



Workshop Understanding and measuring unemployment and exclusion from the labour market



Antwerp in Flanders in Belgium in Europe





The city of Antwerp in numbers

- **484.850 citizens**
 - 61,2% aged between 18 and 64 years
 - 30,8% of foreign origin:
 - 25,3% Morocco (7,8% total population)
 - 8,3% Turkey (2,5% total population)
- **GDP (2007, Antwerp region): 57.3 billion EUR (= 17% of Belgium's GDP)**
- **most important sectors of employment (2007): industry (13.5%), administrative services (12.8%), retail (11.8%), health services (10.9%), transport (10.5%)**





The city of Antwerp in numbers

- activity rate (2008): 65.4%
- employment rate (2008): 59.8%
- unemployment rate (May 2010): 14.7%
- 6,035 people on social welfare (2009)
 - 1.9% of people aged between 18 and 64 years
 - 8% of people aged between 18 and 64 years with non-EU nationality
 - % are relatively stable over time (2005-2009)





Effects of the recession on unemployment in Antwerp

- autumn of 2008: financial crisis strikes Belgium, the economical crisis soon follows
 - increase of the number of unemployed in Antwerp since the beginning of 2009
 - some groups are struck harder than others
 - some parts of Antwerp are struck harder than others
 - increase of the unemployment rate
 - first positive sign since the beginning of this year (the pace of increase is slowing down)
 - however: long term unemployment is now increasing, as is the very long term unemployment





Finding answers to persistent problems in Antwerp

- persistent problems (long before the current recession):
 - youth unemployment
 - unemployment of people of foreign origin
 - long term unemployment
- finding answers:
 - collaborations:
 - 2007: contract between city of Antwerp and the Public Employment Service in Flanders (VDAB) region Antwerp
 - 2008: contract between city of Antwerp, VDAB region Antwerp and the local social welfare service (OCMW - centre public d'aide sociale)





Finding answers...

- sector network approach:
 - sectors: industry, construction, commercial and administrative professions, logistics, catering industry, ...
 - operational partnership consisting of governmental (department Work and Economy, Local Council for Education, VDAB), sectoral actors (sector funds) and social partners (employers and employees' organisations)
 - aim: realizing a coordinated approach for matching vacancies and workforce
 - projects:
 - Talentenwerf: organizing innovative vocational training for jobseekers on building sites, with the collaboration of companies
 - Metaalbad: screening of skills of unemployed who are interested in a job in the metal industry





Finding answers...

- study of the (nog) niet bemiddelbaren/(not) yet activated to the labour market:
 - aim (summer of 2008): answering the question why the city of Antwerp has such a high unemployment rate even in times of high conjuncture
 - analysis (in 2009) on the databases of VDAB en OCMW
 - results:
 - the combination of problems/thresholds, such as lack of educational attainment, (limited) knowledge of the Dutch language, health issues (physical or mental), mobility problems (no driving licence) and childcare problems increases the distance to the labour market,
 - for almost 8% of the unemployed and for 35.4% of the people on social welfare the distance to the labour market is too far to bridge (only social activation e.g. volunteer work is possible)





Finding answers...

- results (continuation):
 - for other groups the distance to the labour market can be decreased by more intensive, long term paths of training and counselling to work
 - a more intensive collaboration between VDAB and OCMW: the unemployed with welfare problems/thresholds are first send to the OCMW by VDAB to resolve those problems before going back to VDAB for a path of training and work; people on social welfare but who can be activated to work after a path of training and work are send to the VDAB by OCMW
 - monitoring of the results of this intensive collaboration between VDAB and OCMW is on going



Finding answers...

- other projects:
 - Werkhaven Antwerpen:
 - aim: realizing 1,000 new jobs in social economy in Antwerp
 - location: Antwerp-North
 - Werkhaven provides services to the city and OCMW for “soft” renovation, maintenance, cleaning, weed control, removing of litter, ...
 - number of manual workers: 2008: 105 – 2009: 169 – 2010: 312
 - how: on the job training (instructors / language coach) for the manual workers so they acquire work experience and enhance their chances for regular employment





Finding answers...

- other projects (continuation):
 - jobobstakels (job obstacles):
 - Digipunten: aim is to reduce the digital gap by giving free access to computers and internet, giving computer training (not only for the unemployed but for every citizen of Antwerp)
 - OKiDO's (occasionele kinderopvang): for the unemployed who need quick and short term childcare because they are in training or have job interviews
 - facilities not only to be used by the unemployed but also possibilities for the employment of unemployed (e.g. the unemployed working for the OKiDO's are trained to become qualified child care nurses)





Evaluation of policy results?

- draw up of operational plans that define common goals and concrete actions (with indication of budget costs)
- monitoring on a quarterly basis of results (e.g. number of unemployed reached, some population characteristics)
- but not everything can be measured (yet?): we are struggling to measure e.g. what happens after training to the unemployed/employment in social economy.



What can we learn?

- because of the collaboration in Antwerp the different parties know what role they play and which tasks to perform (who does what for whom is made clear)
- you can go only as far and as fast as the weakest link is willing/able to go (budgetary reasons due to the current recession are put forward as explanation)

