

Education Scotland's report on project meeting in Zurich

Organisation: Education Scotland

Meeting: Zurich

Host organisation: Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung SVEB

Date: 21st 22nd June

Location: Resort Walensee

I. Reflections

What were the most useful experiences?

As usual it is so useful to hear the experiences of our European partners. The presentations and in particular the discussion stimulated by the presentations created the best learning opportunities throughout the day. However, most of the real nuggets are gained at the margins of the meeting, over dinner and coffees where the opportunity to really have a dialogue takes place.

What can be considered as examples of good practices?

The Czech colleagues really set the scene in describing their current attempts to establish new learning centres and a delivery programme across their country. This is particularly interesting as it is similar to the Scottish experience in character which also developed from a very limited baseline of previous activity in basic skills. It was so interesting to hear their plans and to really reflect on some of the experiences we had in Scotland in attempting the same work.

What did you learn that is similar or different from policy and practice in your own country?

The Swiss contribution was really excellent as it really gave an insight into the different community languages and cultural mix of Switzerland. For example, I had never understood the range of languages included Romansch and about the differences in dialect too. The latter being is very similar to the Scottish experience and also described on a previous occasion by Norwegian colleagues.

What conclusions can be drawn from the experiences of the meeting?

I think what is emerging very strongly that although we are very diverse in terms of the level to which policy has been developed at governmental level, many of the challenges we are facing are the same. We can develop guidelines that really assist those who are setting up programmes because the approach is very similar and can be influenced at the practitioner level.

What recommendation can be made based on the experiences and discussions of the meeting

- **at EU level;**

That at the practitioner level we can reflect and share the experiences of developing and implementing policy and reflect on what worked and what we would do differently. This allows for us to learn from each other's experience and to draw learning points that can be useful within our own contexts.

- **at national policy making level;**

That government policy in basic skills can be achieved from bottom up approaches expressed by the field and interested stakeholders as well as top down approaches. These could be achieved through more intense partnership working and policy activism of practitioners and learners.

- **at institutional level**

That the current pressures on staff within the Scottish context are also apparent across Europe, with Romania having the most challenging context for development.