

**Job relevant basic skills concepts and tools
for groups facing particular challenges at the labour market**

BAGru-Manual Volume 1

**Adult Literacy in the Context
of Labour and Community**

Editors

**Rosemarie Klein
Helmut Kronika
Dieter Zisenis**



Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of innovation – DE/09/LLP-LdV/TOI/147253

BAGru – Job relevant basic skills concepts and tools for groups facing particular challenges at the labour market. This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of innovation

DE/09/LLP-LdV/TOI/147253

BAGru – Job relevant basic skills concepts and tools for groups facing particular challenges at the labour market

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Imprint

Editors:

bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung, R.Klein & Partner GbR, Dortmund, Germany

BEST Institute of Continuous Vocational Qualification Training and Personnel Training Ltd., Vienna, Austria

Rosemarie Klein / Helmut Kronika / Dieter Zisenis

Cooperation: Kerstin Wolff

Cover design: Peter Bölingen, PIXELFRE! Medien-DSG-NER, Dortmund, Deutschland

Printend in Austria – Printing: Plankopie Eder, Wien

September 2011



Contents	Page
Introduction	
Dieter Zisenis What is BAGru? General overview: outlines, aims, intentions, procedures	4
Rosemarie Klein Work-related basic education – contemporary	8
Helmut Kronika Special benefit of a European Leonardo transfer of innovation project	14
Experiences and Findings	
Tord Hansson The Swedish experience of responding to the needs of the unemployed	18
Špela Reš Adult Literacy in the Context of Labour and Community in Slovenia	24
Denis Rouquié Adult Literacy in the Context of Labour and Community in France	31
Insights in the BAGru project	
Ralf St. Clair Evaluation in transfer projects: Towards a responsive approach	38
Marcin Gońda, Szymon Świerczewski Quality management in the BAGru project	45
Annexe	
BAGru – brief description	57
BAGru – consortium	58
Authors	59

Introduction

Dieter Zisenis

What is BAGru? – An overview of the project's goals, intentions and processes

The LEONARDO DA VINCI – Innovation of transfer project BAGru stands for 'job relevant basic skills concepts and tools for groups facing particular challenges at the labour market'. The basis for this project has been the employment situation of unskilled, low skilled and formally low qualified people on the labour market. Based on the aims of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy, the particular challenges of people with low qualifications are pointed out in many European discussions and processes, like e.g.:

- Copenhagen – Process, which aims to improve the quality of vocational training and to encourage people to take part in both vocational training and further education programs
- 'Action plan Adult Education' of the EU-Commission aiming at improving the opportunities for adults to step up their level of qualification and reaching the next level
- Initiative of the EU-Commission 'New skills for new jobs' aiming at anticipating the needs of competences and ensuring the competences are relevant for the needs of the labour market.

Discourses and studies make aware that the employment opportunities of formally low qualified people decrease further, that within Europe their unemployment rates are rather high and that their chances of being re-integrated in the labour market are particularly low. At the same time, the demand of skilled people does increase, as do the needs of competences, especially for relevant basic skills in relation to rather simple tasks. There is the need to develop within businesses settings where people – in particular socially deprived people, young adults with learning disabilities, but also unskilled or low skilled people having not graduated – are able to gain basic skills, which pay attention to their very situation and needs.

The core question was which competences adults needed for participation in economical and social life. Due to the discussions and activities within the BAGru project an extended understanding of literacy and basic skills was developed. The understanding was not based on deficits whether or not people were able to follow the rules of literary language and had sufficient numerical skills and skills related to information technology. The ability to apply language and communication skills in the very living or working context is crucial.

Job relevant basic skill development supports formally low qualified employees and unemployed people to be socially included, to feel responsible and to realise self-defined aims and strategies.

Based on this background, new settings of learning as well as appropriate learning situations needed to be created. Adult learners with formally low qualifications and particular challenges on the labour market can be motivated, if their living and working condi-



tions form the basis of their learning. Job relevant learning and learning in situations of daily life is the key to basic skills development. Therefore all stakeholders need to be convinced and supported. This applies to HR personnel in businesses, staff in employment agencies as well as to trainers and advisors in training institutions – and of course also to the learners themselves. Job relevant skills development requires the trust of all people involved. At the same time it means, that everybody benefits from it: the businesses which feel responsible for the development of basic skills as part of the human resource development and for the individual learner who wants to experience that their chances on the labour market improve and new perspectives might develop. Successful job relevant skills development means to pay attention to the competition and the requirements of the businesses whilst following a consequent learning perspective. In that way successful learning situations are being created – in particular for those groups with rather limited potential to learn and achieve. The self-esteem necessary for learning is based on the trust managers in businesses and advisors in employment agencies have got in the ability of those, looking for and requiring new perspectives.

The consortium consists of partners from Germany, France, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden, which worked on specific project tasks:

- bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung, Dortmund (DE): Project-coordination
- IRFA Sud Formation professionnelle en Languedoc Roussillon et Midi Pyrénées, Montpellier (FR): Transfer activities
- BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH, Wien (AT): Dissemination and project management support
- Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna w / Lodzi, Lodz (PL): Qualitymanagement
- Papilot Zavod za vzpodbujanje in razvijanje kvalitete življenja, Ljubljana (SI): Transfer – activities
- University of Glasgow, College of Social Sciences, Glasgow, Scotland (UK): Evaluation
- Folkuniversitetet Kristianstad (SE): Transfer activities

The basis of BAGru were the outcomes and models of good practice from the German project GiWA – ‚Basic skills development in economy and employment‘, which was realised within the focal point of support of the BMBF ‚Research and development for alphabetisation and basic skills development amongst adults‘ from 2007 to 2010. (www.giwa-grundbildung.de)

Transfer of innovation is a process of giving and taking. The task was not the translation of the products from the existing national project, but to develop a common understanding of basic education and changing requirements at the labour market. Finally, the French, Slovenian and Swedish project partners did transfer their experiences and materials from GiWA into their national context and specific educational systems and institutions.

The Slovenian project partner Papilot developed methods of needs analysis for further education within the company, targeting low qualified employees. The ongoing cooperation with executive managers of businesses was a huge success factor: The businesses recognised and realised their responsibility for job relevant basic education. The



Swedish project partner Folkuniversitetet worked as part of BAGru on transferring biographic learn methods and diverse instruments of advice into programs for the long-term unemployed. In this way the participants are seen as experts of their own lives and their individual lifestyle and personal aims of the long-term unemployed are respected. The French project partner IRFA Sud focused on creating links with both employers and learners. IRFA Sud made use of already existing networks with stakeholders from the private and public sector. The approach based on partnership enabled IRFA Sud, to include basic education and key competences in formally accredited qualification programmes for the care of the elderly.

The chosen consortium partners have been working in different sectors and have got long lasting experiences with educational programs for the specific target group, which facilitate access to people and businesses. The very national as well as the diverse sectorial contexts were used for experimenting and further development.

BAGru commenced with a “Kick-off-Workshop“ in December 2009, which involved not only the project partners but also German strategic partners as multipliers for diverse areas of vocational training and representatives of the GiWA project. The working process was shaped extensively through four further meetings with all partners. The first phase of preparing the innovation transfer was followed by a second one looking at implementing the transfer activities with partners in France, Slovenia and Sweden. In these three countries these activities were realised through bilateral meetings of the project coordinators with the Scottish partner responsible for evaluation. The last phase was dedicated to the documentation of the experiences and outcomes gathered in the project manuals. Representatives from employment agencies, businesses and educational institutions from all partner countries presented the most important outcomes at a dissemination conference in Vienna in June 2011.

In the context of communication, related to the concepts and materials of job related basic skills concepts as well as with generating transfer activities with the three transfer partners it has been necessary straight from the beginning to agree on the terms used. It became obvious that the themes ‚basic education‘ and ‚alphabetisation‘ were defined and treated differently in the very national contexts and discourses. An example of this is the terms ‘competences’ and ‘skills’ (basic- / key- / soft- / transversal- etc.). The project consortium, on the one hand, had to discuss the developed and presented concepts and transfer projects over and over again, whilst on the other hand they could develop a common understanding of ‘contextualised basic education’.

Furthermore, intensive discussions were needed in order to develop a common understanding of innovation transfer. Within the phase ‚transfer‘ it became obvious that products offered for the transfer of innovation (which evolved from the GiWA project) are not related entirely to concrete training instruments and methods, but equally to basic concepts and access paths to the relevant players (target groups facing particular challenges at the labour market as well as businesses and other groups working in the field). The particular characteristic of the GiWA project outcomes’ ‘multiperspectiveness’ became apparent whilst working on the project together. A reader published in 2010,

which focused on selected GiWA concepts, materials and instruments and also the bilateral talks between transfer partners facilitated the process.

The feedback from the two project partners responsible for the evaluation and the quality management within the transfer of innovation process identified the challenges, which needed to be dealt with. The process- and dialog orientated project design should enable transfer and back-transfer as well as discussion and development between partners, which pays attention to the very national context, competences and expertise. As part of this development there were some project phases based on uncertainty, in which a necessary agreement had to be negotiated, decisions taken and tasks agreed on. Nevertheless, within the project common concepts of job relevant basic education could be developed and successfully implemented.

In light of the demographic development in future businesses are going to consider the potential of low qualified employees and will recognise the importance of their qualification in respect of the business' future. The BAGru outcomes will influence initiatives for increasing the take up of further education from low and unskilled people, for the acceptance of informally acquired competences, for ensuring sufficient supply of skilled workers and for further development of job relevant basic skills within learn – settings at the workplace.

The following contributions allow a lively insight in the project itself. Rosemarie Klein describes the multiple accesses to the current understanding of job relevant basic skills and points out the main characteristics of the BAGru concept. Helmut Kronika illustrates the benefit of a transnational European transfer of innovation project. The three transfer partners describe their national context and the institutional background for the development of 'adult literacy' – programs in relation to employment and society, providing an insight in their projects. Tord Hansson from the Folkuniversitetet discusses the aspect of training with the unemployed and the realisation of a subject-orientated approach within basic education. Špela Reš from Papilot advises on the successful strategies for gaining the interest of businesses in respect to job relevant basic education, which were developed by Papilot. Denis Rouquié discusses how the French partner IRFA Sud successfully implemented methods and instruments from the transfer project into a number of vocational trainings regarding the care of the elderly. Ralf St. Clair from the College of Social Sciences at the University of Glasgow explains the concept of evaluation, responding to the characteristics of a transfer of innovation project. Marcin Gońda, Szymon Świerczewski from AHE in Poland work on the documentation of a quality management system and its requirements in the context of an innovation transfer. They highlight some results for BAGru.

Work-related basic education – contemporary

Rosemarie Klein

1. Country-specific comprehension of basic education

Even if developments like the implementation of the European Qualification Framework into national qualification frameworks are suggestive of a European consensus on central concepts within the areas of education and further training – reality is different. This becomes clear when looking at the country-specific definitions of basic education formulated by the partners of BAGru. It appears that nationally grown cultures and education politics show higher shaping power and are more sustainable than the relatively young attempt to develop common conceptualisations within Europe. The concept of “Bildung” in Germany or Austria, for example, is hardly applicable or adaptable to the European context since its conceptual history is not compatible with the history of terms like “education”, “educazione” or “vocational training”.

But there is a variety of concepts even within the German language area. While the term in Germany is “Grundbildung”, the term “Basisbildung” is used in Austria.

Within the BAGru project it was important to compare notes about the national options of gaining basic education, the conditions for subsequent basic education and work-related basic education for adults. The comparison was necessary in order to be able to understand the specific ways of innovation transfer and to even work on the cornerstones of a mutual comprehension of work-related basic education.

The specific circumstances of the BAGru project also have to be considered. It is one characteristic of the project that the overlap in time between the “transferring” cooperative project GiWA and the EU project BAGru which is “establishing transfer” allowed direct communication between the particular participants. This also helped to fill the philosophy of BAGru with life. This manifests that innovation transfer is a mutual exchange process and not just the simple transfer of concepts and materials into the specific national contexts. Within the three transfer sub-projects of BAGru, particular perspectives, experiences, findings and materials from GiWA are being adapted into the several national contexts and therefore also into systemic and institutional frameworks. The Slovenian partner PAPILOT focuses on the role of enterprises and their management level and develops special methods of needs assessment for internal training programmes, especially for the so-called low-qualified employees. The Swedish project partner Folkuniversitetet has a long tradition of projects targeting long-term unemployed people, migrants, unemployed older people, socially disadvantaged groups and rehabilitees. These projects are carried out in cooperation with labour administration, social administration, health insurances and private employers. Folkuniversitetet uses the results of the the the innovation delivering project for the development of a certain approach of “trust”, which acknowledges and values the individual lifestyles of long-term unemployed people. It comprehends the participants as the real “experts” of their own lives respectively it wants to lead them to such a perception of themselves. The French project partner IRFA Sud follows the approach of developing paths and connections to enterprises, other organisations and learners through partnerships with social

services and stakeholders from other fields of work. The transfer of IRFA Sud aims at employees in the field of elderly care in the region of Perpignan. The background of these specific contents is the partners' perception of development demands and chances for their hitherto existing work with basic education. This approach was not without consequences for the perception of contemporary work-related basic education – which will be discussed further in this document.

2. The national research project of innovation GiWA

The project consortium GiWA ‚Grundbildung in Wirtschaft und Arbeit – mehrperspektivisch‘ (basic education in the economy and work-multiple perspectives) aimed to develop concepts for a vocational basic education, to test these concepts and to follow up on the impact of such concepts on an individual and organisational level. GiWA was funded through the BMBF from 2007 to 2010 in relation to the funding programme ‚Forschung und Entwicklung zur Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener‘ (research and development for literacy and basic education of adults) as a research and development initiative. The sub projects of the GiWA consortium dealt with people who were partly in paid employment or alternatively partly participated in measures for vocational (re) integration:

The subproject ‚Neue Beschäftigungsperspektiven für Geringqualifizierte in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen durch Grundbildung und Alphabetisierung‘ (new employment opportunities for low skilled workers in small and medium sized organisations through basic education and literacy) focused on three specific operating contexts of vocational basic education: Transfer associations (SBIII), work opportunities with compensation for additional costs / AGH-MAE-measures (SGBII) and a medium sized organisation operating in the car supply industry. This subproject dealt with the creation of educational services and structures, subject orientated and tailored to each framework condition, in order to gain work- and vocational basic skills within these specific operating contexts.

- The subproject ‚Förderung arbeitsplatzbezogener kommunikativer Kompetenzen bei MigrantInnen in der Altenpflege‘ (funding for job specific communication skills for migrants working with the elderly) focused on the development and trial of a transferable concept of communication based basic education for employees working with elderly people with so called low level skills and a migration background.
- The subproject ‚Kompetenzbündelung aller an der Grundbildung Beteiligten der Gesundheitswirtschaft‘ (concentration of skills for all participants of basic education in the health industry) was connected with the care of the elderly. Here, the central focus of the project was on the development, trial and implementation of cross linked basic educational concepts for employees (mother language German) on so called basic working places.
- The subproject ‚Zweisprachigkeit als Chance – kompetenzbasierte Grundbildung für MigrantInnen‘ (bilingualism as a chance – skills based basic education for migrants) had another additional specific feature. This project dealt with the development of a concept for basic education, which builds on the specific (transfer) skills of migrants in order to combine these with vocational aspects.
 - Finally, the subproject ‚Kommunikation. Bildung. Chancen‘. (Communication. Education. Chances) developed access paths relevant for the target group of people

with severe physical disabilities and communication impairments, in order to support people using communication aids through a vocational perspective on basic education with regard to opening doors to gainful employment and employability.

The project consortium was facilitated and scientifically guided by the bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung. The subproject ‘Wissenschaftliche Begleitung’ (scientific guidance) carried out an inventory in relation to modified demands on places of work. This project also undertook a formative evaluation of the subprojects processes as well as a subsequent evaluation on their impacts. (www.giwa-grundbildung.de)

3. Development of common transnational perceptions

The BAGru partners do agree on the target groups that are addressed by adult education and the corresponding activities. It is about people whose cognitive competences are – for different reasons – not advanced enough to permanently match the demands of employment. These people have to gain additional competences in order to ensure their employability and to avoid the risk of long-term exclusion. Two things become apparent. A definition of basic education cannot be static or claim long periods of validity in view of the dynamics of changes within contents and organisation of work. Secondly, basic education that corresponds to the demands of employment has to be shaped differently in different countries as the variety of economic structures in other European countries with their various key industries and key sectors shows. A country with a high rate of services targeting clients will have to define work-related basic education in a different way than a country with a high rate of industrial jobs.

The differing relations of people to the system of labour also influence their perception of basic education and the strategies of intervention, depending on whether they:

- 1 are strongly connected to the system of “Economy and Labour” – work-related learning on the job (i.e. HR development for formally low-qualified employees)
- 2 are seeking to get out of the system of “Economy and Labour” and back into the system – learning out of the job, into the job (i.e. transitional company)
- 3 are trying to find their way from being unemployed into the system of “Economy and Labour” – learning into the job (i.e. long-term unemployed / migrants without previous access to the system of employment)
- 4 are able to develop meaningful life perspectives beyond employment – without job in the regular but in public subsidised / intermediate labour market (social participation in the context of publicly funded second or third labour market)

Regardless of the particular relations there is the challenge to relate the individual pre-conditions (biographies, life situation, competences) to the changing social, labour market-related and job-specific requirements. Furthermore, it is important to choose the corresponding vocational and individual goals and interests in order to develop matching settings for the development of learning and competences. This is one of the very important innovation transfer results regarding to the philosophy of work related basic education. The result of the discourse about the pedagogic attitude of contemporary work-related basic education is also of special relevance. The usually dominating approach of pointing out deficits or the charitable approach was considered behind the times. So finding individual deficits and therefore assigning someone to highly sophisti-

cated and seemingly scientifically legitimate levels of literacy must not be the cause or precondition for work-related basic education. It is rather about making aware and capturing individual strengths and competences and developing them. Work-related basic education seen as reflexive and partly self-explorative provision of personal development applies – in different distinction – to all three BAGru transfer partners.

4. Basic education related to Economy and Labour is more than alphabetisation

It should be clear by now: innovation transfer within the BAGru project has turned out to be meaningful and useful for all partners despite or maybe even because of all the differences. On a basis of collective consideration it was managed to specify the concepts of basic education and identify similarities. The underlying question to work on was: Which specific competences do adults need in order to take part in economic and social life and minimise the risk of exclusion? The answers to this question led to what we here call a contemporarily extended concept of basic education.

The aspect of alphabetisation literacy respectively gains special relevance in the context of work-related basic education. Literacy is not to be understood to be the ability to read or write possessed or not possessed by an individual though, but it is meant to be the complex disposition to use printed and written information in order to take part in social life, reach one's own goals and to develop one's own knowledge and potential (cf Nottter a.o. 2006, 11). This disposition varies in different societal and social contexts. Literacy as a social practice refers to a plurality of literacy and this plurality's dominance, efficacy, meaning and use mainly depends on the particular social structures and contexts of action (cf Linde 2008). Therefore, an extended perception of literacy or illiteracy and basic education does not develop from the deficits in mastering the system of rules of literary language. It asks for the context of profit and use of language and communication, the connected options of participating in society and the particular individual strategies of life and survival.

Furthermore, the realisations and considerations of the French, Slovenian and Swedish transfer partners' projects show respectively prove the educational and emancipatory character of work-related basic education which asks for the conditions and possibilities of self-education and self-determination of the adult learner. This becomes very clear when using the example of the Swedish partner FOLK. FOLK's aim is to support learners in being experts and not victims of their lives. Accordingly, FOLK has developed and introduced appropriate reflexive and coaching-based methods and instruments. Thus, basic education cannot be prescribed, but it has to be seen as one's right. It has to bring advantages and added value and serve the improvement of the individual quality of life. If basic education is based on respect for the learner as an expert of his own personal business, it also applies that the right to basic education does not necessarily include the duty to take part in it.

There are two more aspects to the question of the educational attitude underlying basic education of adults: work-related basic education avoids stigmatisation and social imputation of self-inflicted discrimination. It uses appreciative, respectful and dialogue-oriented access paths, processes and methods. It does not follow a protective paradigm

of care for specially deprived people but is foremost education with and for adult learners. Plus: insufficient basic education also expresses the failure of education systems. Insufficient basic education cannot be reduced to individual responsibility and therefore individual failure but it also has to be understood from the perspective of social responsibility.

Under the angle of innovation transfer, the discourses in BAGru also confirmed that there is no such thing like the basic education: besides national specifics, basic education is also to be seen context-related, process-related and – as already pointed out – from an individual perspective. Therefore, it cannot be offered as a close curriculum but it has to be developed from the perspectives and needs of the individuals. Looking at it from a definitional point of view it makes sense to see basic education as both a “state” and as a “process”. “State” refers to being equipped as in “I can do this, I have this at my disposal and this is useful for...”, “process” rather refers to the target mark: “I am aiming at this, I am learning this, I am developing...”

5. What does work-related basic education contain?

The partners agreed on the fact that mastering basal cultural techniques like reading, writing and calculating are characteristics of a “basic-educated” individual and that the acquirement respectively, the chance for acquirement of these cultural techniques form a part of basic education. The requirements for basic education to employment have increased in all countries involved. The formerly predicted divergent development – that is increasing requirements in upper employment segments and stagnancy of requirements in so-called easy jobs – has not come true. Increasing automation, higher requirements to quality of work – secured by quality assurance systems – and enhanced documentation requirements do not only lead to higher demands for the so-called low-qualified – this is the perception of the Slovenian partner PAPILOT – they also lead to new demands for basic education for qualified jobs. Professional experience does not suffice if it is not connected to an acquirement of new competences. Looking at the aspect of generations, it appears that older people show a higher need for competences concerning computing and new media, which is a self-evident part of the competences of adolescents.

6. Employment-oriented basic education knows various clients

Concepts of basic education referring to employment develop in the context of settings, individual perspectives and aims and need presentable added values: “What is useful/important for the specific subject from his/her point of view?” Thus, the particular individual forms the central starting and reference point of all pedagogic efforts. The outcome of this is also the need for counselling as the additional approach to teaching. In practice, reflexive methods in settings of both individual and collective coaching and cooperative mentoring have proved themselves (cf the example of the French partners IRFA Sud). But even though the individual is thought to be the central client, basic education referring to employment also implies the perspectives and needs of the other clients: companies or labour administrations as organisations. The implementation of sustainable basic education opportunities into working contexts is only possible if subject-oriented HR development and organisational development as well as “learners” and “people in charge” are connected. Therefore, it is necessary to also present and prove

what companies gain if they take part in basic education. Within the project, potential analyses and demand analyses turned out to be the methods of choice and the “opener” for companies. The example of the Slovenian partner PAPILOT makes this obvious.

7. Risks and side-effects of employment-oriented basic education

Concepts of employment-oriented basic education abandon thinking and acting in familiar and apparently established categories of “target groups” and therefore also mean losing the security of knowing what is right and useful for the target group from a pedagogic point of view. The people working in education give the power of definition to the individuals. Reflexive methods call on the individual to think about its situation and its own patterns of explanation and interpretation and to become aware of them during counselling. This is the only way to create the conditions for a transformation of the defensive learner – who learns in order to avoid punishment – into an expansive learner. Only the expansive learner who experiences learning as personal gain will be able to meet the requirements of life-long learning and to ensure his employability. The same applies to the managerial section: the sustainability of enterprises depends on the potential of expansive learners within the company. This aggravates, the more forms of subject-oriented work (cf Voß 2011) are dominating.

References:

Linde, Andrea, 2008: Literalität und Lernen, Eine Studie über das Lesen- und Schreibenlernen im Erwachsenenalter, Münster

Potter, Philipp / Arnold, Claudia / Erlach, Emanuel von / Hertig, Philippe, 2006: Lesen und Rechnen im Alltag – Grundkompetenzen von Erwachsenen in der Schweiz – Nationaler Bericht zur Erhebung Adult Literacy & Lifeskills Survey, Neuchâtel

Voß, Günter G. 2011: Vor neuen Herausforderungen – Beratung im gesellschaftlichen Wandel. In: Bildungsberatung im Lebenslauf. Forum Erwachsenenbildung 1/11, S. 31-34

Special benefit of a European Leonardo transfer of innovation project

Helmut Kronika

Introduction

BAGru is a Leonardo da Vinci transfer project based on the outcomes of the project consortium 'GiWA – basic skills in labour and economy' of the research programme 'Research and Development for Alphabetization and Basic Education'. It is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, funded by the European Commission, in order to improve the employment opportunities for people facing particular challenges at the labour market.

(Klein, R; Zisenis, D.: GiWA. Basic Education in Economy and Work. Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of innovation BAGru. DE/09/LLP-LdV/TOI/147253)

Background of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme

Part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme, the Leonardo da Vinci Programme funds practical projects in the field of vocational education and training. These include initiatives enabling people to train in another country, co-operation projects to transfer or develop innovative practices, and networks focusing on topical themes in the sector.

Leonardo da Vinci enables organisations in the vocational education sector to work with partners from across Europe, exchange best practices, and increase their staff's expertise. It should make vocational education more attractive to young people and, by helping people to gain new skills, knowledge and qualifications, the programme also boosts the overall competitiveness of the European labour market.

The beneficiaries of the programme range from trainees in initial vocational training, to people who have already graduated, as well as Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals and anyone from organisations active in this field. Innovation projects are key to the programme. They aim to improve the quality of training systems by developing and transferring innovative policies, courses, teaching methods, materials and procedures.

Aim of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme

The aim of Leonardo da Vinci Multilateral Projects 'Transfer of Innovation' is to improve the quality and attractiveness of VET in the participating countries by transferring existing innovations to

- new legal
- systemic
- sectoral
- linguistic
- socio-cultural
- geographic

environments through working with transnational partners. Thus, innovation transfer projects avoid ‘re-inventing the wheel’ and, furthermore, generate synergies by exploiting existing VET innovations.

Benefits of a transfer project

Through a transfer project, either a product or an approach is converted and adopted to a new geographical area/country, and/or a different sector and/or a new target group. This process leads to innovation in a number of ways, such as:

- new VET courses
- tools
- materials
- methodologies
- occupational referentials or standards
- credit systems
- policy or legislative lessons.

However, there is much more to a transfer project than carrying over a new product or approach: It is rather a process of ‘giving and taking’. Ideally, a ‘Transfer of Innovation’ project not only combines innovations from several countries for the transfer to one or several other countries but also partners from those countries involved. Thus the project also becomes a learning experience for those partner VET stakeholders where the innovations come from.

(http://ec.europa.eu/education/leonardo-da-vinci/doc1035_en.htm)

How is the transfer being realised within the BAGru project?

The BAGru project is a collaboration of partners from Austria, France, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom, with the German partner as the project coordinator (see Figure 1). It works process-orientated and focuses on three transfer activities, being implemented in France, Slovenia and Sweden. These activities include:

- the potential end users (diverse groups with special difficulties in the labour market);
- the diverse contexts of education (vocation education, pre-vocational qualification measures, programs for disadvantaged groups, operational continuing education);
- instructors, teachers, trainers and advisors as multipliers.

The Slovenian project partner Papilot ensures the transfer of the product and further development of approaches by focusing on employers and enterprises, as well as developing needs analyses methods and soft skill programmes. Furthermore, emphasis will be given to basic skills, which are necessary in order to get and keep a job.

The Swedish project partner Folkuniversitetet transfers the project by establishing networks of employers, trade unions, employer organisations, the employment services and VET-providers at the labour market. The approach is based on trust, as many participants have had a bad experience in their former education of feeling dependent and inferior. Acknowledging and appreciating the individual’s lifestyles is key to improving motivation and self-esteem and to regarding participants as the experts of their lives.

The French project partner IRFA Sud focuses the transfers project on employees who care for the elderly in the Perpignan region as well as people with limited qualifications working in viniculture in the Carcassonne region. The project aims to incorporate basic education and transferable competences into formal accredited qualification programmes.

Furthermore, the learner’s individual interests are at the heart of the project. A link between the vocational training goals and their employment needs is established, alongside basic skills assessment and provision. The Austrian partner takes on the dissemination, whilst the Polish partner focuses on the quality management and the partner from the UK on the evaluation of the BAGru transfer project.

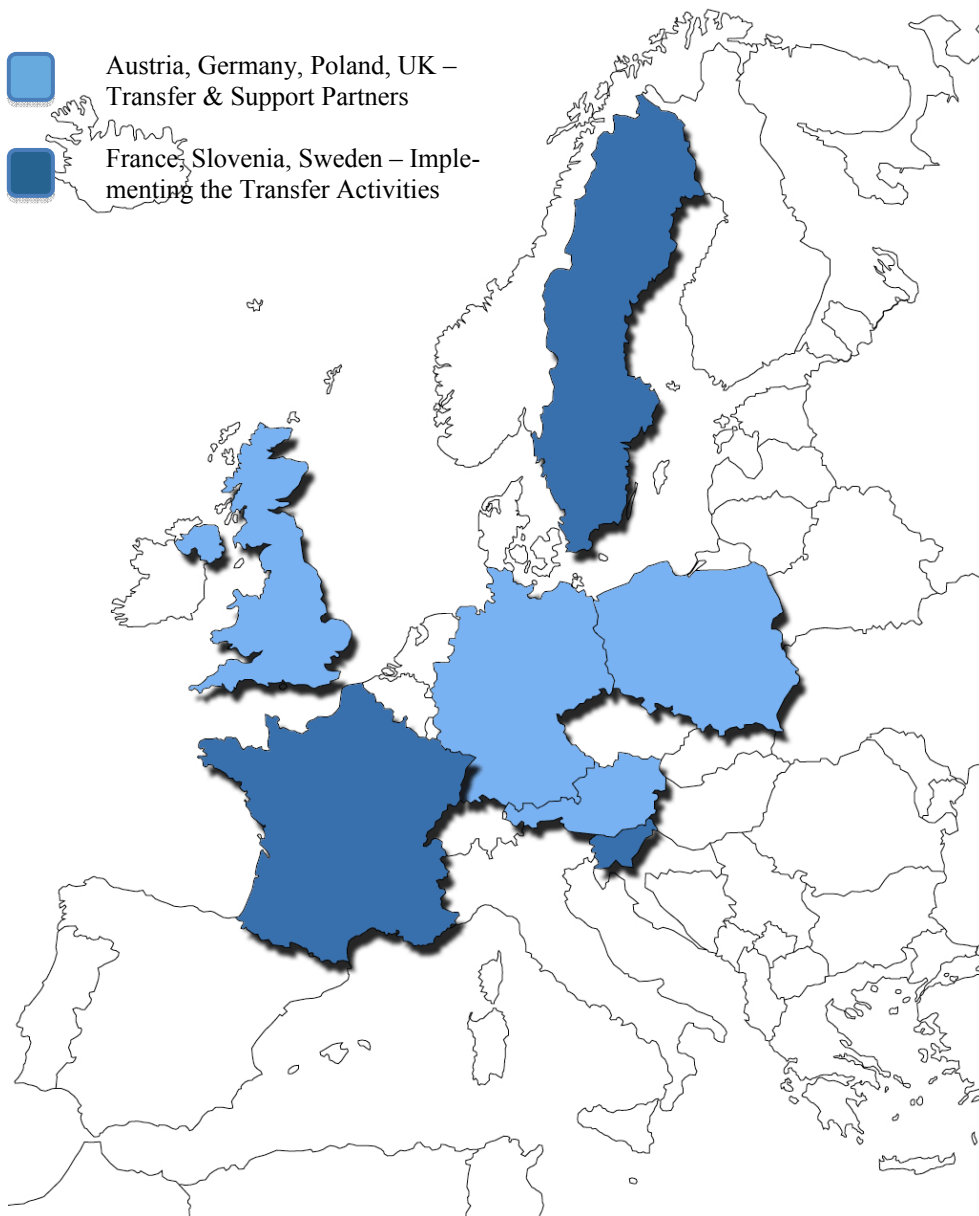


Figure 1: Participating countries / partners of the BAGru project

The benefits of the BAGru project

Whilst the main aim of the BAGru project is to improve the employment opportunities for groups facing particular challenges in the labour market by transferring the three activities described above to France, Slovenia and Sweden, the benefit of the project goes far beyond those three countries. The synergy resulting from the process is considered to be a major success of the project (see figure 2).

A key element of the project is the exchange between the participating countries. Inclusion of various stakeholders takes place on a regular basis, study visits are being organised as a way of learning from each other and regular meetings are being set up in order to keep each other informed about the ongoing process and progress made. They also provide an opportunity to discuss major steps and milestones.

During the project the participating countries have identified a number of best practice models. There is the opportunity to implement those in a new context – either a different country or region, or in a new sector or with a different target group. They can also be further developed in order to fit the needs of the beneficiaries.

As in any process where people work across different countries, it has proven to be of importance that a basis of mutual trust amongst the participants is being created. Also, cultural awareness and language skills have been enhanced. The atmosphere, which has been developed during the project, provides an excellent opportunity for future projects and cooperation between the participating countries and organisations.

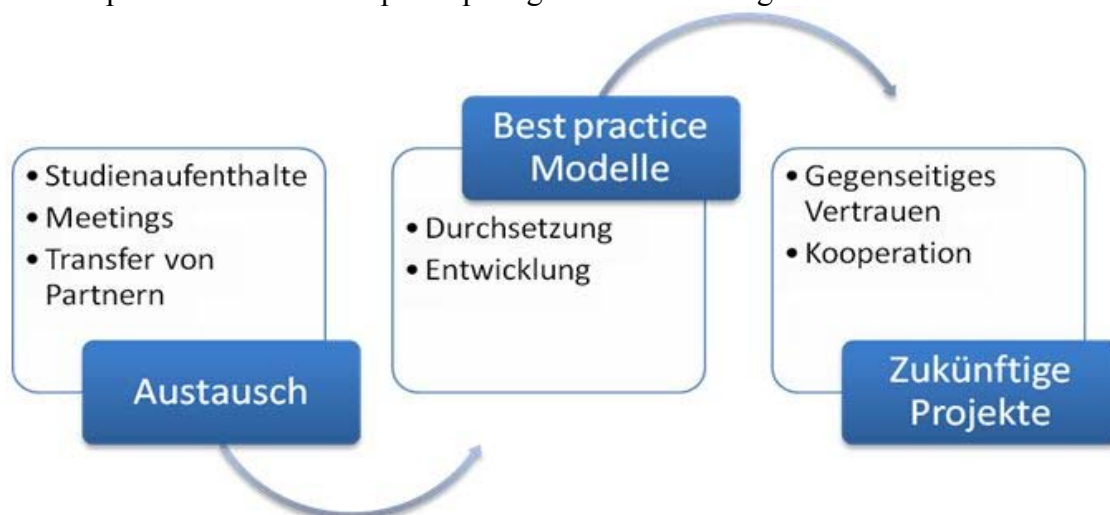


Figure 2: The synergy resulting from the process of implementing the BAGru project

References:

- http://ec.europa.eu/education/leonardo-da-vinci/doc1035_en.htm
- http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php
- http://www.na-bibb.de/innovationstransfer_225.html
- http://www.lebenslanges-lernen.at/home/nationalagentur_lebenslanges_lernen/leonardo_da_vinci_berufsbildung/innovationstransfer/

Experiences and Findings

The Swedish experience of responding to the needs of the unemployed

Tord Hansson

1. National context

Sweden has a long history of education and opportunities for lifelong learning. The social democratic tradition has supported the development of many formats that have gone on to influence worldwide developments, such as Folk High Schools and Study Circles (emerging from Swedish and Danish experience). In recent years, however, this tradition has not always been sustained. Even though Sweden still represents an example of a highly developed welfare state it has not escaped the changes in the conception of unemployment that has affected the entire Western World. This can be summarised as a move away from structural models of unemployment towards approaches that suggest the reasons for unemployment may be found within the individual.

One of the most common perspectives holds that a poor educational background is often one of the major reasons behind unemployment state in Sweden, and there is little doubt that there is a connection. According to a national statistics there are over 40,000 registered unemployed holding only a primary degree (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2010). The economic forecast for the coming years is not optimistic either, indicating a sharp increase in unemployment over the coming years, with the bulk of the job losses focused on less skilled workers (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2010). Unless people can obtain additional vocational qualifications or relevant work experience, chances of securing employment are not good. There is need for an educational response to the challenges facing unemployed and underemployed workers in Sweden.

Fortunately, the Swedish educational system is well known for its diversified teaching curriculum. Apart from mandatory nine years of attendance at primary level, which covers basic literacy, numeracy and social skills, it offers variety of vocational programs (also known as VET). These include various types of apprenticeships, vocational language training, business courses, motivational workshops and business etiquette. Such programmes are addressed to people wishing to improve or change their qualifications, as well as to short and long-term unemployed, since many working people wish to improve basic skills particularly in terms of generic abilities such as clear communication skills, taking the initiative, assuming responsibility, working in teams and decision making.

2. Organisation

Folkuniversitetet in Kristianstad serves is an educational institution that follows the Swedish tradition of serving marginalised people. Established in 1942, it has a long tradition of working with the Public Employment Services (PES) on developing and implementing regeneration programmes addressed to long-term unemployed, migrants, elderly unemployed, and other socially disadvantaged groups. It does so by delivering a variety of vocational lectures, training seminars, as well as through running diversified apprenticeship programs. Its network of cooperating partners includes a variety of pri-

vate and public organisations, including the Swedish Social Office and the Health Insurance Office. The ability to establish close collaborations (through the development of “access paths”) is a result of an “honest approach” bringing a clear, bilateral understanding between employers and jobseekers. This is especially true for the so-called “marketing phase,” when many of participants demonstrate skills and competences that do not fit well with the requirements of the contemporary labour market.

Folkuniversitetet is one of the pioneers in a novel approach to work with unemployed people that views participants as “experts” on their own work situation, needs and abilities. The method implies a shift away from a negative perception of the unemployment state that view it as a form of personal failure, towards a positive encounter with the participants being placed at the centre of training activities. It also modifies the role of a coach from an “expert” to “advisor”, helping to create a less hierarchical and more positive working climate. Nevertheless, it is not always as simple as it sounds to make this cultural shift. Participants sometimes displayed substantial difficulty in accepting their new roles, as their experiences were filled with countless examples of enforced solutions applied by various employment agencies and public service institutions.

In order to implement this alternative approach vocational training commences with a procedure of identifying the basic skills of jobseekers. This includes a process of “mapping” of formal and non-formal abilities by using various methods, such as: questionnaires, interviews, presentations, portfolios, observations, individual coaching, and a daily diary management.

Other tools, such as GROW¹, and the Case Method are also applied. The GROW-model is a type of a dialogue approach, where a coach adapts to a role of a participant in order to identify specific SMART (specific, measureable, adapted, relevant and time set) goals in finding the most suitable way to find employment. The main idea behind the process is to identify specific and individual ways leading to the goals’ achievement through a series of conversations.

Similarly, the Case Method, which is a learning approach, refers to participants’ working experiences by binding them into series of manageable approaches, action-plans and employment strategies. All the coaching sessions are combined with more traditional parts of training programs, such as how to apply for a job, where to look for the employment, or how to write a CV. These activities and their outcomes are reviewed in follow-up meetings spread over a six months period, to monitor participants’ progress and to keep them motivated. The main challenge of this stage is to open the participants to a possibility that the success is achievable and that they are able to find the way out of the long-term unemployment.

3. BAGru

In the fall of 2009 it was decided that the Folkuniversitetet will become one of the three European transfer partners in a knowledge transfer program called BAGru. The programme aimed at an international transfer of good practice and novel training methods

¹ „GROW is an acronym standing for Goal – Current Reality – Options – Will. The model is a simple yet powerful framework for structuring a coaching or mentoring session.” http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_89.htm

tested in Germany through the GiWA project. Folkuniversitetet had a history of successful involvement in European partnerships, and believed that much could be learned from participation in BAGru. The programmes involved in GiWA were similar enough to Folkuniversitetet, and working with a similar enough population, that the tools were likely to be highly relevant.

Inspired by the outcomes of GiWA's Alpha KU (Klein & Zisenis 2009), which was directed at insufficiently qualified persons who wanted to acquire essential basic competences – i.e. reading, writing and numeracy, as well as developing abilities in a range of communication and information strategies – Folkuniversitetet decided to adopt two methods from the program to enhance and improve training quality. These methods were the “talent marketing” and “my personal life curve”. The former was developed as a way to discover talents through a series of open-ended questions directed at uncovering participants' abilities. The latter aimed at highlighting important stages in one's working life, allowing them to reflect and draw conclusions on their current employment situation. It also allowed them to identify positive working experiences as well as to expose working potential and self-confidence.

Both methods proved useful in terms of bringing clarity to participants' working objectives and needs. The creation of a positive atmosphere allowed for a frank and open discussion about problems experienced and the ideas adopted to address these problems. As one participant noted, “I am unemployed, but I am not helpless.”

4. The case studies

The BAGru transfer project consisted of introducing the “personal life curve” and the “talent/self-marketing” methods. It commenced with a questionnaire on participants' interests, work situation, skills and abilities. As the answers from the questionnaires were brief and insufficient, the decision was made to replace them with in-depth interviews to obtain the desired data. During the pilot phase the in-depth interviews were spread over a period of 5 weeks to allow time for the participants' necessary reflection and to keep them motivated. All the participation at this stage was voluntary. The participants were divided into two groups, namely FAS 1, consisting of people unemployed for between 18 and 24 months; and FAS 3, made up of participants unemployed between 4 and 7 years (These definitions are based on Swedish welfare legislation). Each group included 7 to 8 individuals with equal representation of males and females. Participants were assured that the data obtained through the course of the process will stay confidential and will not be passed or shared with any outside public or private job agency.

The participants of the FAS 1 group were quite positive in their attitude and generally willing to discuss their life circumstances. Concerns over their economic situation were identified as the major factor, though the lack of employment income affected not only their material position, but also negatively influenced participants' social life. Additionally, many participants commented on a gradual decrease in their levels of self-esteem and personal confidence. Through the course of trainings and discussions it was agreed, however, that setting up a clear path to achieve employment goals helps to stay focused and motivated. Also, staying socially involved was identified as critical in surviving the unemployment stage.

This positive attitude was far more unusual found when interacting with participants of the FAS 3 group. Due to an extended period of unemployment they mostly withdrew from social activities, as they felt a degree of humiliation regarding their life circumstances. Consequently, their attitude was mostly negative—to the point that participants of FAS 1 group were afraid of being affected with the negative attitudes of FAS 3 participants. Furthermore, the FAS 3 unemployed felt “bossed about” by various employment agencies, as well as by politicians whose decisions tended to worsen their economical situation even further. Apart from low-self esteem, many experienced mental health problems such as depression. They related feeling worthless, angry, bitter, disappointed, helpless and anxious about the future. Many were ashamed and humiliated as felt they were being viewed as lazy, employment avoiding and benefit system abusers. Surprisingly, when considering strategies aimed at improving their situation they identified social networking and social involvement as the way to securing an employment.

The implementation of the BAGru transfer program identified series of gaps, especially in the area of the development and implementation of training programs aimed at the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged groups of Swedish society. It was observed that the individual, personalised approach of addressing needs of jobseekers from a multilateral perspective over an extended period of time brings satisfactory results. The key obstacles identified included a negative perception of the unemployment period and the unemployed as well as the perception of others that long term unemployment was being willingly and unquestionably accepted as a way of life.

Additionally, it was observed that a greater sensitivity and courtesy is required on a part of trainers, as many of participants, especially at the early stage of the training, are over-sensitive and over-reactive to a slightest form of criticism. Such a state of mind is a direct result of months of low-self esteem induced by a failure to secure any type of employment juxtaposed with inhumane treatment received from various job agencies.

Other issues raised include examples of a simple human impoliteness, as observed by one of the participants: “you just feel that they only want to get rid of you; that’s not how it should be. They do not care about finding out my background or conditions ... How is this process going to help me finding a job?” Therefore, it is necessary to make the participants feel wanted, needed and important, as this can support them to increase their motivation and develop a more positive approach. This is illustrated by yet another participant: “it would be so good to have well educated, understanding trainers... the positive energy one needs, as one is filled with such a bitterness and feels so low... you are unemployed after all ... I dream of working with people who would at least try to understand my situation, who could encourage me in the best possible way, instead of saying: no, I cannot do it for you, but – here are the applications”. Also, the time availability of trainers was raised as a concern, and it was suggested that there should be open hours for ad hoc consultations and advice. The language used during the training sessions was also identified as problematic, and therefore should be adjusted to participants’ specific levels of comprehension.

Furthermore, the need for diversified apprenticeships was also identified as a crucial factor in almost every interview conducted. Some participants described the experience

as a great way to practice their skills in a real-life working environment. Apprenticeships were also described as a great way to access the labour market, or at least, to obtain references and learn new technologies. One person noted that employers are also in favour of apprenticeship programs, as: “if I do not have any experience, then it is unlikely that they hire such a person like me”. Nevertheless, some were disappointed, and feel used, since the experience did not lead to any employment offer. “(Y)ou go and practice for months”, noticed one of the participants, “and then the employer takes on another person, then another, and so on. Thus, you work for free. Soon, you become unmotivated. You know it is only a month. One loses all enthusiasm to show off what one can do, as there is only a small chance of securing a job at the end of the process, anyway”. Others perceived the apprenticeships as “a punishment and abuse”, or participants being used as “free labour”. Therefore, it is important to cooperate with participants on their understanding of the training process. It would be useful for them to realise that not every apprenticeship experience leads to a permanent, full time job offer. This is a critical knowledge and should be well explained before participants are placed at private entities for their apprenticeships. Fair understanding of bilateral rules, expectation and demands is a key in creating a good working relation among all involved, as well as helps in keeping participants positively motivated.

Other issues raised by participants referred to their feelings of alienation and concerns over their limited networks of professional connections, both in terms of size and quality. Confused over employment choices, participants often identified the Folkuniversitetet as an important medium offering assistance, guidance and professional support. The need to establish a post for a permanent career advisor available to address ad hoc employment issues was also frequently expressed. There was a further suggestion for an online employment portal. Such a website should include examples of well written cover letters and statements summarising work history, including advice on job-seeking techniques, employment offers, training announcements, as well as incorporating chat-rooms allowing the participants to exchange their work-seeking experiences and to socialise with people challenged by similar life circumstances.

Nevertheless, the benefits observed at the end of the transfer process were just overwhelming. These included attitudes’ changing towards the unemployment situation from perceiving “unemployment as a way of life” towards an active attitude on development and possibilities for the individual. “Today the focus really is on sending people out to work”, noted one of the participants, “before it was more like the trainers made their way to you and you made your way to them, but you didn’t really meet anywhere. Now it’s more individual, and they see you as a person, not as a number”. Additionally, it was observed that at the end of the process participants obtained skills allowing them for clear goal identification, job searching and applying, successful professional networking.

5. Results

The positive effects of the transfer process – and they were many – arose from the simple fact that participants were seen as individuals, with individual needs and goals. The tools allowed Folkuniversitetet not only to take into account their individual situation and possibilities as they emerged from the in-depth interviews based on their Life

Curve, but also to show participants that they were being taken seriously in the process of vocational counselling. Similarly, the talent marketing process begins from a perception that participants have strengths and abilities to offer, and that it is crucial for them to find a way to show their talents to others.

The overall philosophy of individual instruction is not new to Folkuniversitetet – indeed that is why we chose to participate in the BAGru project. But our participation allowed us to identify tools that turned this philosophy into a concrete classroom process. By personalizing the process with new methods applied in an existing program, and doing so by involving the participants in the process, Folkuniversitetet have gained the necessary trust from the participants to achieve desired results. The outcomes may not be directly measurable in numbers or figures, but show up extremely strongly in the participants' self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation and interaction with our organisation.

References

Arbetsförmedlingen (2010) *Arbetsförmedlingen prognos*. Available at:

<http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Om-oss/Statistik-prognoser/Prognoser.html>

Klein, R. & Zisenis, D. (2009) *GiWA: Basic education in economy and employment- multiperspectives*. Dortmund: BBB.

Adult Literacy in the Context of Labour and Community in Slovenia

Špela Reš

Introduction

Why should basic education be an important subject for personnel development in medium-sized and small enterprises? Will basic education be an effective training focus for entering companies and staying successful? Will it be of value for the employees and the employer? Are basic skills sufficient for being competitive in the workplace or labour market? These are some of the questions that our organisation faced some time ago when we decided to take a closer look towards the situation and developing strategies of companies in the economic sectors in which we are active. We will try to give our theory- and experience-based answers in this article.

1. National context

Broad changes in Slovenia over the last twenty years have demanded substantial changes in upbringing and education, which are the pillars of the existence and development of society. Awareness of the importance of good education is reaching all strata of society, though slowly. Due to these factors, the need for comparability of educational standards with other education systems and the accreditation of education have hastened changes in the education system, which from an organisational and content point of view has to be designed to be compatible with European and other systems.

In 1995 the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia issued a White Paper in which a global conception of systemic solutions for the field of education was introduced. In this legislation the basis for thirteen-year-long education up to university was set. Since the Higher Education Act had already been passed, it meant that the whole educational system from preschool education to university was transformed. Part of these changes was an increased interest in lifelong learning.

The development of the lifelong learning concept and practice in Slovenia is closely associated with the endeavours of the adult education field, as well as with social, political, economic, cultural and technological changes that have taken place in the country over the last sixteen years. There is less appreciation of lifelong learning spanning from cradle to grave. The term lifelong learning was only really adopted in 2004 when Slovenia joined the European Union, reflecting the requirements and expectations of the Union concerning its members and ultimately to the Lisbon Strategy and "Education and Training 2010: diverse systems, shared goals" (2002 in C. Černoša, 2009). Slovenia prepared an action plan with goals and benchmarks to realise the Lisbon goals.

As for adult education, the most significant achievement in the field was the adoption of the *Adult Education Act* (1996 in C. Černoša, 2009) and later the adoption of the *Resolution on the National Plan of Adult Education until 2010* by the Parliament of Slovenia (June 2004). The outcomes after the commitment to lifelong learning and adoption of the new legislation are impressive. In 1991 Slovenia had an inadequate educational structure of the population over 15 years of age. About 17% of the population had incomplete or non-existent compulsory (8 years) primary education, 30% of the popula-

tion had completed primary education, 42.5% of the population had finished upper secondary education (ISCED 4) while 8.8% had higher education degrees (ISCED 5 and 6). The 2005 results were quite different, with the educational attainment of the population over 15 years of age showing considerable improvement. The percentage of those without or with unfinished compulsory primary school dropped from 17% to 5.2%, as well as the percentage of those finishing only primary education (from 42.5% to 23.7%). The share of the population with upper secondary school (ISCED 4) increased to 55.6%, while the percentage of the population with higher education degrees reached 15.6%. The frequency of participation in adult education changed as well. While participation in 1987 was 27.6%, this figure reached 37% in 2004. The Lisbon benchmark, 12.5% participation of the population between 25 and 64 years of age, was reached and exceeded in 2003, which puts Slovenia in the 6th place among the EU-25, after Sweden, the UK, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands. (C. Černoša, 2009)

Adult education represents a broad and complex field where formalised and very structured forms of education, leading to certificates and degrees, are included, as well as non-structured and non-formal forms. The complexity of the adult education field is mirrored in the diverse network of educational institutions dealing with adult education, as well as in various types and forms of educational programmes in which adults participate.

However, there are many challenges ahead, the first of which is the realisation of a lifelong learning strategy and a concrete operational plan where the anticipated activities and partnerships can be developed. Within this strategy there is also the question of recognition, validation, certification and equality of qualifications gained through the school programme and in other contexts. There is also the question of coordination of various lifelong learning activities to achieve greater synergy. Secondly, there is a need to achieve real social partnerships in education. Without these partnerships, lifelong learning will remain an educational matter. Concerning adult education, the biggest challenge is how to retain the level of provision (legal, financial, programmatic) which has been achieved so far.

However, adult education is growing irrepressibly in depth and breadth. It is present in the workplace, at home and in the local community, in all places where people at all levels shape their lives and it is of vital importance to all of us that lifelong learning becomes the real basic need of every individual and that the learning society becomes a reality. This is truly the greatest challenge to our society. We must think of basic skills learning as lifelong learning.

Basic education In Slovenia is commonly accepted as writing, reading, mathematics etc., and usually refers to children's basic education in primary and secondary school. However, this is no longer sustainable, and there is increasing recognition that basic skills should be developed in conjunction with work occupations and work activities. Developing basic skills in the workplace represents a concrete example of lifelong learning and an opportunity for personal and social development of the employees.

When considering what employers would recognise as valuable basic skills, effective performance is the main expectation. However, an adequate definition of performance is likely to encompass multiple traits and behaviours, such as effective communication with colleagues, technical competence and physical capabilities of employees. Further research is required to distinguish different dimensions of performance within employment and their varying relationships with basic skills. However, it is possible to identify three critical areas.

Basic skills and information technology

Information technology is increasingly important within modern workplaces. Since many computer based tasks pose basic skills demands, the rise of information technology has implications for the basic skills required at work.

Coping strategies

Research suggests that individuals with poor basic skills often develop practical coping strategies, such as relying on memory or social networks, to get by when faced with basic skills challenges in their working and personal lives (Krahn and Lowe, 1999; Kamp and Boudard, 2003). However, basic skills problems are still likely to have a negative impact on performance by limiting the flexibility of personnel, and it is important that training produces personnel who are able to respond to new challenges and to adapt to different ways of working.

Trainability

Trainability concerns the extent to which personnel are willing and able to engage effectively with the task of acquiring new skills and knowledge. Basic skills improvements may enhance cognitive aspects of trainability as well as non-cognitive aspects of the trainability of personnel.

Employers recognise the need for these types of skills, but can be reluctant to provide them directly. One survey (Frank & Hamilton, 1993) found that around 94% of companies in the North West of England said that reading and writing skills were important in manual tasks, yet only 61% of them saw a need to train their workers in these skills. Amongst the main difficulties with basic skills provision in the workplace in many contexts, including Slovenia, are:

- linking delivery to the 'bottom line' concerns of businesses;
- raising employers' awareness that a problem may exist amongst their staff;
- convincing employers of their responsibility to address skills shortfalls that may be regarded as failures of the compulsory education system.

Issues affecting employers' willingness to invest in the skills of their workforce are of course not limited to basic skills provision. Particular problems, however, arise in the case of basic skills as these are not perceived by employers as job-related.

The European Union is in no doubt as to where responsibilities lie. They include employers amongst other social partners as having the main responsibility to provide for developing the competences of their workforce. Stimulating demand for learning should take in basic skills as well as the needs of employers in general, especially SMEs, whose motivation to train is important.

2. Organisation

Papilot institute was established in 1995 in response to the changing situation in Slovenia due to independence; some of the more challenging effects included over-night unemployment, changing life-styles and new value systems. It is a company with local units and a large number different areas of work and diverse staff profiles. Our main activities are focused on education, training and guidance for unemployed and other vulnerable groups.

Our basic activities are: occupational rehabilitation, sheltered employment, social inclusion programmes, active employment policy programmes, help centre for the victims of crime, day-care centre care for elderly people, soft skills and other training. In addition, we provide educational programmes for individual organisations and national and international partner companies on the topics of social economy, vocational education, social inclusion, unemployment, equality of right. Papilot is active in South East Europe (Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia) mainly in programmes within active employment policy in the private sector and in development and implementation of work rehabilitation orientated programmes.

Papilot does not view education and learning as objectives in themselves. They are means for personal, family and community development, for active citizenship building and for improving the lives of people. Thus, they must be explicitly framed within and oriented toward social transformation and human development. We see basic education as foundation or essential education, aimed at meeting and expanding the basic learning needs required for human satisfaction and development. Expanding perceived learning needs and enhancing the capability to fulfil them is particularly important for learners in the most disadvantaged situations – the poor, the most excluded from information and knowledge sources and opportunities – whose perceived learning needs tend to be limited in scope, and who have more difficulties in translating such needs into effective demands.

Basic learning needs (BLN) derive from, and relate to, basic needs of individuals, groups and societies. Basic needs – and thus BLN – vary according to age, gender, context, and culture, and also according to individual interests, motivation and preferences. Both basic needs and learning needs change with the passing of time. Thus, the specific content and modalities of satisfaction of BLN must be decided for each specific purpose, context and moment in time. Literacy remains a key BLN, it relates to many human satisfactory and it is essential for meeting several BLN. The concept and scope of literacy, as well as the needs for literacy in the life of individuals and groups, have changed and expanded considerably. It is necessary to change the conventional way of dealing with adult literacy/illiteracy rates for the sake of numbers, or of “becoming literate” within an individualistic perspective. Literacy, to be called such, must be meaningful and functional. The challenge today is the building of literate environments, especially in workplaces. The role of Papilot is to put these principles into action in the changing environment of South East Europe. We do this by seeking innovative methods to bring together social actors and businesses in networks aimed at increasing the inclusion of, and opportunities for, people who face challenges in educational and vocational engagement.



3. BAGru

The Papilot Institute were delighted to be invited to participate in the BAGru project, as it seemed to offer a way to enlarge the range of strategies available to us in our work. The areas where we felt we could use some ideas, and on which the transfer was focused, were contacting employers and conducting needs analyses of the employees, employers and organization itself. Concrete methods for “Snapshots” of needs were transferred through the BAGru Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation program based in the German GiWA project. We have translated them from the Alpha KU subproject of GiWA and then adapted them to our needs.

The first steps in working with employers are immensely important for showing professionalism and gaining trust. The main idea underlying the transferred processes was that before implementation of various programmes and courses we have to make adequate and positive contact with the target employer or organization and we have to snapshot their needs, so we will be able to implement the right program or course. This not only ensures credibility with the employers but also prevents resources being dedicated to strategies that prove not to be helpful.

4. Case Study

VDC Novo Mesto is a centre to serve adult people with special needs, most related to developmental disabilities. It is a public social welfare institute, which has been independent since 2000. VDC was established in 1981 when people with mental and physical disabilities were first offered workshop accommodation under the legislation of the time. Today, VDC offers users a program of institutional care and program management, including care and employment under special conditions and activities to raise participant’s quality of life. Users are also involved in different sports: football, athletics, bowling, swimming, dance lessons and billiards. There is a wide range of other opportunities available to participants, including a library, an educational development centre, music workshops, a self-advocacy group, engagement in environmental programmes, agricultural schools, governing the forest and walking trails, as well as visiting cultural and other events.

Every day of the year except public holidays participants are offered eight hours of programming involving day care, guidance and job placement. A range of staff with high levels of expertise in a range of areas, including social work, defectology, psychology, social and special pedagogy, work with participants. Even well-trained and experienced staff can find the participant group challenging and demanding. Besides the highly educated experts, a large number of lower skilled staff are also employed. This group can also find the work challenging at times.

In the context of the BAGru transfer project the Papilot Institute transferred and developed tools relevant to three aspects of work with VDC:

- approaches to employers and enterprises
- need analyses methods
- development of soft skills programs.

The first information that Papilot received about VDC was that the staff, irrespective of their education and previous experience, found the participant group hard to work with at times. Even though all the staff had at least a foundation of basic skills, there were many day to day issues that were hard for them to handle. Papilot Institute decided that the best starting point would be to offer a special need analysis for the expert workers in VDC in order to understand the work demands and special needs of target group. On the basis of this information, it would be possible to design a special tailor made program for developing the skills of experts in coping with stress and aggressive users.

In the first phase, Papilot transferred methods of approaching employers from GiWA. We used the “Targeted interview with manager” and related techniques to detect the needs, interests, goals and challenges within VDC. We also use observational methods of non-verbal communication, working space features, communication between employees etc. Later on, we used a specially designed survey about work stress, coping with users, coping with aggressive users and related topics. On the base of the results, we prepared workshop programmes for developing the basic skills of experts in ways to relate to participants, with emphasis on working with difficult and aggressive users.

The workshops were organised in small groups with 14 participants, and delivered at VDC. The facilitator’s role was guidance and discussion management. We also used the technique of role playing and the technique of empty chair (Klein & Zisenis, 2009). The feedback from VDC experts as well as from VDC management was very good, so we extended our cooperation. Following on from the initial workshops we are developing workshops covering similar topics, but designed for VDC staff with less formal education.

5. Results

Overall the results of the transfer for VDC, and for Papilot, have been extremely positive. Based on this success, the Papilot institute intends to target further organizations for implementation of these new approaches and methods for basic skills development. Using BAGru activities and transferred knowledge, we aim on better employment opportunities for experts and lower educated employees of VDC and other organizations. In future we will spread the BAGru voice across the entire sector of organisations working with people with disabilities.

Given the context of Slovenian adult education, we believe there is an opportunity to widen the basic skills concept in Slovenia, from literacy, mathematic and reading to basic social skills which are indispensable for improving the job opportunities of less educated and less skilled. Slovenia has come a long way in a few years. With the concepts and tools developed in this project, we believe we can take it further yet.

References

- Černoša, S. (2009) *Lifelong Learning and Adult Education in Slovenia*. Paper presented at CONFINTEA VI Paneuropean Conference's Follow-up Conference, Pecs.
- Frank, F. & Hamilton, M. (1993) *CSET, Not Just a Number: the role of basic skills programmes in the changing workplace*. Lancaster: Lancaster University.
- Krahn, H. and Lowe, G.S. (1999) *Literacy in the workplace*. Ottawa: StatsCan.
- Klein, R. & Zisenis, D. (2009) *GiWA: Basic education in economy and employment- multiperspectives*. Dortmund: BBB.
- Parsons, S. & Bynner, J. (2007) *Illuminating disadvantage: Profiling the experiences of adults with Entry level literacy or numeracy over the lifecourse*. London: National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy.
- Wolf, A. (2005) *Basic skills in the workplace: opening doors to learning*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel Development.
- NIACE (2009) *The impact of basic skills improvements on the performance and trainability of service personnel*. Leicester: Author. Available at:
<http://archive.niace.org.uk/Research/BasicSkills/Projects/AFLS/Briefing%20Paper%20%20PERFORMANCE%20AND%20TRAINABILITY.doc>

Adult Literacy in the Context of Labour and Community in France

Denis Rouquié

1. National context

France is one of the European Union countries which has been struck badly by the 2008 financial crisis. Countless bankruptcies of small and medium size businesses juxtaposed with numerous redundancies in public services resulted in a substantial increase in numbers of unemployed workers. In March 2011 there were approximately 3.6 million people without a job across the country. The worst situation is among youth below 25 years of age and among women. The statistics shows that at the end of 2010 the unemployment rate among young people was almost three times higher than that of the adults (26 years old and older). This includes two and a half times greater unemployment levels for unqualified individuals than for those with a tertiary education qualification. Consequently, the number of job-seekers registered for more than two years has increased rapidly by 38 percent, while the number of those registered for three years and more increased by over 18 percent.

Today, analysis of recruitment prospects indicates a slow increase in employment of 1.1 percent per year. According to market research, 18 percent of 428,400 employers intend to hire a minimum of one person in the course of the coming year. The level of recruitment, however, varies among different market areas, with agriculture and private services (especially the care sector and farming) becoming the leaders in generating new employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the employers point out to an increasing divide between the skills presented by individuals and the demands of the labour market. This is accompanied by a disparity in education levels, insufficient work experience, apathy and lack of motivation. Vocational training courses, therefore, become a preferred solution for addressing gaps in the participants' working style and education combined with a particular attention to specific needs presented by employers.

Consequently, a variety of actors are involved in the design and implementation of vocational training schemes, with a variety of different programmes being implemented successively. On average 4.5 million adults enter such training programs each year, among which around 700,000 are unemployed as opposed to improving skills while working. All the training is financed either by the State, the regions or the Public Employment Service (PES hereafter). The regions subsidise almost 50 per cent of training programmes for the unemployed, including:

- Basic training aiming at providing unqualified unemployed individuals with basic skills in general disciplines;
- Training aimed at helping the unemployed in their job-seeking;
- Qualifying or pre-qualifying training, aiming at providing qualifications recognised by potential employers.

All the courses are building according to innovative standards in approaching the training process, such as incorporating individualization of active labour market policies that lead to a development of tailor-made coaching measures for unemployed, as well as employed, individuals. Such actions include:



- the identification of a lack of skills according to the business sector's needs;
- the necessity of a partnership between several labour market actors (funding organisations, training centres, business partners);
- a large degree of flexibility in the content of the training due to tailored cooperation agreements between training providers and employers.

There is growing commitment of public actors to use vocational training policies to help tackle the problem of growing unemployment. Vocational training was initially seen as a reintegration process between the workless and the labour market. However, it soon evolved into a standardised, successful coaching solution to support the social inclusion of particularly disadvantaged groups of poorly qualified young people, long term unemployed women, disabled individuals and migrant workers.

2. Organisation

IRFA *Sud* is an employment training institution that specialises in establishing links between jobseekers and various public and private sectors organisations (MLJ, Pôle Emploi, local missions for young and various public agencies). Established in 1974, IRFA *Sud* is located in two regions: Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi Pyrenees (10 departments). This area has been recently struck by galloping unemployment rates (45.9 per cent among females, and almost 22 per cent among youth under 25 (Klein et al., 2011: 267)). Placed in such a context, IRFA *Sud* offers training and support classes for unemployed adults (80 per cent) as well as socially under-privileged, disabled, and employed adults with low basic skills². IRFA *Sud* specialises in providing training courses addressed to employed individuals wishing to obtain new qualifications. These include vocational training programmes for: retail, business, and administration; child and elderly care; housekeeping; catering and tourism; as well as IT courses. With its extensive base of 200 trainers and counsellors, IRFA *Sud* reaches approximately 10 000 trainees per year.

As a result of the funding received from the Council of Regions, the French Ministry Education and Ministry of Work, as well as from various public and private enterprises, IRFA *Sud* has been able to co-operate in developing and implementing numerous approaches to training and employability at local and European (Leonardo and Grundtvig) levels. Most of the approaches, such as “learning for success”, focus on confidence building and empowerment, as low self-esteem is a common issue for learners. Other approaches centre strictly on employability. The approaches include the “skills” method of recruitment, which appraises the vocational qualifications of jobseekers by utilising a wide range of simulated, work-related situations. There is a related “generic skills assessment” that centres on a balance of competencies developed through close collaboration with other European partners (Italy, Spain). IRFA *Sud* also authorised a “career guidance portfolio” which binds the “L'Activation du Développement Vocationnel et Personnel” approach (Pelletier, Noiseux & Bujold, 1974) together with participants’

² For the needs of IRFA *Sud*, the basic skills are defined as a capability of reading, writing and speaking in a given language, as well as possessing numeracy at the level allowing to fulfil employment obligations. A minimum knowledge of IT, as well as social skills, such as: team-working, self-management, and non-problematical communication, are also included in this working definition.

personal interests in career choices and career development. Nevertheless, the most successful asset established by IRFA Sud is the development of a partnership approach allowing for a design and implementation of tailor-made training courses responding to needs and demands of specific business partners. Consequently, in recent years IRFA Sud has become a local leader in employment strategy development and implementation.

3. BAGru

In the fall of 2009 IRFA Sud was approached to become a transfer partner in the international knowledge transfer program, BAGru. This European Commission funded project aimed at improving the employment opportunities of groups facing particular difficulties in the labour market. The BAGru ideas stemmed, however, from a research program, GiWA, which constituted of five independent, projects of three years duration run in various locations in Germany. Inspired by the results of GiWA, IRFA Sud implemented two training methods derived from the KOMBUSE project in Düsseldorf, namely “helpful mentoring” and “transversal competencies” in a local care sector.

The “helpful mentoring” technique relies on an individual, non-judgmental approach to analysis of participants’ training progress. It was utilized during a five months long *Fédération des Particuliers-Employeurs de France* (FEDEM) qualification course run by IRFA Sud. After each apprenticeship period (lasting approximately two weeks) participants were asked to attend a group meeting where each of them had an opportunity to express their opinions on training received and work-related problems encountered. The tool proven exceptionally successful in stabilizing the trainee-trainer power struggle, as it provided the participants with control over the learning process, as well as instigating new approaches to data recording and archiving.

The other method utilized by IRFA Sud during the BAGru transfer project involves the identification and assessment of the “transversal competencies” of low qualified young adults (16-25 years of age) using a tool based upon the combined experience of KOMBUSE and other European projects. It involves a two-fold appraisal of participants’ skills and competences, that is at the training centre, and during the apprenticeship period at the company. As the appraisal differs in form, as well as in the situational context, it provides a diversified feedback on participants’ capabilities. Consisting of a set of distinctive stages allowing participants for an evaluation and self-evaluation, it cumulates in a final interview highlighting their competences and containing suggestions for a further career path in a care sector.

The two methods were chosen to develop new and innovative strategic partnerships, as well as to improve the effectiveness of the care sector’s training programs. It was hoped that through such defined cooperation the trainees will gain the new skills necessary to analyse different life circumstances and work related difficulties, as well as to turn the feedback received from trainers into the social capital leading to suitable employment. During the BAGru 2010 internal meeting on “basic skills in a special context regarding person and working place as well” with BAGru three transfer partners, IRFA Sud’s trainers and coordinators, it was established that IRFA Sud will focus on transfer activities related to the care sector. Many of the training activities had already been imple-

mented in this field, and it was hoped that a development of new training methods will be directly transferred into IRFA *Sud*'s everyday practice.

4. Case studies

According to the French educational system, there are various levels of care sector (related) qualifications an individual can acquire. This includes: auxiliary of social life (level V), technician of the social and family intervention (level IV) and CAFDES (level II). While the former does not require candidates to undertake any professional training course, the latter two involve detailed technical knowledge certified by formal qualifications.



Most of the roles performed in the care sector consist of providing an active support to people needing caregivers (such as the elderly or the disabled). This includes help and assistance with ordinary duties, such as food preparation and wardrobe attendance, housekeeping, answering social calls, as well as assistance with a spectrum of administrative tasks. The key to professional success in the sector lies with abilities such as empathy and compassion, as well as with a personal capability to develop a positive

relation with the recipients of care, as well as their families and friends. Other skills include ability to organise external services; help with the maintenance of autonomy and of the social links for elderly; knowledge of food hygiene and general hygiene. It was observed, however, that participants often lacked basic social skills such as the ability to listen, discretion, respect, and distance keeping, which negatively affects their work performance. Additionally, the trainees often required reminding of their own basic skills, their learning patterns, and appropriate behaviour to enable them to structure their own individual learning or job searching strategies.

It was decided that the BAGru transfer project would be implemented in a region of Perpignan with the participants being recruited from a two courses on home care run by IRFA *Sud* in Céret and Prades. The first group consisted of eleven unemployed adults (one male and ten females aged 18 to 54) training to obtain a professional certificate: FEPEM level 5 “home help”. The second one was addressed to unemployed adults under the age of 25 (including also one male and ten females) who were trying to find work in a new sector (health and social care) and looking for a specific “training and working contract”.

The two groups participated in courses that had been already planned for spring 2010, so the schedule matched with the BAGru timetable. One was in the Guidance stage, as the group worked towards a new sector, and the other one in Qualification stage, as they aimed for certification. We chose them for this transfer because the activity sector is similar to the Kombüse project and there is a great need for development in the care sector. By using methods and tools from GiWA Kombüse project we wanted to introduce new ways of taking into account basic skills and transversal competencies in training courses in this Care sector, which would be highly innovative.

Consequently, the training course commenced at the IRFA *Sud*'s facilities and aimed at creating detailed knowledge about the participants' skills and abilities relevant to the duties they are about to perform. The most common issues identified at this stage included:

- problems with a clear communication in a native language;
- insufficient numerical, literacy and IT skills;
- lack of “learning-to-learn” competences;
- inadequate knowledge of professional conduct;
- poor team working abilities.

IRFA *Sud* consulted on the data with its business partners, who allocated participants to the most suitable apprenticeship available. In the following step participants entered an employment situation accompanied by trainers ready to offer their guidance and support based on the “helpful mentoring” approach. Through the establishment of the active co-operation with the local care sector professionals, IRFA *Sud* was able to create an efficient educational training program preparing participants for the challenges of employment in the care sector. A particular emphasis was given to the teaching of essential personal abilities, work ethics, and adaptability to different work-related situations, rather than following the standardised teaching curriculum aiming towards with exams performance. As a result, participants became sensitised to needs of the people receiving care as well as to the importance of their work commitment, ethical behaviour and other personal qualities necessary to successfully fulfil their daily work routines. With managerial feedback obtained by trainers at the workplace, it was possible to implement the individually tailored changes required by a given employer. Consequently, the participants have become exceptionally well prepared for the challenges of their future employment, while the IRFA *Sud*'s business partners have been offered the benefits of working with apprentices.

5. Results

IRFA *Sud* is used to working with transfer projects based on ready to use methods and tools, but on BAGru we had to accept the challenge to transfer “concepts” from a previous GiWA project that was not even finished. This meant that guidelines to follow and the expected outcomes were like results of work in progress and not elaborate for the project coordinators – and even less for us –until the Montpellier meeting in October 2010.

During the transfer activities with trainees we had some difficulties to overcome:

- To get the most benefit from the *helpful mentoring workshop* it was important to introduce it before the working period, while participants were still in the educational phase.
- We had to limit the number of participants (12 max).
- We needed to refocus trainees when they expressed too long feedback that moved away from specific questions.
- For the *transversal competences assessment workshop*, the targeted group (hard to reach) still found it difficult to valorise the useful skills and express the positive points to focus on, to convince a professional.
- Substantial time was required to fill in the results on the provided templates.

During the transversal competences assessment in companies, tutors were not always available to fill up the template and evaluate all the competences, because they were very busy. This delayed the final interview with the concerned trainee. So we had to go to the company and take a time to fill up the questionnaire together with them. It was also an opportunity to explain what is a transversal competence in more detail to the tutor in companies.

One of the most positive outcomes of the BAGru transfer project is the introduction of innovative approaches within traditional framework of IRFA *Sud*'s training program. This includes:

- provision of tutors and councillors placed at employment facilities with a detailed knowledge of skills and professional competences of their trainees
- and
- the encouragement of the trainees to record an honest feedback on the training received, including difficulties encountered and solutions adopted.

The methods and tools provided by the BAGru transfer project were applied in a dual way, by combining the self- and external assessments with a mixture of formal and informal appraisals, conducted both at a training centre and at a workplace. The methods utilised differ substantially from traditional forms of formal assessments applied by IRFA *Sud* in the past, and brought exceptionally positive results during the identification process of participants' skills, abilities and competences. Consequently, the assessment strategy implemented during the BAGru transfer project was created on individual basis, involving a construction of individual charts for each and every participant recording their specific skills and competences obtained as well as tasks undertaken by learners and marked by trainers. The aim of the assessment strategy was to identify basic skills and transversal competences required by the specifics of the care sector. This included different appraisal methods, adapted as necessary to the interests of the target group and the sector context, as well as to the specific needs and skills required by the demands of the care sector.

Additionally, the BAGru knowledge transfer project resulted in a construction of new strategies aiming at a confidence improvement and self-esteem building. The interests of the learners have been matched with their existing qualifications and competences in order to identify vocational training goals and job opportunities. Despite the fact that the process turned to be time-consuming and required substantial preparatory work, including a biographical reflection and portfolio construction, it proved exceptionally successful. It has been the reference source for construction of further employment strategies answering the demands of the continuously changing labour market.

Our internal organization creates the possibility of disseminating these methods effectively over 10 departments. Since we always work with professionals from the Care sector field, they will be informed about these new approaches and this will reinforce our links. Overall, it was a successful experience in the Care sector due to the introduction of new tools in training programs in health and care sector training actions as a complement to our existing methods. The aims of these new methods are close to our own

main objectives at IRFA *Sud*: to deliver specific integrated concepts for basic education and links with actors in workplaces.

References

Assedic, Mars 2008, <http://www.assedic.fr/assurancechomage/>

Conseil D'Orientation pour l'Emploi, Travaux du COE sur la formation professionnelle, Avril 2008.

DARES, Premières Informations premières synthèses, La formation professionnelle des demandeurs d'emploi 2009.

INSEE, Une photographie du marché du travail en 2007, Résultats de l'enquête Emploi, 2007.

Pole Emploi Direction Etudes Statistiques, Service Public.fr, INSEE.

Pelletier, D., Noiseux, G., Bujold R. Développement vocationnel et croissance personnelle, Mc Graw-Hill, 1974

Insights in the BAGru project

Evaluation in transfer projects: Towards a responsive approach

Ralf St.Clair

The evaluation of transfer projects is not a straightforward task. When most projects are evaluated the key is to look for evidence of a direct, and predicted, effect. So, for example, a project may set out to prepare participants for a particular type of employment. In this case, the predicted result is an increase in the number of participants employed in these jobs. In this simplest case, there is a linear relationship between the activity and the outcomes, the entire operation takes place within one context, and there are clearly defined expectations. For transfer projects none of these parameters apply.

In a transfer project an element of one programme or set of programmes is put into the context of a different programme. In this case there may not be a linear relationship between the activity and predicted outcomes, the operation spans contexts, and expectations cannot be so clearly defined. In addition there are two separate, but linked, levels of evaluation. As discussed in more detail later, the first level is what the projects that receive the transfer do with it. The second level is the process of transfer itself. These two levels may have some relationship to each other, but it is generally rather loose. An excellent transfer may still result in limited direct effects, while powerful effects can be generated from a less than ideal transfer.

In this chapter I set out the approach taken to evaluation in the BAGru project, and explain how these complexities were addressed. It is hoped that these insights might be useful in developing evaluative frameworks for future transfer projects.

A brief note on evaluation

Evaluation, at its heart, is the process of assigning value to an activity. For example, we might want to look at book groups and see if they lead people to become interested in continuing their education in some way. This would be an attempt to assess the value of book groups in contributing to that specific outcome. On the face of it, this should be a simple process—it surely cannot be that difficult to take some type of activity and work out how it affects people’s knowledge and lives. Unfortunately, it is a lot harder than it seems, and there is a large and controversial body of work addressing the problems of evaluation.

Recent approaches to social services have resulted in a situation referred to as “the audit society” (Power, 1999), which can be summarised in the idea that everybody keeps an eye on everybody else’s performance. Perhaps not surprisingly, this has raised the importance of evaluation activities considerably, through the expectation that outcomes will be measured and expressed in clear, unambiguous language. Over the last few years these new expectations have substantially changed the field of adult education in many parts of the world. (St.Clair & Belzer, 2007)

There are many approaches to programme evaluation in adult literacy and basic skills education, but they can be summarised along a limited number of dimensions. One dimension is the type of evidence taken into account. This could be test scores, people's stories of the programme, or something in between. Currently hard evidence, such as test scores or exam outcomes, is preferred in many situations. People's accounts and stories can be seen as insufficiently reliable because of potential bias. However, many evaluations do set out to find out what participants thought of a programme, and this highly subjective data can be very useful in programme planning and development.

A second dimension is the type of analysis applied to the data once it is collected. Again this is a continuum, with statistical analysis at one end and more qualitative approaches at the other. Statistical approaches analyse the numerical indicators of programme outcomes to find out if the effects of the programme are significant and consistent. More qualitative approaches are interested in the themes within participants' views of the programme and their experience of taking part. Both ways of analysing data have strengths and weaknesses. Statistical analysis provides a robust and widely understood way to reach results, while qualitative analysis tends to provide deeper and potentially unexpected insights, though without providing information on the extent to which they apply on a broader level. In other words, qualitative analysis is good at informing people what is going on, while quantitative analysis lets people know how significant and common those experiences are.

The final dimension to be discussed here is the extent to which outcomes are predicted during the design and implementation of the programme. In the vast majority of evaluation situations there is a clearly defined outcome in advance of the evaluation, and the evaluator's job is to consider the value of the programme in reaching those outcomes. However, there are significant concerns about the assumption that all outcomes can be predicted, and growing interest in approaches that leave the effects more open, allowing evaluators to capture unintended consequences and unexpected outcomes. (Stake, 1972)

Overall, the approach to evaluation is going to be quite different depending on the choices made along these three dimensions. However, no set of choices can provide absolutely reliable evidence that any programme causes specific outcomes. All it can do is provide us with evidence that a certain set of actions is related to a certain set of outcomes.

Many educators are concerned that evaluation can be too narrow in the sorts of evidence and outcomes considered. For example, in the early years of the 21st century, when a new quantitative national accountability system was being introduced in the United States under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Bingman, Ebert and Bell (2000) argued strongly for the inclusion of learners' perspectives in understanding outcomes. They reported that:

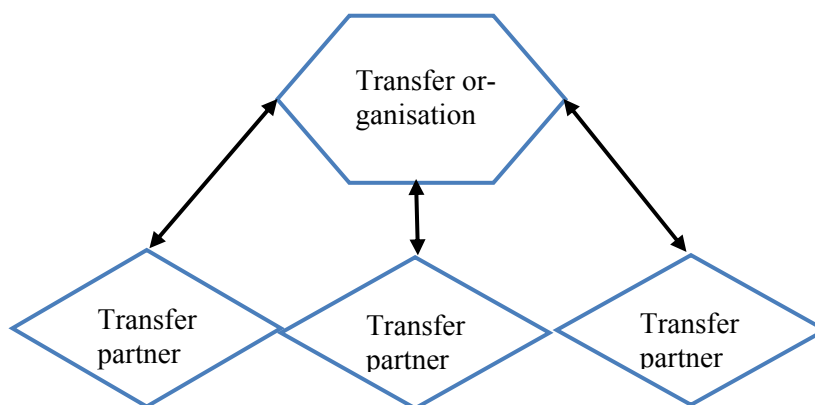
Based on studies conducted in Tennessee in which adult learners reported a broader and more complex set of outcomes than the WIA core measures, this paper suggests that learners have a different perspective on performance than the authors of WIA and that their perspectives should be taken into account at the policy level as well as by local programmes. (p. 1)

The authors go on to explain that while learners did talk about outcomes that would be captured by the WIA measures, such as employment, that were captured by the programme evaluation, they also talked about outcomes to do with how they saw themselves and how they used literacy in everyday settings. One way to capture these aspects of the programme is the case study approach to evaluation, where *the study looks at the programme in its geographical, cultural, organisational and historical contexts, closely examining its internal operations and how it uses inputs and processes to produce outcomes. It examines a wide range of intended and unexpected outcomes.* (Shufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 182)

The advantages of this approach are that without a pre-determined set of objectives to “look for” the evaluation may work better in identifying outcomes that were not explicitly built into the programme design, and may be more open to more complex sets of outcomes. Rather than restricting evaluation to a list of funded objectives there is the opportunity to create a more inclusive model. The limit of this approach is that the findings really only apply to that specific context at that specific time, however.

The transfer project

Transfer projects represent a specific type of evaluation challenge. While even the simplest programmes are hard to evaluate in terms of their effects, the multiple layers of transfer projects create further difficulties. Each of the layers needs to be evaluated, and then their connection needs to be assessed before anything meaningful can be said about the outcomes of the project. In addition, each of the transfer partners (the layer where the project activities are put into practice) will be different, and will use different transfer elements in different ways. The simple model below illustrates the levels of activity and their connection.



A model of a transfer project

At the top of the model sits the transfer organisation. Their responsibility is to provide the materials or procedures (elements) to be transferred and to do what it takes to support the transfer process. The elements may come from the transfer organisation’s own activities or from the activities of others, which will make a difference to the depth of information that can be transferred and the support that can be given. The outcomes of

this activity are not the actual practices of the transfer partners, but the condition of the partners, that is whether the partners have sufficient information and support to be able to make their own decisions and strategies for putting the transfer elements into place. This is primarily a communicative role rather than a pragmatic one.

The transfer partners take the transfer elements and apply them in direct programme delivery. Evaluation of this layer is concerned with understanding the value these elements bring to the operations of the transfer partner, and is primarily based on pragmatic evidence. In effect, each transfer partner is the equivalent of a “standard” evaluation, in that there is interest in the direct application of a set of practices in a specific context.

The relationship between these layers is not straightforward, either horizontally or vertically. The best way to think of the connections may be as “loosely articulated” – that is, affecting each other only to a limited degree. So the transfer organisation may do a very good job of communication, but the transfer projects may not benefit a great deal from the transfer elements. Or the transfer partners may use the opportunity of the transfer to improve what they do, but not really apply the transfer elements. So there is need for caution regarding the way the various activities interact.

There is also the effect of the differences between transfer partners. While the transfer organisation may have generally comparable relationships with each of the transfer partners, their own context is likely to vary widely, meaning that their activities may legitimately be quite different. There is a limited amount of information that can be moved between transfer partners, and it is important to be clear what that is.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the reverse transfer that should occur as the transfer process continues. This is the set of insights generated at local level and passed back to the transfer organisation to increase their understanding of the transfer process. Ideally, these insights could be passed along to other transfer organisations and increase the effectiveness of transfer projects more widely.

It is helpful to think this through with an example. Suppose, for simplicity, that the transfer organisation is the head office of a language school and the transfer partners are branches of the same school. In this case the transfer element could be something like a new curriculum the head office feels could be helpful. The educators from each branch could be pulled in to the head office and trained on the new curriculum. This creates an opportunity for transfer, but does not guarantee that it will happen or what form it will take. However good the transfer organisation, the implementation of the transfer elements still lies with the transfer partners.

The actual implementation of the transfer elements will be different for each of the language schools depending on their own context. So one may work with highly educated language learners and another with people with less general education. One may have a business clientele and another students. The implementation of the new curriculum will be different in each case, and the insights generated will be widely diverse.

The role of the evaluator is to make sense of all of these dimensions of the transfer. If there is a clearly identified transfer element and limited variation in its implementation by the partners, it could be relatively straightforward to assign a value to these activities. In such cases the evaluation of the transfer organisation's activities and those of the partners will not be identical, but will be generally consistent. If the transfer partners can choose from a wide range of transfer elements and apply them in diverse settings then the situation is far more complicated. The key feature of such a transfer project will not be consistency but the variation between activities and outcomes, and explaining this variation systematically will be the main concern of evaluation across the case study of the transfer project.

A responsive approach

Given the nature of multi-context transfer projects it is clear that they require careful selection of evaluation method. Earlier I discussed several dimensions upon which evaluation approaches could be placed, such as the type of evidence considered, the type of analysis used to identify value and the degree to which outcomes were predicted. In a situation such as a multi-partner transfer project with high complexity the concern of evaluation will not be to generate generalisations but to understand the particular features of the project. This suggests that the use of deeper, qualitative data is more useful, and that it should be analysed by careful consideration of emerging themes. Even more clearly, it implies that outcomes cannot be predicted in advance, but should be approached in an open manner. Together these requirements point towards the use of a responsive evaluation method.

Stake (1972), who developed the responsive approach to evaluation, states that *an educational evaluation is a responsive evaluation if it orients directly more directly to program activities than to program intents, if it responds to audience requirements for information, and if the different value-perspectives present are referred to in reporting the success of the program. In these three separate ways an evaluation plan can be responsive. (p. 1)*

These ideas are helpful for assigning value to complex projects because they allow the criteria for assessment to be developed as the programmes unfold rather than requiring what Stake refers to as “pre-ordinate” evaluation, where the outcomes are pre-specified. However, it is important to emphasise that responsive evaluation still requires a high level of rigour—in fact, in some ways a higher level of rigour than pre-ordinate evaluation. Pre-ordinate evaluation can be relatively linear and unambiguous. Evaluators can be very clear on what they are looking for. In responsive evaluation there is less of a framework, and therefore more of a requirement for the evaluator to justify the conclusions reached. Put simply, in pre-ordinate evaluation the qualities to be measured are specified in advance and the aim is to capture the quantity of those qualities. In responsive evaluation both the qualities and the quantities have to be derived from the experience of those involved in the programme, which feeds into the development and assessment of ideas. Responsive evaluation can stimulate dialogue between the stakeholders as a way to achieve this (Van der Knaap, 2006).

The heart of any approach to evaluation is the type of questions that can be asked in order to generate information that can then be used to assess the value of activities. In the case of the responsive evaluation of a transfer project the first concern must be to identify the overarching purpose of the evaluation. Is it to assess the effectiveness of the different layers and components? If so, against what standards? It seems to me that this is not the most helpful set of questions to be asking. Instead, given the diversity of procedures and context, it seems more useful to focus evaluation on the variation between the different components. This gives rise to questions like “why did this set of outcomes come out of these activities?” “Why were the transfer elements more important here and less important elsewhere?”

Specific questions for the transfer organisation are focused on the communicative aspects of their role. Questions might include:

- Were the transfer elements clearly identified and bounded?
- Were they delivered in a form that made transfer easier?
- Were there mechanisms for reverse transfer?

For the transfer partners, the questions are more focused on the pragmatic aspects of their work. They might include:

- How were the transfer elements identified?
- What did the transfer elements allow the partners to do that they couldn't before?
- What are the expected long term effects on the partner's work?
- What were the challenges of the transfer process?

This open approach to evaluation allows for the unexpected and unanticipated value of the transfer project to be recorded.

Conclusion

In this discussion, I have suggested that responsive evaluation can offer a great deal when complex, multi-layered structures are being evaluated. It allows evaluators, and others involved, to go beyond the linear measurement of expected outcomes and move towards the representation of complexity. It permits not only the “what” of the outcomes to be investigated but also the “why”.

By the end of the evaluation process, it should be possible to provide insights into several aspects of the project. At the most local level, this involves insights into the value of the transfer elements to the participants and staff of the transfer projects, and the extent to which the transfer elements had an impact on their practices. There is also an opportunity to understand why these impacts differed and what factors affect the way transfers play out. At the broader level, there is an opportunity to understand which aspects of the transfer project helped the process of transfer itself.

Transfer projects are permeated with tensions between local and more general factors. The role of the evaluator is to bring these tensions out, and identify strategies that can help to bring them to some degree of resolution. A responsive, dialogic approach to evaluation can be one of the best ways to work towards that outcome.

References

- Bingman, M. B., Ebert, O., & Bell, B. (2000). *Outcomes of participation in adult basic education: The importance of learners' perspectives*. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.
- Power, M. (1999). *The audit society: Rituals of verification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- St.Clair, R., & Belzer, A. (2007). National accountability systems. In P. Campbell (Ed.), *Accountability in Adult Basic Education*. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press.
- Shufflebeam, D. L., & Shinkfield, A. J. (2007). *Evaluation theory, models and application*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Stake, R. E. (1972) *Responsive Evaluation*. Mimeo report. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois. Revised as "To Evaluate an Arts Program." In R. E. Stake (1972)(ed.), *Evaluating the Arts in Education: A Responsive Approach*. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill.
- Van der Knaap, P. (2006) Responsive evaluation and performance management: Overcoming the downsides of policy objectives and performance indicators. *Evaluation 12*, p. 278.

Quality management in the BAGru project

Marcin Gońda, Szymon Świerczewski

1. Quality management in innovation transfer projects

What is the quality management?

Quality management (QM) is a crucial aspect of every Lifelong Learning Programme project. As projects are selected for funding on the assumption that they will deliver innovative products of high quality and thus contribute to improving the overall quality of education in Europe, expectations of the funding body are high. Consequently not only the process of products delivery itself, but also the quality management and evaluation of projects need to be taken seriously.³

The general aim of quality management is to guarantee continuing improvement of a project's realization and its highest possible effectiveness, relevance, utility, impact and sustainability. In other words, QM is focused on optimization of the exchange process within the partnership on key project's aspects and strategies to facilitate an awareness building process on potential effects of the project and learning process for the project's executors.

How to ensure the proper quality of a project implementation?

It is necessary that a LLP partnership is aware of the importance of quality management already at the stage of the project's planning. Thus while preparing the project proposal partners need to:

- define quality-related procedures as well as areas of their application and responsibilities of the partners,
- document how the project will plan, implement and assess the effectiveness of its quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) operations,
- stimulate exchange among the different approaches and foster the integration of strategies, maximizing common elements and approaches and creating synergies and complementarities to be shared within the partnership.

Once the project is selected for funding and gets started it enters a crucial stage, as the arrangements made here determine the course of the whole project. In order to achieve satisfactory quality of the project's implementation, both at the starting point and throughout the whole project's life time the partnership needs to ensure that:

- the tasks, timing, calendar and partners' roles are respected,
- the declared aims and objectives are achieved,
- the communication among the partners and outside the consortium itself is efficient and satisfactory,
- outputs are of proper relevance and quality,
- all partners' contribution is effective.

³ See: http://www.european-project-management.eu/fileadmin/images/Survival_Kit_EN.pdf

What are the areas the quality management executors should pay attention to?

Individuals or institutions responsible for implementation of quality management arrangements need to focus on four basic dimensions of quality management:

1. coherence of the project with project proposal
2. quality of results
3. transnational cooperation
4. impact on target groups.

It is thus recommended the project executors answer below questions regarding all four dimensions and their subcategories:

1. Coherence of project with project proposal:

Schedule (respecting deadlines)

- If partners committed their tasks within deadlines?
- If final products are ready according to a timetable?

Dissemination and exploitation

- If the project has been correctly promoted to target groups?

Deliverables

- Whether results contribute to the achievement of the aims of the project?
- Whether results are going to be sustainable after the project completion?

2. Quality of results

Relevance

- If developed results cover the identified needs?

Innovations

- Whether developed results (products/methodologies) have innovative features?

Transferability

- Whether results (products/methods) can be adapted to other target groups?

3. Transnational cooperation:

Effectiveness of transnational meetings

- Whether meetings frequency is adequate according to the number set in application?
- Whether all partners participated in the predefined meetings during the lifetime of the project?

Effectiveness of transnational cooperation

- If a project's transnational dimension adds value compared to a national project?
- Whether cooperation can be improved?

Learning self satisfaction

- Whether participating organizations and individuals learn through the project?
- Whether they are satisfied with project's outcomes?

4. Impact on target groups:

Needs analysis

- Whether target group's characteristics and specific needs in the particular area have been taken into account?
- Whether planned products fit in target-group's needs (if the planned products substantially help the end users to increase their orientation on present labour market)?

Evaluation of project products by target group

- Whether trainees have acquired new qualifications that are useful for their long-term employment?
- Whether products have innovative elements?
- Whether products can be used by other groups?

Dissemination in target groups/national context

- Whether dissemination actions suit needs of identified target groups?

How to monitor quality management?

While implementing the project, individuals or institutions responsible for quality management must be directly involved in the whole project management procedures. It is necessary they have access to all documentation and knowledge of all arrangements elaborated by the whole partnership. As members of the project board they can affect the project's further development whenever the risk of improper quality appears.

In order to monitor quality management they can make use of the following quantitative and qualitative tools in which both the project partners and target groups are involved:

- Analysis of project documents,
- Observation,
- Monitoring through face-to-face meetings, communication platforms, e-mails etc.,
- Self-evaluation (on individual and institutional level) by partners and target groups.

2. Quality management in the BAGru project

Quality management has been foreseen as an important part of the BAGru project concept. Activities in this respect has been assigned to Work package 5. The institution in charge to ensure its implementation was the Polish partner – Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna w Łodzi (AHE).

As a result of discussion within the BAGru project board (BBB – Germany, BEST – Austria, AHE – Poland) the following activities have been designated:

- recording adherence to time schedules,
- tracking development and implementation of deliverables,
- recording contact and support between the project's leader (bbb) and the partners,
- recording contact and support between institutions responsible for evaluation and dissemination and the partners,
- monitoring dissemination and exploitation activities,
- evaluation of partners' meetings by on-line questionnaire,
- evaluation of the partners' experience of the first and second phase of the project by on-line questionnaire and face-to-face interviews with the partners' representatives
- evaluation of the project outcomes by participants of the project's dissemination workshop in Vienna on 27-28.06.2011.

Particular attention was given to self-evaluation of the partners' meetings and the feedbacks on the 1st and 2nd phase of the project.

3. BAGru project's 1st and 2nd phase evaluation

In order to analyze the implementation of the both BAGru project's first stage ("preparation of innovation transfer") as well as its second phase ("innovation transfer") the surveys on partners' opinions were conducted. The aim of the surveys was to give information about project development as well as the quality of the project's activities and products. The surveys were conducted between July 2010 and May 2011 with usage of online survey tool: surveymonkey.com.

Furthermore, in order to deepen the overview of the examined challenges interviews with the partners' representatives were carried out during the project meeting in Swedish Åhus (04.2011). The below report presents both quantitative and qualitative analysis of partners' expectations and opinions on the project's delivery.

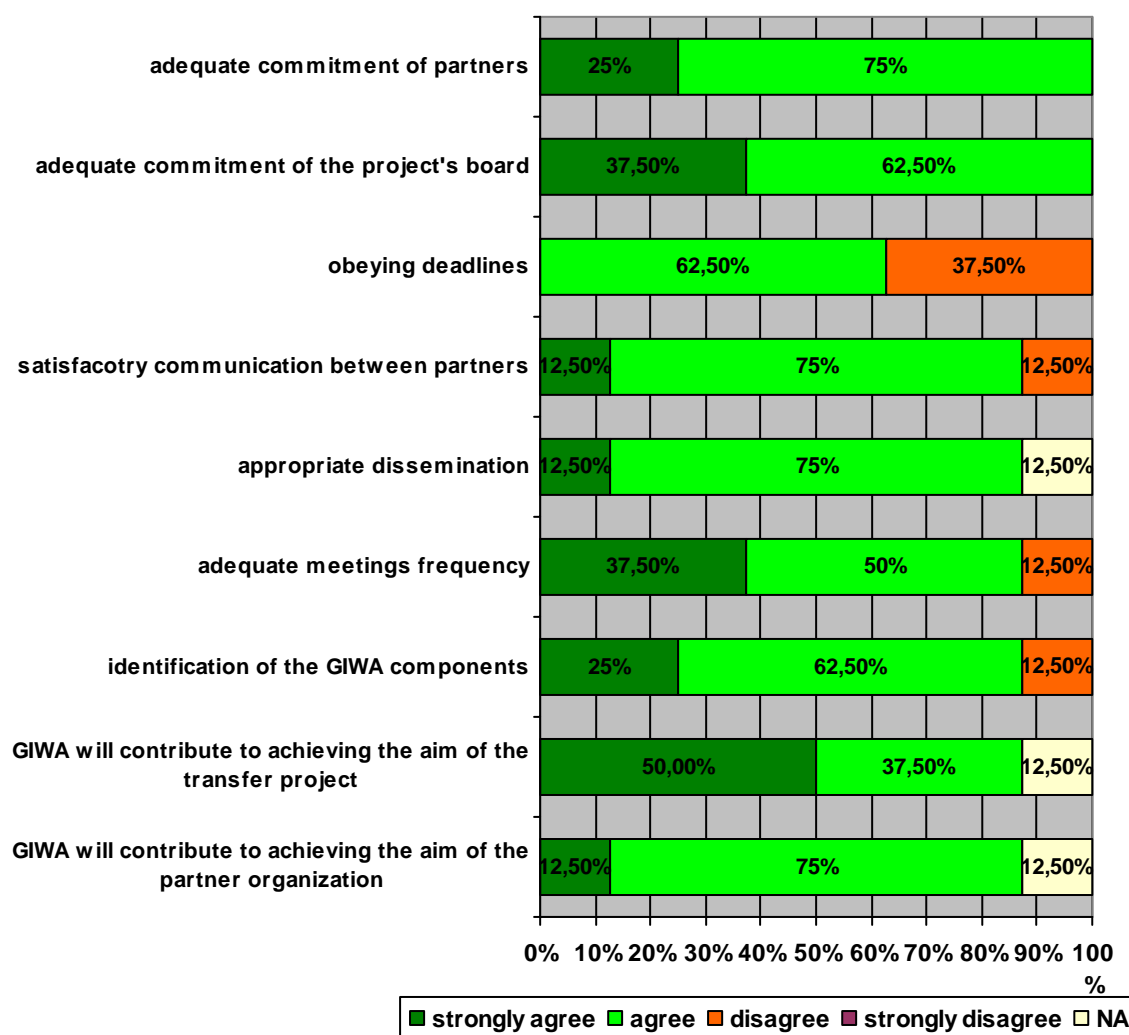
Satisfaction on the project's implementation

In the first part of the online survey questionnaire partners were asked about other partners' and the project board's involvement in BAGru's activities. They were also asked about quality of communication within the project and, finally, about understanding aims and structure of GiWA as the "transfer offering" project network.

Collected responses show all interviewees were satisfied with the first year of the BAGru project. Despite some partners' (37,5%) noticed that other participating organizations do not obey deadlines set at the project's agenda, partners generally appreciate other organizations' involvement and good communication between the project's partners. All partners seem also to understand the GiWA components. Therefore they conceive it as an important tool in both achieving the final aims of the BAGru project and the development of their organizations.

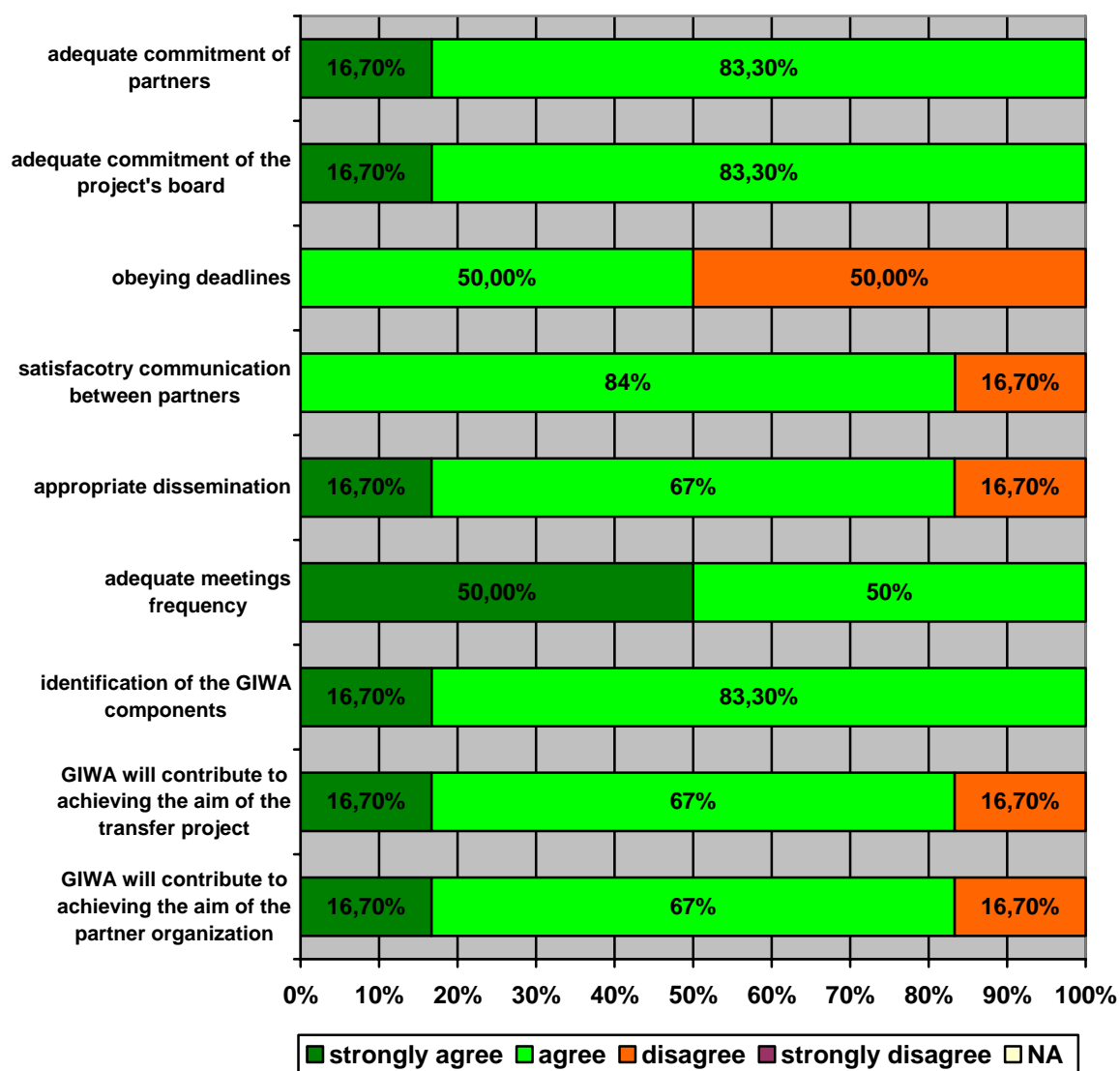
Similar opinions were given in next answers when partners' were asked about strengths and weaknesses of the first stage of the BAGru project.

Chart 1. Strong and weak features of the BAGru project (1st stage)



On the other hand the significant improvement in the project's implementation was noted during its second stage (second year). The GiWA components became more clear and more applicable to partners' local contexts. However, an continuous challenge in the proper project delivery remained poor obeying of deadlines by partners.

Chart 2. Strong and weak features of the BAGru project (2nd stage)



Strengths of the project

Among the strengths that were identified by interviewed partners many referred to the quality of the partnership itself. Interviewees emphasized that it is a good **partnership**, which involves experienced partners and experienced project manager. It is due to the fact that partners have good experience and strong networks. Commitment and flexibility of the project management group is also of special significance to the project implementation.

However, the key feature is its strong theoretical basis – **GiWA**. It gives concrete and practical attitudes to basic education. At the same time, using the knowledge and outputs of another project – **GiWA** – creates large opportunities for its transferability to various natures (international context) and the practical context and potential of use of the expertise of the “target” partners in France, Slovenia and Sweden. The **GiWA** idea was previously not clear for some partners but thanks to honourable and intensive dis-

cussion, as well as bilateral meetings, concrete arrangements and commitments of each partner were set.

Weaknesses of the project

On the other hand, the interviewed partners noticed some weaknesses that potentially might have interfered proper implementation of the project. Despite some partners appreciated good communication within the project's partnership, other partners at the same time argued on not sufficient communication between all partners. The partnership spent much time before everybody was clear of what to do and what was expected. As a result, it took some time to get the transfer from GiWA to BAGru cleared, as the GiWA components were at first not concretely enough. This obstacle seems to be overcome after the second project phase but still some of the GiWA approaches seem a bit abstract / theoretical, so not always easy to transfer into concrete forms of implementation, thus the partnership should particularly worked on it from now on.

It was therefore interesting that for one part of partnership the idea of GiWA project was clear and understandable, whereas for others it was too theoretical and uneasy to adapt to local contexts. Thus this division of partners' attitudes towards the project and its theoretical basis (GiWA) must have been overcome in order to implement it in partners' countries successfully.

Recommendations for project management

However, in order to deal with challenges that were identified by the partners, there were some proposals that should be implemented both in terms of project management and transnational cooperation of partners.

Interviews expected that the project coordinator would be still more involved in communication between partners. At the same time the coordinator should be even a bit more strict / rigid in reminding partners of deadlines and to-dos. Furthermore it was necessary to enhance the existing milestone plans and identify more clearer the expected results and products in order to prepare the final products in a realistic time schedule.

To be improved in terms of transnational cooperation of partners

The above recommendations also referred to the whole partnership. There was a need for higher involvement of partners via e-mails and thus more discussion about the project's implementation. It particularly refers to the transfer partners. What is more, some partners need to show more active communication, i.e. they did their work but didn't always let the others know contemporary about the current state they are in.

Lessons learnt

Nevertheless the partners conceived the involvement in the project as fruitful. It was mainly due to innovative character of the project's outcomes. As one of the interviewees mentioned: [What I have learnt are] "new approaches and methods in training activity: this new situation is very different from usual practice in which one person holds the knowledge especially in training leading to qualification. The project also introduce new method of helpful mentoring, particularly after work placement or periods and writing

report taking account of a discussion workshop about job related problems and questions, all together in a small circle of co trainers.”

Furthermore, participation in the project helped to develop partners’ knowledge and competences in their daily work. Despite challenges of transferring key concepts between contexts it the project gives – as mentioned by two other partners – very much information and more intensive understanding about the different situations of education and vocational training in each country. [It also provides] new interesting issues about training models in the basic skills area; fruitful exchange of expertise among partners with different backgrounds – stimulating for own activities.

Overall opinion of the 1st and 2nd phase of the project

Generally, all partners were satisfied with realization of the project during its first two stages. In fact, despite in the second phase the number of responders conceiving the project’s run as “fair” has grown, none of them perceived it negatively.

To sum up, despite the partners’ general satisfaction with the BAGru project, they noticed some problems (particularly lack of proper communication between partners and lack of clarity as far as transfer of GiWA project into local contexts is concern) that had to be overcome by both the project coordinator and rest of partners in order to achieve aims that had been foreseen in the project’s application.

4. BAGru project’s meetings evaluation

In order to analyze the implementation of the BAGru project it was also necessary to evaluate the consortium’s satisfaction on the project’s meetings. According to the project’s application there were five meetings organized: the kick-off meeting in Dortmund in Germany (12.2009), the second meeting in Ljubljana in Slovenia (05.2010), the third one in Montpellier in France (10.2010), whereas the fourth one in Swedish Åhus (04.2011). The last meeting, which was part of the project’s final dissemination conference, took place in Vienna (06.2011).

The surveys were conducted between July 2010 and March 2011 (after each meeting) with usage of online survey tool: surveymonkey.com.

All partners’ responses were collected. The below report presents selected evaluation findings of consortium’s satisfaction on the project’s meetings (evaluation results of Vienna meeting that were collected after publication of this paper).

Topics raised during partners’ meetings

According to the conducted surveys the entire consortium was satisfied with all meetings’ organization. Partners appreciated the materials provided during meetings, premises where they were held, as well as other participants’ involvement. No significant differences in their opinion on logistics of the meetings were noted. However, more detailed information on project’s run provide questions on topics that should have been more or less emphasized during those meetings.

As far as the kick-off meeting in Dortmund is concerned the partners suggested that more concrete content of transfer projects and basic education and literacy in each country should have been given during meetings. Furthermore they wanted also the results, evaluation and impact of the GiWA project to be more emphasized. During the second meeting in Ljubljana partners expected that the meeting would tackle the issues of financial management, once again the plans of the three transfer partners. It is however worth to underline that the suggested issues were later discussed during the third meeting in Montpellier in France (10.2010). In Montpellier all respondents noted that none of topics raised should have been changed. One participant noticed that evaluation part should have been added to agenda. Other participants would like to emphasize more some topics during next meetings:

- feedback of each partner about the potential problems, project realization..., the obvious problems with communication between partners-it would be OK to find the way how to overcome this problem;
- a common structure to present the final products;
- the next concrete steps for the transfer projects regarding to the evaluation and quality management work package.

The growing understanding of the project's aims was confirmed later on by participants during meeting in Åhus in Sweden (04.2011) as only one partner noted that it should have been "a little bit more details about the transfer Projects".

It is also worth to notice that the first meeting in Dortmund not fulfilled expectation of several participants. Positive opinions referred to partners' involvement and atmosphere of the meeting:

- it was fine to get to know the partners and their institutions and experience with target groups;
- overall work atmosphere very good.

Partners also liked the overall run of meeting, for example:

- Overall the meeting met the expectations, but there was uncertainty about what was expected of us in terms of what to do. This was later clarified in a good and flexible way in an extra meeting with the project management.
- It showed up very clearly which additional information was needed to prepare transfer of innovation from GiWA to BAGru.
- It made very clear what the challenges of the transfer of innovation are, if there is not a transfer of tools and methods, but of an idea, a philosophy and concepts

On the other hand, partners that were not satisfied with the meeting outcomes argued that:

- Transfer was not very clearly identified between methodology tools or philosophy.
- Transfer project contents were not prepared and methodology was not developed as accepted level.

As far as the meeting in Ljubljana is concerned, once again participants explained their answers mainly referring to the project's progress and overall good meeting's run:

- transfer ideas were more concrete;
- agreements for reporting the transfer were done;
- showed the practical progress very well, especially in terms of target partners' plans and ideas for concrete implementation of GiWA contents and approaches;
- I got a good view about what we are going to achieve in the project from all partners.

Furthermore, the meeting in Montpellier fulfilled expectations of all partners. The main explanation of being satisfied seems to be improvement in communication between partners and time for discussion about future task of each partner:

- Very clear overview and agreement about next steps, which will be crucial.
- It was a crucial meeting. Finally all tasks have been clearly divided between partners. Now everyone knows what are his tasks for the next year.
- The meeting was well organized and we moved forward in project work. We also clarified communication and project terms issues.
- Every partner presented his own transfer activities, we raised the quality of the project, which was quite good. We also discuss about the final products on very concrete level.
- Transfer-ideas are now much clearer contributions to the products are contracted structure of products is well developed.

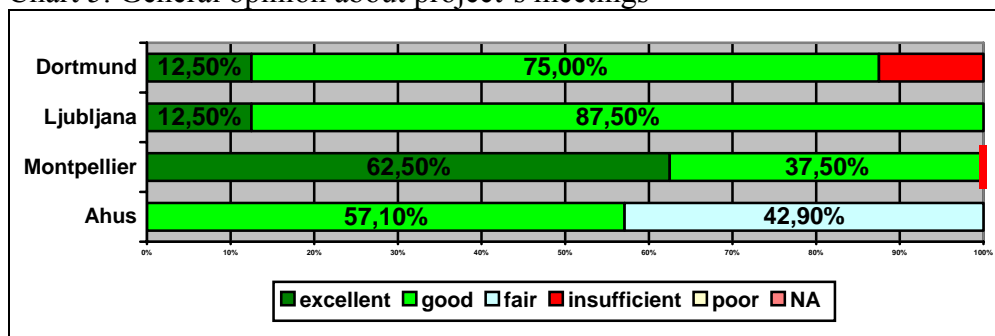
Similar opinions were presented during meeting in Åhus. Participants were satisfied with the results of discussions since the meeting gave them opportunity to make arrangements for the final stage of the project:

- We needed to have things clarified, mostly the products since there have been some uncertainties and changes over time.
- Further clarification of our institution tasks.
- We find good appointments about the BAGru products and the dissemination conference.
- The main focus was on the final steps of product preparation, In this connection, all presentations were extensive and clear and to-dos were clearly identified and agreed upon.

Overall opinion about the meetings

Despite the above mentioned unappreciated issues, generally participants were satisfied with both meetings' runs. Most of them assessed meetings as "good" or "excellent". Only one partner considered meeting in Dortmund as "insufficient". It seems that it was due to primal lack of clarity that was noticed as far as the project's aims are concerned. The given answers on meetings reflect also general opinions of the partners about the first year of the project. Interestingly, overall opinions on the meeting in Montpellier were even better. Participants signed only two sorts of answers: excellent and good. It seems that it is a result of possibility to discuss the partners finally had during the meeting.

Chart 5. General opinion about project's meetings



5. External experts evaluation

The last project's meeting took place in Vienna in June 2011. It accompanied the final dissemination conference that was aimed at presenting the transfer projects and, in addition, drawing first conclusions based on the group work and discussions with participants from several countries. Invited guests included representatives of employment service agencies, enterprises and various educational organisations. At the end of the conference all participants (in total 26 people) were asked to fill in paper questionnaire on the BAGru project. Their answers give additional valuable information of the project's results.

It seems it is a result of respondents' general interest in making use of BAGru products in their everyday work practice. About 80% of all conference participants (21 people) declared that they would use BAGru methods at work. They mainly emphasized that:

- Innovative, interesting methods and approaches of implementing common knowledge about job seeking.
- I will try to change attitude to my work, use the conceptions of experience of Papi-lot.
- I will share the knowledge and products of the project with my colleagues who are working in workplace education. This will encourage colleagues to draw on reasons from across Europe, which will enhance their own work practice.
- Not only methods and products but committed ideas + concepts like demands for qualification and professionalizing the trainers/teachers/counsellors in the field of basic education.
- Good addition to our understanding and realisation of work-related basic education for different target groups/individuals.
- Practical, close to our reality, good for flexible use.

Furthermore, despite some partners have already known methods being used within BAGru, the conference enriched their knowledge in this respect:

- We already use them, but with some new inputs from the conference, we will enrich the methods.
- We already use some of them. We'll go on with that.

As a consequence, conference participants had very positive overall opinion about the meeting. None of them found it insufficient or poor.

In the same time several opinions of workshop participants confirmed problems that had been previously faced by the project's partners, namely: lack of its clarity and concrete results. When asked about issues that should have been emphasized more during the conference, respondents noted:

- more focus on concrete results and measures; most presentations only gave a very general overview,
- next steps – how to implement (& also improve) results, which have been achieved so far,
- more methodology, more examples,
- concrete examples,
- not a topic but more discussion with the whole group would have been nice,
- more time to get more of concrete realisation,
- concrete insight in transfer project practice with case studies, examples etc.,
- something more about GiWA, and if we can receive some materials about this projects,
- BAGru products – concrete guidelines for correction.

6. Conclusions

According to the presented above results of both evaluation of the BAGru project's first and second phase as well as evaluation of the consortium meetings, the process of broadening knowledge and growing awareness on the project's aims among the partnership was proceeding with every consecutive month.

Extensive methods of quality management led to diagnosis of some serious obstacles in the first stage of the project (mainly lack of clarity regarding the project's goals). Problems that were reported by partners during project's meetings or via on-line surveys resulted in changing management methods by the coordinating institution. Furthermore, the process of tracking development and implementation of deliverables enabled the project's board to react immediately to arising problems.

The presented results also show how important is the process of common elaboration of a given project's aims and outcomes during meetings. They give opportunity to discuss and overcome obstacles that every consortium face during a project's lifetime.

Annexe

BAGru – brief description

About the project

The BAGru project that runs between October 2009 and September 2011 is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme and is funded by the European Commission to improve the employment opportunities for groups facing particular challenges at the labour market e.g. insufficiently qualified persons.

BAGru, with its transfer activities, is based on the outcomes of the project consortium “GiWA – basic skills in labour and economy” of the research programme “Research and Development for Alphabetization and Basic Education”. (www.giwa-grundbildung.de) supported by the German Ministry of Education and Research (September 2007 to October 2010)

As has been demonstrated through the EU initiative “New Skills for new Jobs”, there is a distinct lack of developments which focus on furthering the literacy capabilities of socially privileged and slow learning adolescents.

The coordinator of the project is “bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung” from Dortmund, Germany and the partnerships to enable the progression of this project involve the collaboration between these European countries: Austria, UK, Sweden, Slovenia, Poland and France. The three transfer activities which the BAGru project focuses on include the potential end users (diverse groups with special difficulties in the labour market), the diverse contexts of education (vocational education, pre-vocational qualification measures, programmes for disadvantaged, operational continuing education) and instructors, teachers, trainers and advisors as multipliers.

With this in mind, the BAGru project builds bridges between the individual from these countries and the companies, labour administration and institutions of learning there within to improve qualifications and confidence when seeking employment opportunities. This progress is adapted accordingly by taking into consideration the unique living and working environments which these target groups are subject to and in view of that supporting their education, training and employment developments.

For further information on the BAGru project please see the official project website: <http://www.bagru.eu/>

BAGru – consortium

bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung, Dortmund (DE) – www.bbb-dortmund.de

BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH, Wien (AT) – www.best.at

University of Glasgow, College of Social Sciences, Glasgow, Scotland (UK) – www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences

Folkuniversitetet Kristianstad (SE) – www.folkuniversitetet.se

Papilot Zavod za vzpodbujanje in razvijanje kvalitete življenja, Ljubljana (SI) – www.papilot.si

Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna w Łodzi, Lodz (PL) – www.ahe.lodz.pl

IRFA Sud Formation professionnelle en Languedoc Roussillon et Midi Pyrénées, Montpellier (FR) – www.irfasud.fr

Authors

Dr. Ralf St. Clair, Professor of Lifelong Literacy (Social Justice Place and Lifelong Education), Dean of Graduate Studies (Social Sciences College Senior Management), University of Glasgow, College of Social Sciences. Professional activities in adult education, especially in adult literacy and numeracy. Experiences as evaluator of andragogy programmes in Europe and North America. Publication of numerous papers and lastly of the book „Why Literacy Matters – Understanding the Effects of Literacy Education for Adults“ (2010)

Marcin Gońda, Akademia Humainstyczno-Ekonomiczna w Łodzi, has a vast knowledge and experience in administrative and financial management of LLP projects. He has also participated in many research projects co-financed within the 7. Framework Programme, European Social Fund and European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. Marcin Gońda has also qualifications in analyzing job markets as he is also a PhD candidate in area of Sociology at the University of Lodz.

Tord Hansson, Bachelor of Economic, Coach, Instructor, Projectmanager, Teacher (full-time) at the Folkuniversitetet in Kristianstad, Sweden. Main activities and responsibilities: Coordinator for several regional projects for social disadvantaged groups, unemployed individuals, individuals on long term sick leave and immigrants. Coaching and mentoring of Coach-Trainings.

Rosemarie Klein, studied educational sciences and graduated with a diploma in pedagogical studies, managing director of bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung, Dortmund, management consultant, learning counsellor, main activities: learning counselling, discontinuous employment biographies, work related and vocational continuing education and training, Competence portfolio / ProfilPASS, impact research, assistant lecturer, non-fiction author, management of the GiWA-project co-operation.

Helmut Kronika, management director of BEST Institute of Continuous Vocational Qualification Training and Personnel Training Ltd, Vienna. Main activities: international activities of BEST (development projects and training projects in several countries). Since 1993 professional activities in adult education: Teaching and Counselling with job seekers, seminar management as well as concept development and evaluation of educational programmes for disadvantaged target groups, amongst others in the range of innovative basic education.

Špela Reš, Psychologist. Project manager for international projects and leader of project activities at Papilot institute in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Long year experiences in informal education, professional rehabilitation and active policy of employment as well as in counselling the marginalized groups of people. Implementation of employment policy reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Besides: Volunteer in the woman safety house as a facilitator of psycho-social group. External expert in local university for informal education.

Denis Rouquié, Psychologist, clinical and human resource. Since 1992 with IRFA Sud in training activities with unemployed people and low qualified trainees, coordination and administration of European projects. Experience in multicultural environment. Creating tools and methods using electronic data processing. Software particularly adapted for competence portfolio, especially the French „bilan de compétence“.

Szymon Świerczewski, Akademia Humainstyczno-Ekonomiczna w Łodzi, has finished MA studies in Marketing and Management and post-graduate studies in Film and Television Production Management. He is a specialist in areas of marketing, advertising and public relations. Mr. Świerczewski has vast experience in area management and promotion of projects co-financed within the Lifelong Learning Programme and European Social Fund.

Dieter Zisenis, studied educational sciences and graduated with a diploma in pedagogical studies, self employed organisational consultant, partner in the bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung Dortmund. Main activities: concept development and project management in vocational education and training, consulting service for local authorities and enterprises in the social economy, career and learning counselling.