



Keijo Piirainen & Aija Kettunen

Potential for Single-Case Evaluation in Employment Services

Goal Attainment Scaling Method for Difficult-to-Employ Jobseekers

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**POTENTIAL FOR SINGLE-CASE EVALUATION
IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

*Goal Attainment Scaling Method for
Difficult-to-Employ Jobseekers*



Worthwhile Employment Services Project



Euroopan unioni
Euroopan aluekehitysrahasto

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ABSTRACT

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Aija Kettunen**

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Employment Services – Goal Attainment
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Individual goal-setting in services is not a new topic. Goal-oriented work and the need for such are brought up for discussion occasionally. At the same time, it is usually mentioned that it is important to evaluate the attainment of goals.

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a single-case evaluation method developed for individual goal-setting and the evaluation of effects. The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) has introduced the method for use in their rehabilitation services. This publication evaluates the prerequisites of the employment and economy administration for the use of this method in client work, particularly with those people who are difficult to employ. Attention is paid especially to services arranged by the employment administration, whose baseline situation is compared to Kela. There were interviews of 21 experts conducted for the purposes of this study. This evaluation was conducted under the project Worthwhile Employment Services funded by North Karelia Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the En-

vironment and implemented by Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Research and Development Services for Social and Health Economics.

Many factors limit the possibilities for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects. First of all, goal-setting and evaluation of effects require sufficient training. Secondly, the use of a tool such as GAS requires that professionals have sufficient time available to meet with their clients. Clients are often difficult to employ and their circumstances require thorough clarification. Thirdly, individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects require that clients can obtain focused guidance and support from within the service to which they are directed. Fourthly, the infrastructure to support individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects must be in proper condition. For example, logging procedures and the maintenance of registries must be structured so that they can yield other information in addition to that relating to employment goals. Fifthly, an essential precondition for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects is that such activities are legitimised by the upper-level administrative decision-makers.

In practice, the possibilities of individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects are where active employment policy and social policy find their common interface. The fact that the employment administration desires to focus on certain key issues relating to employment transfers the possibilities of individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects towards municipalities and rehabilitative work activity.

Key words: counselling, effects, employment, evaluation, goals, guidance, long-term unemployed

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1 INTRODUCTION

Activities aiming at employment have been seen to be deficient regarding how plans are followed up and how regularly the attainment of goals is evaluated (e.g. Härkäpää, Harkko & Lehtikoinen 2013, 59). The evaluation of the attainment of goals might be facilitated if there were tools developed for that purpose.

It has been seen that, in the activation of the long-term unemployed, it is essential to support the personal and other resources of these job-seekers. Therefore, it is significant how the unemployed are treated in various services and that their views are respected. The success of the measures taken may depend on how employment office staff manages to encourage their unemployed clients to plan their future and have the motivation to participate in carefully selected measures. (Asplund & Koistinen 2014, 69.)

This publication evaluates the employment administration's possibilities of using Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects in their own services as well as in services commissioned by them, also evaluating the required solutions and the possibilities for the methods' roll-out¹. The employment administration has no previous experience of the method, in contrast to the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), which is our reference organisation. The use of the method is evaluated in view of the not-easily-employable clients, in particular.

¹ This evaluation was conducted under the project Worthwhile Employment Services funded by North Karelia Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment and implemented by Diakoniana University of Applied Sciences, Research and Development Services for Social and Health Economics.

The use of GAS, as carried out by Kela, is included in Kela's rehabilitation standards for service providers. Kela uses these standards to supervise the quality of rehabilitation. The standards cover vocational, medical and discretionary rehabilitation. For example, Kela's standard for job coach services requires that the tool to utilise in setting goals and in evaluating their attainment always be GAS. (Kelan avo- ja laitospuotoisen kuntoutuksen standardi. Työhönvalmennuksen palvelulinja 2011, 13.)

GAS is a tool for goal-setting and evaluation of effects that provides a score for a client's attainment of his or her individual goals during an intervention. Concerning the effects of intervention, every client has personal goals, the attainment of which is evaluated, but the scoring method is standardised so that statistical analyses are possible. Traditionally, standardised measuring instruments have included prespecified goal variables and each one of them has had a prespecified goal attainment scale. Contrary to this, when GAS is used, clients' goals and the terms in which their progress is described are agreed upon individually, and the respective expectations are also set individually in accordance with the clients' circumstances and behaviour. The use of GAS requires that the clients' possibilities to attain the set goals are respected and that the professional who works with a particular client is able to predict the goal attainment of that individual on the basis of his or her knowledge and experience.

Lately, goal-setting and goal attainment evaluation in cooperation with clients have been connected to clients' empowerment in particular (Kivipelto & Kotiranta 2011, 135). Empowerment is seen in clients' autonomy, knowledge and behaviours that all promote the attainment of their goals, in their possibility to make decisions concerning their own lives, in their equal participation and cooperation with other people as well as in terms of resources, resource usage and resource management. (Op. cit., 126–127.)

The basic question relating to goal-oriented work is how clients' expertise (e.g. wishes, hopes, personal resources, possibilities) is made visible and respected so that they may become empowered. Goals agreements can be seen as important for the establishment of the clients' position within multidisciplinary cooperation. The challenge in this is that, when many parties work together, someone must help clients clarify their desires, formulating the desires as goals on the basis of assessments of individual circumstances. (Rostila & Mäntysaari 1997; Rostila 2001, 15.)

Goal-oriented work can be seen as belonging to a process model for providing help, structured in three phases: 1) assessment of the client's circumstances, agreement upon the goals, work plan, 2) implementation of the plan together with the client and the client's social network, and 3) evaluation and closing of the work. (Rostila 2001, 12.)

On a general level, this process model and goal-orientation are justified through, for example, these issues: the framework and environment for this type of work require process structuring and process management; the evaluation of effectiveness and outcomes requires goal-orientation; the work is more transparent; and the quality of work improves. (Rostila 2001, 14, 17.)

The conditions for genuinely client-oriented goal-setting exist only in client relationships founded on mutual trust between the client and the professional. Clients must be able to feel that the revelation of personal interests and ambitions will not cause sanctions in e.g. the terms of their social welfare benefits.

The significance of GAS is often emphasised in discussions, because it is considered to help clients focus their actions as well as to motivate clients to work towards the goals. One rationale behind the introduction of GAS is that it brings about the possibility of studying the effects of a service in terms of individual-level goals, relating them to the general attainment of goals at the level of the organisation. The idea is that effects of organisational measures are also involved. In practice, measures relating to goal-attainment and clients' activities usually become combined.

According to Matti Tuusa (2005, 84),

in addition to employment percentages, to be applied as goals and assessment instruments, we would need to structure qualitative evaluation models that measure and describe the step-by-step progress of rehabilitation and the improvement of clients' experiences and circumstances. Every professional should be able to use these evaluation models. In that way, we would not lose our goals and, in addition, we could show evidence of the concrete effects of our work, presenting them for decision makers in a clear way.

Individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects may be expected to benefit, in particular, the assessment of the circumstances of those persons who are difficult to employ and who need support of a different kind than do the

persons that find employment with relatively few supportive actions. The benefits are linked with the revealing of these clients' own views, the setting of manageable goals and the progress through interim goals to the end ones.

When searching to position individual goal-setting while supporting paths to employment for those who are difficult to employ, it is not possible to bypass the role of Labour Force Service Centres beside the Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE Offices). These centres were established to help, in particular, structural unemployment, i.e. precisely the circumstances of those who are difficult to employ. They are cooperative organisations of municipalities, Kela and TE Offices and operate under TE Offices and municipalities. The establishment of these centres was linked to the qualitative development of employment services which was begun in the early 2000s and aimed at improved effectiveness of employment services (Arnkil, Karjalainen, Saikku, Spangar & Pitkänen 2008, 20). For employment administration, the relationship with these centres has been problematic and under development. From TE Offices' perspective, client selection to Labour Force Service Centres has been problematic and services for clients returning from these centres have been less than focused. (Arnkil et al. 2008, 21, 23.)

One of the goals in TE Offices and Labour Force Service Centres has been to make services more client-oriented and client-focused. The goals of TE Offices have been characterised by concepts such as early intervention, staff accountability in client processes, intensified employer services and municipal cooperation (challenges in e.g. health services). (Op. cit., 24.) The renewals in employment services have led to improvements mostly in the early part of the client service chain, in the development of self-service and in cross-sector cooperation (Arnkil et al. 2008, 33).

There are attempts to differentiate the contents of the services by the TE Offices and the Labour Force Service Centres. In practice, the aim is to enable Labour Force Service Centres to have more time for their client work. The centres concentrate on those job-seekers, in particular, who need various forms of support to become employable.

The centres have been seen to provide evidence of the success of active, integrating, employment-focused policies. Their work can be considered as a manifestation of active labour market policies and active social policies. The parties in the employment and social sector work jointly to reduce

long-term unemployment and to improve the employability, functioning status and active participation of the unemployed. (Op. cit., 25.) The state (employment administration, Kela) and municipalities (social welfare and health care, municipal employment services) coordinate and fund jointly certain rehabilitation and employment services for people who face multiple problems in finding employment (Op. cit., 185). Networks of local-level authorities have had the freedom to develop their own policies within their resourcing powers. The effect of this has been operation that reflects local cultures of employment, development and cooperation. This development has attracted municipalities better, and their cooperation with service providers and the third sector has become settled. (Arnkil et al. 2008, 304.)

2 METHODOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

Evaluation questions

The assessment of the possibilities of Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) for application in the services of the employment administration is developmental evaluation in nature. We compare the basic starting points for the introduction of the tool between the employment administration and Kela. After that, we evaluate the possibilities for the use of the tool and the related practices within services arranged by the employment administration. We will bring up which services might yield to its use most fluently and what limitations there are for the use of the tool in practice.

The evaluation aims to obtain the answers for these questions:

1. What are the prerequisites and possibilities of individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects (i.e. GAS) in services produced or commissioned by the employment administration?
2. What are the justifications for positioning, in the future, individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects (i.e. GAS) either within the employment administration or outside it?

This report does not present means or measures required for the introduction of GAS, because, in the last instance, that is a matter for upper-level administrative decision-making within the employment and economy administration.

Data acquisition and data analysis

This study into the possibilities offered by the use of the individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects method, GAS, is based on literature and on the analysis of the data from a set of small-scale interviews. The literature deals primarily with employment administration services, single-case evaluation and the use of GAS.

The interview data is from:

- a pair interview of two experts in the Ministry of Employment and the Economy,
 - an interview of an expert (managerial level) in a Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY),
 - an interview of an expert (managerial level) in a TE Office,
 - a pair interview of two experts in a TE Office (client-level),
 - an interview of an expert in a Labour Force Service Centre,
 - group interviews of service providers (three interviews, ten experts),
 - a pair interview of two experts (project implementation level) in the *Työvoima 2013+* project (name in English: Labour Force 2013+) conducted by the North Karelia Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY).
- The key objectives of the *Työvoima 2013+* project were to improve the effectiveness of labour market measures by improving TE Office staff's competences as well as those of other network participants regarding service need assessments and client processes; by focusing the services and sets of services properly and making them more effective for finding permanent solutions to their clients' employment; and also by improving the follow-up and procurement skills of the relevant organisations.

These interviews were recorded and transcribed except for the pair interview of the two TE Office experts, which was not transcribed. The interviews were theme interviews by nature and they proceeded along the specified themes with a view to the purpose and objectives of the interview. Additional questions were also presented concerning the interview situation. The key results of the interviews are summarised in APPENDIX 1.

The interviews were a means for acquiring information and providing feedback concerning the possibilities of GAS. In addition, we met with a

TE Office expert and with one from the project KASKI Työpankki² (name in English: KASKI Work Bank), but these interviews were not recorded. In addition, to help with the assessment, a project development group was convened for group work so that experts in various employment-related activities could give feedback concerning interpretations and conclusions.

The analysis of the interview data is based on the perusal of the interviews. The interpretation of this data was influenced by the understanding of the key duties of the employment administration, brought up in these interviews, and similarly, of the economic situation of society and the meagre resources of the public sector. An assessment of the applicability of GAS, however, cannot remain aloof from all views of future circumstances; this makes evaluation primarily ex-ante. Some factors directing this evaluation have been the large number of clients to the employment administration and the fact that TE Office resources, such as time available per client, cannot realistically be increased. In addition, according to the National Audit Office (NAO), Finland, before considering any significant reductions to labour market policy measures, it would be necessary to evaluate the wellbeing effects of these measures other than their employment effects (Juvonen & Vehkasalo 2011, 91). The strength of GAS is precisely that it makes visible various individual-level wellbeing effects.

² The KASKI Työpankki project (1 Jan 2013 – 31 Dec 2013) focused on unemployed people between the ages of 25–55, unemployed for longer than 500 days, as well as on vocationally trained young people between the ages of 18–28 who were willing to proceed towards working life or education. The project offered the opportunity of updating one's documents required for job-seeking, completing qualifications in part or in whole, participating in group counselling, learning one's physical health status, and being employed through an entrepreneurial network.

3 DESCRIPTION OF GOAL ATTAINMENT SCALING

From the perspective of individual goal-setting, it can be said that it should be a key issue in employment and rehabilitation that clients have the possibility to set goals and can see the support they receive as meaningful. To what degree client-specific goals direct employment and rehabilitation measures is a more complex question and not everyone is convinced of the sensibility of following up individual factors (Peitola 2005, 35). The challenge for activities aiming at employment is for the organisers to understand how people make decisions about the importance of their goals and either succeed or fail in attaining them. The importance of goal-oriented activities has been stressed considering e.g. the maintaining of the motivation for rehabilitation. (See Autti-Rämö, Vainniemi, Sukula & Louhenperä, 6.)

The use of Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) with its individual goal-setting and goal-attainment evaluation techniques can be considered as single-case evaluation. In Finland, single-case evaluation has interested e.g. Ilmari Rostila and Mikko Mäntysaari (Rostila & Mäntysaari 1997; Rostila 2001; see also Borg & Kilponen 2008). Rostila and Mäntysaari (Op. cit, VII) define single-case evaluation so that a) the evaluation method is applied in a client relationship and b) the purpose of its use is to show how the client progresses towards a jointly set goal. According to Rostila and Mäntysaari, single-case evaluation has been established since the 1970s as a key evaluation tool, particularly in social work.

The need for individual goal-setting was brought about because of our service practices and types of measuring instruments. The starting point of GAS, the individual goal-setting, originated due to the fact that it was not feasible to have the same goal assigned for a whole group of clients as their

primary one in the measuring instruments available. For example, considering their circumstances, gaining employment may not be the primary goal for all clients of the employment administration. It may be more expedient to correct other circumstances in their lives first. Issues relating to mental health, drug and alcohol abuse and personal relations intertwine with those relating to employment.

Because people's circumstances vary, it is understandable that Thomas Kiresuk, developing the GAS method, studied several alternative measuring instruments and came to the conclusion that a whole group of clients could not be told which goal in the scales available would be primary. What was primary for one client would not necessarily be so for another one. On the other hand, it was possible to construct expedient, credible expected outcomes for single-case use, and these outcomes could be measured. (Kiresuk 2009, 145.)

The problem with many services is that measuring instruments do not necessarily find the daily realities of the recipients of these services. For example, the magnitude of a desired change varies per person. In addition, the desired direction of change is not the same for everyone: a divorce might be positive for someone while it is a crisis for someone else; rehabilitative work activity may be a positive factor that supports a client's daily coping while someone else may experience it as compulsory participation in meaningless duties for social welfare without hope for anything better. At least rhetorically, we may present this question: have we reached the point with current services in which, when working in projects with different kinds of staff and clients, we can anticipate the tests, measuring instruments and solutions that are right for our next client? What is the risk that we strengthen measuring systems that staff and clients do not genuinely believe in? If there is no unanimity, there may be long periods of interaction characterised by no tangible progress towards a solution that is apparently desired but not within reach. (See Kiresuk 2009, 145–146.)

In individual goal-setting, such as in the use of GAS, the recognition of a goal is based on the perusal of the client's circumstances. GAS has been described as an intervention and interview technique in which the interviewer 1) clarifies how the specific goal, discussed with the client, ties in with the clients general goals, and 2) identifies potential micro-effects that are specific and relate to behaviour (Prywes 2012).

Interviews are conducted in order to recognise goals important for the client. The strength of theme interviews is in that they do not limit in advance the issues approached but rather open up meaningful ones. It is essential to ask, considering the selected aspects of life, what change would be important and possible. (See Autti-Rämö et.al., 7.)

However, the starting points of GAS are not solely client-oriented in their origin, and goal-setting can take place in different ways. A basic work on the use of this method recommends that in most cases the client should take part in the goal-setting process (Smith 2009, 11). In practice, there are situations in which the professional sets the goals, ones in which the client sets the goals, and ones in which goal-setting takes place as a result of negotiations by the professional and the client. (Cardillo 2009, 40–41.)

From the perspective of a service or intervention, a client's goals are not disassociated from the service the client is receiving. The tool kit available within the service largely determines the mode of working with the client and the schedule in which changes can be attempted.

Occasionally, individual goal-setting clearly requires reaction and support from the service system while at other times, the work towards change is very individual and the required solutions are clearly in the power of the individual. For example, a client may choose the goal of continuing with his or her studies. It is necessary then to identify the essential changes that must take place for the studies to continue. Resumption of studies may be a short-term or a long-term goal depending on the circumstances of the client. It may require, for example, that the client 1) normalises his or her day-rhythm, 2) decreases his or her consumption of alcohol and 3) learns to concentrate better. In this case, these three definitely individual-level goals express in specific terms the changes that will enable the continuation of studies. (See Autti-Rämö et.al., 8.)

GAS is used to describe clear-cut, meaningful, scheduled and desired changes in a client's life. From the point of view of evaluation, we can call this empowerment evaluation. According to Rostila and Mäntysaari (1997, 10), empowerment evaluation means the use of evaluative concepts and techniques to promote people's capability to influence their own lives. The process begins by finding the measuring sticks. The arguments given to support measuring claim that measuring empowers people who have meagre resources, adding to their capability of controlling their own lives. (Op. cit.

10, 11.) Goal-setting has been said to influence relationships between professionals and their clients so that clients become more motivated because they become more aware of their responsibilities in these counselling relationships and experience that they have the opportunity to determine the direction of counselling (Prywes 2012, 16).

Hereinafter, we will use, in particular, the GAS handbook of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), version 2, which stresses client-oriented goal-setting (Autti-Rämö et al.).

The GAS process begins by a perusal of the client's circumstances and the setting of the goals. Once the goals are specified, the process continues on to the selection of indicators and the drafting of the scale. After an agreed period of time, the attainment of the goals is evaluated.

The setting of the goals and the schedule should be realistic. The golden rule, i.e. the SMART principle, is a good aid to ensure this. SMART is an acronym consisting of the first letters of English-language words that describe the character of the goals set. Goals must be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic/Relevant (= attainable through rehabilitative measures)
- Timed. (Autti-Rämö et al., 8.)

The specification of goals requires dialogue between the professional and the client. Together, they identify the most essential issues in the client's circumstances that the client wishes to change. The professional and the client interact to formulate the desired changes as goals. The service that is being offered sets boundaries to the setting of client-oriented goals. The professional's expertise is expected to ensure that goals are attainable with the means and support of that particular service. (Autti-Rämö et al., 9.)

The fact that the starting point is goal-setting, as we mentioned above, means that the client's baseline level and the goal of the specified activity need to be determined. The idea is to show that the intervention influences the behaviour that was selected to be worked on. (Rostila & Mäntysaari 1997, 5.) Each goal is assigned a short, descriptive name such as "choose field of education", "get ready for entrance exam", "cope at work", "day-rhythm",

"sober up", "concentrate", "lose weight", "quality of sleep", "meaningful work", "information management", "mood" etc. (Autti-Rämö et al., 9).

A clear indicator, usable at an agreed time for evaluation, is selected to describe each goal. The indicator describes an activity (or behaviour), emotional state, skill or development that presents the selected goal in the clearest way and shows the progress towards the goal. The indicator may be qualitative or quantitative such as weight in kilograms, duration of sleep, number of awakenings during the night, number of suicidal thoughts, a validated scale of symptoms, or an experiential expression. If the goal is, say, the improvement of the client's mood, the indicator could be the frequency of suicidal thoughts, degree of isolation, concept of the future, feelings of hopelessness, depression, self-esteem or sleeping problems. (Autti-Rämö et al., 9.)

The drafting of the scale is GAS's most challenging phase. It requires good expertise on the part of the professional in respect to the services available, i.e. the upcoming interventions. Clients and professionals must be able to estimate what is feasible in the time available. Kela's instructions also bring up the fact that professionals should be able to estimate the proper period of time required for keeping up a client's motivation. (Autti-Rämö et al., 9.) Experience, in particular, is expected to be of use in this.

The scale specifies the target expectation and functions as a guide, directing the client's focus and efforts to activities that are meaningful for the goal and away from activities that are not so. Focusing on appropriate activities and behaviours advances the attainment of goals. (Prywes 2012, 21.)

When drafting the scale, to make evaluation possible, the indicator describing the goal must be designed so that is measurable. Progress or lack of progress towards the target are described quantitatively (e.g. kilograms, hours, density, percentage) or qualitatively (e.g. ability to control one's feelings, sense of control of information flow). Qualitative indicators are often based on the client's personal experiences and feelings. It is challenging to structure qualitative indicators clearly so that the attainment of a goal can be verified unambiguously. (Autti-Rämö et al., 10.)

When drafting the GAS scale, the target expectation (GAS-scale point 0) is set first. This is the point that the client can realistically be expected to attain. When setting goals, it should be kept in mind that difficult goals will increase activity and effort towards them only if they are realistic and attainable. Experimental research has shown that activity levels decrease when a

person's limits of capability have been reached or when the person's commitment to a goal, set too high, lapses (Prywes 2012, 22).

The next scale points to be set are "somewhat more" (GAS scale point +1) and "somewhat less" (GAS scale point -1) than expected. Both of these describe real, positive changes in comparison to the baseline, but they are less likely to be attained. The purpose of the "somewhat less" scale point is to show that the direction of change is the desired one and real. It also helps the client and the professional to ensure the appropriateness of the actual target expectation.

The next scale points to be set are "much more" (GAS scale point +2) and "much less" (GAS scale point -2) than expected. GAS scale point +2 means that the goal is attainable within the specified timetable under optimal conditions. In other words, it is possible for the client to reach this goal if everything succeeds in the client's life and in the service provision. GAS scale point -2 means that the client has not progressed in the direction of the target so much that the change would have any significance for him or her. For example, if the client's situation remains as it was at the beginning, GAS scale point -2 would be appropriate. (See APPENDIX 2; Autti-Rämö et al., 10.)

The process of GAS goal-setting encourages the client and the professional to cooperate, because the process requires dialogue about the character of the goal (e.g. purpose, degree of specificity), about the relation of the goal to behaviour (e.g. how to assess development) and about its possible impacts (e.g. much more than expected vs. much less than expected) (Prywes 2012, 20). The significance of cooperation in goal-setting and in progress towards the goals can be emphasised through the parties' signatures on the relevant documents.

The attainment of goals (impacts of activity or intervention) is evaluated together with the client at an agreed time. For each goal, a numerical outcome score is entered into the scale according to actual performance. These scores are summed up and a T-score table is checked to obtain the T-score for that number of goals. The table gives the score for a maximum of eight goals. The T-score is 50 if the sum of the goal outcome scores is 0. In that case, goals have, on the average, been attained. If the sum that describes the attainment of goals is under 0, i.e. the T-score remains under 50, then goals have not, on the average, been attained. If the sum that describes the attainment of goals is higher than 0, i.e. the T-score is greater than 50, then goals

have been attained better than average. Naturally, if goals are not attained or if they are attained better than average, this may indicate that the goals were too demanding or too easy. The T-score enables group-level analyses, and the different numbers of goals of different individuals are manageable in statistical analyses. (See APPENDIX 3; Autti-Rämö et al., 12.)

The following table presents a sample goal-setting, the evaluation of the attainment of goals, and the calculation of the T-score (TABLE 1).

In the table, the evaluation date shows the time of the evaluation of the attainment of the goal and what the attained level was at that time (see also an example from a mental health rehabilitee course arranged by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, APPENDIX 2).

TABLE 1. Example of GAS goal-setting and the evaluation of effects

Goal 1: Acquisition of education through courses		
Scale		Date of evaluation
I have made no attempts to get into training.	Much less than expected -2	
I have applied for training courses.	Somewhat less than expected -1	
I have been accepted into training.	Target scale point (expected outcome) 0	
I have started in training.	Somewhat more than expected +1	28/3/2014
I have completed training.	Much more than expected +2	
Goal 2: Employment		
Scale		Date of evaluation
I have acquired the documents required for my CV.	Much less than expected -2	

I have drawn up my CV.	Somewhat less than expected	-1	
I have submitted job applications.	Target scale point (expected outcome)	0	
I have been invited to an interview.	Somewhat more than expected	+1	27/6/2014
I have obtained employment.	Much more than expected	+2	

In the example above, there are two goals and the sum of their points is 2. Therefore, the calculation gives us the T-score of 62 (see APPENDIX 3). In other words, the expectation was exceeded.

Choosing the time for the follow-up point is a policy issue with many options available. Most often, the choice is made between two alternatives: the evaluation is either set to take place at the end of the intervention period or at a time prespecified by the goal setter. For example, a professional may think that a client's goal attainment will be evaluated at the end of that person's three-week rehabilitation period. However, it may turn out that the intervention proceeds slower than expected or that the intervention, as a whole, is modified to require five weeks instead of the original three weeks. It is expedient in this situation to consider whether to conduct the evaluation at the three-week point as originally planned or whether the evaluation should rather take place at the end of the intervention period which is the point for which the goals were timed. The solution may be either depending on how the outcomes will be applied.

The agreement about the follow-up point for goals attainment is an issue of policy because, among other reasons, the choice of evaluation time often reveals how long that organisation is understood to be responsible for the client. For example, if a professional meets a client eight times, goals attainment must be evaluated during or before the last visit. Other matters that impact the choice of the follow-up point may be connected to e.g. social security and the financing of the service. Such issues may limit the options available and vary in accordance with the implementing organisation and other circumstances. (Cardillo 2009, 46.)

Feedback about goals attainment is significant for the attainment of the goals. When feedback is available, goals are attained more successfully. This has been explained through the impacts and significance of control on motivation. This theory of control claims that individuals try to reduce the discrepancy between their current state and their desired state. For example, a client may be motivated for renewed conversations if his or her desired state has not been reached. (Prywes 2012, 23.)

GAS has had certain strengths:

- 1) At best, it provides an organisation with a simple view to how well the individual goals of the organisation's clients have been attained on the average at the level of the client. However, it also binds professionals to administrative work in the sense that all outcomes should be entered into computer systems in order for goal attainment to be evaluated at the organisational level.
- 2) GAS uses standard language. In principle, barriers to communication are prevented between different types of specialists and between clients and specialists. GAS can be understood as a counter-movement to the use of specialised jargon. Evaluations are not structured so that their goal-setting originates from the interests of one professional group only. When GAS was developed, general experience had shown that evaluation systems that rested on the linguistic system of any one professional group did not serve to bridge the gaps between different professional groups and clients. (Kiresuk 2009, 140.)
- 3) In principle, individual goal-setting and GAS-type impact assessments support the approach that includes clients other than those who will provide the best expected outcomes. The fact is that during the past decades we have had cases in different contexts in which the client selection to service processes has created an illusion of effectiveness of interventions and promoted favourable professional images. (Kiresuk 2009, 140.)
- 4) GAS suits different value systems. According to Kiresuk (2009, 143), this heterogeneity includes different professions, administrative personnel, clients with their different problems and educational backgrounds, representatives of public policy, citizen boards and advocacy organizations, officials relating to business and funding, and even academic research as well as measurement specialists.

- 5) In principle, GAS can make the relationship between the professional and the client more open, but for that to take place, regulations concerning specialist work and working cultures must be in harmony. In other words, methods development alone is not enough. It is necessary that current legislation genuinely support the hearing of individuals and their autonomy, promote participation and comprehensive approach in varying circumstances, and facilitate the recognition and development of strengths. We need command of comprehensive entities, responsibility, commitment by all parties, coordination of activities and leadership – all based on clients' needs and goals (Rostila 2001, 16).
- 6) GAS is a light instrument compared to some others that have been developed during recent years and that similarly enable the acquisition of effects (e.g. Karjalainen & Saikkonen 2013; Kivipelto & Saikkonen 2013, 318).

The main challenge we have with our currently available measuring instruments is that they tend to be organisation-specific. Goal attainment can be measured only as long as clients stay to receive a particular service. Not even GAS can enable the acquisition of information about effects that take place outside the organisation after clients leave it. Even when certain specific goals are attained, service providers are not sure what happens when clients transfer elsewhere. Their estimations are based on educated guesses, generalisation on the basis of their clinical experience (extrapolation), and professional literature. (Kiresuk 2009, 150.)

4 GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION AND APPLICATION OF GOAL ATTAINMENT SCALING

4.1 Positioning of GAS – office-internal client service, content of commissioned services, or a tool for long-term client processes?

The key question is, do we consider GAS as a tool for office-internal client management (TE Offices, Labour Force Service Centres), as something linked to services acquired from organisation-external providers, or as a tool for long-term client processes?

Kela connects GAS especially to external service providers' services. Kela's officials, in principle, draft general rehabilitation goals and leave their precise form for service providers and clients to specify with the aid of GAS.

In order for us to understand, on a general level, the applicability of GAS to services commissioned by the employment administration, we now need to make clear some differences in the roles of Kela and the employment administration as commissioners of services.

Kela and the employment administration require different contents of the services they commission, be these services related to providing employment or promoting and assessing employability, and their organisations also supervise the implementation of services in a different way. For example, they allow different degrees of latitude for service providers to manoeuvre and adopt different attitudes towards the transparency of services and the measuring of their effects.

The following table shows some differences between Kela and the employment administration as commissioners of services.

TABLE 2. Kela and the employment administration as commissioners and evaluators of services

Qualitative dimension of service	Commissioner: Kela	Commissioner: the employment administration
Standardisation of services	Highly standardised. Compliance with standard is a quality element for service lines. (A service line is a form of rehabilitation, carried out by a service provider, the contents and method of implementation of which are specified in a standard.)	Not highly standardised (e.g. job application coaching, career coaching, job coaching, work try-outs) but clear service descriptions.
Relation to locality	No special features locally. Clients have the option of choosing the place for their rehabilitation.	Special features of local service production are respected at least on a general level.
Relation to tailoring of services	Chaining of services is allowed (e.g. evaluation of rehabilitation need + work and training try-outs)	Possibilities to combine measures
Contents of services, transparency of processes	Specifically expressed, transparency required	General description and duration of services specified, detailed service descriptions are not transparent (service providers may specify these as business secrets).
Required measuring instruments	Several, specified	ARVI and OPAL evaluation and feedback systems, no other requirements. In addition, evaluations with Melba and IMBA.
Measuring effects and effectiveness of commissioned services	General quality-of-life instruments (e.g. RAND-36 in job coaching), depression inventories (e.g. BDI, RBDI in job coaching), Work Ability Index (WAI) by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (e.g. in job coaching), GAS in rehabilitation (in addition, client feedback questionnaires by service providers)	URA: measure-oriented, change in labour market position (reason of change of employment code, reason of end of job-seeking), measures; OPAL: system for the administration and reporting of student feedback; ARVI: system for the entry of evaluations of students in labour market training; TYPPI: start dates, end dates and reasons for closing a service process. Rehabilitative work activity: activation plan containing assessment of a) effectiveness of previous public employment services, b) actualisation of employment plans and other plans for the client by municipal officials; Service providers' client feedback questionnaires
GAS required	Required for rehabilitation services	No methods-related requirements
Goals of individual service from the perspective of GAS	Standard services are redirected through GAS to gain a more individual approach; this is required in order to set goals and show evidence of effects.	GAS to redirect services towards more standardisation? Could GAS be used to introduce a more systematic approach and more transparency for services, still respecting the individual approach?

Because Kela has increased the transparency of services through standardisation (e.g. Kela's standard for outpatient and institutional rehabilitation. Job coaching service line), we may ask what the possibilities would be for services by the employment administration to proceed in this direction. At the least, the strengthening of the methodological basis for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects might increase the transparency of services.

4.2 Introduction of GAS

Kela considers GAS to be an important method in the evaluation of the effectiveness of rehabilitation. Could it be an important method for the employment administration as well?

Employment services are not standardised in the same way as those provided by Kela, and no particular methods are required of them. As of 2007, Kela has included the specification of goals in its key service product standard so that rehabilitees and service providers are expected to document concrete, measurable rehabilitation goals, the attainment of which can be evaluated. The numerical scale relating to the attainment of goals was introduced only subsequently. In 2008, Kela introduced two alternative goal specification forms, modified on the basis of the original GAS method (Kiresuk et al., 2009) and featuring Kela's adaptation of the numerical scale. (Autti-Rämö et.al., 4–5.)

Primarily, single services within the service supply of the employment administration are less limited in duration and do not require as extensive expert cooperation as do Kela's services (e.g. job coaching).

Because there are no methodological requirements for goal-setting and evaluation of effects in employment services, there is no training available concerning any particular method. The situation is different for Kela which initiated a standard renewal in 2010. The GAS method and a related form were enhanced in accordance with the model provided by Kiresuk et al. (2009), and service providers were recommended to attend GAS training.

Because Kela is not a training provider, universities of applied sciences were recruited to arrange the training. These courses are three ECTS in extent. Kela also accepts this training to be arranged by service providers as in-house training or otherwise. (Kela, GAS-menetelmä Kelan kuntoutuksen tavoitteiden laatumiseen ja arviointiin 2012.)

4.3 Services and goals

The service supply system of the employment administration relies on external employment service providers rather than in-house services. However, when clients' circumstances are mapped and their plans are made, guidance and supervision by TE Offices play a key role (Vedenkannas, Koskela, Tuusa, Jalava, Harju, Särkelä & Notkola 2011, 63). In contrast, Kela's rehabilitation process assigns the key role to health care and rehabilitation service providers. Both organisations have good service content descriptions, but Kela's documentation is more detailed and it also opens up the service processes. In the ideal situation, Kela's rehabilitation processes are expected to proceed in accordance with the GAS target model so that clients first relate their circumstances and express their needs. Then the healthcare system takes note of the rehabilitation needs and, in cooperation with clients, drafts rehabilitation plans (long-term goals). Following this, clerks in Kela who make decisions over benefits interview clients and discuss rehabilitation goals initially. Before any rehabilitation is begun at a service provider's, the service provider asks clients about their goals. Goals are formulated in concrete forms during rehabilitation periods; this is when GAS is applied. GAS goals become precise during rehabilitation processes, and the attainment of these goals is evaluated. Finally, the health care system assesses what further actions are required and sets long-term goals. (GAS target model.)

The duties and goals of employment services focus on employment and employability. Separate partial goals are not emphasised, and there is no single, uniform method for drafting partial goals. Partial goals are seen as potentially defocusing for the performance of key activities. Psychosocial and health-related dimensions of coping are not specifically brought up because they are seen to belong to the realm of municipal services and measures. Kela, for its part, includes partial goals to support performance and coping. The use of GAS brings a uniform method for goal-setting for all rehabilitation organised by Kela. Kela's objective is to make the effects of rehabilitation more measurable in the future. (Autti-Rämö et al., 4.)

When rehabilitation services are commissioned by Kela, the GAS process progresses so that at first, the client and the professional draft the goals and document them. They evaluate and enhance the goals at the beginning and end of rehabilitation, making them more precise. The completed GAS form

is sent to Kela with the client's rehabilitation description and included in the client's documentation. Currently, Kela does not collect T-scores, but it aims to combine T-scores with other measuring results that describe rehabilitation, thereby including them in registries. (Sukula 2013.)

Experiences of GAS in Kela's rehabilitation let us understand that the introduction of the method has made rehabilitation more disciplined and goal-oriented. The method is suitable for different types of rehabilitation, including work-related rehabilitation implemented by Kela. The issue of effectiveness has been brought anew into the awareness of rehabilitation service providers, guiding them to observe the entire rehabilitation process. The issue is not only that of the use of a particular method. (Ylisassi 2012, 46.)

4.4 How could GAS be applied for employment services?

Even if an extensive use of GAS were possible for employment services, GAS could not be applied to all services. In this respect, the situation would be quite different from the rehabilitation services arranged by Kela. When evaluating applicability, we must take note of sufficient training, time available for client work, possibilities for comprehensive clarifications, conditions for focused support, availability of support within the service, and legitimisation by the upper-level administrative decision-makers.

GAS would be the most applicable to services in which GAS would be an integral part of client work instead of a separate item. In addition, professionals should have sufficient time; in other words, they should be able to study their clients' circumstances comprehensively. That would enable focused support and guidance for clients within the service and thereby also goal-setting and evaluation of effects at the level of the individual.

Interviewee 1: One always benefits if one thinks about one's goal-setting in a more systematic and precise way. But then, is that realistic in employment services? That possibility. That's a different thing. I believe that if our experts were like midwives helping goals be born - well we do have individuals who have the basic competences and orientation ready for this kind of deeper work. But we also have those who might not necessarily manage. To start midwifing someone's goals, discussing and studying what milestones

have been reached in relation to goals, then that requires quite a bit of counselling skills of our experts. It also requires a desire to focus, but even more, the resource of time. It's such an intensive way of working that... I'm not sure how it would suit our administrative mode. That sort of guidance takes us to... it's like... not quite the world of therapy but somewhere along those lines. You really need to immerse yourself and know your client's circumstances and build your relationship of trust. You cannot just jump straight in and tell the client that we'll now see about your circumstances and goals, because... OK, it's always possible to fill in that form or whatever, but it would not be that client's thing. Not that client's - it was an external person filling it in. People would benefit but I doubt if our organisation and resources were such that it could be made possible. (Interviewee 1, 2014.)

We must also ask if the employment administration's infrastructure, in other words, recording procedures, data management systems and registration procedures, would allow the setting of individual goals.

There are services arranged by the employment administration that are basically suitable for the application of the type of thinking and practice that are required for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects.

The first of such services is vocational guidance, because it involves a guidance-based, client-oriented approach to work that entails a multi-stage process. The risk is not great that GAS would become a disconnected item in the work of professionals. Vocational guidance aims to support clients and help them draw up career plans that take note of the possibilities in the labour market. The foundation of vocational guidance is in guidance and discussion. These can be supported by various evaluation tools, trials, studies and consultation, and both specialist networks and purchased services may be utilised. Even today, a key element in this service process is the tasks that aim at improving clients' self-knowledge, removing psychological barriers to their decision-making and their carrying out of their plans, and promoting their finding motivation for work. (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön ohje julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta annetun lain ja asetuksen soveltamisesta 2014, 25.) In this respect, we could think that GAS would have reasonably good chances of being suitable for vocational guidance and career counselling. The critical question is, would psychologists in their professional roles and as users of various tests be willing to try methods new to them.

Career coaching is another option possibly suitable for the application of the type of thinking and practice that are required for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects even though e.g. the Ministry of Employment and the Economy may consider the current forms of client management sufficient. Career coaching always involves career counselling based on the client's personal needs.

Career coaching is a form of support for career planning that is more action-based, more intensive and longer-term than career counselling. Career coaching mostly involves face-to-face group activities, but some parts of it may take place online. Career coaching is offered for clients that lack vocational training, are considering career change, intend to re-enter working life, or are considering setting up their own firm. Career coaching is goal-oriented in that it guides clients when they clarify their options in terms of professional fields and careers, obtain study places and develop their working-life skills. Activities most often take place in groups but short-term familiarisation with working life in one or more workplaces may also be included. (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön ohje julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta annetun lain ja asetuksen soveltamisesta 2014, 26.)

The type of thinking required for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects is applicable, under certain conditions, for work try-outs aimed at clarifying clients' options in terms of professional fields and careers and for supporting their re-entry to the labour market. A work try-out is a service that aims to promote employment, organised at a workplace but not involving an employment relationship. The possibilities of work try-outs for individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects are linked to the fact that even today, it is important for the TE Office, client and organiser of work try-out to communicate and agree on the objectives of the try-out. (Op. cit., 28.) The possible limitations to the use of GAS, on the other hand, are linked to the fact that work try-out places differ in their possibilities of providing individual guidance and support.

Interviewee 1: Maybe work try-out and training try-out – it's here and there. Because there needs to be one that really controls this work.

Interviewee 2: In work try-outs it depends a little on where they are arranged. It could even be in enterprises. We do not require that enterpris-

es use very heavy methods for evaluations. Or that they support clients' career choice clarifications or anything. It is through the work that clients get the idea whether they wish to have that kind of jobs or not. (Interviewees 1 and 2, 2014.)

Individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects can be applied in situations in which services are systematically combined and chained. For example, it is often expedient to combine job coaching with other employment services such as pay-subsidised work, and the continuation for jobseeking coaching may consist of job coaching for the open labour market (Op. cit., 27). Pay-subsidised work may include training through e.g. the pay subsidy being granted for apprenticeship training or so that the subsidised work and labour market training are combined (Op. cit., 70). A period of career coaching may be temporarily interrupted by a work try-out period.

A special case among services commissioned by the employment administration consists of different types of projects, but also other activities in which clients may be guided as they progress. It may be that GAS is best applicable to situations in which the employment administration orders services that are implemented in project form. Projects often have better possibilities than do standard operations for applying process-based, individual, client-oriented guidance. Their possibilities are therefore also better for applying tools for goal-setting and the evaluation of effects. The challenge for projects is that their documentation procedures relating to goal attainment and evaluation may not be very developed; these procedures tend to vary and also deal only with activities during the project period.

4.5 The progress of the GAS process and organisation-related conditions for the evaluation of effects

Applied in the service process of not easily employable people, GAS could proceed as presented in FIGURE 1.

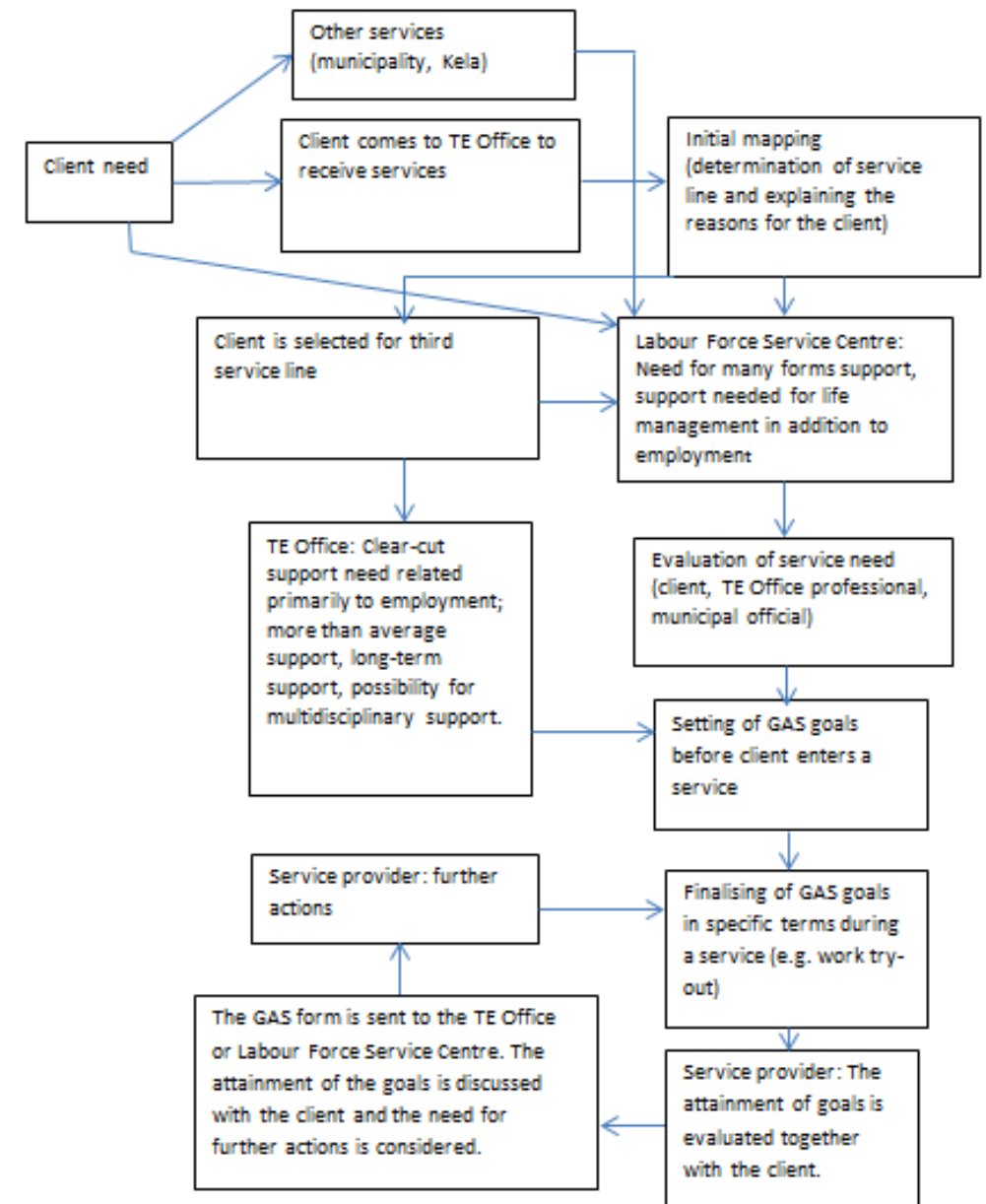


FIGURE 1. Possible GAS process flow in TE Offices and Labour Force Service Centres

People become clients of the TE Office, the initial examination determines the required service line, and the clients are explained the rationales. They are assigned to the third service line in the TE Office or directly to the Labour Force Service Centre. Clients remain with the TE Office if their

support needs are relatively clear-cut and primarily relate to employability. These clients still require more support than average and it is long-term. In addition, there is the possibility for multidisciplinary support. Clients are assigned to the Labour Force Service Centre if they require multiple types of support and, in addition to employability issues, need support in their life management. The Labour Force Service Centre evaluates clients' service needs in cooperation with the employment administration and municipal social workers. Either the Labour Force Service Centre or the TE Office drafts preliminary objectives for the GAS process before a client enters a service. After a certain service by a service provider has been selected and the client has entered that service, the GAS goals are finalised into specific terms. Finally, the service provider evaluates the attainment of GAS goals together with the client. The service provider sends the GAS goal-setting form either to the Labour Force Service Centre or the TE Office. The attainment of the goals is again discussed with the client and the need for further actions is considered. If needed, the client is directed to further services with new GAS goals.

Exposing the organisation-level effects requires proper IT management. In other words, it must be possible to enter all information relating to effects into the computer systems in a natural and easy way. The implementation of the GAS method at the level of client workers and service providers would require instructions and supervision from the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Today, the employment administration's infrastructure, in other words, recording procedures, data management systems and registration procedures, do not allow the setting of individual goals. It is an open issue to which degree the adoption of the Employment Radar³ will influence recording procedures and the detection of minor changes.

An employment-related problem in evaluations could be that someone may become employed during a process targeted at improved employability even if the primary goals did not include obtaining employment. The evaluation score would then be weak regardless of employment received. The question has been presented whether employment should always be one of

³ The Employment Radar is a prototype for the monitoring and assessment of TE Office guidance services, suggested to be put in practice from the beginning of the year 2014. The prototype has two parts: The first one is a new monitoring and assessment method – Employment Radar. The second one consists of the new infrastructure for analysing and interpreting the data produced by the Employment Radar, required by the new assessment method. (Spangar, Arnkil, Keskinen, Vanhalakka-Ruoho, Heikkilä & Pitkänen 2013.)

the goals. (Konturi & Kurvinen 2012.) Using GAS in the employment administration would also require edits to the GAS form.

4.6 Why is GAS challenging for employment services?

Certain factors limit the use of GAS in client work in TE Offices and in services commissioned by the employment administration.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy is, basically, interested in realising its two primary goals – clients' employment or entry into education. At the same time, the Ministry is concerned about the realising of its basic duty:

Interviewee 1: From the perspective of steering, I believe our primary focus is still on the final outcome, which is still hard to reach, meaning, that they get employment or training. There is a factor with an impact here... we have noticed that our experts in employment services have been rather interested in handling, when we look at the circumstances of the most vulnerable groups in the labour market... in handling very many duties that actually do not belong to this administrative branch. They kind of try to patch up the deficiencies in the municipal social and health sector. We could say that because of this, we are trying all the time to require some focus of them that hey, you should take care of your basic duty and make sure people get jobs or training so that they can transfer to working life later. These other issues in life should not be in their focus. We try to make people remember that it is this that is the meaning of us being here. The point is that we have not actively tried to tell our experts that hey now you must cater to all aspects of life. (Interviewee 1, 2014.)

The development of steering and registration procedures in order to bring up wellbeing effects other than those related to employment directs the steering and the evaluation of operations to areas other than the key area. Under the Act on Public Employment and Business Service,

Public employment and business services promote the functioning of the labour market by ensuring the availability of skilled labour force and providing jobseekers with opportunities for finding work, promote the emer-

gence of new business activity, and develop the operational preconditions of enterprises and the quality of working life. (Laki julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta 2012/916, 2 §.)

Under Section 4 of this Act, the TE Office and the client together assess the client's service needs, on the basis of which such public employment and business services are provided that best ensure the availability of a skilled labour force and promote the placement of the individual client in the open labour market.

Guidance and counselling in TE Offices would require better possibilities for detecting small changes in clients' circumstances and employability. Even if persons working with guidance and counselling in TE Offices would be interested in interim goals and clients' life management issues, the recording and registration procedures available for them relating to such goals would not enable appropriate evaluation of effects. However, it is obvious that employment-related interim goals can be entered in employment plans where their follow-up is possible. However, this is a point that is more related to the vigorousness of service processes than to any comprehensive approach to clients' circumstances. Instructions have been issued regarding employment plans stating, for example, that these plans are to be agreed on in cooperation with the client concerning complete sets of services, both current and the next, with intermediate goals specified for follow-up purposes. (Kerminen 2010.; Haavisto-Vuori 2011.)

From the perspective of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, interim employment goals relate to the harmonious flow of the service process and process management rather than the individual circumstances of clients.

Interviewee 1: We have tried to improve the quality of employment plans... Precisely that... Currently, there is the plan section and what it all aims at, and what interim goals there are, and then there is this action plan... Where the concrete actions are and what they will do next. Now that we have electronic services, clients must drop in there to acknowledge if they've done their bit for the plan. The core of those services is the employment plan. It's done together and both parties approve it and commit to it.

Interviewee 1: Those are maybe not interim goals but more like steps.

Interviewee 2: Yes but the plan itself may contain these and interim goals. But that plan is made concrete with this action plan.

Interviewee 1: They are like steps to make progress. It's good to see them that way. I'm already comparing... When we have GAS, then what is the difference... it's not necessarily the fact that... GAS is a tool for clients to understand their goals and to evaluate where they are on the way to their goals. Or evaluate how well you've done with this goal. For our part it more like makes the service process more stringent. And it is made more systematic. So we know that when we take these steps and have milestones where someone should do something. It is like our challenges are related to the management of this process. Not necessarily how the clients see how close to their goals they are, or how far from them. (Interviewees 1 and 2, 2014.)

In TE Offices, the URA system determines quite largely which aspects of clients' circumstances receive attention. In the URA system, employment plans and the plans replacing employment plans, contain chartings and action plans. A charting is a concise description of a jobseeker's circumstances, summarising his or her qualifications, training, competences and work experience. Chartings also have entries concerning jobseekers' job-seeking skills and activity. If necessary, they may include essential information concerning clients' employability and, possibly, their needs relating to change of vocation or entry into vocational education. The extent and contents of entries vary according to service line. Jobseekers' action plans show the goal of jobseeking and the intended progress to the goal. The professional and jobseeker agree on the goal together. The action plan includes the agreed actions itemised and the services that will advance the attainment of the goal. The jobseeker and the TE Office professional agree on the follow-up of the employment plan and approve the plan. (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön ohje julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta annetun lain ja asetuksen soveltamisesta 2012.; Valtioneuvoston asetus julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta 2012/1073, 4§, 5§.)

From the perspective of managing daily TE Office work, the good point is that the system structures activities and aids memory. However, no proper tools exist for clarifying clients' circumstances in any depth so that client

service staff could be guided in e.g. finding information concerning essential goals and means. In practice, matters and means rely on professionals' expertise when these professionals help their clients understand their circumstances.

Interviewee 3: You must be able to ask general questions about the client's situation, such as what influences his or her employability, what helps it and what might hinder it and should be got rid of. It might even be easier to clarify these competence development -related things than try to take in all of the client's situation. But discussion and interview (are essential/ KP). (Interviewee 3, 2013.)

All in all, evaluation practices in TE Offices focus on the basic duty of the office and they are not currently being developed so that interim goals or any other goals not related to employment could be brought out. (Some changes may come about due to the introduction of Employment Radar.) For example, the instructions by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy concerning the application of the Act and Decree on Public Employment and Business Service do not refer to interim goals or the setting of them (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön ohje julkisesta työvoima- ja yrityspalvelusta annetun lain ja asetuksen soveltamisesta 2014).

Within TE Offices, the need of bringing up effects focuses on more traditional, expert-oriented measuring instruments that show the goal options created by the creator of the instrument. Tools that relate to the setting of new goals and evaluating effects are easily seen as inexpedient, and users do not desire a cumbersome, overloaded system.

Certain elements also limit the use of GAS in services commissioned by the employment administration. The productisation of services has led to the fact that the contents of services available for order are precise and narrow in scope. However, opposite to Kela, the employment administration has not standardised service processes. Their service providers have latitude to manoeuvre in how their services progress and what is involved in the various phases.

Interviewee 4: When Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment ask for competitive bids, we must be extremely careful to pro-

vide precisely what they ask for. We have placed our bid and have promised to adopt their template for what they buy from us. It's a very clear goal. Of course, there may be variation per client such that we may start searching for a job for someone very soon. For someone else, the pace must be calmer and we might take more time with, say, what field, what type of work we will eventually look for. And we take time with getting their job-seeking documents done, improving their jobseeking skills in general. At a later point of time we will then search for a job but in any case, we talk as if... somebody will aim at having a job within a month and we cannot drag our feet for several months even in our slowest cases. If so, the client has not been directed to the right service. If they need months and months to get ready. And about working ability assessments, like I said, the template is awfully clear what our tasks are. (Interviewee 4, 2014.)

In commissioned services, large numbers of clients per professional are possible, causing professionals to consider individual goal setting and evaluation of effects as extra work that cannot be allocated any specific time. Service providers provide only what is bought from them, and focused client work with specialised evaluation tools is not often possible (e.g. job coaching, "no hours allocated").

Interviewee 5: And if we use meeting time to fill in GAS goals, like three different goals and intermediate goals minus one and two, then all that is immediately off the number of hours available. When we go and explain the service, first in a triad, then we tell them the goal is employment primarily in business in the open labour market and with hard cash. That's what it is and that's where we are going. We don't use any time for it longer than that. That's how it is. (Interviewee 5, May 2014.)

Interviewee 6: I've got... well like last month I had sixty clients, sixty two it was, plus dormant clients on top, maybe twenty of them. I mean, it's a huge number, or so I think myself anyway. And it is clear one cannot work in an individual way like some clients would require. If we started individual coaching, then I would say fifteen, twenty... That's when one could really get the job done. (Interviewee 6, 2014.)

GAS goals and the way they are expressed would not necessarily present a particular challenge for service providers:

Interviewer: I'll just ask this much that do you think it funny in some way to have intermediate goals for like employment... like the example of the target expectation (scale point 0/KP) here is that the worker has filled in the applications, minus two is that they did not get any application documents. Minus one is that the documents are there. Then there is plus one to mean that they have gone in for a job interview, and getting a job is plus two.

Interviewee 4: Those are our goals directly but we cannot sit down with them every time because we have hours allocated that we must get to the goals within, and also, it is quite a toilsome method. If we sit down every time to ask how many applications have you filled in now, then that takes an awful amount of time. Yes, they are our goals directly. If the client doesn't, between meetings... like we meet with them every week or two, and if a client comes in time after time and says I haven't made any of these phone calls in my list and haven't sent any applications, then we must pretty soon decide that ok, if you don't do what we agree to do then you are not in the right service. (Interviewee 4, 2014.)

The use of GAS is limited also in that all services are not client-oriented – they may be expert-oriented as well. Some services such as working ability assessments are based on objective evaluations.

Even traditions can limit the possibilities of GAS. Typically, no tools-related requirements have been placed on services commissioned by the employment administration. The commissioning party does not require the use of any particular measuring instruments or evaluation tools relating to the setting or attaining of goals.

In addition, some clients and client groups feel negatively about evaluation tools. They fear that agreements on goals and evaluations of goal attainment would be used to criticise their actions and to pressure them. The underlying factor is the fear of losing benefits.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the future, we will need research into the implementation of our current measuring instruments as well as studies concerning factors relevant for the introduction of such tools (Kivipelto & Kotiranta 2011, 135).

The strength of GAS is that it could be a professional tool in many different contexts in the social and health sector. One of its strengths is that it involves no risk that the effects of professional work would be evaluated with criteria that are improper for professional work and set externally. The scaling system does not dictate work methods but lets them be determined by the duty of the organisation and the professionalism of its workers. However, GAS is not suitable for short-term client work of a quick tempo.

GAS sets certain requirements on the organisation for its use to be possible. First of all, the staff of the referring parties such as the TE Office or the Labour Force Service Centre as well as that of the service providers must be offered the opportunity of attending sufficient training in the use of the tool. For example, Kela utilises universities of applied sciences for GAS training. Secondly, the use of the tool must be integral to client work and not a disconnected item. The GAS form should not dominate the discussion with the client about goals and the evaluation of their attainment. When goal-setting is integral to client work, the completion of the form does not involve as great a risk of per se ritual as it does when the form is completed for the sake of completing it. Per se rituals are involved when contents or rational issues do not control the work but the form is completed mainly because the parties are under external obligation to do so. Thirdly, GAS requires time for taking note of the clients' total circumstances and for evaluating the attainment of goals. Fourthly, GAS requires that clients be giv-

en focused guidance and support within the service. This is necessary because, for example, goal-setting may require updating or redefinition. Fifthly, the infrastructure in the organisation must allow the use of GAS. In other words, the URA and TYPPI systems used by the employment administration would need to have separate GAS sections or GAS goals implemented, and the follow-up of goals would have to be implemented electronically so that it would form a natural part of the work of professionals. Sixthly, the use of GAS requires legitimisation by the upper-level administrative decision-makers, as Kela's example shows us. The employment administration is not likely to introduce the tool without supervision from the level of the Ministry. Service providers will not introduce the tool if the commissioning party does not require it. Considering the above factors, the conditions for the introduction of GAS for the employment administration do not seem favourable.

If an opportunity existed in TE Offices and the Labour Force Service Centres to use GAS, the critical phases in its introduction would involve the situations in which the initial GAS goals are drafted before clients are referred to a certain service or measure, and those in which the service provider states these goals in more specific terms. The service providers should be able to evaluate the attainment of the goals; they should also send information (the form) concerning the attainment of goals to the TE office or to the Labour Force Service Centre, where the attainment of goals and the need for further action are again discussed with the client.

Currently, the best conditions for the introduction of GAS in services produced or commissioned by the employment administration are found in the following services:

- *GAS might be useful in vocational guidance and career counselling, because these involve client-oriented, process-form guidance in many stages. The approach is based on guidance. However, its possibilities are limited by the fact that career counselling by psychologists is a professional form of activity for which tools and methods are selected primarily to meet professional requirements. In order for the tool to be applied in career counselling, its use should be legitimised by the upper-level administrative decision-makers.*
- *GAS might be possible in career coaching, which includes individual career counselling. It would then be more action-based than in vocational*

guidance and career counselling, and it could be tailored per target group. Career coaching would be sufficiently long-term (40 days per year possible), and its strengths include discussions with the coach.

- Work try-outs might have the right conditions for the use of GAS when such try-outs are used for clarifying clients' options in terms of vocational fields and careers and for supporting their re-entry to the labour market. It is then possible to evaluate whether their competences and working-life skills are up to date and what support might be required. This possibility, in turn, is limited by the fact that work try-out places do not often have sufficient expertise and opportunity for the use of the tool, unless the try-out takes place in a rehabilitation organisation.

- In addition, systematic combination and chaining of services might offer opportunities for the use of GAS so that it could advance the systematic planning of client service.

The possibilities for the use of GAS are better in Labour Force Service Centres than in TE Offices, because they have more time available per client and focus more on means that target matters other than only employment.

Certain elements limit the use of GAS in client work at TE Offices. First of all, the upper-level management of the employment administration is, basically, interested in realising its two primary goals – clients' employment or entry into education. They are concerned with the completion of the basic duty of the organisation. There is interest in intermediate goals and goals relating to clients' life management (psychosocial aspects) among the TE Office staff that work with clients, but the recording and registration procedures available for them relating to such goals do not enable the evaluation of effects. The focus is on structured, universal, predetermined factors considered common for all clients. In addition, the use of too many tools is not appropriate (e.g. the URA system should not be made too heavy). However, there is a need in TE Office client work to be able to detect small changes. For its part, the upper management's concern of the main duties of TE Offices limits the possibilities for the use of GAS, and there is no approval within sight from the management for the use of a GAS-type tool. On the basis of the above, the potential is not great within the employment

administration for the general introduction of a tool that is based purely on procedures and mindsets of individual goal-setting and evaluation of effects.

Other, different issues limit the use of GAS in services commissioned by the employment administration. The productisation of services has led to the fact that the contents of services available for order are precise and narrow in scope⁴. Because large numbers of clients per professional are possible, it is difficult to have services include duties that entail extra time. Currently, clients are offered only what the employment administration has purchased. Commissioned services do not allow focused client work (e.g. job coaching) with special evaluation tools because it is difficult to allocate working hours for it. In addition, all services are not client-oriented but specialist-oriented in nature. Some services are based on an objective approach that distances itself from the client (such as working ability assessments). In addition, the tradition in the employment administration does not include tools-related requirements for services. The party commissioning the services does not require a certain method for the setting, attaining and evaluating of goals, and there is no change to this in the foreseeable future. Adopting the clients' view, we may again doubt the need for the setting and evaluating of individual goals. Some clients or groups of clients fear that agreements on goals or evaluations of goal attainment would be used to criticise their actions and to pressure them.

When looking for possibilities to introduce GAS, projects seem to have potential. Projects have better opportunities for individual, client-oriented guidance offered in process-form than do more standardised practices, and thereby they are better able to apply tools based on goal-setting and the evaluation of goal attainment. However, the challenge for projects is that their documentation procedures relating to goal-setting and the evaluation of goal attainment may not be very developed and tend to deal only with activities occurring during the project period. The use of tools based on goal-setting and the evaluation of goal attainment may be temporary, and it is not expedient for organisations to build the infrastructure for the needs of projects.

On the basis of this study, we can estimate that the suitability of GAS for client work within services produced or commissioned by the employment

administration is not very high and neither is the probability of its introduction very high. In principle, the best potential for focused, individual goal-setting and the evaluation of goal-attainment within the employment administration is found in supported employment services. The prerequisites for individual goal-setting are the best when the starting point for the work is the systematic, scheduled development of the client's labour market competences.

However, it may be that GAS is the most applicable during rehabilitation periods within clients' employment processes in which the TE Office relationship with these clients is not very close and in which the guiding and promotion of the clients' circumstances is relatively minor or completely outside the TE Office. Individual goal-setting is not considered to be at the core of the employment administration's duties particularly when it relates to issues of psychosocial coping and life management. The question presents itself whether individual goal-setting and the evaluation of effects, founded on a comprehensive view of clients' circumstances and aiming at concrete changes in factors influencing them, would be beneficial for and supportive of the work that is carried out in order to improve clients' wellbeing and employment by Labour Force Service Centres, in rehabilitative work activity and in social welfare work. This question is made particularly relevant because, according to labour administration officials, the most effective paths to employment are constructed by the Labour Force Service Centres due to their possibility to cooperate directly with the social and health sector (Terävä, Virtanen, Uusikylä & Köppä 2011, 61). On the other hand, the given employment goals have been too high even for the Labour Force Service Centres (e.g. Telén 2007,74).

⁴ This is a more extensive problem and it is related to service acquisition and production. The joint production of services into a more client-oriented direction by the service provider and the commissioning party is an important theme. Such joint production has been bypassed in the procurement of services through competitive bids.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. Potential of GAS for services arranged by the employment administration (for people that are difficult to employ), summary of interviews

	INTERVIEWS									
Possibilities of the prerequisites of GAS to be realised	Pair interview, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Expert, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (management level)	Expert, TE Office (management level)	Pair interview, TE Office (client-level)		Expert, Labour Force Service Centre (client-level)	Group interview, service provider (client-level, 3)	Group interview, service provider (client-level, 3)	Group interview, service provider (client-level, 4)	Työvoima 2013+ project (project implementation level)
Training in the use of the method	Carefully filtered training needs.	GAS may be too demanding to learn.	Not for all staff, too demanding.	Would required thorough training.		Made easy through training?	Requires practice.	No need within employment services.	Requires practice.	Would require training and practice.
Sufficiency of time	Not much time.	Not much time. Cost of extra GAS work?	Too many clients, i.e. lack of time.	Possible in Labour Force Service Centres?		Better than in TE Offices.	E.g. job coaching: too scanty.	Too burdensome a method, shortness of time.	Time available for clients in projects.	Large numbers of clients and lack of time cause problems.
Possibility for comprehensive investigations	"Experts are not midwives delivering goals".	Labour Force Service Centre: primarily a matter of multidisciplinary cooperation.	Might be possible in Labour Force Service Centres.	Primarily a matter of multidisciplinary cooperation.		Good potential in Labour Force Service Centres, intermediate goals.	Potential in services other than those commissioned by the employment administration.	Primarily a matter of multidisciplinary cooperation.	Projects work goals into intermediate goals.	Structures do not support comprehensive approaches and individualism.
Focused guidance and support within service	"Focus on education and employment", reservations in the approach, no realism.	Need to find the optimum, not too detailed.	Projects for vocational guidance and career counselling.	Vocational guidance and career counselling, work try-out with reservations.		Employment mainly through work try-outs (+ pay subsidy and job coaching).	Potential in services other than those commissioned by the employment administration.	E.g. not possible in job coaching but possible in work activity.	Most applicable for supporting clients in projects.	Mass products are not adapted to individual goal-setting.
Infrastructure to support methods	Need to develop for TE Offices for use with pay-subsidised work (TUPAL?)	Need to develop for steps towards employment (TUTKA, Radar, would form an appropriate compromise for now).	The trouble with URA and TYPPi is overlapping work. Could GAS include any of it?			TYPPi; URA for employment administration staff; a card for GAS in TYPPi?	Would require development.	Starting point in goals set by commissioners of services. Would require development.	Previous experience from vocational rehabilitation by Kela: project infra would require development.	URA guides, but no system for service need evaluation and mapping situations, GAS an option?
Legitimation by upper-level administrative decision-makers	No need for the method.	Interest: prevention of long-term unemployment.	Should be required at the level of an Act or Decree. Not foreseeable.			Would require commitment of parties.	Will not be started on a voluntary basis.	GAS is extra cost, not applied if not required.	Would require legitimation and resourcing.	Would require guidance and binding force. Use is not prohibited.

**APPENDIX 2. GAS goal-setting and the evaluation of effects.
An example from a mental health rehabilitee course arranged by Kela**

Goal 1: Self-image		
Scale		Evaluation date
Voices only negative aspects of self	Much less than expected -2	
Voices more negative than positive aspects of self	Somewhat less than expected -1	
Voices negative and positive aspects equally	Target scale point 0	
Voices more positive than negative aspects	Somewhat more than expected +1	27/04/2010
Voices only positive aspects of self	Much more than expected +2	

Goal 2: Social life		
Scale		Evaluation date
Does not participate in activities outside the home	Much less than expected -2	
Occasionally participates in a group outside the home	Somewhat less than expected -1	
Participates in a group weekly	Target scale point 0	
Meets one person regularly in addition to a group	Somewhat more than expected +1	
Meets several persons regularly in addition to a group	Much more than expected +2	30/09/2009

Goal 3: Decision-making leading to action		
Scale		Evaluation date
Cannot draft plans	Much less than expected -2	

Drafts plans but does not intend to carry them through	Somewhat less than expected -1	
Carries through plans if reminded	Target scale point 0	27/04/2010
Drafts plans and carries them through partly independently	Somewhat more than expected +1	
Drafts plans and carries them through independently	Much more than expected +2	

The sum of the points for the goals above is 3, and their T-score is 64, which means that the expectation was exceeded.

(Source: modified to follow Autti-Rämö, Vainniemi, Sukula & Louhenperä, 24)

APPENDIX 3. T-score table

Sum of points	Number of goals							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
-16								18
-15								20
-14							18	22
-13							21	24
-12						19	23	26
-11						22	25	28
-10					20	24	27	30
-09					23	27	30	32
-08				21	26	29	32	34
-07				25	29	32	34	36
-06			23	28	32	35	36	38
-05			27	32	35	37	39	40
-04		25	32	35	38	40	41	42
-03		31	36	39	41	42	43	44
-02	30	38	41	43	44	45	45	46
-01	40	44	45	46	47	47	48	48
00	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
01	60	56	55	54	53	53	52	52
02	70	62	59	57	56	55	55	54
03		69	64	61	59	58	57	56
04		75	68	65	62	60	59	58
05			73	68	65	63	61	60
06			77	72	68	65	64	62
07				76	71	68	66	64
08				79	74	71	68	66
09					77	73	70	68
10					80	76	73	70
11						78	75	72
12						81	77	74
13							79	76
14							82	78
15								80
16								82

(Source: Autti-Rämö, Vainniemi, Sukula & Louhenperä)

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