Empowering Labour Markets through Convention 88 and Employer Outreach: A Global Perspective

Associate Professor Jo Ingold
26 September 2023
Acknowledgement of Country
Evidence base
Employers don’t know about your programs or why it might help them

Commissioner

Customers/ Clients/ Participants/ Candidates

Employers

Lack of demand-side focus

Complexity
• Demand-side largely absent

• Involvement / participation / engagement

• ‘Two faces’ (Ingold and Stuart, 2015)

• Employer engagement as “the active involvement of employers in addressing the societal challenge of promoting the labour market participation of ‘vulnerable groups’” (van Berkel et al, 2017)
Labour market intermediaries

- Employment service providers are Labour Market Intermediaries (LMIs) that advocate between the employer (supply-side) and candidate (supply-side)

- Two key roles:
  1. Information Providers
  2. Matchmakers

- Servicing jobseekers & employers are focused on the same goal

Key stages of employer engagement

1. Role of *inter*-organizational relationships with employers
2. Role of *intra*-organizational relationships within provider organisations

Employer engagement - distinct from ‘participation’

1. Non-participating employers
2. Two clear groups of engaged employers:
   (i) ‘Instrumentally’ engaged (one-off/ad hoc transactional activities)
   (ii) ‘Relationally’ engaged (deeper, repeated, systematic engagement)

Conditionality

• Employers are critical of policies focused solely on the supply-side.

• Receiving large numbers of unsuitable and unfiltered job applications frustrates employers (‘box ticking’).

• Also critical of media rhetoric that that suggests unemployed are ‘faulty products’ – risks ‘tarnishing’ candidates and undermining their chances of securing employment.

Employers’ recruitment processes pose barriers

- Large employers – economies of scale but hard to access decision-makers

- Large employers can accommodate ‘spray and pray’ approach (not recommended!)

- Small employers can be easier to engage but more resource-intensive

- Programs can help particular cohorts into work incl PWD

- BUT employers’ recruitment and selection processes pose barrier that needs to be addressed

A role for social networks?

• UK and Denmark more similar than expected

• UK employers were more likely to participate in programs if they were more deeply embedded within wider social networks

• In Denmark, trust in programs was transmitted more widely through a network of employer associations and trade unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to build relationships (inter-organisational relations)</th>
<th>Strong communication skills incl presenting</th>
<th>Sales-specific skills – negotiating, influencing, closing a deal</th>
<th>Persistent (can deal with knockbacks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Good customer-focused skills e.g. follow-up</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Good understanding of employment programs and caseload</td>
<td>Identify and analyse sources of labour market intelligence</td>
<td>Concierge (‘no wrong door’ and ‘hide the wiring’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[https://business.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/183/employer_engagement_in_active_labour_market_programmes](https://business.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/183/employer_engagement_in_active_labour_market_programmes)
Co-opetition

• The ES market is confusing & crowded
• ‘Needs-led’ rather than ‘product-led’ approach
• Co-opetition (collaboration amidst competition)
• Rationale: if employer requirements > 1 provider

Scott T and Ingold J (2020) ‘Collaboration is key: but is it really as easy as ‘working together’?’ Discussion Paper for the Institute of Employability Professionals:
Australian employers and employment service providers

• Large employers
• HR benefits
• CSR benefits
• Financial benefits – two types
• Increased efficiencies
• Direct financial assistance

Some evidence that micro employers benefit from wage subsidies to grow

Employer Engagement: Making Active Labour Market Policies Work

Edited by Jo Ingold and Patrick McGurk
### Varieties of Employer Engagement

**Table 2.1: Varieties of policy approaches to employer engagement in activation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem definition</th>
<th>Regulation approach</th>
<th>Facilitation approach</th>
<th>Negotiation approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid discrimination by changing the recruitment and selection practices of employers</td>
<td>Provide adequate and qualified labour and serve the recruitment needs of employers</td>
<td>Collaborate with employers on job matches, job design and job retention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged jobseekers further away from the ordinary labour market</td>
<td>Jobseekers close to the regular labour market that are ‘fit’ and ‘ready’ to work</td>
<td>Disadvantaged jobseekers further away from the ordinary labour market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance mode</td>
<td>Old public administration</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
<td>New Public Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy assumption about employer’s role</td>
<td>Employers as passive subjects and utility maximizers</td>
<td>Employers as customers</td>
<td>Employers as co-producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main policy instruments</td>
<td>‘Sticks’ (regulation)</td>
<td>‘Carrots’ (subsidies)</td>
<td>‘Sermons’ (information)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bredgaard, Ingold and van Berkel (2023)

UK
Denmark
Netherlands
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement level</th>
<th>Main actors</th>
<th>Key characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Macro**        | • National governments  
                  • Employer associations  
                  • Trades Unions  | • Blend of policy ‘sticks’, ‘carrots’ and ‘sermons’  
                      • Institutionalised social partnerships  
                      • Regional/local devolution  
                      • Societal concern with the quality of working life |
| **Meso**         | • National regulators  
                  • Intermediaries  
                  • Sectoral bodies  
                  • Regional and local government  | • Simplicity in programme operations  
                      • Holistic recruitment and retention intermediary services  
                      • Co-production partnership approach and local autonomy  
                      • Occupational career ladders |
| **Micro**        | • Individual firms  
                  • Human resource management experts  
                  • Local partnerships  | • Inclusive leadership and human resource management  
                      • Shared responsibility for local, social outcomes |
Examples

Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment

Use this form to send through details of jobs you would like the Work and Health Programme to help with, or to ask us any questions.

Once you have completed the form, we will be in touch within 2 working days.

Australian Government
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Please complete your details below. We look forward to hearing from you.

Your name
Business email address

Your role
Business phone number

Company name

Address line 1

Address line 2
Employer Engagement

- Edited by Jo Ingold and Patrick McGurk

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Thank you for listening!

- Jo.ingold@acu.edu.au
- https://www.linkedin.com/in/joingold/
- Many resources are available from: https://business.leeds.ac.uk/faculty/direcord/research-projects/743/employer-engagement-in-active-labour-market-programmes


• Ingold J and Carr T (2020) ‘How can we better integrate employer engagement in service delivery?’ *Institute of Employability Professionals Journal #2*

• Ingold J (2020) ‘Improving Business Engagement’ *Institute of Employability Professionals Journal #1*


Ingold, J. and Knox, A (in press) ‘An analysis of employer engagement in employment services: Evidence from Australia’, *Journal of Industrial Relations*  
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00221856231159512


Ingold J and Carr T (2020) ‘How can we better integrate employer engagement in service delivery?’ *Institute of Employability Professionals Journal #2*

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