Grundtvig Learning Partnership 2013-2015
IMPROVING PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

Transnational reflection modules - compilation

The transnational reflection modules capture the ongoing learning of the participating partners in the Grundtvig IPAE learning partnership. The focus is on the European learning with regards to an organizational perspective:

EU WAREHOUSE, Belgium

Kick-off meeting in Bonn
A core finding for me was in the group work exchange on "obstacles to participate in AE" and that we came up with workable cluster on **psychological, situational and system-related barriers (and also financial barriers)**. This will be a helpful base to continue the work and connect it with the question of "how we make choice" or even the ability to make choices. We will also have them, clustered, in the minutes.

I have noted here a list of relevant topics of for our project, which might serve as a base for the future work:

- Meaning of learning,
- Fear of commitment,
- Family situation,
- Learning phobias,
- Self-reflection,
- Lack of persistence,
- Overeducated,
- "peer-pressure",
- Mismatch between offers and expectations,
- Quality,
- Mandatory education / social benefits,
- Start business mandatory measures (e.g. for hairdresser etc.),
- Financial issues,
- Fear to start,
- Lack of information / access to information,
- Lack of self-confidence
- Long-term unemployment,
- Language problems (in BE: NL and FR, DE),
- To long out of structure(s),
- Information / lack of information before orientation (but orientation is ONLY following labour market!),
- Bureaucratisation, not enough advice: people are not given a CHOICE, but there are send in measures,
- AE-measures are too long, people want to earn money,
- Recognition of competences,
- Adequate work,
- Precarious situation of learner – if you have to survive, you look for a job,
- Paid stages,
- Financial support of stages,
- Needs for a personalized approach,
- You haven't learned to choose – people feel, they don't have big choices,
- PIS.

Another profound insight was to have an overview on the German system with regards on AE and its impact.

From the best practice presented from VESBE e.V. the following aspects are the most relevant ones for me with regards to continue the European transfer:

- The importance to work in small groups with the target groups,
- The emphasis on getting people into life, not primarily into work,
- Huckepack (those, who are already in the measure, will take the others on) – mentoring potential and aspects (very interesting) – it is important to have a credible group,
- the initial phase is very important,
- "Appreciation" / appreciative approach;

With regards to some policy-related ideas we would like to prepare in this project, the following thoughts entered into my pre-selection:

- There are a lot of good/best practices already available – the core question might be, how they can be financed, as most of them need to be mid-to long-term, in order to have a sustainable impact;
- There is a need to have a renewed look in order to provide learning and work for people, who do simple labour;
- "participation": there is a lack of ORIENTATION, with regards to what you can do as a potential AE-participant;
- the target groups are pretty defined;
- we need individual approaches (self-awareness);
- idea of "mediator / passeur".

Transnational meeting in Slovakia

The partnership is running very well and, I'm glad to say, on a real European work level. We managed to stay away from just have front-desk input, but to engage in mutual exchange and fruitful discussions, letting us profit from our different backgrounds and professional experiences.
A very important aspect for "organizational" learning for me is the enabling of European learning. Basically, this is in line with the concept of the IPAE-project, isn't it? We are looking for means to participate. This is also a challenge in a European team. How can all people involved participate? How can we get the (relevant?) input in such a short time, how can we bond in meetings? What is required to make people comfortable enough in a situation out of there comfort zone, with regards to colleagues, other countries, travel, language barriers and … meta-level approaches.

Next to the valuable findings we had specifically with regards to overcome individual barriers which hinder participation, the European group dynamics were very important to:
- we related by communicating with all means (not only language),
- we stayed open to the others,
- we worked as much in mixed groups as possible,
- we had a good mixture between "social" and "learning" activities (which had an great impact on the results!),
- the partners found it use- and helpful to related to a clear "red thread" created in the project",

- working in mixed European workshop contributed very much to our joint (!) work results,
- a well-structured work plan is very helpful for the group work and dynamics.

Content wise: The defining of the main stakeholders relevant for education and determine their role in this process went very well and will sustain our working results. I think it also helped us to structure the complexity of the work process.
We also achieved work results, which are important for the group, but also for the organizations themselves. In order to own the project and the process the project partners were encouraged to continue with a related, but more specific action/measure/result/interest of the project.

Transnational meeting in Lithuania
The partnership meeting was very well organized by the host and it was a real added value that GI had opened it partly up to the public. I found it very positive to see that our "investments" in a good and trustful working sphere were continuing – being visible in the amount of preparation and ready- and willingness of the partners to collaborate.

It was very enriching to get such a deep and skillful overview on the adult education scene and its implications in Lithuania. Again we exchanged best practice on AE-offers, target groups and access questions, which added a lot to our IPAE-related questions. It found the reflection very helpful – seeing a complete different country setting is always very useful to me to understand European and Belgian perspectives better. A lot of problem are common, but the intercultural and national/regional/local background plays a significant role in the questions concerned. Here again, the trusting work relationship we have built really helps to ask all kind of "unfiltered questions" to get a better understanding about the Lithuanian background, which has been mostly unfamiliar to me. And I'm feeling very grateful to get deeper insights in the educational questions of country with such a rich history and I'm very thankful that European cooperation enables this kind of exchange.

Transnational meeting in Brussels

Well, the end of the project is immanent and I can only say that the project collaboration was more than worthwhile.
As coordinator I was glad to see that we managed to work through a broad subject in a focused way, relating it to our own work spheres. And we also managed to take "participating" seriously, as a European work group is a bit of a small scale "access to AE"-setting.
The project also proved possible, that different work levels can be combined successfully in one project – mixing the meta-level with the grass-root works and learners.
There is still a lot to do with regards to improve the access, but we have acquired valuable perspective and new strategies, tools and best practices to continue our work.

UAB "Globalios idėjos", Lithuania

Kick-off meeting in Bonn
Partners were able to find common ground very fast. All partners were involved and interested in discussions. Although not all of participants spoke English and the language barrier was difficult to overcome but because of translations all the participants had a chance to be involved in all the activities. Overall level of partners' English language is very good and communication was very easy. Very important team building aspect – all partners attended all diners and lunches, few of them went to History gallery together.

The work during this meeting was very efficient, planned goals were reached. The coordination of this project was exemplary - stress reduced to a minimum, work load suitable and acceptable, goals reached efficiently - we have one project outcome already (identified barriers of participation in adult learning and classified according to psychological, situational, structural, systemic, financial and other criteria).

Hosting institution did incredible work, the meeting went without any problems and issues. VESBE organization presented all their activities, showed and demonstrated their workshops (activities for adult learning). The experience and knowledge they shared was very interesting and useful for our organization. We improved the knowledge about workshop organization, our view was expanded.

Transnational meeting in Slovakia

The second partnership meeting was even more successful than the kick-off. Comparing to the first meeting language barrier was much lower, communication was easier and more effective. Hosting organization was able to create very friendly atmosphere – all partners attended all diners and lunches.

Work load was acceptable, goals reached efficiently. All the discussions were effective and up to the point. Splitting partners into two work groups was excellent idea and the results of the work were very surprising.

After the meeting we will share new ideas for activities with organizations director, we will consider implementing them in our country and for our target group. The organization and management of meeting was inspiring, we received a lot of good ideas and we will try to implement them while organizing next project partnership meeting in Lithuania. The experience and gained knowledge is very useful for our organization.

Transnational meeting in Lithuania
The third partnership meeting was very successful, nevertheless language barrier was still present. As a hosting organization we were able to create the atmosphere for effective and efficient work. This meeting was an excellent for teambuilding: all partners attended all diners and lunches.

We were able to share our experience and invite guests (other companies) from Lithuania and Latvia to share theirs. We organized conference for local stakeholders and other interested parties.

All the work tasks were completed efficiently, discussions were effective and on the point. We reached the goals that were set before the meeting.

Company will use gained knowledge and experience in further activities.

Transnational meeting in Brussels

The last partnership meeting was as successful as all the other meetings during this project. Comparing to other meetings language barrier was almost non-existing and it made work easier and more effective. Project coordinator organized dinners and lunches for all partners.

Work load was acceptable, all the objectives and goals reached efficiently. Coordinator organized work in groups and division of partners was very beneficial. All the discussions were effective and up to the point. However, some discussion would have benefited from more time dedicated to them.

As the project is coming to an end, most of the results are already reached, the quality of the outcomes that partnership developed are high. Some of the ideas and results will be adapted and implemented in our organisation. We will use the knowledge gained during this meeting in organizing local dissemination activities and other work related to adult education. The experience and gained knowledge is very useful for our organization. We hope to find opportunities and possibilities to continue working in the area related to the idea of this project.

Škola dokorán n.o.

Kick-off meeting in Bonn

The kick-off meeting held in Bonn was the best way to start the exchange of the information, the best practice and knowledge. All partners shared similar activities in adult education. Our organization focused its activities on communities with a language barrier among others disadvantages. Not all the participants spoke English so the language barrier was disadvantages in this meeting. However together we explored how to keep all participants in discussion, exchange our experience and compare our problems. And this is the way how to use our knowledge in reality.

According to the subjects of the meeting there are topics to be discussed as possibilities for the future:

a) language barrier and how to pass them,
b) value and meaning of the education for adults,
c) self-destructive behavior as a fear for change,
d) cooperation with other organization involved,
e) connections between "offer" and "demand" in order to make AE "requested",

We gain some new point of view to the adult education and learn new things. Exchange of experience with all the partners who deal with similar or the same obstacles means great addition for us.

Transnational meeting in Slovakia

The participants were engaged in discussions related to improve participation in Adult Education and define the main stakeholders relevant for education, and determine their role in this process. The results of discussions in both groups were almost identical. Participants stated the following stakeholders in three levels (central, organizational, personal level):

- Ministries/national government,
- Business/Employers/ Entrepreneurs, NGOs,
- Individual/family

Participants defined the roles of the representatives in each level. We compared the situation in our country with other participating countries. For example in Slovakia - on organizational level - we do not have developed services provided by the adult educational centers, social private centers.

Discussion was very interesting and enriching. We were acquainted with the possibilities of organizing mobility with the aim to improve participation in adult education. We identified the barriers of the mobility. For the Slovak participants this information was very helpful and interesting, other countries had more experiences in organizing adult education.

We identified strategies to overcome barriers for entry into adult education. For Skola dokoran, n.o. was very important to determine the main objectives, sequential steps and major themes related to the preparation of adult education by our NGO.

In cooperation with other participants:

- we defined the ways of rewarding target groups involved into education, as well as benefits, advantages gained by completing this education,
- we defined our roles and skills needed to meet our objectives in adult education,
- we discussed the ways to develop cooperation between NGOs and business in individual countries,
- we defined our target groups.

Meeting in Slovakia fulfilled our expectations and contributed for strengthening relations between the participants and identified other tasks.

Transnational meeting in Brussels

Workshop 1

The topic of our group work "**access and choice**" was very interesting. We spoke about behavior of unemployed people who do not have enough choice in the areas of high unemployment rate. On the other hand many of them prefer to be unemployed because their social welfare is higher than their wage. We spoke about values, motivation, working habits of young generations; about labor offices which do not offer trainings resulting from the currently needs. We also discussed about possibility to

support them during their involvement in working, to give them extra support not only at work, but also at home, etc.

Workshop 2

In group we analyzed the various possibilities of choice in comparison with situations presented on worksheet (The costs of comparison). There were presented three different situations, conditions for choice. Discussion was about different kind of choice conditions and their implications of adult education in individual countries.
It was interesting to discuss and compare different possibilities for adult education. We defined that each choice has its impact, consequences.

We also spoke about early school leavers and young people not in education in individual countries. – Sometimes it is not their choice – it is the result of their family background (culture, unemployed parents, etc.)

Workshop 3

In group work we defined Policy recommendations to government, labor offices, youths, staff, etc.

- To support motivation (for example through social benefit),
- To use different methods in the process of adult learning,
- Focus on the same values,
- to improve the public recognition of adult education,
- to share effective and innovative practice of monitoring and evaluation of adult education,
- provide guidance, counseling and other supportive services strengthening adult education,
- Media should attract certain jobs, professions,
- Marketing approach,
- Quality,

At the end of the meeting we agreed on the ways to finalize the project, about the deadline for writing reports and personal responsibilities to do it. This meeting fulfilled our expectations and the member of our organization enjoyed involvement into this project.

VESBE e.V., Germany

Kick-off meeting in Bonn
In order to present VESBE's work in Adult Education, I carried out an internal survey based on a questionnaire that I had prepared, and interviewed some of the staff working with this target group. Not only the facts and figures from the different schemes that I informed myself on, and presented at the kick-off meeting were interesting but

also the conversations with the staff about their personal commitment/feelings/needs experienced in their work with the target groups. There is obviously a great need to communicate and channel such thoughts and these are, within a holistic approach, an important aspect to be considered when exploring best practice in overcoming barriers and improving participation in AE. I will upload the questionnaire in drop box once I've translated it into English.

According to the information exchange among the partners at the meeting the following aspects emerged and should be considered in our project work:

The motivation to attend AE courses is very low when such courses are made obligatory as in Slovakia (in order e.g. to be allowed to set up one's own business) or in Germany (mandatory to receive social benefits).

In order to motivate people, especially the educationally challenged /deprived, they need to understand the benefits, learn to chose and take ownership of the opportunities offered in Adult Education.

On the other hand, people/institutions working with marginalized groups need to offer opportunities/schemes based on individual needs, competences, and with as much respect to the individual´s own career ideas as possible. This will increase motivation and might influence the person´s willingness to complete the scheme.

A modularized approach with sub-steps in accreditation might be helpful to create AE-measures that focus on employability and avoid "over-education" or reluctance to commit oneself to long-term training.

The recognition of experiences and competences acquired in a more or less informal setting is necessary in order to strengthen self-esteem and to assure that AE will build up on this. It is important in the guidance process that only because there are no certificates that prove formal competence, people are pushed into certain "basic" courses.

Enterprises should be enabled to describe their work-needs outcome-oriented rather than formal qualification-oriented in order to make the system more permeable.

Transnational meeting in Slovakia

The two conference days were very well organized, the contents very interesting, the final results fruitful and the hospitality fantastic.

Things I learned and things I would like to do:

I found the way that local companies were integrated into one of our Slovakian partners very successful programmes very "ideenreich". By including companies in programmes from the very beginning (and depending on the targeted outcomes, eg raising the employment of women), needs of companies can be found out through eg, questionnaires from the beginning. This can be a means of creating targeted and sustainable income-generation.

The presentation of the courses for adults gave us many concrete ideas about how to design and carry out such courses (structure of the course, methods, close working with employers etc.)

We found brainstorming in groups with regards to cooperation with stakeholders (eg businesses and social partners etc) very fruitful and noticed that the problems and needs in different countries may vary but the methods are partially similar. And we can learn from each other.

To reach target groups in order to motivate them to e.g. participate in AE you need group internal "champions of change" who have benefitted from AE, belong to the target group and can through awareness-building contribute to convincing their peers to participate in AE courses.

We will explore the possibility of including mobility options in our programmes targeted at improving participation of target group into AE.

At the end of the workshops project partners selected a presented strategy for overcoming barriers to entry into AE according to their organisation's interest and potential in order to implement the idea in their organisational work. This will allow the partners to own their strategy and increases the sustainability of their work. We chose to follow the strategy of SME integration in our work in Adult Education and qualification processes.

Website: http://www.eu-adult-learning.net/