



Education and Culture DG

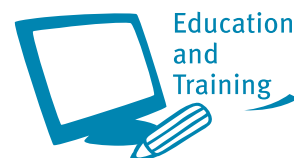
Lifelong Learning Programme



GRUNDTVIG ADULT EDUCATION

Mobility creates opportunities

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Grundtvig: It's always a good time to learn

Until recently, people generally associated learning with the education they received at school and university. Today, Europe is undergoing a major transformation to become a world-leading knowledge based society. This means that knowledge, and the innovation it sparks, are the EU's most valuable assets. The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) supports individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating opportunities for learning across Europe.

A range of trans-national mobility activities within the Lifelong Learning Programme offers pupils, students, trainees, adults, professionals, professors and teachers a unique chance to obtain education, training and work experience in a foreign country. Thus, they acquire new expertise and professional skills and in addition develop their capacities to adapt to new environments. Mobility activities are supported in all of the four sectoral programmes of the Lifelong Learning Programme, i.e. Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig.

Grundtvig is a prime example of how Europe creates opportunities for its citizens. Teachers, trainers, tutors and other staff of working with adult education move to other countries and come back with a bag full of experience. Apart from knowledge in new subjects or in teaching matters, in better organisational skills and in intercultural understanding, they acquire an improved command of other languages and deeper insight into the host countries.

One of the key effects of the mobility actions is the mutual understanding and trust they create among the education and training systems of the countries participating in the LLP, which helps to improve education structures and supports cooperation for a European Area of Education and Training.

In order to ensure quality, the European Commission has established a European Quality Charter for Mobility, which provides recommendations to organisations responsible for mobility. The exchange lifespan includes preparatory measures, implementation and follow-up – three stages that must be considered as a whole for a project of quality.

I am pleased to present the outstanding projects and courses included in this brochure to demonstrate the potential and positive effects of mobility of staff working on the adult learning sector. These examples of good practices at European level can provide inspiration to potential project coordinators and course developers in mobility actions. They should encourage European citizens to seize the opportunities that mobility in Europe has to offer to improve knowledge and skills, enlarge horizons and meet new friends and colleagues throughout Europe.



Ján Figel'

Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Youth

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jan Figel'.

Countries participating in the Grundtvig Programme



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Why the name ‘Grundtvig’?

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Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872), a Danish clergyman and writer, is regarded as the founder of the Nordic tradition of ‘learning for life’. His ‘folk high school’ concept was based on the idea that education must be available to all citizens throughout life and should encompass not only knowledge but also civic responsibility and personal and cultural development.

It is always a good time to learn! – The Grundtvig Programme

An effective Europe-wide system for lifelong learning is central to achieving the European Union’s ambitious policy objective of raising economic growth and competitiveness while nonetheless strengthening social inclusion. Adult education has a vital role to play in this regard – in raising the level of knowledge, skills and competences among the adult population, in providing a crucial second chance for the large number of adults who leave school early, and in helping to address the societal challenge of Europe’s ageing population.

Recognising these needs, the European Commission has launched a new policy initiative – the Action Plan for Adult Learning – designed to boost the attractiveness and accessibility of adult learning opportunities, improve the quality of adult education provision, implement systems for recognising the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, and improve the monitoring of the adult education sector.

The Grundtvig Programme for adult learning has both contributed strongly

to the development of these initiatives and is a key instrument for their further development and implementation. It provides the vital bridge between policy and practice, enabling adult educators in over 30 countries to work together on developing innovative approaches, giving local providers the chance to link up with partners abroad to develop joint cooperative initiatives, and opening up a wide range of opportunities for adult education staff and learners to cross national borders in search of new opportunities for training and knowledge.

Launched in 2000 in the framework of the Socrates II Programme, Grundtvig covers all levels and sectors of adult education and all forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal. It is open to all sectors of the adult population, but gives special attention to those with particular needs: people lacking basic education and qualifications, people living in rural or disadvantaged areas, people who are disadvantaged for socio-economic reasons, people with disabilities or severe learning problems, and social

groups which are “hard to reach” and which do not generally tend to take part in educational initiatives. With the adoption of the Lifelong Learning Programme in 2007, Grundtvig has also been given the strategic objective of responding to the educational challenge of an ageing population in Europe.

In the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme, Grundtvig continues to support several actions:

- Individual mobility to further the professional development of trainers/teachers and other staff in adult education
- Multilateral Projects and Networks in the field of adult education
- Learning Partnerships between adult education institutions from different European countries.

European mobility and cooperation as a means of improving the quality of adult education staff

6 | High quality teachers, trainers and management staff are vital to achieving the attractive and effective adult education system which Europe needs and deserves. That is why one of the main priorities for Grundtvig is to support cooperation projects, training courses and individual mobility activities aimed at improving the In-Service Training of all categories of personnel involved in the adult education sector. This is the focus of the 2008 Grundtvig Success Stories selected for inclusion in this brochure.

This Brochure seeks to highlight in particular, the benefits which mobility can bring for teachers/trainers in adult education throughout the European Union and the other countries participating in the Programme (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey). Every year thousands of educational experts, teachers, trainers and other staff involved in adult education, meet fellow colleagues when taking part in Grundtvig mobility activities such as In-Service Training courses, in another European country.

Many of the Grundtvig In-Service Training courses are derived from multilateral Grundtvig projects designed to produce courses of this

kind. Multilateral projects develop high quality didactical material, modern didactical approaches, new ways of valuing non-formal learning, innovative guidance and counselling methods for adult learning, ICT-based information tools and a host of other useful products for the adult education community in Europe. For such projects to achieve their full potential, good dissemination of their results is vital, and the organisation of In-Service Training courses is a particularly effective dissemination tool.

Based on their analysis of current trends and needs in adult education, project partners from different European countries combine their skills and expertise to develop teaching material and training courses for education staff on such widely varying topics as basic skills and key competences, learning in later life, prison education and education for ex-offenders, language learning, internet use and ICT, cultural issues, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, European history, integration and society, literacy and numeracy, environmental issues, counselling and guidance.

This brochure presents examples of successful Grundtvig In-Service Training courses developed by multilateral projects.

More information on developing such In-Service Training courses to be found on the following website:

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index.htm>



Grants for individual participants

Once the courses have been developed, Grundtvig then provides individual adult educators with grants to enable them to participate. During the Socrates II programme from 2000–2006, Grundtvig provided some 7,000 grants for these In-Service Training activities – a real contribution to advancing the development of a European dimension in adult education.

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What are the advantages of Grundtvig In-Service mobility?

As the enthusiastic reports from grant-holders show, training events of this kind offer participants a wide range of benefits:

- the European character of the courses makes it possible to learn with participants from at least three different countries, thereby extending participants' professional horizons in a way which would not be possible in a course in their own country – the key distinguishing feature of the Grundtvig courses;
- teaching by a multinational team offers a more international view with respect to the course topics. The presence of trainers from several countries adds a valuable contribution to the development of the European dimension and to the raising of quality in adult education;
- participation in a training course can be a real eye-opener for adult educators into the methods and experiences of colleagues in other countries and in this way is often a stepping stone to further participation in Grundtvig, for example by helping them find partners for a Grundtvig Learning Partnership;
- many participants learn for the first time at such courses about the activities of European forums and adult education associations, which then become important sources of information in their future work;
- almost all participants come home with an enlarged circle of professional contacts – and often personal friends: their own 'European network';
- thanks to attending such courses, participants report greatly increased awareness of the concepts of 'European consciousness' and 'European responsibility'; they become more involved and interested in European news and European affairs generally.

In this way, broader European goals such as promoting multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism are also served by events of this kind.

In all these ways Grundtvig In-Service Training courses and individual mobility grants give a lasting and positive stimulus to the development of adult education in many European countries – and a stronger European dimension in this sector of learning.

Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training

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The Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination project developed and managed a new training programme to address diversity and discrimination issues around religion. The programme included subject-specific modules on anti-Semitism and discrimination against Muslims, and is designed to help enhance adult education in areas where information about religious diversity and discrimination is needed.

This project took on the development of a new training programme for adult educators addressing issues of religious diversity and anti-discrimination. It aims to provide them with the tools to transform obstacles presented by religious differences into opportunities.

The training programme is not an interfaith dialogue programme and does not teach various religious traditions. Rather, it is designed in the spirit of anti-prejudice and diversity education, recognising and respecting multicultural diversity. It confronts prejudice and discrimination and develops intercultural skills, bringing a topic to adult educators who may or may not have religious expertise or affiliation.

By working with educators that are active in community associations and by providing them with concrete educational tools, it is possible to raise awareness around issues of religious diversity. The training course has been developed as a means for facilitating dialogue and the exchange of experiences in areas of religion and culture.

Participants have the option to receive university-level credit for their work in the training programme through the University of Derby (Learning Through Work Scheme). These credits may also be used in the European Credit Transfer System.



Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training



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SPICES – Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills

From 2005 to 2007, the SPICES partnership, which consists of five universities and two non-profit organisations, developed a training course and supporting materials to provide knowledge and skills to educators who intend to create tailor-made courses for professionals working with foreign citizens.

The project is based on the observation that foreigners often experience communication obstacles in certain institutional situations, and that most textbooks do not pay enough attention to such linguistic-communicative needs. In response, the SPICES project developed a training course that supports teachers of second languages, police officers, civil servants, medical doctors, operators in migrant centres, and other professionals who work with foreign citizens, to improve their methods of communication and interaction.

The work is based on research from participating countries that analysed current intercultural communication and language training courses, as well as identified major communication and cultural obstacles that foreign citizens and those dealing with them face in institutional settings. The subject's relevance becomes apparent when considering the variety of situations it includes, e.g. detention centres for asylum seekers, hospitals, teacher-parent interaction, universities involved in exchange

programmes, immigration authorities, public services and many others. Methods used in the training course, such as simulation and role-play, problem-solving, and life stories encourage the active involvement of participants and help relate the content to real-life situations. Participants that complete the training course, which includes preparation work and a post-course assignment, are awarded 12 credits through the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The research findings, along with a glossary and more information about the project, can be found on the project's web site. The main page is available in seven languages. To learn more about the training course click on "SPICES Conditions and Certification" in the "Training" section.

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SPICES – Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills

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Stars under the Cobblestones – Multicultural skills for teachers of adult education

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European teachers and trainers are on the frontline of globalisation and work with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The aim of this Grundtvig training course is to provide adult-education teachers and trainers with the skills necessary to successfully do their jobs.

Multicultural integration and inclusion offer a challenging hurdle for European adult-education professionals. Teachers in adult education must have the skills and expertise to understand and recognise a multicultural environment as a valuable learning resource. The Uniting Europe Through Cultures Project is working to develop a comprehensive training programme for teachers in adult education. The project hopes to provide them with the tools they need in the form of a skills handbook, developed co-operatively through a previous project.

The main educational concepts are based on experiential learning and theories of narrative and analysis. Under the motto “Stars under the Cobblestones”, the course aims to: improve the training of adult education professionals in the areas of intercultural relations and European identity;

introduce them to skills vital to teaching in a multicultural environment; and promote the study of languages that are not readily offered in European educational institutions. The training course has already been held five times and three more sessions are planned for 2008. This demonstrates the quality and success of the project as well as the strong demand for this type of training.

The course materials have been developed as an electronic handbook and include theoretical materials for working in a multicultural environment. The handbook also contains practical examples of how to teach in a classroom with students representing a number of different nationalities. It is easy to see how the project supports mobility in Europe since it increases cultural awareness and develops intercultural skills, themselves the cornerstones of European mobility. The project has received very positive feedback from its participants who testify to its thoroughness and depth of content.



Stars under the Cobblestones – Multicultural skills for teachers of adult education

UNEC
UNITING EUROPE THROUGH CULTURES

the business club
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TEACH – Teaching European Active Citizenship

Active European citizenship is one of the most important attributes of European integration and inclusion, but is also one of the most difficult subjects to teach. The TEACH project provides a training programme to help adult educators overcome exactly this problem.

Active citizenship is considered to be one of the most vital factors for European development and there is a strong demand for ways to teach and provide training in this field. The project Teaching European Active Citizenship (TEACH) has developed just such a training programme for adult education professionals.

The main objectives of the programme are to further train people teaching active citizenship in non-formal adult education, and to provide participants with an analysis of skills related to active citizenship. Participants will also learn invaluable tools to teach these skills and come to understand best-practice examples of active citizenship throughout Europe.

The training materials are a combination of lectures, workshops, discussion panels and case studies. The courses, over five days, are in the format of face-to-face training, and also include a preparatory phase during which participants receive study materials and access to an interac-

tive web platform. The programme is divided into different modules and the materials are succinct and appropriate to the subject.

After the course, the web platform remains available for follow-up discussions and for continued use by course lecturers. The TEACH project gives Europe a practical and tangible approach to provide training in the difficult, but nevertheless extremely important subject of active European citizenship. This will have a direct impact on mobility throughout Europe because it is necessary for citizens to have a deep knowledge of their rights and responsibilities if they are to develop them.

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TEACH – Teaching European Active Citizenship

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LLML – Lifelong Museum Learning

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The Lifelong Museum Learning project is born out of the fact that museums and other non-formal learning environments have a lot to offer in terms of bringing education closer to citizens and in providing learning opportunities for everyone.

As part of this project, museums all over Europe set out to review and revise their relationship with society and local communities. They launched significant actions to create social change and integration, as well as to get more people interested in education.

Although some museums have started community projects, this shift in focus needs to be supported by supplying the necessary skills and expertise to educational staff at even more institutions. The innovation necessary for opening up to new audiences (adult learners in particular) requires a major commitment to training initiatives by museum educators.

The Lifelong Museum Learning project addresses museum educators and cultural mediators in charge of adult education in museums. It is also targeted at institutions willing to develop programmes for adults, to be implemented in museums themselves. The project focuses on designing and delivering training materials to support museum educators in this new challenge. To this end, project activities are based on practices and case studies developed at the European level, and on the expertise and contributions of experienced trainers in the field.

Two training courses for museum educational staff were organised in the project's framework and offered museum practitioners the opportunity to further develop their skills for working with under-represented segments of the European public. The courses also provided participants the possibility to exchange experiences with colleagues in different countries and institutional frameworks.



LLML – Lifelong Museum Learning


Lifelong Museum Learning

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Teaching Sign Language and the Culture of the Deaf

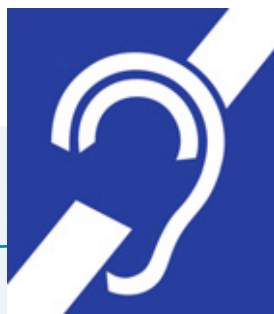
The main objectives of this project were to raise awareness on European deaf culture, illustrate teaching methods for deaf students, and introduce the theory behind sign language. The course was aimed at reaching those with experience in sign language but without formal teaching qualifications.

The opportunity to study in one's own native language is vital for free and equal access to education. To this end, the project hoped to develop educational materials that would give deaf instructors and teachers an opportunity to advance their professional skills. The project included two test courses titled "Teaching and Sign Language" and the "Culture of the Deaf". During the first test course, all the lectures and workshops were interpreted in the five national sign languages of the partner countries involved. The second test course was given in International Sign Language to offer an alternative educational perspective on the same subjects to a different target group.

An intranet site was developed for the continued networking of partners and course participants, and high-quality visual and multilingual teaching materials were created to support the test courses. In addition, the project's materials were accessible through an interactive DVD. Press releases, leaflets, seminar presentations, articles, and the Internet were all used to spread the information developed by the project.

The training course included a preparatory phase during which all relevant course materials were provided to participants in advance. During the follow-up phase, the students took part in discussions about subjects provided on the intranet. The course can be viewed in several sign- and written-language versions. Besides offering a broad selection of materials for teaching and learning sign language, the disc also contains unique ideas for cross-linguistic research. There is a strong potential for the materials developed in the project to be used in other applications, as was originally intended by its developers. The success and depth of the project is illustrative of the active contribution from all members of the partnership.

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Teaching Sign Language and the Culture of the Deaf

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Meta Europe – Media Training Across Europe

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This project developed a training course between 2004 and 2006 to help raise media skills of teachers working in non-formal adult education. Participants learned how to work with local social groups in the context of community media (particularly radio). They developed skills to encourage individuals and groups to speak out with their interests and opinions, thus introducing members of local groups to a new means of communication and cultural exchange.

The increased use of podcasts, local and Internet radio stations, as well as other new information and communication media, has created exciting possibilities for getting people engaged in their communities. The training course “Speaking out! – Media competence and cultural empowerment” offers an attractive and well-designed method of teaching the necessary social and technical skills to improve media aptitude in areas such as moderating and conducting interviews in radio production. The target group includes social workers, adult-education teachers, and other professionals working in local communities



who are interested in engaging with people on the fringes of society such as immigrants, the elderly, persons with limited schooling, and the disabled.

The partnership brought individuals to the project with an array of experiences and education in broadcasting, academic media research, project management, and other skills related to media production. It was able to draw from past experiences gained during two other projects entitled: “Creating Community Voices”, and “Digital Dialogues.” This project was faithful to the European ethos of diversity and intercultural dialogue, featuring 10 partners from 8 different countries, all of whom were actively involved in the development of the training course and its materials. This multicultural setting allowed partners to improve their language skills, and all went away with at least some basic phrases in German, Polish, Hungarian, Italian, and Finnish. It was refreshing to see communication take place in this way.

The curriculum and complete set of training materials are available on the project’s website. To learn more about the training course itself, enter “Speaking out” in the search engine of the Comenius – Grundtvig Training Course database.

Meta Europe – Media Training Across Europe

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COLTT – Collaborative Learning in Teacher Training

The Collaborative Learning in Teacher Training (COLTT) project attempted to address a lack of familiarity with information and communication technology (ICT) while providing much needed training for adult education professionals. The project focussed on the use of new communication technology in education.

Unfortunately, the use of information and communication technology is not very common in adult education. Although web-based platforms could provide extensive innovations and improvements, they are rarely used even in collaborative learning environments. The Collaborative Learning in Teacher Training project began developing a training programme for lecturers to support their teaching methods with information and communication technology-based tools. The project also produced a handbook on how to integrate information and communication technology learning into the classroom, as well as an electronic logbook for recording class discussions and results.

The courses are designed to present a clear definition of collaborative learning. They increase familiarity with internet-based platforms, such as how to set up e-mail

conferences and use e-logbooks, while providing training on the use of already existing course materials.

The whole course is built around the SIMULAB concept for internet-based communication between language students. The course includes preparatory and follow-up phases and targets adult-education teachers and trainers. After the course, participants will be able to increase their familiarity with online-based collaborative learning and initiate both national and international activities for their students. This approach to teaching is fully developed and provides an innovative contribution to the development and modernisation of European adult education.



COLTT – Collaborative Learning in Teacher Training

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Equalineurope – Strategies and Tools for Asylum Seekers' and Refugees' Pre-Professional Education

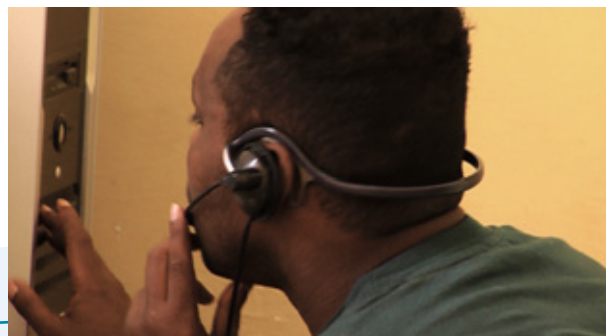
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The Equalineurope project developed and managed an international, pre-professional online course for practitioners working with refugees and asylum seekers in host countries. The project and training course was designed to provide tools and strategies for improving their professional abilities and skills in the field.

The Equalineurope project focussed on the development of educational strategies and innovative self-teaching methods, which enable professionals to respond more efficiently to the specific needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.

In particular, the project strives to promote increased access for refugees and asylum seekers into education and professional opportunities, as well as provide them with tools to help facilitate social and cultural integration. To accomplish this, participants learn best-practice

methods for teaching basic elements on which the host society is built, thus facilitating motivation and participation in the integration process. They also learn how to guide refugees and asylum seekers through daily challenges they may face, such as economic and social independence. Practitioners in this important field are also given the knowledge and skills to exchange strategies with colleagues from other European countries to better develop the profession.



Equalineurope – Strategies and Tools for Asylum Seekers' and Refugees' Pre-Professional Education

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RURALpro – European Training course for future Professionals of Regional and Rural development

Between 2004 and 2006 the RURALpro project developed a “European Training Course for Future Professional Trainers of Regional and Rural Development,” which used a holistic approach toward rural development to address the dramatic and complex economic and social changes affecting rural areas across Europe.

The project was based on the assumption that the importance of agriculture is declining and its role is changing in today's Europe. New rural industries and new kinds of entrepreneurship are emerging, and residential patterns are changing because of outgoing, and possibly incoming, migration. As a result, new target groups for adult education are appearing, such as rural entrepreneurs, business networks, and communities in the voluntary sector. Partners set out to answer the question of how teachers informal and non-formal education should approach and address these target groups.

The partnership, consisting of six higher- and secondary-level educational institutions representing five countries, drew from the results of a previous Grundtvig project entitled ADORE – Adult Education as a Tool for Rural Development.

The RURALpro training course, which was equivalent to three European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, was tested and extensively evaluated. Much attention was placed on finding the right balance between interactivity and theory. Themes addressed in the course included concepts of sustainable rural development, community and network development, partnership and participation, and adult education as a tool for rural development. A variety of teaching methods were used to ensure the understanding of materials and to enhance the content's relevance. The course acknowledged the importance of intercultural learning, and supported networking among its participants. This process did not end, however, with the training course. A memory box, follow-up questionnaires, and a book of inspiration were used to keep the networking process going.

The curriculum and further information about the project and the training courses are available on the project's web site.

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RURALpro – European Training course for future Professionals of Regional and Rural development

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Testimonials from participants at In-Service Training courses

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“We talked about a course like this happening in our own country... this Interactive course was a very great experience in terms of work as well as a person. Meeting people from different places was so good; to share ideas, experiences, projects... The organisation was beyond expectations... Great job!!! Keep it on! And thank you for giving me the opportunity to become a better and more creative teacher!”

“Hello friends from Europe! The new school year started today, September 25, in Madeira island. Summer is gone, holidays are over... time to go back to work with bright ideas to motivate (even more) our learners. I hope to put in practice most of the ideas and experiences we've shared in Bangor. It was an amazing experience that I highly recommend to my colleagues. I hope you all have a great school year, full of joy and success!!! Share your results with us. Keep in touch.”

M.F.
Spain

“I've felt really enthusiastic, sometimes exhausted, but finally I find myself full of energy and ideas. Now it's up to me to put all I have learned into practice. It is incredible how emotional it has been. Even my English has improved noticeably.”



“I understand better the European dimension of teaching English. I could compare methodology and systems of education and apply things I found useful. And I improved my English as well. I like the idea of a “highly communicative” course where we don’t spend all the time in classrooms but we visit lots of interactive places and meet lots of interesting people. The projects worked also very well in my opinion. For me the process discussion, interviews, etc, were even more important than the actual presentation of outcomes.”

M.F.

Czech Republic

“It was a very interesting, well prepared course giving us opportunities to enhance our English but above all to learn a lot about Ireland and meet teachers from other countries which enabled us to learn from each other and can lead to future contacts between schools. Talking to other participants and local people not only did I improve my English but also I learned quite a lot about other European countries.”

K.S.

Poland

“During the course I had a very good opportunity to practice English with group-mates, tutors and Irish people. I also shared my experience in intercultural projects (eTwinning) and participated in discussions on education. The course was very helpful for language development. It also covered several aspects of Irish culture and social life –the things you can’t read from books but have to experience yourself. The lecturers delivered efficient lectures and I have a lot of teaching ideas to put into practice in my work. Also, a lot of ideas arouse from discussion with my colleagues from other European schools. The atmosphere was very friendly and fulfilled my expectations. Thank you!”

M.S.

Estonia



Learning by observing – “Job-shadowing” in another country as a means of professional development

20 | Job-shadowing is a form of professional development in which a member of staff “shadows” a colleague in another institution in order to learn more about his or her daily work. Participants witness firsthand the work environment, methods and approaches in practice and can learn how a certain method could be put into practice.

In Grundtvig, grants are provided to facilitate such “job-shadowing” at an adult education organisation in another European country. The organisation to be visited should be experienced in the field of activity the applicant wants to learn.

Reports from people who have carried out such “job-shadowing” visits in Grundtvig suggest that when properly planned, this is an extremely effective informal means of improving practice and transferring innovation in the adult education field.



Sign language – observing how it is taught in Cyprus, through French eyes

In March 2007, French sign-language instructor Christophe Giner visited Cyprus with the help of a Grundtvig in-service training grant. Here are his reflections on an experience which in the short space of ten days changed his life and work.

“My job-shadowing experience consisted in an observation placement at the Deaf Federation of Cyprus in order to have an idea about their activities and experiences. The main objective of this job-shadowing visit, was to gain an understanding of the methods/approaches used for both social and working inclusion of deaf people, as well as to observe activities developed by the deaf community in Cyprus more generally. For me this was also an opportunity to discover and appreciate the Cypriot education system targeted at deaf learners. I had the opportunity to observe some learners during an entire week.

During my stay, I was guided by the President of the National Federation of Deaf and I had the opportunity to meet the Minister of Labour. This experience has been a tremendous success. I visited and met a number of organisations and actors active in promoting literacy, such as a

school for the deaf in Nicosia; the Association of Cypriot Deaf in Nicosia; the Deaf Association in Larnaka; the Deaf Association in Limassol; the Cypriot Association of Parents of Deaf Children; the Cypriot Labour Ministry, department for handicapped people; the Cypriot Confederation of Associations of Handicapped People. I attended courses targeted at young deaf people.

The Cypriot sign language was only recognised as an official language for the deaf as recently as 2006. It is still under Greek and American influence and there is still an absence of training materials. To overcome this problem, I had to adapt the icons I was used to in French sign language in order to be able to communicate effectively with the deaf people in Cyprus. I also proceeded to gather information relating to Cypriot deaf community expectations, and in particular I focused on a comparison between education, social and professional laws and achievements in France and other European countries which was a really useful exercise for me.

This job-shadowing experience allowed me to better understand Cypriot deaf culture, which seems to share, with all other European deaf communi-

ties, a number of values and activities. I was encouraged to further learn and compare my experience with people I met in Cyprus, I further developed my sign language competences and gained a better understanding of the learning process that has to be implemented when teaching deaf learners. The opportunity to exchange experiences and compare them with different approaches and education systems was of great benefit to my school. My motivation to continue to stress the need for the recognition of sign language and the specific learning needs of deaf people, has unquestionably been greatly reinforced.”

The Grundtvig Programme 2007–2013: Objectives and Actions

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The Grundtvig Programme aims to

- respond to the educational challenge of an ageing population in Europe
- help provide adults with pathways to improving their knowledge and competences

More specifically the activities supported under the programme are designed to:

- improve the quality and accessibility of **mobility** throughout Europe

of people involved in **adult education** and increase its volume, so as to support the mobility of at least 7,000 of such individuals per year by 2013

- improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation between organisations involved in adult education throughout Europe
- assist people from vulnerable social groups and in marginal social contexts, in particular older people and those who have left education without basic qualifications, in order to

give them alternative opportunities to access adult education

- facilitate the development of innovative practices in adult education and their transfer, including from a participating country to others
- support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning
- improve pedagogical approaches and the management of adult education organisations

Grundtvig supports the following activities

- Mobility of individuals which may include: exchanges for learners and staff in adult education, In-Service Training courses for adult education staff, preparatory visits

Such In-Service Training grants are not restricted to people wishing to attend formal courses: they can support any activity in another European country which will help your professional development as an adult educator in the broadest sense. That can mean:

- a training course;
- less formal kinds of training activity, such as a study visit, job-shadowing or job placement;
- a European conference or seminar that involves active participation.

Courses and other training activities can run from one to six weeks and the average grant amount is of 1.500 € (for a one-week training course) to cover course fees, travel and subsist-

ence costs. Cost of language preparation prior to going abroad can also be covered.

Many training courses are published in a European database for In-Service Training courses on <http://ec.europa.eu/education/trainingdatabase/>

However, candidates who want to apply for a training course which does not appear in this database, are not excluded.

More information can be found on the following web site:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/grundtvig/index_en.html

- Grundtvig Learning Partnerships between adult education institutions from different European countries focusing on themes of mutual interest to the participating organisations

- Multilateral projects aimed at improving adult education systems through the development and transfer of innovation and good practice

- Networks developing adult education in the discipline, subject area or management aspect to which they relate, identifying, improving and disseminating relevant good practice and innovation, providing content support to projects and partnerships, and promoting the development of needs analysis and quality assurance within adult education.

A number of new activities are currently under development and may be implemented from 2009.

Who can participate?

Basically everyone involved in adult education can participate in the programme, e.g.

- Learners in adult education
- Institutions and organisations providing learning opportunities in adult education, their teachers and other staff within those institutions or organisations
- Establishments involved in the initial or further training of adult education staff, higher education institutions, research centres and bodies concerned with adult education issues
- Associations and representatives of those involved in adult education, including learners' and teachers' associations, bodies providing guidance, counselling and information
- services relating to any aspect of adult education
- Persons and bodies responsible for systems and policies concerning any aspect of adult education at local, regional and national level
- Enterprises, not-for-profit organisations, voluntary bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Lifelong Learning

There was a time when people generally associated learning with the education they received at school and university. Today, Europe is undergoing a major transformation to become a world-leading knowledge-based society – making the pursuit of lifelong learning more important than ever.

In recognition of this, the EU has brought together its various educational training initiatives under a single umbrella, the **Lifelong Learning Programme**. With an ambitious budget of nearly € 7 billion, the new programme (2007–2013) is made up of four sectoral programmes – **Comenius** (schools), **Erasmus** (higher education), **Leonardo da Vinci** (vocational training) and **Grundtvig** (adult education) – as well as a transversal programme which focuses on policy cooperation,

languages, information and communication technology (ICT) and dissemination, and the **Jean Monnet Programme** to stimulate teaching, reflection and debate on the European integration process at higher education institutions world-wide.

<http://ec.europa.eu/llp>

Adult learning – it is never too late to learn!

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Education and training are critical factors for achieving the European Union's over-arching policy objective of raising economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion, the so-called Lisbon Strategy.

In 2007, the European Commission published its first ever Action Plan on Adult Learning. Based on the Commission's 2006 adult education policy paper, "It's never too late to learn", the Action Plan calls on the Member States to work together and with the Commission to help remove the barriers that prevent adults from engaging in learning activities, to improve the quality and efficiency of the adult learning sector, to provide adequate levels of investment in adult education, and ensure better monitoring of the adult learning sector.

European Commissioner for Education, Training, Youth and Culture, Ján Figel', explained the initiative: "We live in an

increasingly knowledge-based society with an aging population and a more intensely competitive global economy. It is therefore vitally important that adults continue to learn, to keep up and to adapt to change. Whether adults find themselves needing to up-skill or re-skill, the Member States must work to make adult learning as easy and accessible as possible. This is precisely what the Commission's Action Plan on Adult Learning aims to do, and today we are calling on Member States to redouble their efforts to implement the Action Plan."

The objective of the Action Plan is to help build an efficient adult learning system throughout Europe. This involves improving the adult learning sector's governance structure, and the quality, efficiency and accountability of its systems of delivery for learning activities, learning support and the recognition of learning outcomes.

Five key actions are proposed:

1. To analyse the effects of reforms – including those in other educational sectors – on adult learning;
2. To improve the quality (and quality assurance) of provision, with special emphasis on initial and continuing training, status and payment of staff in the adult learning sector;
3. To increase the possibilities for all adults to improve their qualification profile by at least one level ("one step up");
4. To speed up and improve the process of assessing and recognising non-formal and informal learning, in particular for disadvantaged groups;
5. To improve the monitoring of the adult learning sector, with more coherent terminology and better and more comparable data.

More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/index_en.html.

How to apply?

The application process, the level of support and the minimum number of partners required vary according to the type of action. For detailed information on applying, please consult the following web pages:

<http://ec.europa.eu/llp>

A list of all National Agencies in the participating countries can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/national_en.html

European Commission

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