

## Peer Review Workshop Report

**Good practice  
on the (re-)integration of older long-term unemployed  
into the labour market  
in**



First AWB PEER Review Workshop  
15 and 16 March 2012

In cooperation with



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**LIST OF APPREVIATIONS**

AWB	Age-Work-Balance Project
PES	Public Employment Service
PRCW	Peer Review Workshop

STEBEP	Styrian Employment Pact
TEP	Territorial Employment Pact

## 1 Introduction to the Peer Review

This 'Peer Review Workshop (PRCW) Report' presents findings from the on-the-spot exchange visit on a selected good practice targeted to older unemployed people over 45 years. The 'Peer Review Workshop' took place in Graz, Austria on 15 and 16 March 2012.

Peer Review Workshops within the AGE-WORK- BALANCE (AWB) project are set up as social experiment during the project period 10/2011 - 03/2013 and aim to identify the relationship between the network structure (different public and private actors on different geographical levels) and a particular practice to bring older people into sustainable employment. Within the AWB project practices are reviewed in five cities and transferable aspects revealed for a mainstream strategy to be defined.

Within the PRCWs a "**critical friend**" **review model**<sup>1</sup> is used in which visiting AWB members work together with their hosts as equals in a reciprocal relationship. Critical friends use two complementary approaches: (i) they generate information through discussions that offer new perspectives or ideas, and (ii) they ask challenging questions or suggest possible changes. By acknowledging one another's unique contributions and engaging in constructive dialogue the PRCW exploration process thus promotes the production of new knowledge and insights.

All PRCWs are concluded by focussing on 'CPN':

**'C':** STRATEGY and APPROACH of the **CITY** in relation to active labour market policy;

**'P':** GOOD **PRACTICE** example of (re-)integrating older unemployed people into the labour market;

**'N':** **NETWORK** structure supporting the good practice.

The 'PRCW Exploration' in Graz involved a series of presentations<sup>2</sup> with opportunities for discussion between key stakeholders and practitioners of the practice under scrutiny and AWB members. Closer analysis of key lessons emerging from presentations took place during the AWB core member session. In conclusion, PRCW participants<sup>3</sup> shared their initial findings, questions and key lessons from the visit with representatives of the good practice in Graz.

The 'Peer Review Workshop Report' was drawn up by Maria Schwarz-Woelzl, ZSI and Anette Scoppetta, ZSI to highlight the central points that emerged. It makes

<sup>1</sup> Rallis, S. F. & Rossman, G. B. (2000) 'Dialogue for learning: Evaluator as critical friend' *New Directions for Evaluation*, 86, 81–92 and Brinkerhoff, J.M. (2002) 'Assessing and improving partnership relationships and outcomes: a proposed framework', *Evaluation and Program Planning* 25, Elsevier, pp 215-231.

<sup>2</sup> All presentations are available at the AWB project website <http://www.age-work-balance.metropolisnet.eu/reports/>

<sup>3</sup> Please find a list of participants in the annex.

no claim to be complete and is intended as an initial note from 'critical friends' with statements deriving from the two half days reflection visit.

The AWB core members deeply thank their colleagues in Graz for the warm welcome and openness which built an optimal basis for learning on the approach to bring older people into sustainable employment and its network structure.

## **2 Exploration of the policy strategy and approach**

### **Problem analysis**

Whilst the unemployment rate of older people was increasing in Graz in the last decade, the business sector had difficulties to fill vacancies with qualified people. There is a significant skills mismatch on the labour market. Consequently, a need occurred for individualised services with careful analysis of both the companies' requirements and the job seekers' qualifications in order to provide a successful match, satisfied companies and sustainable employment.

Regardless of the applicant's age the same rules are applied by the PES (Public Employment Service) even though older people need more time for training and updating their qualifications. It was made clear by project representatives that they learn more effectively on the job than in-class.

### **Description of the policy strategy followed**

The policy approach followed by Styria's PES is to integrate older unemployed people as "efficient as possible". Furthermore, the employment pact in Styria (STEBEP) in which the PES is an important partner, recognises the skills mismatch. According to the representative of PES Styria, the approach undertaken in Styria, however, was not accompanied by a national strategy and ageing was not set priority at the national level in 2011.

### **Key stakeholder of the strategy**

STEBEP has been conceived as a platform based on partnerships for activities related to employment policies in Styria; it has been renewed in 2001 and 2007. The Employment Policy Forum ('Beschäftigungspolitisches Forum') is a strategic steering group; the operational business is conducted by the STEBEP core team, which calls in additional members when dealing with specific issues. The core team comprises the PES, the provincial government of Styria and the STEBEP co-ordination unit. STEBEP provides a strategic umbrella for the individual Regional Pacts, which are formed as operational and regional strategy units with steering groups, working/project groups and pact coordination units.

## 3 Exploration of the good practice

### Responsible implementing organization

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### Rationale and Purpose of the project

With increasing age the individuality of people and their awareness about their own needs rise. This growing diversification can only be met by an equally great diversification, i.e. the more diverse a person the more diverse a tailored programme for this person must be. The measures package >Experience counts! optimally complies with these requirements and also facilitates, supports and promotes

- biographical learning
- life stage oriented learning
- learning from generations and
- experience oriented learning

It is crucial for its conception as a measures package that the points of intersection between the individual offers allow for smooth transitions and therefore enable a demand-oriented quick and uncomplicated utilisation of the required service.

Using conventional measures with older people often fail due to contents and needs being insufficiently tailored to the age group. If the offer is too narrowly defined and does not match the heterogeneous, individual requirements, learners fail. The conception of the „Experience Counts 45+“ with its diverse services builds the precondition for the success of the measure. Another important point is the sequence of the measures package. This is taken into account through the clarification in Stop&Go! as well as the selection process in the Implacement foundations the orientation and the preparation for the qualifications in the career module: >Karriere:Management 45+!

### Description of the good practice<sup>4</sup>

In the early 90s, the PES conducted dual<sup>5</sup> training courses for qualified female job-seekers in non-traditional professions. Deriving from these experiences, the PES decided to realise the practice “>Erfahrung zählt!”, thereby focussing on older people.

The practice “>Erfahrung zählt!” (>Experience Counts!) was set up in Graz in 1999 and was transferred to the north east of Styria in 2000 and to the south of Styria in 2004. According to the PES representative, the practice today is

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<sup>4</sup> For detailed information please see the document: 'Context paper and project information for the Peer Review.'

<sup>5</sup> „Dual“ trainings combine on-the-job training with in-class instructions

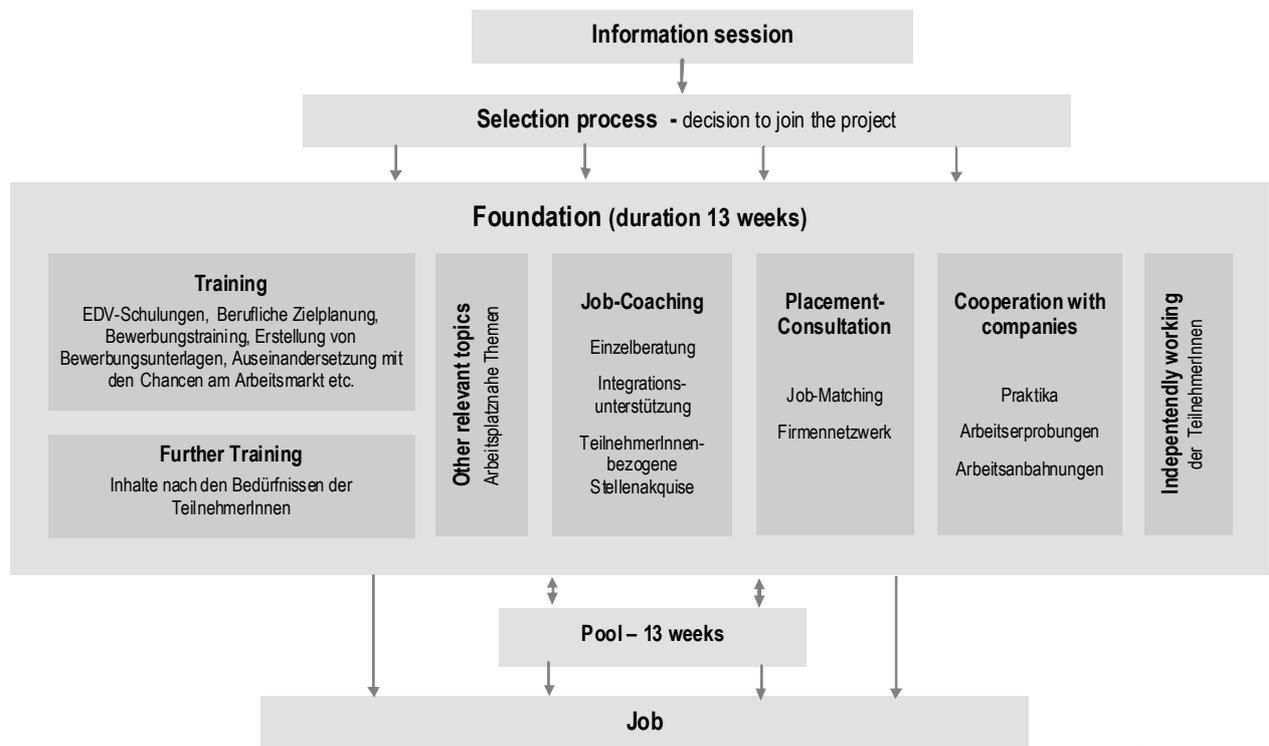
regarded as an important project for the target group for unemployed people with its large geographical scale.

The goals of the practice are:

- To sustainably reintegrate unemployed people 45+ into the labour market;
- To qualify unemployed people 45+ for a specific job;
- To help enterprises to find persons with the required qualifications (i.e. to deal with the skill mismatch).

The practice is, hence, to be understood as an early intervention and does not focus on older long-term unemployed people. Please find an illustration on the structure of the practice until 2009 in Graph 1.

**Graph 1: Structure of the practice from 1999 to 2009**



Source: Presentation by Hooshmandi-Robia on the 15/03/2012

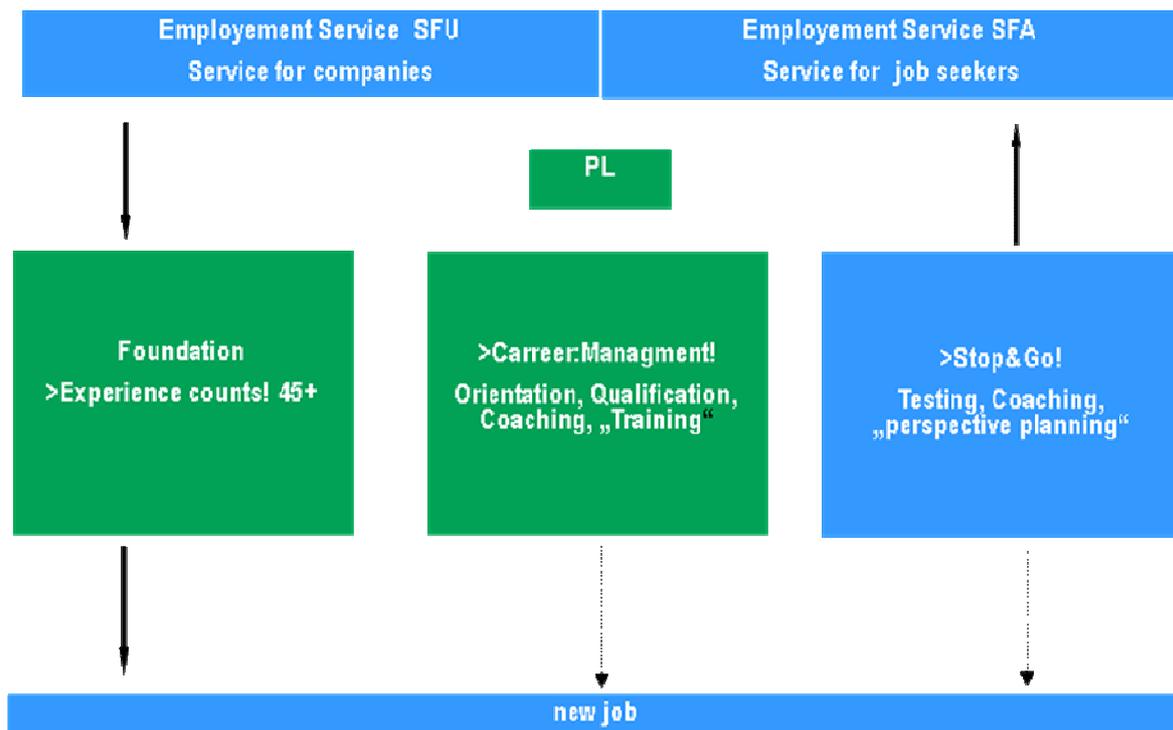
For further information please find a brief description of the illustration in the following:

- Ad "information session": A compulsory measure for those who have been sent by the PES; all other measures are voluntary for the clients.
- Ad "training": Trainings include IT trainings, occupational planning, job application training, examination with labour market opportunities, etc.
- Ad "Further Training": The topics are targeted on the participants training needs.
- Ad "other relevant topics": Experts for particular training needs are invited such as experts assisting by burn outs, personal styling, etc.

- Ad "job-coaching": Takes place in an individual setting at least one hour per week;
- Ad "placement consultation": exclusively for those still without a job;
- Ad "independently working": 25 hours per week;
- Ad "cooperation with companies": different variations exist:
  - Internship for one to two weeks in order to self-test if the person is 'job-ready';
  - Trial work placement in case of a vacancy offered.
  - Vocational plan: to gain a qualification without a vacant job offer, e.g. IT skills;
  - Qualification in cooperation with a company for a specific job (according to move-ment this is a very effective approach).

**Since 2009** ">Experience counts!" comprises three different projects: ">Experience counts!" is a service for the business sector, while ">Carreer:Management!" and ">Stop&Go!" are services for job seekers. Please find an illustration regarding the structure from 2009 onwards in Graph 2.

**Graph 2: Structure of the practice from 2009 onwards**



Source: Presentation by Hooshmandi-Robia on the 15/03/2012

**"Stop&Go! 45+"** is funded by the Public Employment Service (PES). The aim of the **three weeks** lasting measure is to assess the job seeker's potential as well as to identify potential inhibiting factors towards employment. A comprehensive individual profile is developed taking numerous relevant factors into account such as health and qualification. Together with the move-ment adviser a 'perspective

plan' will be developed jointly and submitted to the PES based on the participant's commitment. Finally, the decision will be taken on whether or not a participant can continue with "Karriere:Management 45+"<sup>6</sup> or with "Implacementstiftung 45+"<sup>7</sup>. The costs per participant range between approx. € 400 – 500.

**"Karriere:Management 45+"** is funded by the government of Styria. The costs per participant are approx. € 3.000.

**"Implacementfoundation 45+ oder Foundation Experience Counts!"** is an implacement measure funded by the provincial government of Styria. It is also co-funded by companies regarding qualification measures on the workplace. The PES officers decide on the interested persons that can participate in the implacement. The implacement service is offered only in case of a qualification gap. The rules of the implacement are defined in a tri-lateral training agreement (Ausbildungsvereinbarung) between PES, move-ment and the participant. The agreement is signed at the beginning of the implacement. Part of the agreement is the company's commitment to employ the participant after the end of the implacement. During the implacement the participant is not employed, but receives financial support (including health, accident and pension insurance). Costs are shared between the PES, the government of Styria and the respective company (€ 400 per month are contributions from the company). Move-ment provides accompanying case management both for the participants and for the company during the entire implacement.

Depending on the participant's qualification, the implacement may last up to **six months** (in exceptional cases up to one year). In future, 1/3 of the training has to be provided in-class. A wide range of occupational trainings are offered (e.g. home helpers, Nursing assistant, nursing home management, estate agent, insurance business man, etc.).

### **How older job seekers get on the placement scheme?**

While the ultimate decisions have the PES officers, there are a variety of ways by which people could come forward, e.g.

- the PES can offer the implacement measure to the company if it can't find suitable employees;
- job seekers could refer themselves to move-ment and can apply with the implacement measure;
- the company reports the vacancy to the PES and PES looks for suitable people. Unemployed people apply for this position/job. If a qualification is missing they make use of the implacement measure.

This kind of flexibility is a significant element of the practice.

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<sup>6</sup> translation: career management

<sup>7</sup> translation: implacement foundation

## Link to the policy strategy

The link to the regional policy strategy is ensured (e.g. in particular via the aim to integrate older unemployed people).

## Founders and actors of the practice

The practice is **founded** by:

- The provincial government of Styria;
- The PES of Styria; and
- Collaborating companies seeking for qualified people.

The **actors** of the practice are move-ment, job seekers and companies.

The practice's success in particular relies on move-ment's in-depth knowledge of their participants' background, their problems, perspectives, skills and qualifications. This knowledge enables for tailored suggestions of candidates for the implacement and creates trust and confidence for companies. In case a person lacks a certain qualification requirements, it will be filled by trainings provided by move-ment.

## Results achieved so far

### Period 1999 to 2009

During the past 10 years 6624 people attended the information event, where a gender difference has been observed: more men than women attended the information event, but more women than men were interested to participate in the practice. The training was concluded by 2233 people. Please find the total number of participants in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Total participation number, 1999 to 2009**

Experience counts 1999-2009	Information session	13 week training
Graz	4042	1268
North East Styria	1739	612
South Styria	843	353
	<b>6624</b>	<b>2233</b>

Out of these participants, 1051 persons concluded trainings in cooperation with a company. Please find the total number of persons conducting trainings in cooperation with a company in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 Numbers of persons conducting trainings in cooperation with a company, 1999 to 2009**

Internship	Internship vacant job	Qualification cooperation With company	Qualification without company
534	257	195	65
<b>1051</b>			

Internship	Internship vacant job	Qualification cooperation With company	Qualification without company
534	257	195	65
<b>1051</b>			

### Period 2009 to 2012

- Stop & Go!: 2708 participants
- Career:Management45+ : 630 participants
- Placement foundation >Experience Counts! 105 participants
- Information event (1999 to 2012): approx. 9000 participants

### Impact of the good practice

#### Period 1999 to 2009

58% of older unemployed people were integrated into the labour market

#### Period 2009 to 2012

- 59% of participants of "Career:Management 45+" were integrated into the labour market
- 83,7% of participants of the "**Placement foundation 45+ or Foundation Experience Counts!**" were employed.

**In both periods**, 60 companies could fill vacancies via the practice and "were happy with their new employees". The average age of participants is 51,6 years (13 participants were 55+). The qualification budget per person is on average € 2.109,80.-. The costs for companies per person are on average € 3.347,10.-

A project evaluation has been concluded by the funders during the first year of the practice's implementation (1999). Since that time no systemic and external evaluation of move-ment's 10 years lasting experiences has been conducted.

### **Aspects of innovation of the good practice**

The heterogeneity among people and their awareness about their own needs rise with increasing age. Heterogeneity relates to job experiences, life experiences, learning experiences, health conditions and the attitude towards retirement. The participants vary also in relation to the duration of unemployment, their educational level, professional backgrounds, countries of origin and mentalities. Those factors have to be taken into account when offering tailored measures. Hence, offering different kind of measures is a requisite for successful intervention strategies in mature age. This includes

- Self-assessment via the Work-Ability-Index as starting point for 'perspective planning' together with the move-ment advisers (the Work-Ability-Index is slightly adapted within the project),
- An individualist approach of the coaching,
- The use of a variety of training methods, which are all based on following principles: self-organisation, self-definition of goals (e.g. for the next week), self-definition of training needs and topics, flexibility and self-reporting of working hours;
- Opportunity to switch between different measures; as well as
- Binding agreements between the actors and defined rules.

The practice can be regarded as a "one-stop-shop" where clients are guided, trained and advised during all integration phases. In contrast to mainstream measures, participants receive a bundle of measures (via the integration chain).

### **Transferability of the good practice**

Even though the practice is implemented since 10 years there is only a weak connection to other projects in the field. There are no plans of transferring the project beyond Styria as stated by the practitioners. This may be based upon limited resources which does not allow for additional work.

## **4 Exploration of the network behind the good practice implemented**

### **Network members**

According to move-ment there is a national-wide association in place for exchange of experiences and knowledge in regard to placement foundations. Even though, move-ment, does not have much contact to their counterparts. In respect to the network behind the practice implemented in Graz, move-ment informs on the cooperation between

- the government of Styria,
- the PES, and

- move-ment itself.

The cooperation structures are defined in the Styria employment pact (STEBEP), founded by the ESF-European Social Fund. The communication processes within the cooperation work successfully because the “actors listen to each other”. However, the link to the wider network of the STEBEP, e.g. regional pacts, seems to be weak.

## Ownership

The question on the ownership of the practice was answered by statements which highlight the cooperation between the main stakeholders (the government, PES as well as move-ment). All local/regional experts participating at the event underlined that the practice would not have been possible without the cooperation. Hence, the ownership seems to be divided between the three partners.

## Significance of the network related to the good practice

From move-ment’s perspective, the cooperation structure with shared responsibilities among the members is a big advantage for running the practice. In certain aspects the PES may have a weaker interest, which is compensated by the government of Styria and vice versa. Move-ment appreciates this cooperation structure as it provides them flexibility and quick decision makings on the day-to-day basis. However, even though the cooperation had high importance at the beginning of the practice, the network as such lost its significance over time.

## 5 Summary of Key Lessons learnt

The key lessons from participating AWB members on the practice’s work in Graz include:

- The project “Experience Counts!” seemed to be very successful and we believe one of the key reasons of that success is the involvement of the private companies in the promotion of elder people employment.
- The practice can be considered as “one-stop-shop”. A holistic approach is followed, beginning from the information event, to the participants’ profile assessment, in consequence with person specific qualifications measures both in-class and in companies, and finally structured implacement measures which safeguard sustainable integration into the labour market;
- Apart from the individual approach related both to the participants and to the companies, move-ment’s approach is also characterized by personal engagement of the involved staff. The project profits from long-lasting relationships and in-depth knowledge of the target groups;
- The selection process via the Work Ability Index is crucial for the participants’ further perspectives and procedures, either during or outside the practice (in case they are sent to institutions such as debt advising, rehabilitation, withdrawal treatments, etc.);
- The practice shows strong co-operation with companies and organisations in the region;

- The personal interactions, perspective plans, advices and the opportunity to change between particular measures, allow flexible decisions for and with the participants.
- Also the mix of mainstream measures with the move-ment services enables for flexibility for the participants.
- Given these facts, the practice could be easily transferred to other regions.
- It was very interesting the fact that the "Experience Counts!" project offers a very individualized support to participants. We see this strategy adds a lot of quality to the project, however it limits the results in terms of quantity as giving a personalized service cannot be done with a big number of participants.
- The network involved in the "Experience Counts!" is very interesting as it combines public entities working together with private ones. However, in the workshop we realized that communication does not flow really well throughout the network, as other partners we believe this matter should be improved.

### Recommendations for the practice in GRAZ

The key recommendations from participating AWB members on the work of the practice in Graz include:

- As the wider network of STEBEP seems to have a weak significance for the practice at present, the link should be improved, as well as the expectations of the network discussed and roles clarified.
- The network between regional public authorities could be intensified, e.g. by regular roundtables.
- The role of the local actors (e.g. regional TEP) could be strengthened.
- In order to make the added value of move-ment's work in relation to PES's mainstream measures visible, comparative analysis could be carried out.
- As the practice has only been evaluated ten years ago, an evaluation is highly recommended. It is suggested that STEBEP partners could assign an evaluation based on a holistic impact definition.
- In order to easier the process of possible transfer, the roles of involved actors and move-ments' responsibilities should be defined more precisely.

### Key Lessons learnt of AWB members for improving their city approach, policies and actions

The partners also discussed what they will take home as learnings in order to improve their own actions. The learnings taken home comprise:

- The AWB member from Vienna learnt: A holistic intervention is the key for sustainable re-integration into the labour market.
- The AWB member from Tampere learnt: it is a challenge to get deep enough into the details of a practice given this restricted time.
- The AWB member from Rome learnt: the provision of sufficient resources for the practice's networking activates are crucial.

- The AWB member from Dublin learnt: the significant contribution of good relations between network actors to the success of the initiative.
- The AWB members from Berlin learnt: networking takes frequently place without awareness of doing it. The policy approach should be a mixture of mainstream measures and target measures in order to create flexibility. Further, the importance of mutual trust and reliability among the network actors needs to be highlighted.
- The AWB member from Hamburg learnt: key to the success of a practice is in particular the intensity of the intervention as well as the different steps taken by the practice. It is also important that the practice is embedded in the political environment.
- The AWB member from Santander learnt: the practice could not be implemented in Spain because Spanish private enterprises will not be able to participate in a program as such, as nowadays they do not have job vacancies, employment creation is required.
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### Open questions

A) Open questions of the participating AWB members on the work of the practice in Graz are:

- Is the project target group specific? Can it be applied to other groups also?
- Are there any mainstream measures interlinked with ">Erfahrung zählt!""?
- To what extent is the policy driven by the needs of the labour market, to what extent does it have a social inclusion dimension?

B) Open questions of the participating AWB members concerning AWB's research approach are:

- How do we define the impact of a practice?
- How do deal with data from the two control cases of non-target group specific measures?
- How do we define cooperation and how network?

### Feedback to the overall workshop

- The presentations done during the workshop were interesting and gave a lot space for active participation and discussion. The speakers had a good level in English and this allowed a great communication flow.
- The project subject for the study was well chosen and allowed interesting discussions and experience exchange.
- The overall workshop was very well organized.

## 6 Annex – List of Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role in the Peer Review Workshop</b>
Deutschmann	Alois	MOVE-MENT	Director of move-ment
Eisenberger	Karoline	MOVE-MENT	Project leader of ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Eskonen	Tommi	TYPÄ	Peer Reviewer
Geiger	Regina	Land Steiermark	Network partner and funder of ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Gómez	Mónica	Documenta	Peer Reviewer
Graf	Hannes	AMS Graz	Network partner and funder of ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Grilli	Elena	Ciofs-FP	Peer Reviewer
Horvath-Reitbauer	Eveline	Land Steiermark	Network partner and funder of ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Heuermann	Daniel	GSUB	Peer Reviewer
Hooshmandi-Robia	Bettina	MOVE-MENT	Adviser in ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Johnssen	Sabine	MOVE-MENT	Adviser in ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Kindermann-Wlasak	Herta	AMS Steiermark	Network partner and funder of ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Löschnigg	Gabriele	MOVE-MENT	Adviser in ">Erfahrung zählt!"
Mirbach	Thomas	Lawaetz	Peer Reviewer
Peitel	Diana	GSUB	Peer Reviewer
Schwarz-Woelzl	Maria	ZSI	Peer Reviewer
Scoppetta	Anette	ZSI	Facilitator
Sievers	Rasmus		Video producer
Somers	Jean	DEP	Peer Reviewer
Zouizi	Jasmin	METROPOLISNET	Peer Reviewer