



# Job Carving and Job Crafting

A review of practices

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Job carving and job crafting can be effective strategies to overcome the challenges of labour market (re)integration of people facing barriers and to keep workers employed by creating meaningful and productive employment. This paper was produced as an output of the ESF Employment Thematic Network, a network of the European Social Fund (ESF) Transnational Platform (on behalf of AEIDL) by order of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. It aims to raise awareness and promote job carving and job crafting activities within the EU. It provides insights into current actions of ESF Managing Authorities and their partner organisations that aim to provide holistic support to employers, employees and unemployed people during job carving and/or job crafting activities. Promising practices applied within the EU are presented and recommendations drawn for future activities within the ESF. Examples include the need for guidance and mainstreaming of the approach within EU Member States as a promising European Social Fund theme.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of people with barriers to entering the labour market is a growing challenge in Europe. This applies to low-skilled people in particular, many of whom are long-term unemployed (LTU) as well as to people with disabilities, amongst others. For instance, in 2018, 7.2 million people or 43% of all unemployed people in the EU were unemployed for more than a year (Eurostat, 2019). As is well known, LTU can reduce productivity (Edin & Gustavsson, 2008). The 2016 Council Recommendation on the integration of long-term unemployed into the labour market aims to promote measures that can support this group into work, through holistic, individualised support provided by a single point of contact, and with the involvement of employers.<sup>1</sup>

Job carving and job crafting can be effective strategies to overcome the challenges of labour market (re)integration of people facing barriers and to keep workers employed by creating meaningful and productive employment. Strategies of this kind can contribute to the humanisation of work and may gain importance due to digitalisation and automatisisation processes that drive the changes in the world of work. The aim of this paper is to enhance awareness amongst ESF-Managing Authorities (MA) and their partner organisations of the opportunities and challenges faced when implementing job carving and job crafting. The ESF can support practices of this kind by helping employers identify possible areas for carving, by assisting employees in their crafting processes, by offering preparatory training to vulnerable people, and by accompanying the processes of placement and after-care.

To further improve the role of the ESF in promoting job carving and job crafting activities, the Employment Thematic Network (ETN) dedicated a 2-day meeting to this topic on 14-15 May 2019 in Malta. The meeting was a result of discussions held during other ETN meetings, especially at the ETN meeting on 28-29 September 2017 in Athens. The paper builds on findings of the ETN meeting in Malta and was further enriched by results of the workshop “Investing in Careers: Job Carving for inclusive Employment” held in Brussels/Belgium during the ESF Transnational Platform Annual Conference (21-22 May 2019). It provides background information and informs of advantages and potential risks when implementing these approaches. The target audience for this paper are ETN members, namely ESF-MAs and their partner organisations, such as social partners, NGOs and their umbrella organisations, as well as EU institutions (e.g. European Commission, etc.).

Key questions discussed at the aforementioned events were:

- What are the most widespread forms of job carving and job crafting within Europe? Which target groups are most frequently addressed?
- Which sectors or industries are most open to job carving and/or job crafting for the employment of specific target groups?
- How can the ESF support effective job carving and job crafting?

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<sup>1</sup> Council recommendation of 15 February 2016 on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market, 2016/C 67/01

The paper is structured as follows: following the introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 sets the scene by describing the concepts, their relevance and the challenges and opportunities of job carving and job crafting. Chapter 3 informs about the status quo of current activities implemented by ESF MAs in this field and provides examples of promising practices. Recommendations developed during the meetings, especially addressed at public administrations are summarised in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes by highlighting key lessons learned.

### 2. SETTING THE SCENE

Job carving and job crafting aim to match the needs of enterprises with peoples' individual talents, needs and interests. Activities of this kind can benefit the individuals concerned, the companies, and society in general. As such, humanising job design is consistent with efficiency and sustainability.

More recently, these activities have also been discussed under the headings "*Job design*", "*Job enrichment*", "*Job satisfaction*" and "*Work customisation*". Ideas of this kind are grounded in the recognition of legitimate needs and interests of both the worker and the employer. They are strongly linked to the concept of humanising work by action to re-size the job so that it suits the capacity of the worker. This is of particular concern with regard to the intensification of work, the pace of work, and the fact that many jobs become burdensome and physically demanding or cause workers to work under acute pressure with consequent risks to health and well-being.

**Job carving** refers to the practice of rearranging work tasks within a company to create tailor-made employment opportunities for all people, but especially for people with reduced work capacities or for people who for other reasons are constrained in the tasks they carry out (Griffin et al., 2007; LWL-Integrationsamt Westfalen, 2017). Not all carving activities thus have to lead to customised employment opportunities for *new* employees.

Usually, carving is done by managers together with specialised consultants who help the managers to identify areas in which tasks and processes can be rearranged to create new positions within firms. The carving process can be accompanied by complementary training for filling a new position, ongoing support measures to advance people in their further careers and by offers to the enterprises, such as workplace adjustments.

**Job crafting** refers to the practice of employees designing their tasks and work processes themselves. It can be regarded as a specific form of workplace innovation.<sup>2</sup> Job crafting is defined as "*the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work*" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p.179). In contrast to carving, job crafting describes a bottom-up process: employees are granted the freedom to decide on how they work, which allows them to change their work identity and its meaning. This can help employees increase their job satisfaction and decrease the risk of burnout (Tims et al., 2013). Bart Moens, who presented the job enrichment approach

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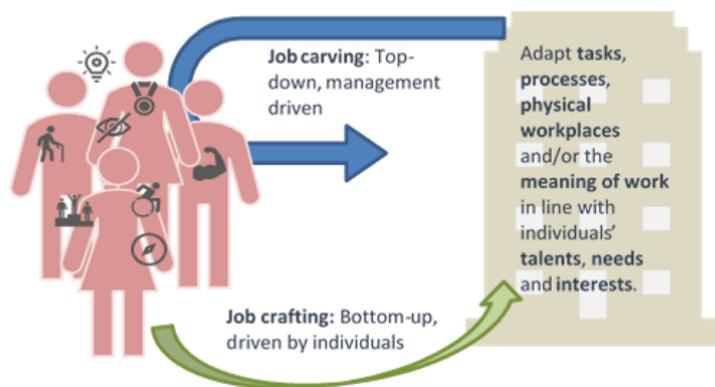
<sup>2</sup> Workplace innovation improves motivation and working conditions for employees, which leads to increased labour productivity, innovation capability, market resilience, and overall business competitiveness (See: [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/policy/workplace\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/policy/workplace_en) )

taken by Mooi Werk Makers in Flanders (Belgium) at the ETN meeting, distinguishes between:

- *Task Crafting*: Taking on more or fewer tasks, expanding or diminishing their scope, changing the way they are performed, adjusting time and effort devoted to different tasks;
- *Relational Crafting*: Changing how, when, or with whom employees interact in the process of performing their job duties;
- *Cognitive Crafting*: Changing the way employees perceive the tasks and relationships in their jobs; and
- *Time-spatial Crafting*: Actively selecting and/or adapting workplaces, work locations and working hours.

Though job carving and job crafting describe similar processes they are therefore driven by different actors: as shown in Figure 1, **job carving is a top-down process driven by management** to adapt tasks, processes or workplaces based on the talents, needs and interest of current or future employees. By contrast, **job crafting is a bottom-up process driven by employees**. Both concepts, however, show clear economic benefits for the companies. They enhance productivity and increase the health of workers and their job satisfaction (Tims et al., 2013).

Figure 1: *Understanding job carving and job crafting*



Source: Own illustration

Key features of the concepts are outlined in Table 1 below. As a result of the differing drivers of the process, **the target group varies**: while employees are the primary target group of crafting, job carving can be conducted with and for both the unemployed AND the employed. Although both concepts can create new positions, roles or jobs, the adaptation of job tasks to an individual's needs is focussed within job crafting. Finally, there are differences observed regarding the role of public funding: to date, the ESF has mainly contributed to job carving activities in some countries (see Chapter 3). Public financial support for crafting activities, however, seems to be very limited or simply not named as such.

Table 1: *Key features of the concepts*

Field of Activities / Features	Job Crafting	Job Carving
<b>Drivers</b>	Employees (Bottom-up)	Management driven (Top-down)
<b>Target group</b>	Employed	Unemployed
<b>Focus of the approach</b>	Adapt job tasks to individual needs	Create new positions/roles/jobs
<b>Funding</b>	Little/no public funding	Partly ESF-funded (trainings, consultancy, etc.)

Source: Own illustration

Sheltered employment and activities within the social economy are related to job carving, because they also provide employment opportunities for people who otherwise have difficulties in finding a job. However, the entities implementing job carving in these sectors can be clearly distinguished from others:

- **Sheltered employment** refers to employment within definite companies that are specifically set up for the employment of people with disabilities or other working limitations (European Commission, 2018a). Usually, this specific type of employment is subsidised by public funds.
- **Social economy activities** aim at the social and economic integration of disadvantaged workers. Different types of organisations are key actors, such as cooperatives, non-for-profits and social enterprises (European Commission, 2016).

In contrast to sheltered employment and activities within the social economy, job carving is implemented together with and for employers on the *regular* labour market.

## 2.1 Relevance

Hagner et al. (2002) emphasised that every job involves some degree of adaptation as everyone modifies a job to highlight their abilities and get around their limitations. In this regard, managers understanding job carving and gaining insight into why and how their employees craft jobs can enable the process to be beneficial for the individual employees and their organisations.

Research, moreover, confirms that people with significant barriers to employment have often been excluded from labour market integration. Condon et al. (2004) found members of this group as often *“unable to successfully complete the complex variety of responsibilities associated with existing jobs”* (p. 1). Studies, especially Callahan (2002), have noted that services and programmes relying on traditional methods do not result in sustainable employment outcomes for people with complex support needs. Individuals

can often be placed into an existing job based upon the employer's need to hire and the support services they need for a placement, rather than considering how best to make use of the competencies of the job seeker.

Griffin et al. (2007) have challenged the view that one must be 'close to perfect' before entering the world of work. Professional integration with permanent subsidies typically involves enterprises organising sheltered workplaces, outside of the open labour market. Some clients are people with disabilities. Davister et al. (2004) found sheltered workplaces in Portugal, Sweden and Ireland were offering productive activities that allow clients to establish a social identity and acquire professional competencies. However, few workers found employment in the open labour market. They also noted that several adapted work enterprises in Belgium sought to offer an experience more akin to an open market (i.e. non-sheltered) environment. In an environment of continuing skill shortages and bottleneck occupations, employers have an incentive to consider more flexible and creative hiring processes including job carving and job crafting. They (are forced to) accept a diversified workforce, providing bespoke training and individual support which can create opportunities for job seekers and meet companies' needs.

Work customisation generally, whether through job carving or job crafting, can be of special benefit in creating opportunities for all people, especially for people with some shortfalls in capability, and can help overcome employers' recruitment difficulties. Traditional employment models are changing with the increasing focus on service sector employment. This can present opportunities to promote work customisation. In many advanced economies, an ageing workforce is contributing to certain sectors that face increasing recruitment difficulties. As competition for workers increases, employers are recognising the need to be more flexible.

Employers can benefit from help to address current employment dynamics such as labour shortages and high turnover rates. They can also enhance business organisation and increase efficiency and productivity by using the skills of all employees to their best advantage. This can be done through re-assigning jobs to match skills, re-organising workflows to increase productivity, identifying unmet needs in the workplace through negotiating customized jobs, increasing customer satisfaction, and helping employers to better reflect the existing diversity in their communities. Griffin (n.d.) has concluded that employment specialists and job developers are key to job redesign and need to be prepared to identify and develop these opportunities and to work effectively with job seekers and employers to address their mutual goals and needs.

In conclusion, job carving and job crafting can be a promising strategy for all groups of society. **The rearrangement of work tasks that takes place within job carving and job crafting can lead to new job opportunities and add value to all involved:** the enterprises as well as the employees and the people re-entering the labour market (men and women LTU, people with disabilities, older male and female workers, migrants, carers, etc.). The ESF already supports these practices (see Chapter 3).

## 2.2 Challenges and Opportunities

There are different views on the opportunities and challenges for job carving and job crafting, as we will see in the following:

On the pessimists' side, scholars underline the **prevalence of negative stereotypes**. For example, one challenge to the employment of people who are not 'close to perfect' (see Griffin et al., 2007) is what has been called the "*vicious circle of low expectations*" (Rinaldi & Perkins, 2005): employers believe that, for example, people with disabilities cannot work and therefore do not employ them. The low employment rate of members of this group confirms that they are unlikely to find work. Consequently, they are disheartened and do not apply for jobs.<sup>3</sup> As the length of time people are unemployed increases, they can lose self-confidence and become self-deprecating, which often results in poor health. This further reduces the number of these people in employment and reinforces employers' perception that they are unable to work because they do not see evidence to the contrary. The core challenge is therefore to outreach to employers and to convince them to give all people a chance in the first place. This can be achieved by focussing on the talents of people.

Job carving may easily lead to a **downgrading of salaries** when identifying and carving out easy or elementary tasks. To avoid developing positions of lower value<sup>4</sup>, consultants should ensure that the talents and the benefits the new employees will bring to the companies are highlighted and support the engagement of and dialogue with social partners. Practical guides to job carving stress the win-win aspect of carving for both employers and the new employees (Griffin et al., 2007; LWL-Integrationsamt Westfalen, 2017). However, given the evidence that employers have a vested interest in reducing turnover for all (Devins et al., 2011), and that lower skilled jobs can be satisfying for workers in the right environment, there are opportunities to engage businesses in job carving activities.

In addition, there are several **practical challenges** associated with job carving. Target group-specific approaches are required to be successful. These approaches must reflect the talents, needs and interests of the individuals of specific groups such as migrants, people with disabilities or older workers, as described below.

### *Success factors*

Some evaluations and practical guides stress the importance of **the discovery (or assessment) phase** which served to ensure that individual's needs were understood and their skills, talents and interests identified (Griffin et al., 2007).

Griffin et al. (2007) also identified **the level of professional skill of support** workers as a crucial factor in the success of customised employment initiatives.

Evidence from Germany underlined the importance of **good and uninterrupted relations between job carving consultants and employers** (LWL-Integrationsamt

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<sup>3</sup> Such views on disabled persons can be reinforced by traditional gender stereotypes and prejudices that consider that female disabled persons should not work (European Parliament, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> This is a particular risk for women who are generally facing a process of devaluation on the labour market, explaining the persisting gender pay gap between women and men (European Commission, 2019).

Westfalen, 2017). Fesko et al. (2008), moreover, emphasised the importance of successful collaboration between supporting actors, especially those specialising in designing customised tasks, as key to success.

Similarly, Nicholas et al. (2006) noted the need for **ongoing support for disadvantaged jobseekers who found employment**, resources to fund services arranging work customisation and business leaders willing to support customised employment initiatives.

Elinson et al. (2008) however found that customised employment programmes frequently ceased in the absence of funding for support systems for employees.

Studies, including Corden & Thornton (2002) and Beyer et al. (1996), have found that **the quality of employment opportunities** available has been an important consideration in integration outcomes from customised work approaches.

As already stated, the main opportunities from job carving and job crafting comprise the development of new roles, positions and jobs within (regular) enterprises that fit to employees' talents, needs and interests. Benefits of the approach therefore include the prospect of providing meaningful work, increasing the productivity and health of individual workers, increased engagement, job satisfaction and decreased burnout (Tims et al., 2013), and improved employer-employee relations. Job crafting thus can be regarded as an important strategy for **improving workers' health**.

Since there is also clear evidence that job crafting can have positive effects for employees and companies (Tims et al., 2013; Van Wingerden & Poell, 2017), the ESF can play an important role in promoting this approach. There is however little evidence that *public actors* like ESF-MAs promote job crafting. Most crafting activities seem to be based on the initiatives of companies or their employees. Yet, the openness of employers to supporting job crafting confirms the value added for companies. To achieve results to benefit the company, scholars suggest employees are informed about the overall goals of the organisation (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Further to this, the nature of crafting requires that employees are given autonomy on how to achieve their tasks, as job crafting activities are related to the perceived level of crafting opportunities (Van Wingerden & Poell, 2017). Hence one challenge for the ESF-MAs is to convince managers to alter their management style and/or their organisational culture and grant more operational freedoms to their workers, whilst also ensuring that the crafting processes are successful.

### *Gender perspective*

According to Nathalie Wuïame (2019), gender expert of the ETN, job carving and job crafting intersect with gender, since gender aspects are linked to employment (horizontal and vertical segregation), and expected competences and skills., They also relate to roles and responsibilities in the private sphere (parental burnout).

Opportunities and challenges as well as risks of crafting are listed in Table 2 (below). Opportunities related to the gender perspective include, for instance, detection of gender discrimination during the process of job carving. This must be dealt with, in parallel, facing the challenge that gender identity is recognised as an important part of work and

organisational culture. It has therefore to be addressed in order to avoid reinforcing segregation.

Table 2: *Gender perspective on opportunities and challenges of job crafting*

Opportunities	Challenges / risks
Supports individuals in crafting their job to get more satisfaction.	Shifting (managing) responsibilities to individuals without adapting work organisation.
Detect gender discrimination, e.g. more routine tasks for female employees, or different expectations etc.	Recognising that gender identity is an important part of work and organisation culture and avoid reinforcing segregation in work redesign.
More participatory management and greater flexibility.	Gender stereotypes and biases in both aspects should be taken into account.

Source: Nathalie Wuiame, 2019

Opportunities and challenges of job carving from a gender perspective are in Table 3. In this area, opportunities encompass, for example, a targeted approach for women facing barriers to entering employment. Consequently, the challenges are reducing barriers without reinforcing stereotypes associated with target groups, such as concentrating on offering low paid or part-time jobs. It also requires that attention be paid to intersectionality aspects (e.g. offering jobs on care for the elderly to female migrants).

Table 3: *Gender perspective on opportunities and challenges of job carving*

Opportunities	Challenges / risks
Assessment of different aspects of the job (human and technical).	Assessment by independent intermediary, coach and employer of individual competences based on supposed "natural" competences of women and men.
Targeted approach for people facing barriers to enter employment, e.g. people with reduced capacities.	Reducing barriers without reinforcing stereotypes associated to target groups, e.g. offering low paid or part-time jobs to women.
Adapt the work and organisation culture to newcomers (more flexibility) and enhance diversity management.	Work with employed staff to support integration of newcomers and employ an inclusive working culture.

Source: Nathalie Wuiame, 2019

The ESF can contribute to reducing gender inequalities at the workplace, in society generally, and within job carving and job crafting processes, for instance, by:

- Providing gender training on gender stereotypes and biases, and also gender roles/responsibilities and identity, and their influence on work organisation;
- Monitoring crafting and placement (carving) not just in terms of volumes but also by sector and types of job (no downgrading of jobs) satisfaction level, (data by sex) etc.; and by
- Offering the same rights for newly created jobs and avoiding downgrading new jobs created through job carving.

The challenges and opportunities of job carving and job crafting can be summarised as follows: people not (yet) fitting into new roles, positions and jobs, as well as people no longer being able to perform the tasks required, can receive new chances via job carving and job crafting. Win-win situations are created where enterprises benefit from the talents of people and where people add value to firms and society at large. Awareness, however, still needs to increase not only amongst enterprises but also within public authorities supporting the approaches. There is an identified need for sensitising employers and creating a mind-shift towards enhanced humanisation of work. Collective rights need to be strengthened and persons supported in carving or crafting job tasks so that meaningful, productive and sustainable employment can be created.

### **3. STATUS QUO AND GOOD PRACTICE<sup>5</sup>**

#### **3.1 Status quo of activities implemented by ESF-MAs**

EU-Member States (MSs) vary regarding their implementation of job carving and job crafting approaches. Some MSs report that individual elements of job carving, such as job coaching, are applied in their countries, and other activities resemble job carving but are not named as such. Other MSs clearly state that job carving and job crafting is a new practice that has still to be elaborated in their countries. Amongst the EU front-runners for job carving implementation co-funded by the ESF are Malta and Belgium.

#### **3.2 Case descriptions**

This section demonstrates key features of selected approaches applied in the EU and includes examples presented during the ETN meeting in Malta AND during the workshop in Brussels, both of which took place in May 2019. The selected promising practices are "Job-carving for jobseekers with disabilities" (Malta) and "Web+" (Belgium). Please find a brief description of the examples in the following.

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<sup>5</sup> This chapter describes ESF-activities in the countries present at the ETN meeting in Malta (14-15 May 2019) and was further enriched by findings from the workshop "Investing in Careers: Job Carving for inclusive Employment" held in Brussels/Belgium during the ESF Transnational Platform Annual Conference (21-22 May 2019). Please note that information on activities in this chapter is not exhaustive and builds on the knowledge of attending participants only.

Table 4: *Promising practice implemented in Malta*

<b>Job-carving for jobseekers with disabilities</b>	
<b>Country</b>	Malta
<b>Rationale</b>	As a consequence of the enforcement of the 2% employment quota for persons with disabilities in Maltese enterprises, a substantial number of enterprises wanted to integrate persons with disabilities. Due to the gap between the "requirements" of existing vacancies and the "preparedness" of the disabled jobseeker, job-carving was adopted.
<b>Specificities of the approach</b>	Jobsplus, the Maltese Public Employment Service, entered into a partnership with the Lino Spiteri Foundation (LSF), which is an entity specialising in the labour market integration of job seekers with disabilities. LSF set up a corporate relations unit to support enterprises in the recruitment of persons with disabilities. The corporate relations executive identifies existing occupations within the enterprise which are potentially suitable for jobseekers with disabilities. The "carving" exercise is driven by the enterprise requirements and the existing competencies and skills of the registered jobseekers with disabilities. This is coupled with pre-employment efforts such as training and work exposure schemes offered by Jobsplus to improve the employability and preparedness of the registered disabled jobseeker.
<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the labour market integration of jobseekers with disabilities; and</li> <li>• Change the perspective of employers on the employment of people with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	Corporate Relations Executives encountered difficulties in finding suitable jobs for jobseekers with disabilities given that enterprises willing to integrate persons with disabilities often offer jobs requesting complex qualifications, competences and/or tasks that overall cannot be met by disabled jobseekers. By carefully analysing the enterprise requirements and operation/workflow, the Corporate Relations identify elements, tasks and outcomes from existing jobs in the enterprise to design a new job or a workflow that can integrate a person with disability or a mixed-ability group of persons with disabilities.
<b>Impact</b>	As of April 2018, it was possible to create 278 jobs suitable to the jobseekers with disabilities by making use of the job-carving approach.

Source: European Commission, 2018b

Table 5: *Promising practice implemented in Flanders (Belgium)*

<b>WEB+</b>	
<b>Country</b>	Belgium
<b>Rationale</b>	WEB is a social economy organisation focussing on the open labour market integration of vulnerable LTU. Support is provided for people who need intensive coaching in finding sustainable employment. Meaningful employment opportunities are offered by the organisation to those jobseekers with difficulties in functioning in the open labour market even after intensive assistance. WEB offers advice to employers, helping them to develop customised job design which aids them in incorporating people from vulnerable groups into their workforce.

<b>Specificities of the approach</b>	The target recipients of the programme are people with low work motivation, limited capability and poor labour market knowledge. After initial orientation and labour market exploration a variety of support options are available for clients, including individual coaching, support with job hunting and matching, internships and workplace learning. Different integration approaches are offered for non-native speakers, people in poverty and vulnerable young people. Individualised learning through practice for the clients combined with provision of advice and guidance on job carving and continuing HR support for employers assists in securing sustainable jobs. Whether directly employed within WEB or in external companies a philosophy of "one step at a time" is applied. This seeks to encourage greater autonomy to optimise opportunities for vulnerable people through designing jobs enabling them to make the best use of their competencies and where possible increase these, whilst maintaining a safety net as necessary.
<b>Aims</b>	To provide a bridge to employment providing step by step labour market integration for LTU. This is achieved through stimulating empowerment, improving their soft skills and general competencies, and improving their technical competencies.
<b>Challenges</b>	A key lesson learned has been how to develop a model balancing individualised tailor-made support whilst maintaining a core routeway for clients. A common methodological framework was subsequently adopted. It has been important to ensure coaching remains focused on external employers' requirements, whilst ensuring a two-way approach, client and employer, is maintained. Significant effort has been applied to developing measures to assess the results of coaching.
<b>Impact</b>	In 2017, 138 clients out of a total of 370 received workplace actions. 140 clients completed a pathway to a job in the regular open labour market.

Other examples presented, discussed or identified in the literature comprise the project "Road 67" implemented by Trendhuis/Belgium (see Scoppetta & Aparicio Jodar, forthcoming), the ESF-funded project "Active and Needed" implemented in Lithuania, and actions taken by Mooi Werk Makers in Flanders (Belgium).

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Job carving and job crafting is regarded by ETN members as a useful and successful approach. Participants see potential for mainstreaming, not only across EU countries but also for different target groups: in addition to the target group of people with disabilities, job carving should increasingly be applied for older people, migrants, women, etc. In order to enable widespread implementation, participants identify a need for *guidance* and *EU-wide exchange on promising practices*.

**Guidance should be provided** not only to employers (e.g. guidance on how to better connect companies' resources with potential workers; see Griffin (n.d.) and Griffin et al., 2007) and unemployed and their families, but also to labour market institutions (ESF-MAs, Public Employment Services, NGOs, etc.). Advice should be offered based on findings from practices already implemented such as those applied in Malta.

Moreover, there is an identified need for **coaching of both employers and employees**. Rather than the nature of disability, the job carving examples presented have shown that the level of skills is the core issue determining employers' decisions when hiring personnel. Thus, **outreach activities to employers** are as important as **continuous training** for the unemployed/employed and **offers for accompanying support** for both the employer and the employee after a job has been carved. Job carving should be regarded as a process, which helps the individuals to advance during employment. Approaches taken should not just enable employment, but also advancement in jobs and careers.

While the implementation of job carving was extensively discussed during the two events, there is still a lack of information on practices that assist in a better understanding of how ESF-MAs and their partner organisations assist job crafting approaches implemented within the EU.

Due to the peer approach applied within the ETN recommendations, development focused on two distinct governance levels only, namely the national/regional levels and the EU-level, and comprise the following:

#### **National/regional levels:**

- ❖ ETN members call for a **mainstreaming of job carving and job crafting** which goes beyond the target group of people with disabilities. Under the guidance of well-advanced MSs, **pilot projects should be established within the ESF** in those MSs that have not yet worked with job carving and job crafting. Participants stressed that job carving should be put on the Agenda of ESF+ in the MSs and that calls should be introduced. To mainstream the approach, sharing existing know-how and mutual learning between MSs is regarded as key.
- ❖ It is most likely that the implementation of job carving and job crafting will increase in importance due to **digitalisation and automatisisation processes** that drive changes in the world of work. Challenges faced by all groups in society, but especially by vulnerable groups such as the low-skilled, can be proactively addressed through job carving and job crafting.
- ❖ ESF-MAs and their partner organisations call for **creating partnerships** amongst relevant stakeholders. A need is identified for **enhancing social dialogue** and placing the social partners in the lead of job carving processes. The role of trade unions and building **partnerships with civil society** is regarded as a key for success. Moreover, it is essential to conduct **outreach to employers** and raise awareness of the need for enhanced dialogue between employees and employers in crafting job tasks.
- ❖ The added value of the approach should be communicated to all, but especially to employers. Participants advocated **a mind-set change** where talents are placed in the centre of all concerns, especially during the recruiting processes. In order to reach the goal, **support services** should be offered to both employers and employees/people to be employed before, during and after the placement process.

## EU level:

- ❖ The recommendations at EU-level encompass elaborating job carving and job crafting as **a theme in ESF+** and enhanced **mutual learning between Member States**. EU **guidelines** for job carving and job crafting should be developed that build on the experiences of MSs already extensively implementing the approach, such as Malta.
- ❖ Furthermore, the participants stressed the importance of improving the **link between the ESF and the ERDF** to foster job carving approaches in the MS.
- ❖ ETN members also regard as crucial support for **training on the development of job carving and job crafting schemes** at the transnational levels and would like to see job carving linked with **socially innovative entrepreneurship/social innovative actions** (see Scoppetta & Geyer, forthcoming).

To summarise, job carving and job crafting requires holistic support by ESF-MAs and EU-institutions. Sufficient resources must be made available in order to enable *all* people to find and realise meaningful and productive employment that matches their talents, needs and interests. Support from the ESF is therefore crucial.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Job carving and job crafting can be effective strategies to overcome the challenges of the labour market (re)integration of people facing barriers and to keep workers employed by creating meaningful and productive employment. Job carving activities are supported by the ESF in some EU-MSs. However, activities of this kind are often not identified as such and holistic implementation approaches are frequently absent.

Nevertheless, the ESF can fund activities of this kind such as helping employers to identify possible areas for job carving, offering preparatory training to people with disabilities, matching the demands of enterprises and employees/unemployed, and building well-established cooperation with enterprises next to outreach activities. Target-group specific approaches are being implemented in Malta and Belgium (Flanders).

Implementing job carving and job crafting add value to policy implementation within the EU because of their potential for achieving enhanced social inclusion, due to the win-win situation created for both employers and individuals. To minimise the risk of a potential downgrading of salaries for the new jobs, roles or positions created, individual's talents must be put at the centre of all policy concerns. Job carving and job crafting requires holistic support from ESF-MAs. Sufficient resources should be made available with the help of the ESF to enable all people to find and realise meaningful, productive and sustainable employment.

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