

EQUAL INITIATIVE - SPAIN

General details

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Details of activity

During round one of EQUAL, Andalusia was covered by a web of 29 partnerships, nearly a fifth of the total in Spain, and more than in many countries. They all belonged to the Andalusian EQUAL network.

In the case of Andalusia, the strong commitment to EQUAL from policy makers, allowed them to role out a battery of measures to support mainstreaming. The results have been the incorporation of lessons from EQUAL into regional employment legislation, improvements in the governance of employment policy, the take up of EQUAL successes by financial institutions and a queue of EQUAL good practices being studied for future policies.

During EQUAL the Regional government has taken "a series of steps to provide a direct link between good practice on the ground and regional employment policies".

The main steps in this new "itinerary" between practice and policy offer a number of insights to other European thematic networks. The steps include: the analysis of the main regional labour market problems and the gaps in existing labour market policies; the identification of good practice in EQUAL; a review of legal and regulatory changes required for transferring these practices into mainstream policies; and, finally, the process of convincing the policy makers that the change is worth while.

The first step taken to build the bridge between policy and practice was to commission a thorough analysis of the labour markets dealt with by each of the EQUAL partnerships and the second was to review existing active labour market policies. For this the Region decided to tap the experience of a research centre which had been responsible for the Spanish Strategy for Social Inclusion and the Mutual Learning Programme of the European Employment Strategy.

Having reviewed both the labour market and existing employment policies, the next step for the Andalusian EQUAL Network was to identify the EQUAL good practices which were most relevant. Once again the process was very thorough and systematic: first, the use of the general criteria for deciding on the innovative nature of the actions (process, product and contextual innovations); then direct contact through a regional seminar on business creation; third a questionnaire sent by E. Mail; fourth, a request for background documentation; fifth, in depth interviews. The good practices were grouped according to their relevance for the three main blocks of regional employment policy described above.





At a local level, EQUAL is said to have meant nothing less than a revolution for this complex maize of governance. Local authorities had been used to work in isolation in the design and management of their policies. However, after the experience of working with other local and regional actors in EQUAL partnerships many important local authorities (such as Almería, Jerez, and Seville) have decided to develop local employment plans in cooperation with both social partners and representatives of civil society.

At a regional level, EQUAL is said to have had a significant impact on the coordination of the different departments and networks of agencies and has brought the administration far closer to the employment needs of disadvantaged groups.

