

The CoZiMa portfolio in practice. A look behind the scenes at PSW Werk.

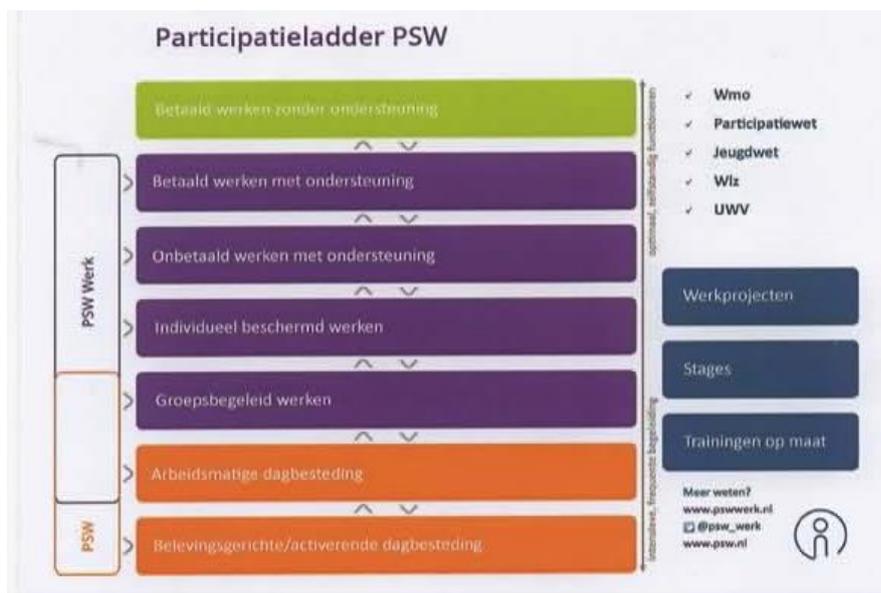


To see how the CoZiMa portfolio is used in practice, today we are at PSW. A special organisation that supports people with a mental disability in their home situation, in living, in daytime activities and in work.

Today, we meet Wendy Cox, a job coach at PSW and Matthijs Dagelet, PSW Work Team Leader.

What kind of organisation is PSW?

Matthijs explains that PSW is an organisation that originally focused on offering support to people with a mild mental handicap. Besides offering day care, ambulatory care and supported living, PSW Werk has increasingly focused on supporting people with a distance to the labour market towards supported, sheltered, paid and unpaid work. The accompanying Participation Ladder shows what PSW has to offer and how it distinguishes itself from, for instance, commercial reintegration agencies.



PSW Werkt mainly receives assignments from municipalities (WMO, Participation Act, Youth Act), the UWV (Sickness Benefits Act, partially disabled, WAJONG) and health insurers (WLZ). PSW Werk employs 7 route counsellors and 35 job coaches.

Their expertise and experience with the target group prove to be an added value in mediating to work. PSW is mainly active in North and Central Limburg, but is expanding its activities to South Limburg.

How does PSW Werk do it?

Job coach Wendy explains how they go about it. After a thorough intake in which the job coach cooperates with the route counsellor, a plan is drawn up depending on the possibilities of the candidate. This is coordinated with the client managers of the relevant client. Within the extensive network of companies, one of the job coaches then places the

candidate within the company. The job coach has his or her feet firmly on the ground within the companies every day and knows what is needed.

Besides individual job coaching, we also have group-coached workplaces or training teams. In a training team of PSW Werk, a group of participants is placed within 1 company. This way, the candidate is prepared for an individual placement. This happens in all kinds of sectors, so that people can be active with different tasks and with work at different levels. Good examples are companies like the GAMMA (DIY and building materials), the Outletcentre Roermond (retail), AH (supermarket) and Holbox (production work in cardboard display articles). Because of the large network of companies, we can look for a suitable place with a participant. Despite the fact that the target group suffers from a number of limitations, Matthijs is firmly convinced that 75% of them can simply find a job in a free company. Provided that they receive proper guidance and are given an opportunity to see what they can do within the company, even if this is not at a normal production level. Companies also appear to be open to this.

Why does PSW participate in the SUSTEIN project and use the CoZiMa portfolio?

Via the VSO school De Ortolaan, part of the Aloysius Foundation, pupils were regularly referred to PSW Werk. This is how PSW got to know the CoZiMa portfolio. When it turned out that the Aloysius Foundation, for a new European Erasmus project SUSTEIN, was looking for new partners who wanted to support the guidance of employees and trainees within companies with the CoZiMa, the deal was quickly made. For PSW Werk, the CoZiMa portfolio offers a wonderful opportunity to show people who will never obtain a 'real diploma' what they can do and what experience they have already gained. In addition, it was interesting to be able to shape the communication with the companies jointly from one portfolio. This would make it easier for supervisors of PSW Werk and the companies to talk about the progress of the work and the development of competences. With each other, but also with the candidate and employee. The latter would also have more control over their own work and their own career.

How does the portfolio work in practice?

At this moment, the portfolio is mainly used by the training team that explores what kind of work would suit a participant. Based on the qualification profiles MBO-Entree and MBO-Niveau2 the participants receive questionnaires to find out which tasks and competences belong to a position. Wendy says that this enables them to assess which learning objectives they need to work on if they are going to work in this direction. In practice, this turns out to be quite difficult to do independently. In most cases, these questionnaires have to be filled in together with the course counsellor or job coach. Once it has been filled in, it is very useful to look back at it.

Making a CV, a nice tool of the portfolio, independently is not easy either. To solve this problem, an instruction video has been made. It explains in a simple way how to design and fill your CV in steps. This will be experimented with in the near future.

Another issue with the implementation of CoZiMa is that it is very difficult for the supervisor to stimulate the participant to use CoZiMa. There has been information about it and the supervisors have been trained in its use, but it often remains a product of the supervisor. It should become more of a product of the participant. That is something we are thinking

about, says Matthijs. For example, the use of the newly developed QR code could be stimulated. This makes it very easy to add a completed assignment or a short film of something you have already mastered to your portfolio.

What could be even better?

According to Wendy and Matthijs, the portfolio will have to become a real part of the work process of coaching participants and employees. Matthijs adds that it should then become even simpler to use. In other words: KISS, keep it simple stupid.

Another point that deserves attention is the ability to work with 'rewards'. In social media, after posting a message or photo, you can collect or distribute likes. It would be nice if something like that could also be done in CoZiMa.

It has also become clear that it is very helpful if students have already worked with the CoZiMa portfolio at school. Then they pick it up more easily.

These are matters that PSW, together with the partners in the SUSTEIN project and Paragin, the ICT developer of CoZiMa, will discuss further in the coming period.