ESF Evaluations by MS 2007-2013

Antonella Schulte-Braucks
Head of Unit Evaluation and Impact Assessment
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Vilnius, 5 July 2013
On-going evaluations

• No obligation for MS to carry out evaluations at a set point in time

• = significant variance among MS in timing, topics, scope and methods of ESF evaluations

• = challenge for Commission services to gather and analyse findings of evaluations conducted at national level
ESF Expert Evaluation Network

- The Expert Evaluation Network (EEN) involves one/two national expert(s) in each Member State

- They collect and analyse all evaluations related to ESF Operational Programmes carried out by the MS in the 2007-2013 programming period

- To produce Inventories of evaluations, Country Reports for all 27 MS, and Synthesis Reports at EU level
Evaluations

• By May 2013, the country experts had identified 769 evaluations

• Most evaluations are conducted at national or multiregional level

• Most evaluations are operational

• Most were process evaluations
Status of the Evaluations

Territorial Level

Finalised: 79%
Ongoing: 15%
Planned: 6%

National/Multiregional: 56%
Regional: 42%
Other/not specified: 2%
Potential (intended) use of the Evaluations

- Operational: 62%
- Strategic: 31%
- Mixed: 3%
- Unclear / not specified: 4%

Evaluation Approaches

- Process: 55%
- Impact: 24%
- Other / not specified: 17%
- Mixed: 4%
Findings

• Most of the findings relate to effectiveness

• The most evaluated policy field is Access to Employment

• Followed by Social Inclusion

• Among individuals, the most evaluated target groups are Unemployed and Young people
Access to Employment

Key Figures:

• Information stand: 2012
• Around €23 billion committed
• Over 12.5 million final recipients supported
• Over 2.4 million final recipients achieved an employment result
• But little evidence on sustainability of employment

Good practices identified in some MS:

• Designing interventions to reflect needs and assets of individuals and priority groups
• Engaging effectively with employers
• Building strong partnerships between agencies and beneficiary organisations
Access to Employment

Factors helping effective implementation:

• Opportunity to refocus OPs after recession
• Good quality staffing, systems and management arrangements
• National Employment Service with strong capacity

Learning Points:

• People with multiple disadvantages need more intensive and/or lengthy interventions
• Important value of key worker/personal adviser working closely with final recipients on one to one basis
• More support needed for final recipients after they enter employment, particularly given weak labour market
Access to Employment

Challenges for evaluation:

• Despite its importance, evaluation evidence is often fragmented and lacking robustness

• Poor design of some sub-priorities (no baseline, no quantification of targets for indicators, etc...)

• Simple indicators (i.e. initial job entry) too much dependent on exit data supplied by beneficiary organisations (not always reliable and correct)

• Need for more impact evaluations
Social Inclusion

Key figures:

- Information Stand 2012
- Nearly €24 billion committed
- Over 14.5 million final recipients engaged, although this might involve double counting as SI final recipients engage in different interventions
- Broad range of target groups: over 2.4 million unemployed, over 1.3 million migrants, and over 1 million young people have been supported by SI interventions

Particularly effective interventions:

- Working in schools with young people at risk of early leaving or at the point of transition from school to work
- Interventions with families from Roma communities
- Activities to bring adults back into the education system
Social Inclusion

Factors supporting effective implementation:

• Focussing on the needs of individuals
• Well integrated interventions and services
• Intelligent design of interventions using evaluation evidence, but also involving final recipients themselves
• More emphasis on early interventions, for example to reduce early drop out from school
• Responding flexibly to changing economic circumstances
• Building the capacity of the organisations designing and delivering interventions
• Key support services (drug counselling, money advice, etc.)
• Raising awareness and changing attitudes and behaviours (e.g. towards disabled people) among employers and key agencies
Social Inclusion

Challenges for evaluation:

- Little robust evidence, in particular on soft results
- Poor design of some sub-priorities (no baseline, no quantification of targets for indicators, etc...)
- Need for more impact evaluations
- Need to know what types of interventions produce significant net effects
Target Groups – women and young people

- Reports on “Women” and “Young People” - May 2013

- Focus on 10 MS with more evaluation findings:
  Spain, Germany, Greece, Poland, UK (women)
  Austria, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Portugal (young people)
Target Groups – women

• Nearly 25.5 million women have been final recipients of ESF support

• Women account for 52.1% of all final recipients, with wide variations across MS (between 33.2% and 64.7%)

• ESF efforts in relation to women were strongly focussed on employment and employability, with much less emphasis on social inclusion

• Little evidence of interventions focussing on tackling horizontal and vertical segregation
Target Groups – women

Challenges for evaluation:

• Lack of focus on measuring results

• Data collected on irregular basis or lacking

• Presentation of data preventing an assessment of ESF contribution to women

• Limited amount of evaluation evidence to help identifying good practice
Target Groups – Young people

- Over 14.5 million young people have been final recipients of ESF supported activity, nearly 30% of all final recipients

- Big variations across MS (11.1% - 49.4%, much greater than for women)

- There is a tendency for the proportion of young people who are final recipients to be lower in the Southern European economies

- Growing focus on proactive interventions
Target Groups – Young people

Challenges for evaluation:

• Differences in definitions of young people across evaluations and MS

• Lack of specific targets for young people

• Very few reports focussing on young people specific interventions

• Only small number of impact evaluations to assess impact of ESF interventions (not specifically designed) on young people
SUMMING UP

• GREAT DISPARITY IN EVALUATION EFFORTS AMONG MS

• EVEN FOR MAIN ESF THEMES, INSUFFICIENT OR LACKING EVALUATION FINDINGS

• GENERAL LACK OF HARD RESULTS

• = HOW TO DEMOistrate IN A ROBUST WAY WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?
Recommendations for 2014-2020

• Clear intervention logic

• Well defined indicators and definitions

• Baseline and quantified targets whenever appropriate

• More impact evaluations = start preparing now
Thank you for your attention!