

Report from project meeting in Budapest

Organisation: Vox

Meeting: Budapest

Host organisation: Progress Consult

Date: 13-14 June, 2013

Location: Budapest

I. Reflections

What were the most useful experiences?

The main task during this meeting was to finalise the recommendations on the professionalization of adult basic skills teachers. We had prepared a draft which was further developed during the meeting. We organised smaller groups that worked different aspects of the recommendations. The group work was shared and discussed in plenary and afterwards a small group of three persons volunteered to write a draft, which again was discussed before the final version was written.

Working in smaller groups allowed everybody to engage in the discussions and to be active and involved.

What can be considered as examples of good practices?

We learned more about the learning integrators and how to build a system in a field that there was nothing. The learning integrators are the main actor to compensate institutional lacks in adult basic skills training. This started as a small pilot project with nine learning integrators in different parts of the country, and now there are 50 open learning centres all over the countries. The project has developed a training program for the learning integrators with five modules. The modules consist of knowledge of the basic context system, adult learning, and guidance, planning, and also a module on how to collaborate with the local community and enterprises.

This is an example of good practice in how to develop and build a system for adult basic skills learning in a society where this didn't exist beforehand.

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

Maria Arapovics from the Eötvös Loránd University ELTE, Faculty of Andragogy, gave a presentation of the Hungarian higher education system, and also about basic skills teaching and learning. There is a strong formal educational system in Hungary. We also learned that the study of adult education for teacher is more

oriented towards laws and rules of the formal educational system than theory of adult education. There is some pedagogy in the curriculum, but not as much as in Nordic countries. The curriculum and the adult education studies are focused on which rules and laws are relevant in formal training for teachers in adult learning. The teachers in adult learning need to know the system well to give informal courses for adult in basic skills.

When it comes to adult education, the Nordic countries have an Anglo-American tradition that differs from some of countries the in the Eastern part of Europe that seem to follow a more German tradition.

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

It was great fun and also challenging to work on the recommendations the way we did. It was a process with good, professional results. We learned a lot in different ways; how such a process works and also a lot about the policy in the field of adult basic skills teachers in the partner countries/EU. All countries face the same challenges, more or less.

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

- at EU level;

We recommend that the EU disseminate examples of good practice that are low threshold models.

- at national policy making level;

We recommend that local and national authorities in other countries where there is no established system for adult basic skills training study the Hungarian example and experience. The learning integrator approach is a low threshold initiative where volunteers, teachers and resources from the local community are involved. We assume that this facilitates the recruiting process because the persons involved know the local community and system, and they are probably trusted by the citizens in the communities.