

INTERREG SIV

D.T3.2.1

Improved Voucher Process

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1. Introduction

The deliverable *Improved Voucher Process* is an updated version of the deliverable *Voucher Process*, which was developed and submitted in 2020, the second year of project implementation. The deliverable *Voucher Process* has served as the basic document that describes the structure of voucher programs in the 8 countries participating in the Social Impact Vouchers project. The document presents target groups, activities, involvement of employers and the implementation schedule, as well as other aspects.

During the elaboration of the original deliverable, the activities of the projects were already affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. The individual partners thus already took into account the impact of the restrictions brought about by the pandemic when setting up the voucher model.

In addition, it is natural that the voucher model developed a year ago included some planned activities and desired implementation outcomes that are no longer possible in their original forms given the pandemic-driven changes.

The activities of the Social Impact Vouchers project represent a pilot testing of various proposals, measures and ideas. Over time, it is necessary to re-evaluate them and possibly change the structure and settings of voucher models in individual countries.

A suitable opportunity is the development of the presented deliverable *Improved Voucher Process*. It was based on individual consultations with responsible partners and presenting the current status of voucher models during the Partner meeting in March 2021.

The original document - *Voucher process* - consisted of a detailed description of the voucher model in each country. This deliverable - *Improved Voucher Process* - rather presents a summary of information about the current status, changes and updates in individual voucher models. The aim of this document is to repeat the basic facts about voucher models and to present the changes that will be introduced in the participating countries for successfully implementing voucher models by the end of the project.

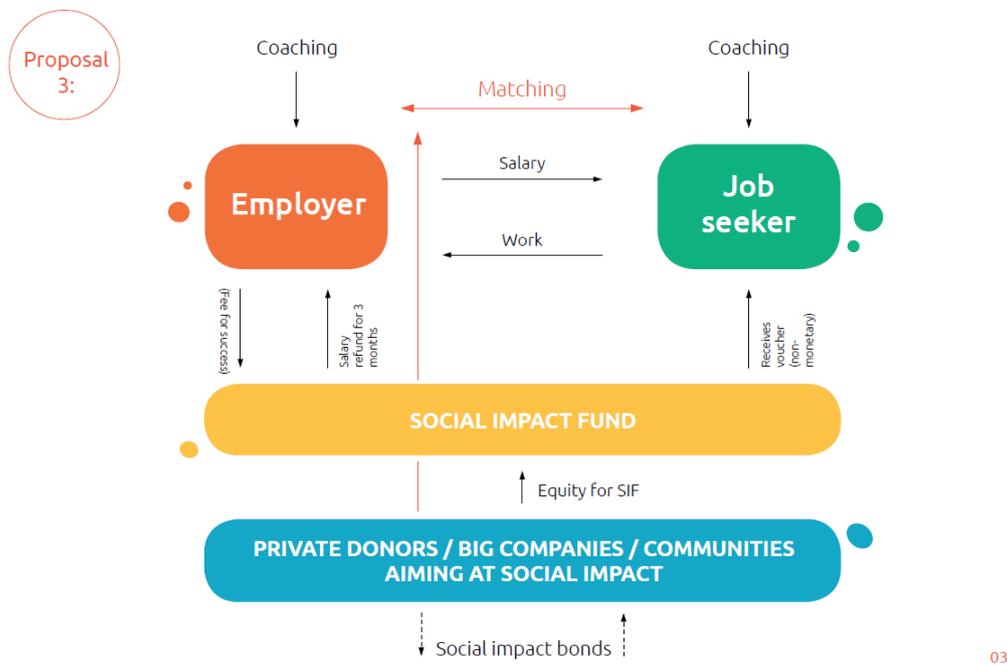
The deliverable was developed by Centire (P11) as the lead partner for T3 with inputs from all project partners.

2. Improved Voucher Models in participating countries

2.1. Germany

The German voucher model consists of two independent voucher systems - one implemented by Sozialunternehmen Neue Arbeit and the other implemented by Diakonisches Werk der Evangelische Kirche in Württemberg e.V (Diakonia). Therefore, the following chapter includes information about both voucher models. Nevertheless, the voucher model of Diakonia serves more as a complementary and pilot small-scale model in comparison with the voucher model of Neue Arbeit.

Current status of the model managed by Neue Arbeit:



The voucher model is based on Proposal 3. The implementation of the voucher programme has followed the set plan.

The target groups in this model remain unchanged. The target groups are (1) long-term unemployed, (2) people with disabilities and (3) socially disadvantaged people from different backgrounds (educationally disadvantaged, migrants, etc.).

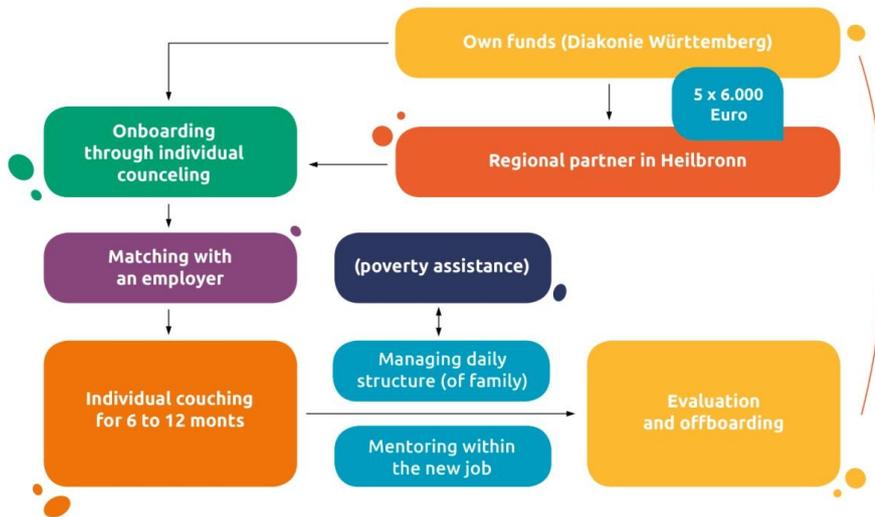
Voucher model managed by Diakonie Württemberg

- The Basic Model (introduced during the last partner meeting) finished the on-boarding phase in June 2020. Off-boarding will be finished by June 2021.
- The Model 1+1 (introduced during the last partner meeting) is still running with low capacity (two to five people supported each year).

- A new regional model starts in April 2021 in the first region and June 2021 in the second region. For each region five to ten employees can participate. This introduction focuses on this project only

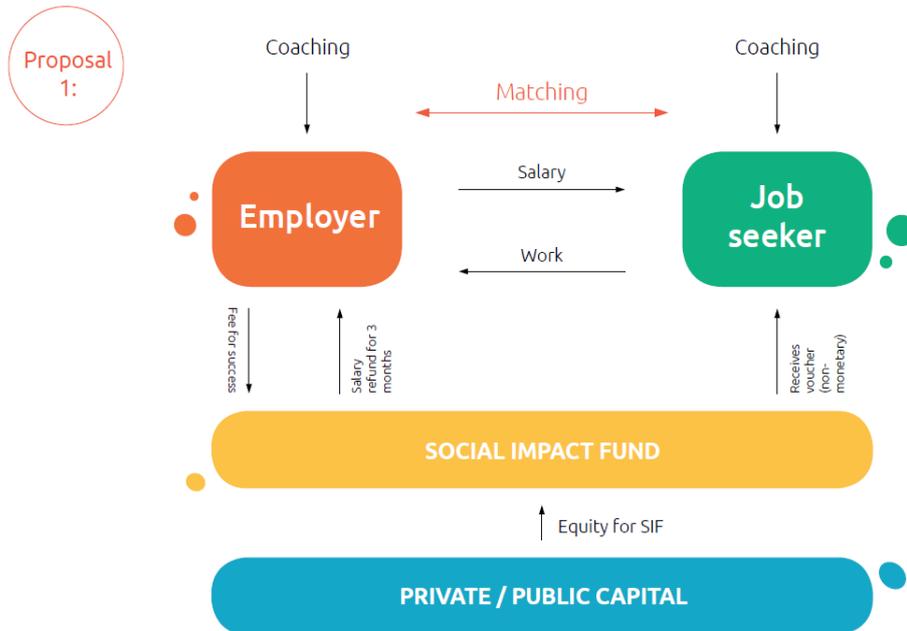
The target group of this voucher model are women with (young) children. The participants are being selected based on a voluntarily approach and there are no predefined connections to rules and regulations from the job center.

The following scheme describes the voucher model in the second German voucher model.



2.2. Croatia

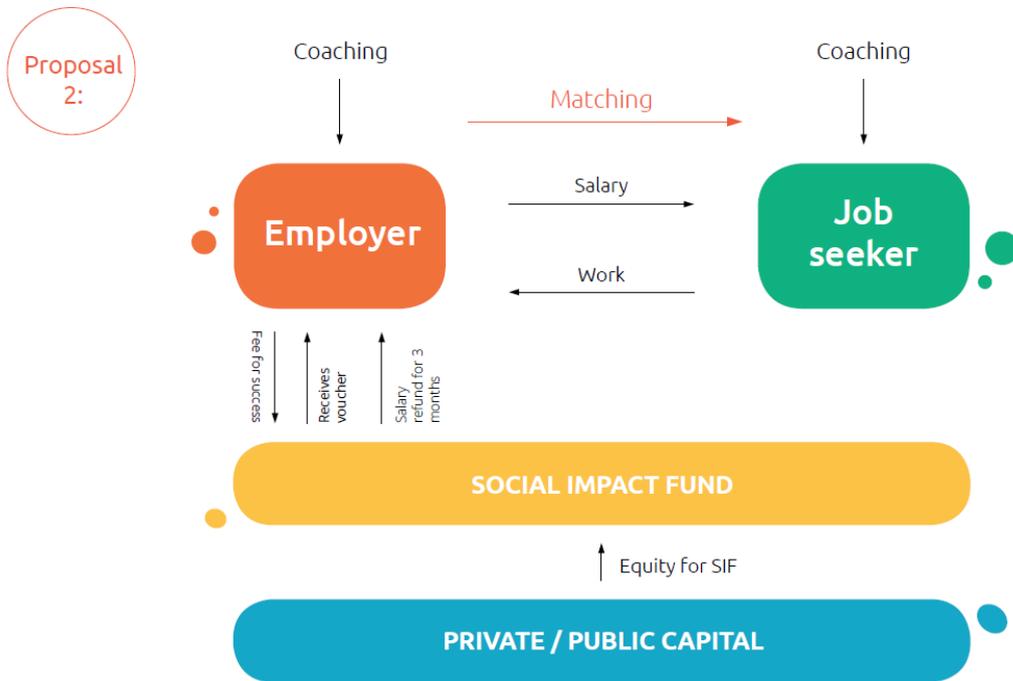
As planned, the Croatian partner has been implementing Voucher Models 1 and 2.



The Croatian partner implements two types of voucher model:

1st - vouchers are issued to workers and they can use it to pay for the education, building up their skills in a Virtual Reality supported classroom that is held online. Certification of skills achieved is done at the end of the programme when vouchers are exchanged for money by the education provider. Educated and skilled beneficiaries are connected with companies requiring those skills and if the beneficiary turns out to have skills necessary for that job, the company pays the Fund back (part of) the cost that was paid for training. This payment is to the value of any company training for those skills not needed or not to the previous extent since the beneficiaries enter the company 'pre-skilled'.

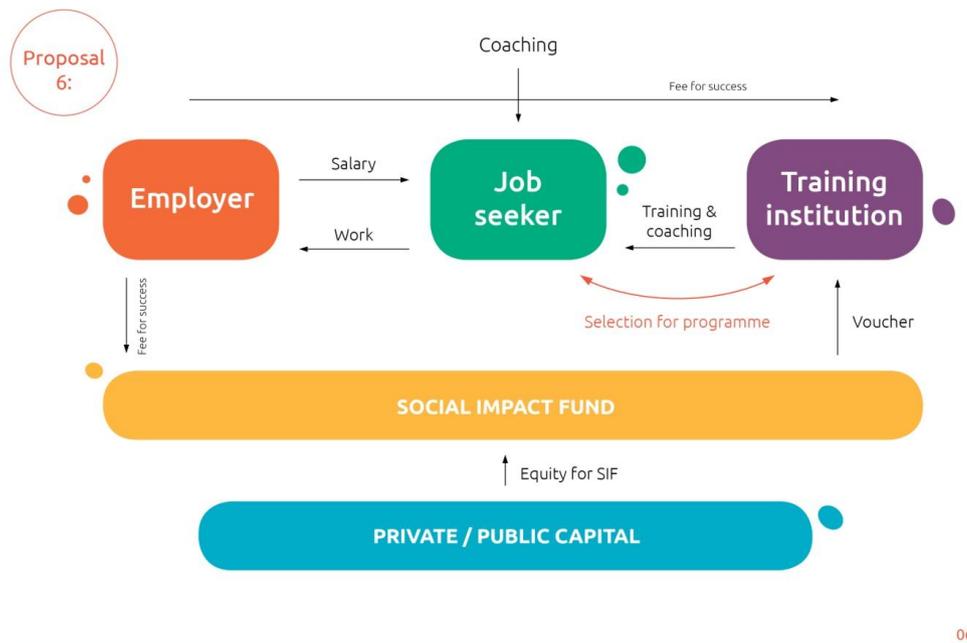
2nd - vouchers are issued to beneficiaries who can use them for the variety of costs incurred when starting a business (consultancy, business plan, definition of initial costs, registration of the business/legal entity etc.). Beneficiaries can use it for all eligible costs related to starting a business. If and when the business becomes financially sustainable, then (part of) the amount of the vouchers spent is given back to the fund.



For now, no changes or updates are being planned for the voucher model in Croatia.

2.3. Slovenia

In Slovenia, voucher model Nr. 6 has been implemented.



The aim of the voucher programme in Slovenia is to:

- invest in training/education of unemployed before they get the job
- launch an individual plan and vouchers
- develop an additional document - referral in the Slovenian model - that defines the employers' needs and the job seeker's profile they need

The goal is to set up a few pilot schemes and test them. The target group is unemployed people (in general):

1. In social economy fields:

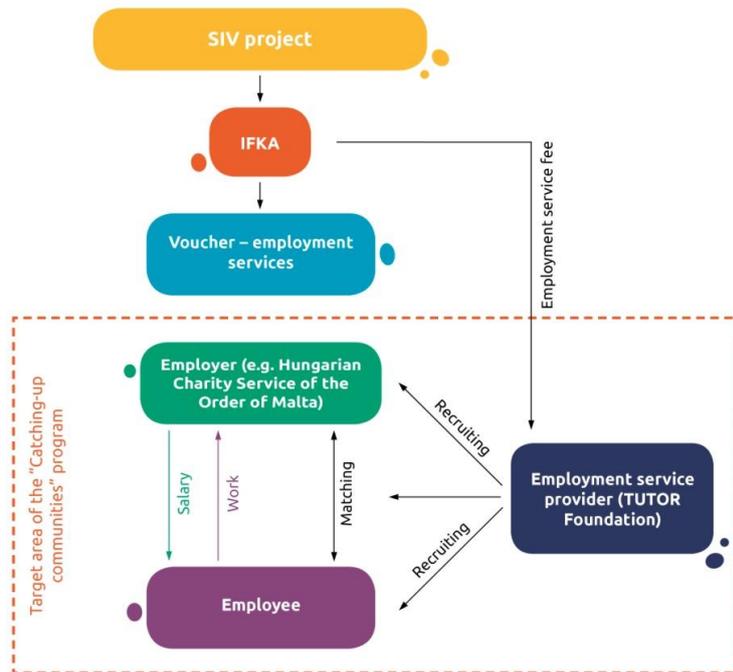
- Impact tourism (employing people for new accommodations in Bohinj)
- Impact textile

2. Others:

- Prizma foundation (external partner working with social companies and vulnerable groups)
- Karitas Maribor and Karitas Celje

2.4. Hungary

In Hungary, the following voucher model has been implemented:



In Hungary, recipients of the vouchers are employers - namely SMEs registered in the Catching-up Communities Programme. The vouchers are to be used for labour market services for hiring new employees, i.e. recruitment and matching.

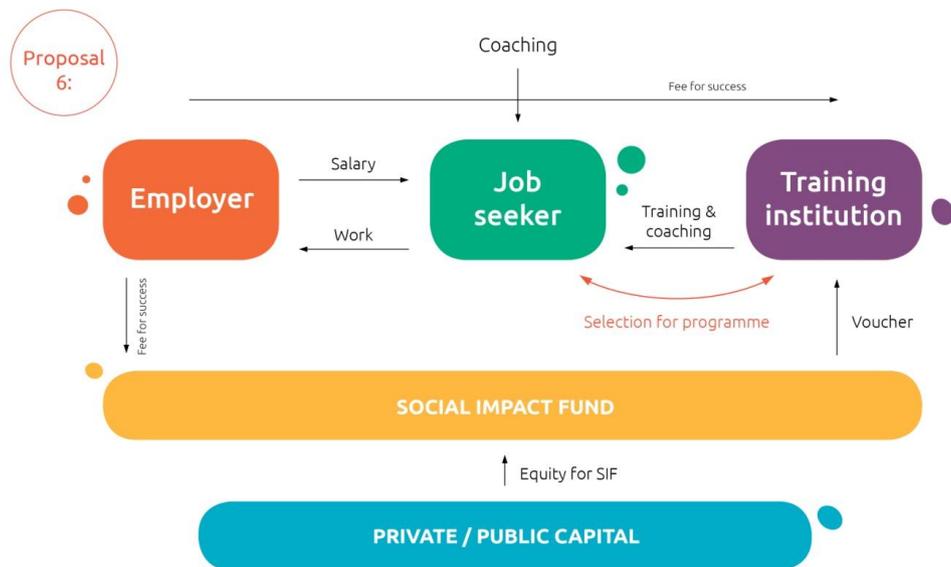
The main change is narrowing the spectrum of services covered by vouchers to labour market services. These services might be extended once the SIF is developed.

The main accomplishments are:

- Contracting the labour market service provider
- Starting labour market services - 1st round of recruitment (18 registered job seekers, 1 registered employer)

The Hungarian partner envisages organizing 3+ recruitment rounds and placing 40 job seekers by the end of 2021.

2.5. Austria



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Caritas has been working closely with Everyone Codes, a social business providing extensive training in the field of programming, to implement the voucher programme in Austria. Within the framework of this collaboration, Everyone Codes is mainly responsible for the content of the training and Caritas supports mainly the community-building activities included in the program. The program addresses unemployed people who are interesting in starting a new career as programmers/coders. Job seekers who are interested in the training program can register through the Everyone Codes registration system. After registration, a multi-stage pre-screening process takes place in which Everyone Codes shortlists and finally selects job seekers for the training programme.

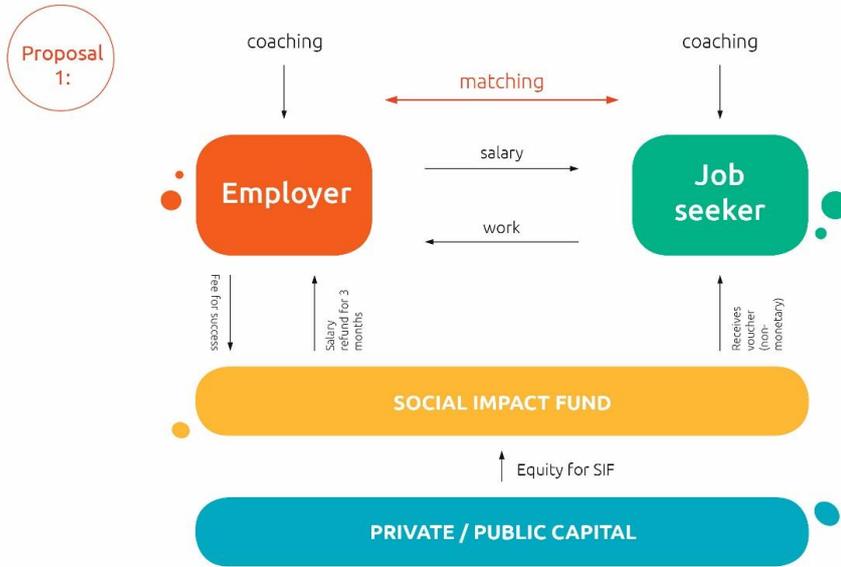
Job seekers are addressed a few months before a training round starts, both through Everyone Codes and Caritas, while the Employment Service also helped in this regard. For the training round that is currently running, this occurred in spring and summer 2020.

After successful selection of the participants within the framework of 2 recruiting events (so-called assessment centers), the current training program started in September 2020 and consisted of two phases. The first phase was completed in April 2021 and covered the basics of programming. After these phase, some participants chose to leave the program, in part because they were already successful in finding a programming job. The remaining participants carried on with the second phase focusing on more advanced topics and that is still ongoing and will be completed in November 2021.

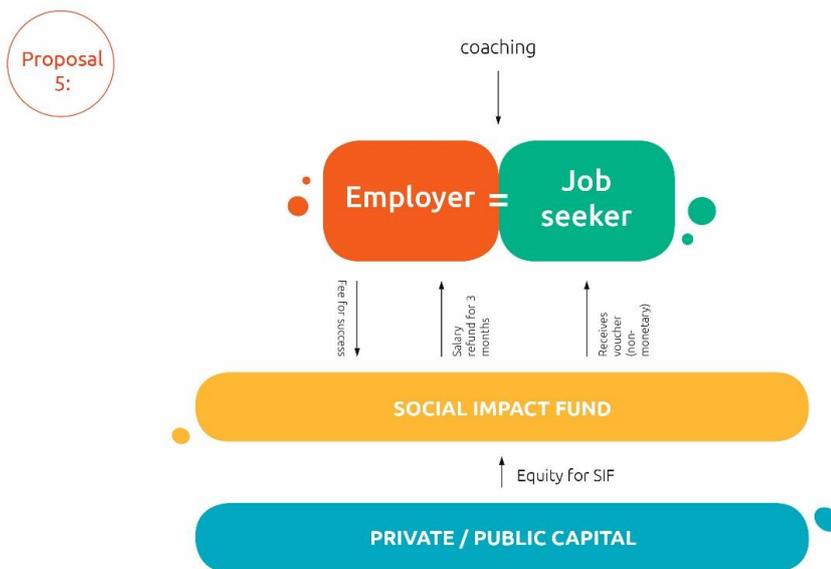
The training is designed as full-time program, with 30 hours of teaching per week. The programme consists partly of lectures with all participants and partly of session where participants are divided into different groups, in which they work together on tasks. Participants are also expected to work on these tasks individually at home.

2.6. The Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the voucher programme follows 2 voucher models:



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The Czech partner has launched the website Pracuj-podnikej in December 2020, which serves as the main tool for registration and matching. It consists of 4 sections:

Section 1: Work

The voucher offers unemployed people the opportunity to get a job with a monthly contribution of up to CZK 18 000 with the aim of permanent employment. In this system, the job seeker registers himself and is advised on the suitable programme. After that, the job seeker gets a work voucher and contacts an employer. After getting a job, job seeker might receive a contribution up to CZK 18 000 per month, while this support period might last up to 12 months. The final phases are job matching and training and re-training.

Voucher are provided at 3 levels:

- Free as an invitation ticket to the appropriate project
- Co-financing up to 15%
- Reimbursement - 100% -SIV

Section 2: Start business

The voucher allows to test the new business using the BEC methodology. Testing the business is an approach to verify in practice whether the sale of products or services will succeed on the market, with a guarantee of a monthly income for paid entrepreneurs of up to CZK 13 400. Jobseekers who want set up their own business get a voucher for paying their salaries as a paid entrepreneur for 3/6 - 12 months, coaching, eventually retraining.

Section 3: Employ

The voucher system matches employers with vacancies and disadvantaged people looking for a job. Vouchers enable job creation for a period of 6-12 months.

Section 4: Cooperation

Pracuj-podnikej enables the publication of projects supporting job creation and start-up support. It intermediates not only employers, but also NGOs and other labor market entities. The section includes 4 main steps: (1) registration, (2) publishing of the project, (3) cooperating network and (4) matching.

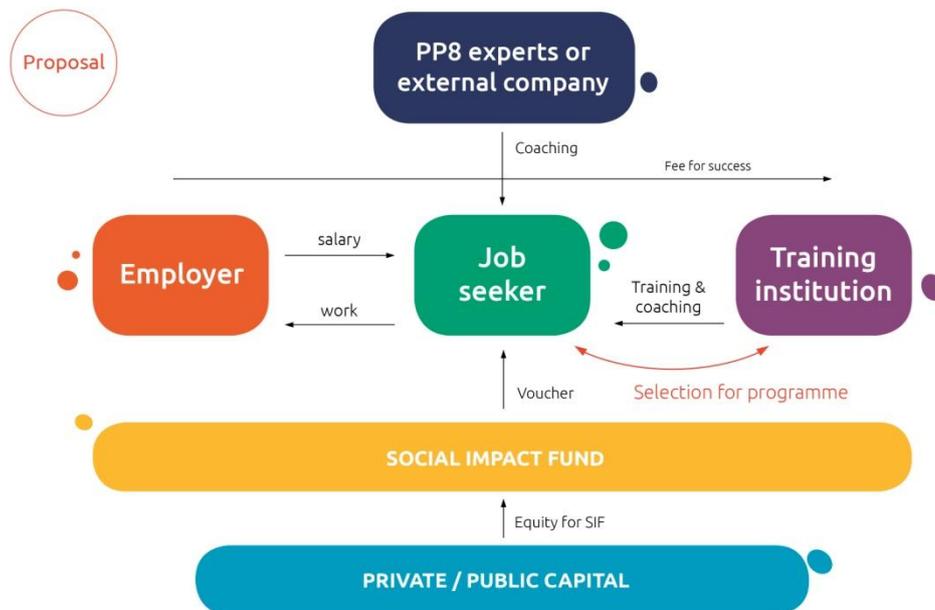
SIV tasks:

- Matching jobseekers/target groups with relevant cooperating projects published on the webpage www.podnikej-pracuj.cz.
- PR of the cooperating projects.
- Cooperating organizations can apply for the SIV programme managed by SIF with same conditions as an employer (section 3).

Target groups of the Czech voucher model(s):

- aspiring entrepreneurs
- unemployed (without further specification),
- women currently inactive on the labour market,
- long-term unemployed,
- socially disadvantaged people,
- single parents,
- parents on / after maternity / paternity leave,
- 50+ year old unemployed,
- graduates of secondary vocational schools.
- **In general, people that want to start their business, find a job or change their situation on the labour market.**

2.7. Poland



The Polish voucher model proceeds from original Model 6. However, two major changes are:

- (1) employer will not pay for fee for success to training institution, the fee will be paid to the Social Impact Fund only
- (2) coaching will be provided by experts from PP8 or external company selected especially for this purpose

In the Polish model, employers present job profiles they are looking for. The Polish partners gather/register the job seekers in their database through an online registration form. Subsequently, at least 2 best candidates are presented to the employer. Once a candidate/s is/are selected, a voucher is provided for training and coaching to the job seeker(s) (based on the needs of both the employer and job seeker). After the training, the job seeker(s) starts working for the employer. In the end, the employer pays a fee for success.

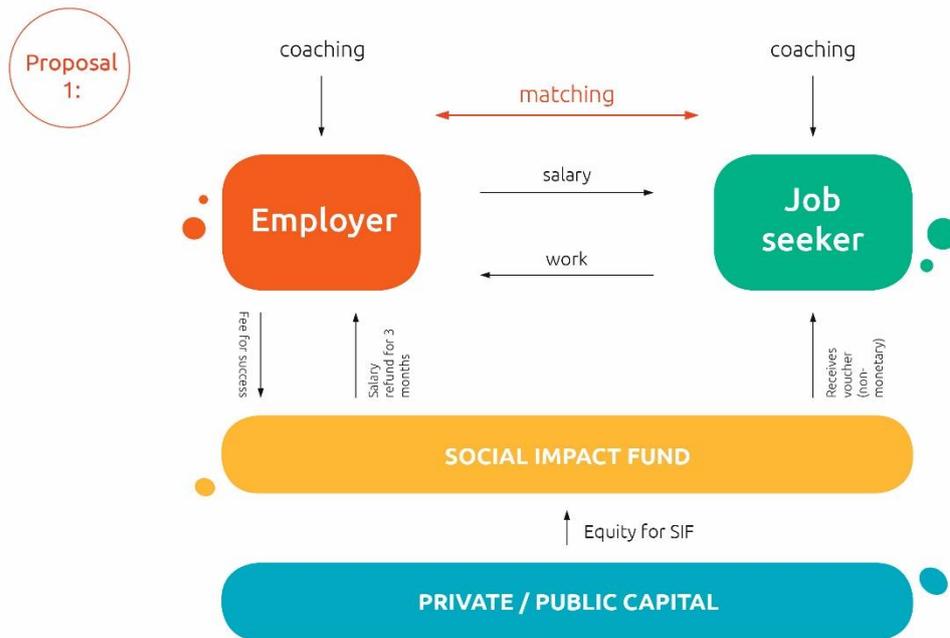
To date, 7 job seekers have been registered. The Polish partners have been approaching employers to get involved in the programme. Moreover, the selection of a training company and coaching/mentoring experts is taking place.

Target groups in the Polish voucher programme are:

- women that are inactive on the labour market as a result of taking care of dependants
- women who have lost their job due to Covid-19
- women of the age 60+ that want to remain actively working

2.8. Slovakia

The Slovak voucher programme mostly proceeds from model 1.



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The pilot implementation of the voucher programme started in June 2020. The Slovak partner launched the portal “Práca v kocke” which serves as the main tool for registration and matchmaking. The portal offers different types of trainings - individual consultations as well as group trainings. The programme was revamped in Fall 2020. The portal is open to any job seekers from disadvantaged groups.

In the Slovak voucher programme, job seekers are the recipients of the vouchers. Potentially, in the future, employers might also be recipients of the vouchers. Vouchers are being, and will probably be, used mostly for trainings.

Target groups in Slovakia include:

- graduates (especially from secondary vocational schools)
- current employees of social enterprises (as they can stay employed at social enterprises for max. 2 years) / potential employees for social enterprises
- disabled job seekers and other groups