

EUROCITIES

STUDY VISIT ON INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKET
'TACKLING LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL'
5-6 OCTOBER 2016, MADRID

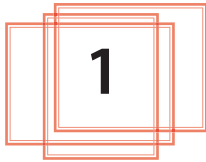
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Introduction

1.1. EUROCITIES work on long-term unemployment

The EUROCITIES declaration on work, launched on 26 February 2015, highlighted that long-term unemployment, especially amongst vulnerable groups such as young people, low skilled workers, and migrants, has become an increasingly urgent issue for city administrations. Most European cities have noted an increase in unemployment since 2010 mainly due to the economic crisis. Recent statistics also show that long-term unemployment currently affects 4.9% of the active EU population.

Long-term unemployment has negative social and economic consequences for individuals and society, and the groups most affected need comprehensive support and investment. Unfortunately, the downsizing of the public sector in some member states has had an impact on the capacity of local authorities to offer such support. Cities, as the level of government closest to citizens have considerable knowledge of the local economy and the labour market. They are also on the frontlines in combatting unemployment, poverty and social exclusion at local level.

As explained in the EUROCITIES statement on long-term unemployment, city authorities can play a vital role to prevent and reduce long term unemployment, and make labour markets more inclusive for disadvantaged groups through different measures, in particular by:

- improving the efficiency of public employment services tailoring them to local labour market needs;
- increasing the effectiveness of activation measures also through a stronger coordination with social assistance and welfare; and
- supporting social entrepreneurship as a crucial way to combat social exclusion and provide job opportunities to vulnerable groups.

City authorities also have a central role to play in delivering integrated and individualised services targeted at the many different groups of long-term unemployed people.

EUROCITIES welcomed the Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market and in particular the recognition of the role played by local authorities in this field. Some interesting concrete examples of measures promoted by cities to tackle long-term unemployment are included in the publication 'Promoting an inclusive labour market at local level'.

EUROCITIES is providing the European Commission with evidence and good practice examples of the role played by cities in addressing long-term unemployment with the view to having stronger involvement by local actors in the implementation of the Council Recommendation.

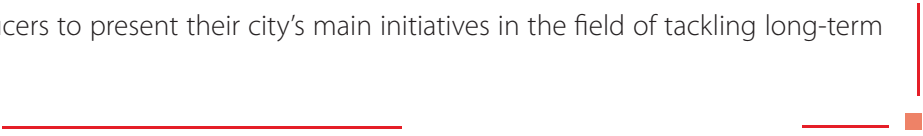
This study visit is part of the wider work carried out by EUROCITIES to promote mutual learning and policy transfer among cities in the field of employment policies, which aim to promote a more inclusive labour market. On 5 and 6 October 2016, EUROCITIES gathered 15 of its members¹ in Madrid to analyse how the city copes with high levels of long-term unemployment and how cities can address this deep rooted issue in their communities. The study visit focused on the Madrid Neighbourhood Plans initiative (more information on following page).



1.2. Objectives of the study visit

- A.** To give in-depth details on how a member of EUROCITIES is implementing measures aimed at tackling long-term unemployment, with particular attention paid to the collaboration between the local authorities and other stakeholders such as the public employment services.
- B.** To provide an opportunity for exchange between cities on the specific policy challenges of tackling long-term unemployment at local level. It should also allow city practitioners to discuss various solutions to specific issues and explore different approaches.
- C.** To analyse the lessons learned and promote city to city policy transfer also through the involvement of external experts and contributors from the European Commission's DG Employment, and the OECD-LEED.

This dynamic and interactive one day and a half e-study visit gave the participants:

- An in-depth knowledge about practices carried on at local level to fight long-term unemployment.
 - Mutual learning opportunities on how to implement solutions at city level to integrate people facing long-term unemployment into the labour market.
 - The possibility to participate in a critical peer review of the strengths and weaknesses of the host city's practices vis-a-vis the experiences of the other participants.
 - The opportunity for city officers to present their city's main initiatives in the field of tackling long-term unemployment.
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1. City members participating at the study visit were: Barcelona, Berlin, Bristol, Ghent, Gijon, Lisbon, Lyon, Madrid, Milano, Milan, Munich, Newcastle, Stockholm, Tbilisi, Timisoara. A very good level of cooperation was established with the EUROCITIES Working Group Employment.



The Madrid Neighbourhood Employment Plans in brief

Since the economic crisis there has been an increase in the unemployment rate in Europe, especially among young people and the over 45s, with many from these groups being unemployed for more than one year. Spain remains the country with the second highest rate of unemployment in Europe, with 50% of all unemployed people experiencing long-term unemployment. The city of Madrid has not been spared by this rise in the unemployment rate and is now looking for innovative solutions to reverse this trend.

The city has used the precise figures in its possession to observe that some neighbourhoods are more prone to unemployment than others. As an example, the Vallecas neighbourhood, located in the southern part of the city represents 10.42% of Madrid's population, and is home to 14.73% of the 201,605 unemployed people in the city.

Madrid City Council considers combating this concentration of unemployment a priority. To find a solution to this problem it decided to focus its measures at neighbourhood level. The initiative strives to promote a more socially and territorially balanced development of the city; developing solutions adapted to the local particularities and needs of the neighbourhood.

The most important initiative to address long-term unemployment at local level is the Madrid Neighbourhood Employment Plans. This is an innovative programme, which aims to bring local institutions closer to the citizens, provide a personalised employment service and improve the territorial and social balance throughout the city. The programme was set up in 2009 by the Madrid Employment Agency, in cooperation with the Madrid Federation of Regional Neighbourhood Associations (FRAVM) to tackle employment and social issues in some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city.

The key actors involved:

- **City of Madrid**

The city launched the programme in partnership with the FRAVM, to promote employment among the most disadvantaged groups, including: the long-term unemployed, women, young people, those not in education, employment or training (NEETs), older and low skilled workers, and people with disabilities.

- **Madrid Federation of Regional Neighbourhood Associations (FRAVM)**

An organisation that brings together more than 260 neighbourhood associations representing thousands of citizens from all over Madrid.

- **Madrid Employment Agency**

The agency working with unemployed people and employers, matching people's profiles with employers' needs. The agency ensures back up and coordination of the employment services provided by the facilitators in the neighbourhood associations.

- **Facilitators**

'Dinamizador de empleo de Barrio' or the neighbourhood facilitator, identifies the groups eligible for the programme, assesses the obstacles that prevent them from participating in existing employment programmes (training, career advice, job placement and entrepreneurship) and comes up with possible solutions. The facilitator is also responsible for improving and reinforcing the communication channels between the beneficiaries and the public services as well as with NGOs, cultural associations, and other partners.

For more information please refer to annex 1: Madrid Neighbourhood Employment Plans



Main results of the peer review session

The study visit in Madrid gathered together people working on employment in other cities, sharing their knowledge of employment policies at local level. The aim of the meeting was to assess and learn from the Madrid approach.

These are the main outcomes of the critical peer review:

A) The key success factors

- **Work with and close to people**

The presentation of the Neighbourhood Employment Plans and the meeting with beneficiaries emphasised the importance of gaining the trust of those people who have lost their confidence in employment agencies and public authorities. Proximity to the citizens, understanding their needs and providing a holistic approach can help with reaching out to those furthest from the labour market. The city of Madrid works with a large network of active associations and volunteers based in all the neighbourhoods in the city. Thanks to these 'trusted partners' the support provided to beneficiaries is effective and guides them towards more traditional employment services pathways.

- **The role of facilitators**

The plan relies on the involvement of the facilitators; who are the 'face' of the initiative. Based on their knowledge of the neighbourhoods, their people and their difficulties, facilitators are able to adopt a tailored and integrated approach and can advise on measures that will foster the inclusion of those hardest to reach. Once they gain the beneficiaries' trust they have the possibility to guide them to the relevant offices of the city and public employment agencies. Facilitators become the link between the people living in deprived neighbourhoods and the city, offering a customised service to each beneficiary.

- **The multi-stakeholders approach**

Once the facilitators detect and contact beneficiaries thanks to working with the FRAVM, the success of the programme depends on coordination with other stakeholders. The leadership of Madrid City Council in gathering relevant actors, such as different neighbourhoods, social services and the public employment services provide a holistic response to people's needs. Collaborating with third sector organisations and NGOs proved to be an efficient way to reach out to the most vulnerable people.

More information about the main outcomes of the critical peer review continues on the next page.

For more information please refer to annex 2: Guidelines for a critical peer review



B) Challenges and suggestions for improvement

- **A broader collaboration with all levels of government and stronger coordination at city level**

Currently there are many challenges in relation to cooperation between the city employment agencies and the regional and national employment services. For example, in terms of involvement in policy design, coherence of measures and better implementation, including sharing databases and harmonising profiling tools. There is also often insufficient coordination and integration between employment and social services at local level as well as a solid registration system, which would enable the city to reach out to wider target groups and redirect them to the most fitting service.

For these reasons, the work carried out at local level should be in accordance and complementarity to the regional and national level. Synergies in employment policies must be found to maximise the results, especially in a period of scarce resources. This is necessary to avoid any duplication and gaps that might affect an eventual positive outcome. The same goes for the need to maximise internal cooperation among different city services and departments (i.e. employment, welfare and local economic development).

- **Further investment for additional facilitators' recruitment**

So far facilitators have provided their services to 4,596 people from vulnerable groups with difficulties entering the labour market, especially long-term unemployed people.

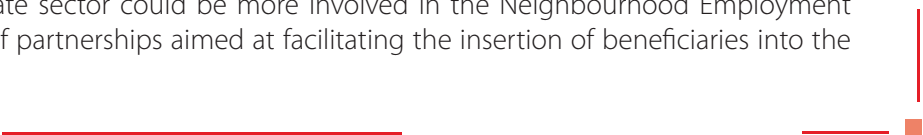
The customised help given to beneficiaries by facilitators must be supported by adequate funding for more staff. The initiative can not rely solely on volunteers whose presence might not be as stable as contracted workers. Further investment to ensure more facilitators are present on the ground could have a great affect in tackling long-term unemployment.

- **The need of a strong monitoring and follow-up system**

Finding a job is not always the solution to all the issues one can encounter in the integration process and continuous support must be provided even after employment has been achieved so people remain active in the labour market. Therefore it is necessary to have a certain follow-up approach, which would allow public authorities to remain informed in regards to what happens several months after a beneficiary has found employment. Also, vulnerable people might face multiple obstacles, move to other neighbourhoods and have to deal with several service providers. In this sense, a unified profiling system in a unique database could ensure a smooth navigation through different services and keep track of beneficiaries and their individual job insertion plans.

- **A stronger dialogue with employers**

Lifting people out of unemployment also involves taking note of the demands of the labour market; therefore employers should fully be part of the project. Despite the work already done by Madrid's employment agency in matching beneficiaries' profiles with employers' needs, more could be done to directly involve companies both in scouting for job opportunities as well as in job creation through incentives. The city of Madrid could foster the inclusion of vulnerable people by using social clauses in public procurement. The private sector could be more involved in the Neighbourhood Employment Plans with the development of partnerships aimed at facilitating the insertion of beneficiaries into the labour market.





A holistic approach to tackling long-term unemployment: exchanging views between city participants and OECD-LEED

Participants of the study visit had the opportunity to discuss with experts from the OECD-LEED programme (Local Economic and Employment Development) on how cities can tackle long-term unemployment using a more holistic and effective approach.

This session touched upon the following issues:

Working on labour force supply: improve people's employability

Tackling long-term unemployment requires intervening not only on employment policies but also in alleviating other barriers that prevent people from finding a job. This is why different city services should work together with an integrated approach (i.e. child care is very much related to labour market insertion).

Cities have a role to play in identifying sectors with potential growth perspectives. Knowing their specificities they can determine the occupations and the skills needed. They do not work only on skills and jobs matching but can also forecast skills to comply with growing sectoral demand. Cities can make resources available for programmes in skills development for people already in the labour market or offer them an occasion to upskill.

- People have to be equipped with the right skills to take over the jobs proposed by the labour market. The city of Birmingham has undertaken a project to connect employment services with the planning and development unit of the city with the aim to create stronger synergies between the demand and supply side at local level.
- The city of Lisbon sees coordination as key to ensure the preparation of workers for the jobs created, thus it has established a platform with employers, trade unions and universities to forecast skills and occupation needs in the future.
- The city of Stockholm is using its role as public contractor to design public procurement including social clauses. This allows the city to work with companies to provide job opportunities to vulnerable groups as well as in establishing trainings tailored to specific occupation pathways.

Working on labour force demand: strengthening the employers' involvement

Cities can cooperate with companies to identify their needs and facilitate matching of profiles available in the local labour market. At the same time companies do struggle with several challenges that hamper their jobs creation potential (i.e. international competitiveness, weak financial and administrative structures and constant research and innovation developments).

Finding a balance between including the most vulnerable groups and also offering people ready for employment to companies is crucial. At the same time there is the need to strengthen the demand for labour force from employers; facilitating in particular the increase of job opportunities for vulnerable groups. This could be done through the use of social clauses in public procurement and increasing city attractiveness towards foreign direct investments creating a favourable environment for companies to prosper.

Finally, city administrations are huge employers themselves: greater attention should be paid to promoting sheltered labour markets when hiring through city channels.

- In order to integrate vulnerable groups into the labour market, the city of Malmo is encouraging companies to hire them with subsidised jobs. It works well but an assessment of the long-term benefits is needed.
- Keeping track of the creation and development of businesses is important to know the jobs available and the needs. The city of Bristol has developed a digital licensing portal for businesses to create a simple online record. This tool can be used by employment services. There is an ambition to transform it into a tool for tracking profiles and skills. The city already has an annual employment survey with skills and jobs trends and a forecast.

The city of Barcelona employs 30,000 people between direct employees and service providers while Stockholm

- offers 400 jobs on average per year.

Measuring success

All policies and measures undertaken to fight long-term unemployment must be closely monitored and their impact accurately measured in order to identify challenges and ways to improve for better outcomes. City authorities are best placed to analyse these results as they have knowledge of their territory and can also see the bigger picture in terms of the quality of the jobs created, and the social inclusion indicators from a long-term perspective. For example, quite often the rates of the decrease or increase in social benefits requests are used as indicators.

- Since 2012 as part of its Jobcoaching programme, Berlin has developed a track record. The coaching, which is implemented by dedicated coaches, focuses on entry into jobs and on the reduction of barriers to employability. These coaches create a profile of the person before the coaching process starts, then document the coaching process and make another profile every month. In this way the programme can show the beneficiaries progress towards the labour market and assess the reduction in barriers to employment (e.g. acquiring the necessary language skills can be considered as an elimination of one barrier).

- The city of Newcastle is also doing this kind of profiling to identify different barriers to employment (rigid child care services, lack of language/ICT skills, etc.), redirecting beneficiaries to the most relevant services able to help them (welfare agencies, training centres). Monitoring these indicators against a wide range of services gives a complementary view of the success of the measures to tackle long-term unemployment.

- Bristol has different measures tailored to different sub groups in long-term unemployment (i.e. high skilled, low skilled, one year unemployed, more than five years unemployed). Encouraged by a national initiative, the city is also looking into health issues related to work and will work closely with health units to tackle health issues that interconnect with employment.

- The city of Munich is measuring the success of employment policies in terms of baseline assessment and ex-post employment rates. It doesn't yet have a system for assessing the quality of jobs offered to highly skilled workers. As a general trend, it appears that a large number of beneficiaries are in jobs that do not reflect their actual skills.



The lessons learned from the study visit

The concluding session of the event was focused on participants sharing their views on the key success factors and lessons learned from the city practices on tackling long-term unemployment discussed at the study visit and the likelihood for potential policy transfers:

- The bottom-up approach and community based solutions is a great way to reach out to people furthest from labour market. Mobile facilitators and third sector organisations can play a role in reaching out to the most vulnerable groups and building a bridge to public services by rebuilding trust.
- A holistic approach and three-fold city strategy: strong connection between employers' demand, supply and community involvement.
- Cooperation with businesses: local authorities can proactively go to enterprises to understand what they need. In order to keep them as partners it is important to offer them good profiles and solutions to their needs.
- Cooperation with NGOs: enhancing the role they have in the community, strengthening their capacities and involving them in the co-design of services.
- One-stop-shops and coordination of services: the development of unified access points is crucial and must be organised in a way that best fits city services and beneficiaries' needs. Finding employment can be hindered by many issues such as housing, mobility or social integration and that is why providing help in an integrated way and trying to tackle these barriers can help the most vulnerable people find a job more easily and can foster better long-term inclusion.
- Individualised support cycle: personalised profiling of skills and competences, assessment of barriers to employment and employability, designing of training and job pathways, matching with opportunities from employers.
- A unified database is crucial for cooperation between public services and associations.



Conclusions

Cities, as the level of government closest to citizens have considerable knowledge of the local economy and the characteristics of their labour market.

This study visit in Madrid proves that cities can play a vital role in preventing and reducing long-term unemployment, and in making labour markets more inclusive through further reforms.

The proximity to citizens is essential to deliver integrated and individualised services to people facing long-term unemployment. Added to the fact they can offer this flexible and customised approach, local authorities can also coordinate one-stop-shops to provide multiple services. The cooperation between the different agencies such as public employment services, social services and municipalities via a single point of contact, as mentioned in the 'Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market' could foster greater efficiency and ensure citizens are offered the right services for their needs.

Cities are ready to take part in the implementation of the 'Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market'. In particular, local authorities can play a role in the establishment of the single points of personal contact to tackle long-term unemployment. This would require stronger cooperation between national, regional and local employment services in order to prevent any overlapping of measures and strengthen all social policies.

Finally, this study visit has shown that for initiatives aimed at tackling long-term unemployment to be more effective they should be based on stronger involvement of local communities, closer cooperation with NGOs and associations and the smart use of professional and human resources available at the local level.

7

Annexes

7.1. Annex 1: Madrid Neighbourhood Employment Plans

The financial and economic crisis has brought with it an increase in the EU's unemployment rate although there are two groups critically hit by job losses; young people under 25 years old and older people over 45 years old. As a result, the pool of long-term unemployed people has become considerably more concentrated in these two age groups.

From 2007-2009 many people struggled to find a job and are now at high risk of prolonged periods of joblessness and exclusion. People who lose their jobs now are facing difficulties in finding ways to access labour market again. The new Europe 2020 strategy envisages a 75% adult employment rate by 2020; however, this goal still seems unrealistic due to the sluggish recovery of the global economy. So, it is crucial to promote and encourage new proposals to help these critical groups find ways to increase their employability and find jobs.

To find solutions to help long-term unemployed people get a job, Madrid 's local government considered it a priority to tackle this situation in a number of neighbourhoods in Madrid to continue progressing towards territorial and social balance in the city.

To tackle this issue, many actions were undertaken to revitalise employment, especially among long-term unemployed people (people who are out of work for over a year), which accounts for almost half of all unemployed people in the city of Madrid.

Registered unemployment

1. Long-term unemployed in Madrid 2016

Features	June 2016	May 2016	April 2016	March 2016	February 2016	January 2016
Male						
from 6 to 12 months	14.876	16.220	16.050	15.130	13.707	13.508
from 1 to 2 years	13.752	14.202	14.482	14.953	15.072	15.430
from 2 to 3 years	6.934	7.114	7.445	7.701	7.763	7.901
from 3 to 4 years	4.938	5.037	5.186	5.301	5.409	5.426
Over 4 years	11.354	11.390	11.345	11.267	11.193	11.117
Total	51.854	53.963	54.508	54.352	53.144	53.382
Female						
from 6 to 12 months	16.991	18.214	17.906	17.176	15.741	15.683
from 1 to 2 years	17.727	18.008	18.186	18.592	18.688	18.817
from 2 to 3 years	9.142	9.294	9.545	9.811	9.766	9.940
from 3 to 4 years	6.384	6.457	6.706	6.792	6.937	6.911
Over 4 years	15.269	15.264	15.107	14.991	14.876	14.759
Total	65.513	51.854	51.854	51.854	51.854	51.854

Source: Regional government of Madrid. General Management of Strategy and Promotion of Employment. Employment Observatory Department

To this end, since 2009 Madrid City Council and the Madrid Federation of Regional Neighbourhood Associations (FRAVM) have been implementing specific Neighbourhood Employment Plans. These plans have contributed towards promoting employment among the most disadvantaged groups (specially young people and the long-term unemployed, but also NEETs, women, elderly workers, low-skilled and people with disabilities, through three lines of action:

1. Revitalisation and career guidance.
2. Job hunting.
3. Training and job placement.

Both organisations (Employment Agency and FRAVM) are committed to addressing long-term unemployment as one of the key challenges to encourage a more accessible labour market in the city of Madrid. Tackling long-term unemployment would contribute to sustainable growth and cohesion. To enhance this, the Neighbourhood Employment Plans are a key tool in the promotion of employment of our target groups.

The development of these plans has allowed our organisations, on one hand, to attract and meet the customised needs of the residents in these neighbourhoods and to provide career guidance and training, and on the other, to facilitate their inclusion onto the labour market. We are clear about the challenge, because the longer people are out of work the more problematic it is to return. The neighbourhood employment revitalisation constitutes an approach of working with the long-term unemployed, one of the most disadvantaged groups of the population, in an intense way to facilitate their access to the labour market; giving them the chance to escape the risk of poverty.

The aim of this approach is to customise the message and to bring local institutions and their personalised services closer to the groups who normally remain at a distance from them. The city of Madrid is working hard to offer a good quality of life and to allow citizens to benefit from the opportunities available to them in this urban context.

The methodology used to this end is based on approaching the citizen through his/her informal social networks. The neighbourhood employment revitalisation consists of taking action to earn the trust of the neighbours through activities and active employment policies thereby facilitating access to public resources, in terms of employment, to the most disadvantaged groups regardless of their own particular circumstances or communication problems.

This approach has a particularly innovative element: to work on attracting those citizens in the neighbourhood who suffer to a large extent from the processes of inequality. Specifically for the long-term unemployed people, this neighbourhood programme provides a way out of poverty for both the workers affected and their families, as half of those finding a job also escape the risk of poverty.

The Neighbourhood Employment Facilitator (Dinamizador de empleo de Barrio) is a professional figure; a person endowed with empathy, exceptional talent for communicating and the ability to include the people who normally stay away from employment programmes into their neighbourhood social networks.

Facilitators have provided their services to 4,596 people from vulnerable groups with difficulties with labour inclusion, especially long-term unemployed. These people live in the neighbourhoods included in the Employment Neighbourhood Plans: 2,527 people from vulnerable groups benefitted from the careers guidance service to improve their job hunting abilities as well as to have a job placement.

In 2016, 900 people in disadvantaged areas will benefit from the employment facilitators' services. They will also benefit from a customised labour insertion itinerary. Some 70% of them or 630 people are expected to become part of a careers guidance process run by the Employment Agency (EA). The EA has signed cooperation agreements with the FRAVM to develop an employment revitalisation project within the framework of the Neighbourhood Plans.

The 2016 standards set by the EA in its budget for further development of the Neighbourhood Employment Plans are the following:

1. Employment consulting, information and training to customise labour inclusion mainly focused on long-term unemployed people and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

2. Indicators:

- 900 users to benefit from the Neighbourhood Employment Facilitators.
- 630 users to benefit from the employment councillors.
- 10 training courses to be provided.
- 150 students to be trained.

3. Activities:

- Register, identify, raise awareness and attract people with difficulties entering the labour market, especially long-term unemployed people, and motivate them to participate in a customised labour insertion itinerary.
- Tailored and individualised guidance and simplified access for the neighbours to the Neighbourhood Employment Plans.
- Designing and planning the tailored and customised labour itineraries.
- Learning assessment and training follow-up of long-term unemployed students and compliance with the established goals as well as with the quality of training actions.
- Increase the engagement of employers in the Neighbourhood Employment Plans, and promote the participation of the established institutions, targeting vulnerable groups, such as long-term unemployed or young people.
- Strengthen continuity in social support services; scholarships for participating students to facilitate their attendance at the training courses and their insertion, preventing financial obstacles and ensuring their participation.

4. Neighbourhood Employment Plans impact assessment. It will:

- Ensure compliance with the established goals.
- Adopt corrective measures, if needed, taking into account the social and economical variables during the implementation of the plan.
- Ensure better coordination between the participating agents.
- Understand the developed actions' impact on job placements.
- Enable the utmost transparency in order to permanently keep citizens and social agents informed about the evolution of the plan implementation as well as the achieved results.

7.2. Annex 2: Guidelines for a critical peer review

Critical peer reviews in EUROCITIES

Critical peer reviews are an analytical tool that have been used at several EUROCITIES events. Colleagues who work on similar subjects but in different cities or contexts meet and evaluate one another's projects or policies. In doing so, they learn about how others are tackling similar situations and see their own work from a new perspective. Regardless of its scope, the basis of the exercise is that the analysis is done by people with similar backgrounds who are able to apply relevant knowledge and experience to the evaluation. The aim of a critical peer review is that visitors not only receive information, but that they also know how to interpret this information and what to do with it in their local situation.

Objectives and outcomes of the peer review

The objectives of the critical peer reviews are:

- to gain deeper understanding of the challenges in the host city and the responses;
- to present potential responses from other cities; and
- to reach findings and conclusions that could contribute to EU policies in the field of employment, especially the implementation of the Council recommendation on long term unemployment.

The outcome of the exercise will be a report that provides information on the topic of the discussions and summarises key conclusions and action points. During this study visit, attendees will also benefit from the inputs of external experts (OECD, European Commission, Public Employment Services) who will share their thoughts on the project at the end of the two day event.

What you will have to prepare before the study visit?

The critical peer review will be much more effective if you go into it with an idea about what is happening in the city, and why. To this end the application form had a specific section asking you to provide information on the status of long-term unemployment in your city and the main measures taken at local level. At the same time you will receive a project factsheet from Madrid with background information on long-term unemployment and the Neighbourhood Employment Plans. It is necessary – in order to structure the peer review session – that you read the materials from Madrid and prepare up to three questions, which aim to better help you understand Madrid's practice.

These questions should aim to discern the concrete functioning of the project, identify bottlenecks and eventually find out whether this practice could be transferred to your own city. They can be related to the main features of the project including its design and budget, as well as its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Some answers to your questions might be provided already during the presentation and the visit but please keep all your personal remarks and demands and use them for building up to the discussions and the debate during the peer review.

In the preparation of your assessment, you might want to use the SWOT analysis technique. This kind of analysis tries to compile in a table Strengths and Weaknesses in relation to internal actors, and Opportunities and Threats concerning the collaboration with external stakeholders. What you will identify in your analysis could help you reflect on the questions you want to ask to the colleagues in Madrid.



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