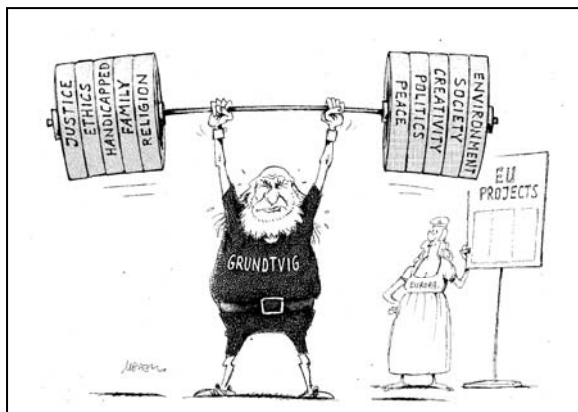


Focus: European Projects. Projects are a good opportunity to try new things, get to know new partners. They are innovative and often trigger new developments. On a European level, this relates primarily to the initiatives within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and "Grundtvig", is its sub-programme for adult education. This newsletter introduces several successful examples from various countries.



Cartoon: Mester

Grundtvig-Projects: Get to know Europe and gain expertise

Europe. Grundtvig is the baby of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Despite the quirks of bureaucracy, it is seeing positive results. This is principally due to the possibility for partners from different countries to get to know each other. The selected projects for 2008 will now be notified by mid June.

(Michael Sommer) Christmas in mid June: Some institutions in Europe received a long awaited letter from the EU in the post shortly before the summer holidays. It informs them that their Grundtvig application has been selected, and requests them to forward the remaining paperwork as stipulated in the application procedure within ten days. A joyful message, yet it also unleashes a whirlwind of hectic activity. The application had to be in Brussels by the end of February; now, three months later, the harassed coordinators are challenged to send the rest of the papers to Brussels in less than two weeks.

The Grundtvig Education Programme

The "Grundtvig" Education Programme, named after Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872), the founder of modern adult education, is the smallest programme within the family of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), and deals with adult education. A new, eight-member division of the European Commission is responsible for the distribution of 358 million Euros (4 percent of the total budget) until 2013. Approximately 50 to 80 multilateral projects and a small number of networks are assisted by the EU each year. In addition, there are Partnership Projects, looked after by national agencies (in 2006, there were 1,980 partners), the development of training courses and, most recently, improving the mobility of individual adult learners.

There will always be bureaucracy, as is only to be expected after the scandal surrounding former Commissioner Édith Cresson, who was European Commissioner for the fields of science, general

and professional education, youth and a great deal of misused resources. In 2006, the European Court finally ruled that Cresson had acted unlawfully. Now strict rules are in force in the finance department, lengthy applications must be submitted, and - when this is not done on a national level - the checking and development of the applications is undertaken by a central agency (the Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency). With the beginning of the new Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) in 2007, a certain degree of relaxation has been felt, particularly among the smaller projects.

Benefits and Problems

A helpful tool for finding your way as a project coordinator is the "Survival Kit for European Project Management", which Holger Bienzle from the Austrian training and consultancy institute "die Berater" produced as part of one project, and which is currently being updated. Decisive factors for a Grundtvig Project "are good planning and the coordinator's unceasing power of motivation", according to Bienzle vis-à-vis InfoNet. The greatest benefits are not particularly to be seen in the jointly-produced "products" such as training concepts, teaching materials, CDs etc. "To be honest, these seldom attain such true marketability as the showcase project the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence), which has made the leap from a pilot project to a certificate recognised Europe-wide." In most cases, the additional benefit lies in becoming acquainted with other ways of working and new experiences as well as increasing the professional and personal competence of the project stakeholders.



Holger Bienzle



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Learning in motion

2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation

Europe. Europe needs to boost its capacity for creativity and innovation for both social and economic reasons. That is why the Commission has today adopted a proposal to declare 2009 the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. The decision will be taken later this year by the Council and the European Parliament. ▶

Stakeholders discuss how to put the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) into practice

Europe. At the end of April 2008, the European Qualifications Framework was formally adopted as a recommendation by the European Parliament and the European Council. At the meeting of the European Education, Youth and Culture Council on 21–22 May 2008, various measures were adopted in the field of adult education, including some related to the validation of learning outcomes. ▶

Adult Learning has key role for employability, civic participation and individual development

Europe. The Council of the European Union adopted new conclusions on Adult Learning during the session in May 22 in Strasbourg. ▶

Learning outside school is becoming an accepted route to qualifications

Europe. Learning acquired outside schools - whether at the workplace, at leisure or even at home - is increasingly becoming an accepted route toward acquiring formal qualifications. The expansion of systems validating such learning is partly due to the rapid development of National Qualifications Frameworks across Europe. This is the main conclusion of the report published by Cedefop. ▶

Sweden. *Outdoor education has commonly been used as a teaching method in Swedish community adult education for many years. Nature is used as a teaching environment, a social meeting place and a forum for ideas. Between 2004 and 2007 Sweden was the coordinator for the Grundtvig "Learning in motion" project, a network for exchanging knowledge about the considerable potential of outdoor education for people with intellectual disabilities.*

(Hetty Rooth) Holding a sun-warmed stone in your hand. Moving your fingertips over its round shape. Feeling its weight and warmth in the palm of your hand. Carefully stepping over roots and branches without stumbling on a winding woodland path. The path goes over a little bridge by a waterfall. Setting yourself a challenge.

These are the sort of things that can happen when living space is expanded for people with intellectual impairments on a residential study centre outside Uppsala. Here, it's the journey, rather than the goal, that really counts.

This particular residential study centre is run by the FUB (The Swedish National Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities), one of seven organisations which took part in the Grundtvig Learning in motion project (LIM) between 2003 and 2007.

The project was made up of organisations from Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Germany and Greece, which work with people with intellectual impairments on various levels. By bringing together adult education organisations, interest groups for people with intellectual impairments and research institutions, the project achieved a robust combination of practical work, theory and appraisal. The successful project has now been converted into a live network for exchange of knowledge about the methods used in outdoor education. Around 20 countries are linked to the network.

Systematic and methodical record

"The aim of "Learning in motion" was to create a systematic and methodical record of all that is good about outdoor education. We wanted to find out the value and effects of the methods for users in the various countries", says Ia Eriksson-Dobrovich, of the Study Promotion Association in Uppsala, the Coordinator of the project.

"Continuity was also an important concept. The knowledge obtained should live on within the context of the special requirements of each country and organisation."

"And so everything was carefully recorded as the work progressed. A comprehensive handbook is now available in several languages".

Teaching outdoors

"Our Swedish experience, with our long tradition of teaching in a natural environment, is that outdoor education strengthens cognitive skills. We believe that outdoor education can speed up the learning process, but it also makes it much more fun. So that the knowledge sticks," says Ia Eriksson-Dobrovich.s

But outdoor education is not just a matter of nature as a means to learning, it's also about step-

ping out from a closed world into the community. It helps participants to feel included and visible in society. A feeling of belonging and taking part boosts their self esteem.

"The Greek organisation involved in the project, for example, worked on the socio-therapeutic rehabilitation of people with mental illnesses. For them the concept of outdoor education was closely associated with social training. If you make a bus journey or a restaurant visit an outside learning opportunity, the learning itself becomes a link with society. The step is taken via the activity". "In Sweden we organised town walks for the mentally ill, in which the participants documented their town environment. The present environment, the one that has disappeared, and the one yet to come. They felt that for once they could make a contribution with their own knowledge.

Assessment

"It's difficult to draw general conclusions from the effects of outdoor education on people with disabilities", says Ia Eriksson-Dobrovich, "Assessing this type of activity takes time. We have worked with so many different target groups, and many different degrees of disability. Some of the nature groups we have had in association with rehabilitation have had multiple disabilities, without the faculty of speech or movement."

"One of the clearest experiences, however, is that all groups that have worked outside on basic skills, such as reading and arithmetic, have worked extremely well. The leaders found that the participants learned more quickly and that it had been a positive experience for them".

"Using outside education is a way of opening the door to lifelong learning, which is everyone's right", says Ia Eriksson-Dobrovich.

Learning in motion (LIM), a European Grundtvig 1 project on outdoor education for people with intellectual disabilities, 2004-2007. Sweden: Stockholm Institute of Education, FUB - Swedish National Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, the Study Promotion Association in Uppsala. Finland: Association for the care of persons with intellectual disability. Germany: Hamburger Volkshochschule. Latvia: Livani Foundation Balta Maja. Greece: University Mental Health Research Institute in Greece. ... ▶

Getting Connected: Grundtvig 2 Partnership engages Older Learners

Ireland. (Berni Brady) European Digital Older Learners (EDOL) is a Grundtvig 2 Learning Partnership involving eight countries. It was designed to engage older people in using Information Technology to enable them to explore their own histories and localities and to share this rich experience with European partners while acquiring ITC skills (www.edolproject.com). In November 2003, a single page correspondence crossed the desk of Mary Mc Geehan, Training Office with Inishowen Development Partnership in County Donegal which is a large rural county in the North West of Ireland. ... ▶

Healing Yarns of Music Notes

Lithuania. *The project "Healing Yarns of Music Notes" (HYMN), implemented under the EU Socrates programme Grundtvig 2 during the period of 2005-2007 developed the new methods of teaching children with disabilities by means of music therapy in Lithuania, Turkey and Italy.*

(Ricardas Totoraitis) Europe prides itself on a diversity of inexhaustible treasures of ethnic cultures, which, however, are only scantily known to the representatives of neighbouring cultures. The increasing mobility of people in the contemporary world opens up wider opportunities to explore different cultures, to gain the most valuable and extraordinary experiences, especially those that encourage and enhance man's spiritual growth. The healing power of music has been recognized since ancient times and has been successfully applied in different countries.

This project, whose aim was to uncover and tap the healing power of music, drew upon the synthesis of diverse cultural traditions and practices.

Oriental music therapy

In Islamic countries traditional Oriental music therapy is a system whose history spans over one thousand years and whose therapeutic, prophylactic and rehabilitative relevance remains to this day. In a way, Islamic culture is 'a culture of listening'. It is with genuine enthusiasm and appreciation that Muslims respond to the melodious sound of the divine word.

In Lithuania music therapy was introduced as late as the 20th century and it was mainly used for relaxation. Although lately both scientists and practitioners have shown an increased interest in the field, Lithuanian experts still rely on the methodology which has been developed abroad. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to search for the most adequate and effective ways of adapting foreign experience and practice in music therapy to the Lithuanian socio-cultural environment.

The project "Healing Yarns of Music Notes" (HYMN), implemented under the EU Socrates programme Grundtvig 2 during the period of 2005-2007, set and pursued similar objectives. The project was carried out by Alytus School of Music in cooperation with the partners from countries with deep-rooted traditions in music therapy: the European Third Age University of Potenza in Southern Italy and the Evening Art School of Kütahya in Turkey.

The project established links between families, people with different abilities, health conditions and interests, and also united different cultures and religions. It provided an opportunity for people of different social strata – teachers, performers, researchers, masters of traditional crafts, elderly people, children, the disabled and their families – to bring out their humanity, tolerance and spirituality.

The HYMN project reflected the attitude of people of different cultures towards their relations in the family, as well as offered opportunities for creating closer family ties by artistic means and opened up possibilities for achieving psychological safety in the family. The aim of the project was to consolidate the family with the help of music. The target

group of the project – families bringing up children who have disabilities and who have suffered psychological stress due to the experience of divorce, loss of family members, etc. – were extremely positive about the results of the project and noted a wider range of opportunities to strengthen their self-esteem and to feel less excluded from the life of their community.

New applications for music

The HYMN project drew upon the experiences of all partner countries, therefore, the participants were able not only to get to know different cultures and explore teaching methods based on music therapy, but also to conduct research into specific experiences of each participating region, which helped to find newer and more numerous applications of music therapy in every country.

The project partners concluded that the best way of strengthening ties within the family was to engage in the activities typical of a particular cultural environment. The most positive effect appeared to have been achieved when grandparents, parents and children joined in performing the music which was closest to their national tradition. For example, in a deeply religious country, such as Italy, singing during Mass helped churchgoing families relax and strengthen their family ties, whereas the Turkish experience of working with mentally or physically impaired people and their family members revealed that the healing powers of music became most intense, when music therapy was used in combination either with drawing classes (drawing has retained its popularity in Turkey since ancient times) or water therapy. Lithuania tried yet another way of socializing families through arts education: children with health or behaviour disorders attended music schools with their parents or other family members, together learning to play music and thus engaging themselves in newer forms of communication and joint activity.

Despite cultural differences, all participants from Turkey, Italy and Lithuania observed the same problem that families in all the three countries encountered: parents and other senior members of the family were so busy and preoccupied with numerous issues that they often lacked time for joint artistic activity, whose obviously positive socio-cultural and psychotherapeutic effects may be instrumental in dealing with psychological problems in the family.

Project diary

The new methods of teaching children with disabilities by means of music therapy, as developed during the project, may contribute to the understanding and application of music therapy in different countries and may be appreciated internationally. These methods have been described and documented in the study and the project diary *Healing Yarns of Music Notes*, edited by A.Vilkelienė, Vilnius: VPU, 2006, and the study book *Selected Aspects of Intercultural Approach Towards Music Therapy* (guidance material to new approaches), edited by project managers G.Tucek and A.Vilkelienė, Alytus: Albagrafija, 2007.

Homogenisation of investment in Continuous Professional Development

Europe. Access to Continuous Professional Development in Europe varies from one group of countries to another and according to the size of the companies concerned. However, a recent study, "Ongoing Continuous Professional Development in European companies, first step towards homogenisation" reveals that there is a growing tendency towards homogenisation. ▶

Further news:

Brussels Debate on Inter-Religious Dialogue ▶

Study on „Adult Education Trends and Issues in Europe“ now in Lithuanian language ▶

Commission encourages applications for new Expert Group on Financial Education ▶

New website on the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training ▶

Projects

Innovation award for a project for the commemorative years 1918, 1938, 1968 and 2008 in Austria. ▶

Finland: Self-empowerment for asylum seekers ▶

Easy: Youths put the life story of seniors on the stage in the Netherland. ▶

AlphaBeta: Learning through the mobile ▶

By using pictograms, images and icons, access to information is simplified and processes are speeded up. ▶

Informal computer-supported learning for hospital patients ▶

Recognition of Quality in Lifelong Learning (RECALL) ▶

... ▶

Malta-EU Adult Education related projects ▶

International Adult Learners Week in Europe – Network of Learning Festivals ▶

European training course on acting in educational networks ▶

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1000 active citizens more?

Lithuania. One of the most important means of promoting active citizenship in the country is developing non-formal adult education services. ▶

“Bless My Baby” campaign

Turkey. In Turkey, where on average 367 women die in childbirth every year and the neonatal mortality rate is 17 deaths per 1000 births, a campaign was organised with the aim of preventing maternal and neonatal deaths. ▶

Austria. Adult education news channel opened ▶

Lithuania: System of Adult Education in Lithuania ▶

Sweden. Reduction in local authority support for adult education ▶

France. new reforms of vocational training for adults ▶

UK: Staff to be given training rights ▶

Serbia. CONFINTEA preparatory process of the national reports on adult learning and education in the countries of South-east Europe ▶

Germany. “Culture in Germany” – on the Study Commission’s concluding report. ▶

Germany. “Multi-generational centres” – the perfect answer to improve the situation for families in Germany ▶

A Theatre ticket - the best way to vote

France. *What sort of impact can a cultural education have on the behaviour of members of the public? Taking this question as a basis, a Grundtvig partnership has been established between the French, the Turks and the Poles. The purpose: to exchange their cultural practices - in particular their theatrical ones - that are performed within the social and civic sector. They all learnt a great deal from one another.*

(Renée David Aeschlimann) Since 2002, the leaders of the socio-cultural centres of the Bas-Rhin have been organising communal training activities and are working on cultural projects together in underprivileged population areas. In 2006, on the strength of this experience, six centres joined forces for a Grundtvig European project entitled “The development of cultural and artistic activities in the service of the active members of the community”. They then developed a European partnership with two associations: the Creative Drama Association of Istanbul, in Turkey, and the Association for Creative Initiatives in Legnica, in Poland.

In the course of meetings between the European partners involved in this programme, their thoughts were mainly focussed on the relationship that developed between the people (the public with problems in France and women’s groups in Poland and in Turkey), the artistic contributor (musician, visual artist, actor) and the organiser (social or charity worker). The Polish association has set up a number of networks of social and cultural structures and has organised discussion groups for women who have difficulty in integrating into society. In Turkey, the project’s enormous impact has resulted in a number of unexpected meetings. An alternative theatre and a group of amateurs thus got together and combined to offer artistic expression workshops to a predominantly female public. Much more easily touched by poverty as a consequence of being less well qualified and being alone with their children, women constitute an ideal public target for this type of activity which calls for expressiveness and communication.

Four subjects

In France, participants from five different socio-cultural centres joined the History of Reflections project, which is based on four subjects: theatre and image, public space, photography, home theatre and circus arts, to form a collective cultural structure. The website provided by the Turkish partners offers to exchange tools, projects, lexicons, and schedules bringing together examples of good European cultural practices.

The meeting in Istanbul between the associations involved in the programme, has made it possible to deepen the relationship between cultural practices and members of the public. “A person who is on stage learns how to speak in public, how to defend an idea, how to gain confidence in himself/herself. In short, it makes that person more capable of being a good member of the public. An underprivileged woman, who is on stage with us ended up by coming to work in our Association’s

offices and from there she joined an amateur troupe which performed in social centres. A great result for a person who had been, until then, socially marginalised,” declares Anne Gonce proudly, co-head of the project at the Bich’Art social and family Theatre Production Centre in Bischwiller.

Extremely integrated artistic and social practices in Turkey

“For the majority of those who came to learn from the three countries, it was a case of having their first experience of an intercultural meeting and exchange. All of them felt the richness and major contribution, at a personal level, provided by the French professional organisers and the Turkish and Polish voluntary workers”, states the Grundtvig report on the programme, prepared by Patricia Brenner, head of the project at the Federation of Social and Socio-cultural Centres in the Bas-Rhin. Many of the organisers, however, regretted the “lack of time given for theoretical reflection on cultural practices, social integration and the potential to transfer them”. Nevertheless, everyone appreciated having access to new methods of socio-cultural production aimed at social integration. “The Turks contributed much and gave us a great deal, with their extremely integrated artistic and social practices”, notes Anne Gonce. Even if it means continuing the theoretical discussion and summarising the main points on the Internet... In this way a website serves as a database (tools, projects, lexicons) and as a forum for exchanges between European artistic actors. The Poles have created their own site, both at a local and national level. Today, these associations are partners in other European programmes, such as “Jeunesse” (Youth) or Leonardo da Vinci. This is how one can get a taste for it in Europe....

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*Centre d’animation social et familial Bisch’Art in Bischwiller : Anne Gonce - casf@wanadoo.fr, tel. 00 33 3 88 63 5 ... ▶

EU will support adult education in Serbia

Serbia. (Katarina Popovic) The Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) financial aid program for Serbia started in early 2007. The negotiation process is still going on, since Serbia, as a potential membership candidate, could receive around 190 million € overall assistance from EU, for some 5 years. This process depends very much on the results of political negotiations in Serbia, where a democratic and pro-European government seems to be expected, but this is still uncertain. The Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and Serbia was initiated in November 2007, signed in April 2008, but its implementation is still blocked and will depend on the measures of the new government. ... ▶