



Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

Kongens Enghave Job Match, Copenhagen - Denmark

Introduction Kongens Enghave Job Match is an ESF-funded project based on an empowerment strategy. The project is targeting long term unemployed (including ethnic minorities) giving them an opportunity to act as jobseekers by using their own initiative and resources. The overall purpose of the project is to establish access to the labour market for this group by developing new methods within the frame of a cooperation agreement. In 2002 The City of Copenhagen took the initiative to form an agreement as a Public Private Partnership with key labour market organisations to enhance an inclusive labour market, especially targeting ethnic minority groups.

The project idea is to ensure the best possible *match* between employers and job seeking immigrants and other long term unemployed through a close co-operation with local businesses that are experiencing labour shortages (particularly shortage of low skilled labour force). After labour market shortages are identified, interviews are held between jobseekers and employers. Suitable applicants are sent on short vocational courses that are designed to match the needs of employers. Employers are involved in the project from the start, in order to ensure a stable long-term match and guarantee employment after the course.

The project was inspired by the success of the ‘matching’ employment method developed in Kista, Sweden. “Kista Matching” was a small local project in Kista district of Stockholm in 1998. As a result of the success, the project was adopted by further 15 district councils and 4 municipalities in Stockholm.

Geographical focus In general, the project is targeting long term unemployed in deprived areas of Copenhagen. The project is either cooperating with or working within 11 local partnerships. Ethnic minority groups form the majority of the residents in all of these 11 communities, however, due to resource constraints, the project has chosen to focus on the 4 largest communities.

Kongens Enghave has witnessed the largest growth of new jobs in Copenhagen due to the considerable number of new companies like Sonofon and Statoil locating to this attractive area. However, at the same time, Kongens Enghave has witnessed high unemployment rates for decades – even during the recent years’ economic boom the unemployment has continued to rise - contrary to the general trend in Copenhagen. The reason is that the qualifications of the unemployed residents of Kongens Enghave do not match the demands of either old or new enterprises – both at the high skilled and the low skilled end of the labour market.

Partnership Based on previous experiences, the project is organised as a partnership to ensure

mainstreaming as well as cooperation with the local communities:

- A steering group with representatives from mainstreaming labour market agencies in Copenhagen and Roskilde University centre.
- Currently forming a partnership contract with each enterprise.
- Forming social partnership contracts in the local communities, targeting local officials and voluntary representatives among the residents.

Activities

The project is working at three levels:

- Forming and carrying out Job Match agreements
- Communicating job opportunities to public employment agencies, who can encourage long term unemployed to apply for a job
- Communicating job opportunities to local communities: advertise, present and discuss the job in local associations, use role models from ethnic minorities, present success stories in local news letters, include human resource staff from companies in local job fairs etc.

Successes

The Job Match model works (in average, 76% of the participants obtain a job):

- The chosen enterprises have all signed partnership contracts for the future.
- The empowerment approach attracts long term unemployed, ethnic minorities included. These groups appreciate the liberating experience of being addressed as a resourceful, potential employee, not as a member of an ethnic group with problems.
- The project has many positive advantages for stakeholders in local communities. First of all, it highlights job opportunities. It also gives stakeholders an insight into skills needs within the local labour market. In addition, it involves a bottom up approach, giving local residents, ethnic minority associations and officials the opportunity to discuss job opportunities on an equal footing.
- Some immigrant participants of the Job Match have high-level qualifications but cannot obtain relevant job because of poor language skills. Through participating the Job Match project, many immigrants have learnt the Danish language significantly quicker than they normally would without working and training in a Danish speaking environment. This has helped many immigrants to obtain employment in their own specific occupational field sooner than they normally would – Job Match has acted as a stepping stone.

Lessons learnt

Key lessons:

- This project shows the transferability of good practice models for local employment development from one city to another, from country to another.
- Local partnerships can provide a useful 'brokering role' building up linkages and trust between local employers with skills gaps, and local unemployed people seeking employment.
- Involving mainstream key actors from the start is crucial.
- Thorough knowledge of the enterprise and the job is fundamental.
- The empowerment strategy is the key to success.
- Coordinating voluntary and public resources in local partnerships creates a synergy effect.

At the same time a number of constraints have been experienced:

- There have been some difficulties in putting the model into practice. To work

efficiently, the project has been forced to target large companies with a personnel staff unit with adequate resources to get involved. Furthermore, the project has had to work mainly with enterprises which are experiencing recruitment problems, as these enterprises are more likely to be willing to offer job guarantees. This focus has limited the opportunities available to job seekers, with an emphasis on low skilled, low paid work.

- The staff of the employment agencies do not regard low skilled jobs (such as a supermarket shop assistant) very highly. Very often they are not willing to communicate these job opportunities to unemployed residents – although those jobs are often the only opportunity for the target group.
- It is important for the target group to be aware of the skills needs in the current labour market. The vocational training undertaken often overlooks the importance of the personal and communication skills required to manage a job in a modern enterprise, for example, teamwork and the ability to take your own initiative.

**Tools and
Transferability**

The Job Match project is an easily transferable model that can be easily adapted to national legislation and local opportunities. Kongens Enghave Job Match is a successful project of which model was transferred from a local project in Stockholm.