

Organisation: NRDC

Meeting: Fourth meeting, Bonn

Host organisation: DIE

Date: 22/23.10.12

Location: Bonn

What were the most useful experiences?

This was an excellent meeting with useful input sessions and plenty of structured opportunities for discussion among the members of the group. There were two new people in the group (Irene Schwab from England and Lynn Tett from Scotland) both are hugely experienced and knowledgeable in this area and both added value to the discussions. We were also joined by Mieke de Haan from Holland as an observer and she was also able to make useful contributions.

The presentations by German colleagues on *Adult basic skills teacher training in Germany* and *Core competences of adult learning facilitators* were interesting and relevant to the goals of the learning partnership and were well complemented by the presentation on *Scotland's Adult Literacies Professional Development Framework*. The three presentations set the tone for the meeting, focussing participants on the challenge of conceptualising and designing national professional development programmes.

The most useful experiences for me came in the focussed discussions held around the *EUR-Alpha project: Charter – Tutor Training for the Self-Determination of Literacy Learners* and the *Final Report of High Level Group of Experts on Literacy*. These are the result of two important recent EU initiatives and the group agreed that it was important that we attempt to reference them in our own recommendations. In plenary and group discussions it was clear that there was much in the two documents that we agreed with and it was decided that we should ensure that what we recommend is aligned with the thinking in the two documents and that we should reference them in our final report.

What can be considered as examples of good practices?

I found *Scotland's Adult Literacies Professional Development Framework* particularly interesting and useful, particularly the organisation around the role. This seems to be an excellent way of conceptualising and describing training needs. It also helped in our discussion of the use of volunteers. If we are able to think purely about roles – what the person does in the teaching and learning process - and stipulate the professional

development that they require to carry out those roles, then volunteer becomes a description not of a role but simply an economic issue in that they are not paid. The group agreed that anyone working with basic skills learners should be trained, more so than those working with most other cohorts as basic skills learners have specific and complex needs, and that those who volunteer should not be the exception. The three key roles in *Scotland's Adult Literacies Professional Development Framework* - Tutor assistant, Group tutor and Co-ordinator of provision - are accompanied by detailed role descriptions, typical competences and daily work tasks.

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

There were a number of discussions in which measures of programme outcomes were discussed. This is a current area of research interest for NRDC and other countries are clearly facing similar issues: 1. how to demonstrate impact of basic skills programmes and 2. how to ensure that impact measures do not adversely affect the quality and focus of the learning programme. Future research in this area would be of interest.

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

It was interesting to note that, while much had been achieved in the Alphasund project including the establishment of Masters level training, recruitment to the programme has been disappointing. This is something that we can recognise from experience in England where the cuts, the expense of training and the lack of formal requirements can make recruitment to courses, particularly demanding programmes at Masters level, a challenge. Flexible, accessible provision is needed.

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

- Align the BASKET recommendations with other EU basic skills initiatives.
- Consider the use of role descriptors as an organising principle behind basic skills teacher training
- Development of new professional development courses should include blended elements where possible to facilitate the participation of professionals working across diverse geographical areas.

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NRDC 02/11/12