

TILBURG



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YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCE GRANT AND THE MASTER WORK EXPERIENCE GRANT

A WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND OLDER WORKERS.

With the unemployment level in the Netherlands at 7.1% it is relatively low compared to other European countries. However, whilst the Dutch economy is slowly recovering from the economic crisis, two groups in particular are facing problems on the Dutch labour market: young people and older workers.

Young people were amongst the section of society most hard hit by the financial crisis. The number of unemployed young people in the Netherlands is increasing and every year a new group of school leavers and graduates try to make their way onto the labour market, adding to the large numbers of young people that are already looking for a job. The social effects of this are devastating. Bleak prospects contribute to poverty, demotivation, discouragement, frustration and possibly deviant behavior. With more young people applying for less available jobs, highly educated people are filling up lower level positions, thus decreasing prospects for young people with lower levels of education.

The municipality of Tilburg is determined to fight youth unemployment, having expressed the ambition to make the region a 'youth unemployment free zone'.

Older workers are also experiencing difficulties gaining employment after being laid off due to economic crisis. Only 3% of all job vacancies are currently being filled by someone over 50 and 43% of all jobless people over 50 remain jobless for at least two years. Employers are hesitant to hire people over 50 due to their presumed higher than average risks of sick leave, high wage expectations and lower levels of productivity. Another problem is the fact that older workers often have an outdated education and a work experience that is limited to only one or two companies or sectors, making mobility among different sectors even more difficult.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMMES

Two specific measures have been introduced by the municipality of Tilburg in cooperation with trade unions; the Youth Work Experience Grant targeting young people and the Master Work Experience Grant for older workers. The municipality implements the programmes and is responsible for their funding, public relations and marketing, and management of the digital platform.

The programmes in brief:

Youth Work Experience Grant

- School leavers who are unable to find a job are helped to secure a traineeship that matches their level of education and interests. Traineeships take place in companies and last six months.
- The young people can actively approach a company and make an offer to the employer. The employer pays the

young person €500 per month plus social security costs.

- Furthermore, the employer puts €100 into a 'school safety deposit box' for every month that the young person is employed. This means that at the end of the work placement the young person can have a budget of €600 to put towards further education or a VET course; strengthening their own employability pathway.



68% OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED FOUND A REGULAR JOB



OVER 50s EXPLORE NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- The municipality pays the employer €550 a month as compensation for part of the costs to the company.
- After completing the work experience placement the employer gives a certificate to the young person indicating the specific skills they have gained during the traineeship. This certificate is included in the trainee's ePortfolio, a standardised tool provided by the municipality,

which the young person can use and further update during his or her career.

The Master Work Experience Grant

- Similarly the Masters Work Experience Grant offers over 50s work experience to assess the beneficiaries' abilities and explore new job opportunities beyond their previous experience.

- It is considered a working traineeship and the employer is obliged to give guidance and training.

- The work experience positions cannot be used to oust regular employees or to exploit older workers by having them perform normal work at a lower salary.

INNOVATION

Online application

Both grant measures can be introduced quickly and simply, and in a way that does not require any changes in current legislation. It is unique in the fact that the entire process is based around an online application; completely streamlining the process.

Adaptability

The grant amount can be adapted to local needs and standards. Funding can be obtained from the municipal level (including money that is saved from social assistance expenses), national budgets and the European Social Fund (ESF).

CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS & WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Both employers and beneficiaries appreciate the streamlined online process.

Young and older people have different information needs therefore the channels used to promote new measures like YWEG and MWEG are tailored to them.

Online and peer-2-peer campaigning proved to be very effective to get young people interest and committed, while for elderly people more traditional ways of communicating proved to be more useful.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS

In May 2015, around 150 Dutch cities adopted the Youth Work Experience Grant, making it possible for more than 2,200 young people to access the programme and to be involved in a subsidised work experience placement.

A recent study by Tilburg University shows that 68% of the young people involved found a regular job through the Youth Work Experience Grant.

The Master Work Experience Grant on the other hand is in its start-up phase. Currently Tilburg and Eindhoven are the first cities to implement it.

