWH-Documentation), however are likely to achieve higher and longer employment status. This group currently shows fewer cases of incapability and they are less likely to leave the programme without a positive result. For migrants, persons who did not achieve compulsory school education and for persons with special needs, the consulting process often resulted in further qualification programmes. The main share of participants from the "stabilisation" category were persons with special needs.

## Formal Qualifications for Migrants

Measured according to not speaking German as a mother tongue, 55% of the participants had migration origins. A fairly large proportion of this group probably had educational qualifications which are not recognized in Austria. This conclusion is formed on the grounds that in over half of the cases, the participants' own description of their academic achievement levels was significantly higher than the data stored in the Employment Office System.

## Gender and Country of Origin determine Resources and Problem Areas

The established resources and problems for labour market (re)-integration vary for men and women, and also differ according to nationality and country of origin:

- For women the main areas include childcare responsibilities and other care duties, deficient labour market skill and limited access to communication technology such as the internet.
- Men often face problems in the fields of housing, debt and criminal behaviour.
- Migrants were mainly disadvantaged by their linguistic deficiencies and lack of the necessary qualifications and skills to fulfil the requirements of achievable (re)integration into the labour market.
- In the non-migrant group of means tested minimum income recipients it was notable that, apart from the issue of (German) language knowledge, this group had even fewer resources at their disposal and more burdens to bear than their migrant peers.

## Degree of Problem Severity correlates with Age and Educational Level

It can generally be said that the severity of problems increases with the ongoing aging process: On the one hand, certain (already existent) problem areas are exacerbated and, on the other hand, the number of problems increase. The level of formal qualifications correlates with the intensity of problems even more strongly than the aspect of age – especially concerning the range of problematic issues a person might have to deal with. It can ultimately be said that the level of formal qualifications strongly influences the success or failure of individual interventions and the general outcome of the Step 2 Job programme participation. Qualifications and professional skills can therefore once again be described as fundamental resources for conquering difficult personal circumstances.

## Intervention Success Rates

The reception of the offered interventions for dealing with the above mentioned problem areas were mixed and the achieved improvements differed substantially. The majority of activities went to address issues surrounding labour market skills and competences and some interventions aimed at improving health and the financial situation of the participant. Proposed interventions in the latter two areas were frequently declined and, together with issues surrounding housing, these are the problem areas which take the longest time to solve. Job Application Trainings and German Language Courses achieved the best results followed by assistance concerning housing and childcare issues. The resolution of debt problems during the course of the project participation was hardly ever achieved, and only one out of ten persons was able to achieve a marked improvement in their situation.

Upon analysis of the success rate of the proposed interventions in view of the current situation of the individual programme participants (taking into account their resources, problem areas and social criteria), then it is possible to draw further conclusions concerning the choice of support activities and their possible impact.

- Generally speaking, women have larger burdens to carry than men and therefore receive more support on the whole. They accept these offers more often than men and successfully finish the programmes more often than their male compatriots. Men are less likely to successfully conclude a support programme and more likely to decline the offer.
- Having a migration background seems to have a positive effect on the general success of interventions. Programme participants without a migration background generally receive more support offers, which they then either decline or do not succeed in fulfilling than clients with a migration background. Persons without a migration background are significantly less likely to achieve a marked improvement in their situation through the programme's support services than clients with a migration background.
- Whilst the number of problems rise proportionally with advancing age, the quantity of offered support activities stays the same. Clients in the prime of their working years were able to benefit most from the support services. Younger participants were at a higher risk of breaking off the programme or declining to participate. In the group of older candidates it was noted that an above average proportion were unable to finish their programmes by the end of their project participation. This fact leads to the conclusion that the older group, in comparison with younger participants, would be better served with longer-term interventions.
- Persons with poor formal education are generally challenged with an array of problems. Consistently, this group is offered the highest quantity of support services. However, the group of participants with a poor education background were more likely to decline support offers or broke off programmes which they had begun. In contrast, results showed that participants with mid-level qualifications had the highest success rates. On the other hand, there were a number of members of the poorly educated group that did very well and were successfully able to be helped by the interventions offered to them.

These insights lead to the question whether these kinds of interventions actually pave the way to labour market entrance. The findings show that of all the participants who succeed in labour market reintegration (including participants in long-term training) a larger amount had successfully partaken in at least one support intervention.

### **High Satisfaction Rates amongst the interviewed Programme Participants**

209 clients of the Step 2 Job programme were contacted by phone and asked about their satisfaction with Step 2 Job. Two thirds of the interviewed parties were very satisfied with the programme, a quarter was generally satisfied. Empathy and empowerment on the part of the consultants were considered important ingredients towards general satisfaction with the programme. In addition, their competence in job placement was also highly valued. The consultants' performance was also evaluated by the clients according to their dedication and commitment to help, their knowledge of the Viennese labour market and their contacts to companies and organisations.

Important indicators for programme success were an in-depth discussion of the most important issues surrounding labour market (re)integration at the beginning of the programme as well as the definition of clear goals i.e. by jointly deciding on objectives for programme participation. The suitability of the Case Management approach is hereby endorsed by the involved parties as this methodology is strongly aligned towards the creation of clear goals. According to the interviewed participants, the integration of issues surrounding basic financial security and integration into the labour market were most successfully achieved. Fewer success stories were found in areas surrounding social integration, self-assessment, self-reliance and motivation to find work.

The expectation of the participants was to achieve labour market integration, and therefore they were able to endorse both purpose and goal of the programme.

#### **Case Management – Catch Phrase or Effective Approach?**

The Case Management approach was favoured by the project funding authority, as they felt it was the best way to deal with the broad range of projected problems that the target groups face. However, this methodological approach requires intensive personal support, as well as active networking and co-operation activities in order that a comprehensive support system can be upheld.

Compliance with the basic principles and procedures of Case Management Practice served to show that this support method was realized (within the framework and project parameters, which were set out by the funding organization). Restrictions, such as the 12 month time limit, however were applicable.

#### **Four Main Success Factors for Programme Implementation**

The insights from 11/2 years experience of the Step 2 Job pilot were evaluated in the context of the implementation of means tested minimum income and systematic labour market support for employable recipients of these type of benefits.

In retrospect of the Step 2 Job implementation four main factors were identified which largely contributed to the success of the project (apart from the Case Management approach):

- Target oriented collaboration between the central protagonists at borough level (project funding offices, social services, RGS) as well as at national level (Labour Market Offices for Vienna, WAFF, the relevant Municipal Dept. 24 - Health and Social Planning and Municipal Dept. 40 Social Affairs, Social and Healthcare Services).
- The definition of a clear mandate on the side of the implementing organisation with regard to quantitative and qualitative targets and success indicators.
- The integration of support structures which facilitate co-operation and communication on both strategic and operative questions.
- Project implementation by a professional organisation, which is empowered to offer ideas and is attended to by the funding organisation.

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