



CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

END-OF-VISIT REPORT

Group Number: 158
Theme: Recognition of formal, non formal and informal learning
Title: Quality frameworks and learning outcomes
City, country: Reykjavik, Iceland
Dates: 09-11.04.08
Group reporter: Vida Motekaityte

Members of the group:



| <u>Last Name</u> | <u>First Name</u> | <u>Country</u> |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
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Introduction:

This report summarises the key findings of the Study visit on quality frameworks and learning outcomes, with special focus on Adult education. The goal of this visit was two-fold:

- (a) Discussing improvements, both at national and at European level, to further European cooperation in the field of Adult participation in lifelong learning;
- (b) Sharing experiences, both positive and negative and reflecting on examples of best practices in the field of Adult participation to lifelong learning to meet their needs and the needs of the stakeholders in general.

The methodological approach has been chosen to present the current report started with a common group discussion taking into account the guiding questions from the CEDEFOP report draft. In a second step the group agreed to group the questions to 5 main clusters, allowing a personal reflection of the issues raised. In a further group discussion personal reflections were taken into account, leading into common conclusions and suggestions.

The chosen questions clusters, reported by every participant, were the following:

1. Expectations
2. Most important learning experiences
3. Main issues for each participant (What do each participant take home)
4. Networking
5. Suggestions

The answers of every participant have been collected on a table basis (see below).

| Country (name, surname of participant) | Expectation | Most important experiences | Main issues for each participant | Networking | Suggestions |
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| Italy (Maria Vittoria Marini Bettolo Marconi), Netherlands (Addy Vroegindeweyj) | To learn more about lifelong learning and to learn more about non-formal and informal learning, competence portfolio, self-development and fortification especially for adults and immigrants(NL) To learn more about the implementation of validation of non formal and informal learning policies in Iceland and see how quality frameworks have been developed in order to achieve learning outcomes (IT). | It was interesting to learn that the Icelandic system is trying to encompass EU policies into new legislation i.e. NQF. Visits to institutions and VET providers offered an overview of how flexible and open the education and vocational system in Iceland is i.e. 2nd chance (Back to learning programme) and “bridges” between general and vocational education even through work based learning. Modular/credit system seems a good way to tackle drop outs or students’ weaknesses. Career portfolios and checklists for self-evaluation help develop learners’ awareness of their own learning opportunities. All relevant stakeholders were involved in the study visit programme therefore this helped the group get a thorough idea of the educational and vocational system. | Focus was made on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual right to validation. • 21 pathways based on national curricula developed by ETCS for the validation of non formal and informal learning which could provide a good ground for further development . • Self evaluation (Portfolio) goes together with summative evaluation carried out by a committee made of assessors and counsellors, namely teachers, professionals and employers’ reps. Good information was given in paper form and through website links. | New contacts might lead to LLP activities. Proposals for co-operation (Comenius, Leonardo, Grundtvig) were made regarding general education and vocational education and training including Adult education. | More time should be given in-between sessions instead of being all at the end of the day. (IT, NL) The agenda was a bit tight. More days should be allowed in order to encourage group work, reflection and exchange of national best practice or legislation. |
| UK (Chris Nutty) | Never having been on a study visit before I did not really know what to expect. I was the only member of the group who was not an academic or an administrator | I was impressed with the way Iceland as a “joined up thinking” approached to life long learning from Kindergarten to University. | Even though Iceland has a very good system, they can still learn from the UK.. I was surprised that they where not using the UK model of SfL delivery for adults. | This was an excellent opportunity for networking. For example Fjola Maria Larusdettir took my details as she is looking at introducing Learner Reps into the Icelandic system of life long learning. | As you would expect in a visit of this kind the days were long and full .But I did feel that PowerPoint was over used and that it would be a good idea to look at using other methods delivery for future visits. |
| Lithuania | To know what opportunities are offered | Recognized distance studies at schools. Given examples how Iceland | Examples of best practices in the school and university level (concerned | After visit I see big possibilities to initiate | More practical visits and practical |

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| (Vida Motekaityte) | in Iceland and other countries for LLL, to exchange an experience what activities are done in different countries to seek for the recognition and best quality of non-formal and informal education. What are the tools used to provide e-learning? Are there any initiatives to provide distance studies at school level? What is the situation concerned to non formal education in University level? | Ministry of Education, Science and Culture tries to introduce programmes concerned with LLL (arranging week for LLL). Carrier Centre which helps students to understand what can be their best choice for future plans and studies. | with recognition of non formal education), educational projects results and validation, information about educational system in Iceland. Presentation how portfolio is used in university level. | Comenius, Grundtvig or Leonardo projects, because participated countries have similar problems and there are not answered a questions in many countries concerned with adults education, recognition of continuing learning, etc., that is the reason to take initiative and create new methods together. | examples concerned with the theory. More free daily time (to have an opportunity to visit cultural places, which are open just in the day time, afternoon) in this case the schedule could be divided in 5 days instead 3. |
| Austria (Georg Müllner) | Getting new approaches and methods of validation of formal and non formal learning in Europe Visiting training organisations of the formal and non formal sector Getting to know new colleagues from other European countries interested in the subject, sector and field. | Breidholt upper secondary school (approaches of validation, modular structure of training programme, self responsibility of students for their learning path and fulfilment of requirements) Prof. Torfi Jonasson: lecture about drop out study in Iceland (perfect scientific quality, interesting results, is dropping out really a problem? For Whom? Concept of discrepancy as major cause of drop-out). | Modular structure of the education and training system is the pre-requisite for validation Somebody (the committee) has to take the responsibility Attitudinal changes take time. | Perfect opportunity for getting to know new organisations interested in European co-operation Getting to know colleagues from the European countries interested in the same subject and in European co-operation. | The guideline questions in the report form are to be answered individually and are not possible to answer to a large extent as a group opinion Maybe more suggestions for evening possibilities (dinner places, drink places, events). |
| Spain (Oswaldo Lopez Alvarez) | The content of the visit was relevant to my interests. In Spain I have to explain formal, non formal and informal learning to my pupils. The subject is "occupational pedagogy" and these contents are included in the programme. I thought before the visit some | I think the validation of competences is the most important. There are some common problems and challenges but social reality is different. So, the way the way can be different too. But the opportunity to inform about our systems can improve them. | Spain is quite different to Iceland. Population is 40 million, (100 times more then Iceland). Education model is decentralised. (17 communities). So it is very difficult to transfer good practices. I would like transfer the best good practice I could see in Iceland, the attitudinal change, to Spain. | I had the opportunity to establish new contacts, but of course, I had an important problem, the language. English is a key competence. On the other hand I know new mails, new web addresses, which I can use in the future. | I think the role of the students and users of services has to be increased. It would have been nice to also have heard their opinion. |

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| | Icelandic good practices were more developed and I realised that there starting yet, but in the right way. | | | | |
| Demark (Camilla Hutters) | New inspiration to my work combining formal and non formal learning. New knowledge about how the recognition of informal and non formal learning takes place in the other European countries. | Awareness of the importance and flexible paths and second chances. Without them we will never succeed in lifelong learning. Awareness that recognition of informal and non formal learning could lead to standardization. Awareness of the importance of flexible and motivating learning environments. | New contacts and ideas to use in my work combining formal and non-formal learning. A greater understanding of the political and methodological challenges related to the recognition of prior learning. More knowledge of how do to international work within this field. | Through the study visit I established new contacts, both in Island and with the other members of the group. They will provide a good background for doing future project together. Every one in the group seemed open and well-prepared for networking. | Fewer but more reflective questions for the group report. And more time to work on it. More time for national presentations More practical exercises - where it is possible! |
| Poland (Izabela Gorecka) | To get knowledge how vocational and continuing education looks like in Iceland, To get information how this country face the problem of validation and/or recognition of skills, To get information how looks like cooperation between employees and vocational education. | If education must be efficient and respond on labour market needs, employees must have an influence on curricula, Validation of non-formal and informal learning shall be placed at national level, Some tips how to improve access and increase participation in life long learning/education, Importance of lifelong guidance in adult people life. | Organization of Adult Learners Week which might help in promotion of importance of lifelong learning, Iceland methodology develop to validate non-formal and informal learning might help us in development of our methodology in this field, Validation of non-formal and informal learning should refer to European Qualification Framework and National Qualification Framework. | Definitely I have opportunity to establish new contacts. But at the moment I don't have any concrete ideas for future cooperation. But I got information who is responsible for what subject. So I know with who I might contact when I will have idea for cooperation in particular field. | I think we didn't have chance to share information about our educational systems. We also didn't keep the balance between theoretical and practical sessions. More practical sessions would be welcome. |
| Austria (Brigitte Zörweg) | To learn about the general vocational education system in Iceland. To see how this system works. To get in contact with people working in the field of formal, non- | The situation is compared to Austria completely different (number of inhabitants, economic situation, unemployment rate, and no direct neighbouring countries - Iceland is an island!) It seems that all parties that are in involved in VET are collaborating well on a very high level. | The situation is compared to Austria completely different (number of inhabitants, economic situation, unemployment rate, and no direct neighbouring countries - Iceland is an island!) It seems that all parties that are in involved in VET are collaborating well on a very high level. | To get in contact with new people from different European countries working in the field of recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning. | Some tips and hints for social activities (for example restaurants for dinners, etc.). |

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| | formal and informal learning. | The single person and his personal situation play a major role when dealing with questions related to skills development and graduation. | The single person and his personal situation play a major role when dealing with questions related to skills development and graduation. | | |
| Germany (Ursula Christ and Stephanie Schauss) | First we were curiously to get to know the educational system of a country which we didn't knew before. In Germany it is a completely different situation because LLL is unknown. So we expected new ideas, new impressions which we are able to take back to Germany. | It was new to us that people without certification can find jobs. In Germany they wouldn't because high unemployment requires a certification to find a job. It was interesting to get the information the unemployment is as low. It was very interesting that really older people start a new kind of education and are willing to qualify themselves in a complete new profession. In Germany the motivation to LLL is not really high. An other important experience was the situation in the college we went to, in competition to German college. We found it really clean and well organised. Pupils behaved polite and looked cultivated. | We want to take home the idea to qualify adults with low level education. And we like to discuss at home possibilities how we can find some ways to keep people thinking about LLL. | We got to know some very interesting European people who are working, as we, in education systems. We think that we keep in touch. | It should be considered to maybe extend the visit to five days instead of three. More practical experience using other methods than Powerpoint, talks to students, teachers, managers etc. |
| Belgium (Flemish community) (Liesbeth Hens) | I wanted to be able to make a comparison between the Icelandic system of recognition of non formal and informal learning with the Flemish one. I expected to learn more about the Icelandic educational system and about higher education systems and recognition of non formal and informal learning from the countries of the other participants. | Description of the system of student counselling at the university of Iceland. Counselling includes the recognition procedure. They are also experimenting with a portfolio as an instrument of career planning. In the upper secondary school we visited the different subjects were seen equally. The problems they encounter with social cohesion, responsibility of students and drop out, are encountered also in Belgium, but in higher education. Recognition of non formal and informal education in a working environment, without applying for some kind of education, is new for me. | The Flemish system is not so bad. Its methodology is comparable to other existing systems. Using the portfolio as an instrument for career planning is an interesting new idea, which I should investigate further in my country. The system with a broad core and different branches can be useful to solve the Flemish problem of the level wise classification of general, technical and vocational secondary education. To find a solution for our problems in higher education, we should also look at certain forms of secondary education in other countries, as long as the same age group is covered. This is a complete new and interesting point of view. We should think how Flemish higher education is able to cooperate on such projects. | Contacts with Breidholt upper secondary school the guidance counsellors' at the university of Iceland and certain group members should be continued and can lead to cooperation. | It would have been nice to be able to talk to some students or the student union, to hear their point of view. |

Conclusions:

Overall Impression:

The study visit met the expectations of the group. It was according to the plan and all the reports and presentations were very clear. They focussed directly on the topic of recognition and validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning. All the visited institutions were part of the jigsaw which gave us an overall view of life long learning in Iceland. It was very satisfying.

Content:

The expectations from the different participants appeared to be quite different. Therefore the learning experiences and the policies or practices that could be transferred or used in our home countries are very different. But as you can see in the table above each individual participant had a productive study which met his/her expectations. Some examples:

- For Polish participant the explanation of the methodology of recognition of non-formal and informal learning was very interesting and will serve as a possible base for implementing this in Poland.
- One of the Austrian participants learnt that the concept of modularity is a pre-requisite for successful validation.
- To the German participants it was striking that people without a certification can find a job. They want to take home the idea to qualify adults with low level education.

Networking:

All participants had the opportunity to make new contacts and gain new ideas for future projects within the lifelong learning programme.

Organisation:

This study visit was organised very well. Both the size and composition of the group were very good and it generated many good reflections and discussions in the group. The programme was well balanced.

Suggestions:

- Maybe to extend the visit to five days instead of three (programme per each day seemed a little bit too tight, though all participants agreed that all the visits were really important)
- More practical experience using other methods than PowerPoint, talks to students, teachers, managers etc.
- More practical and personal experience of using the tools of validation.
- To provide a CD/DVD with a collection of all the shown presentations, web addresses, other possible information in electronic format.
- More information about the host country, cultural activities, recommendations for evening activities and awareness for social arrangements.

- More time for group discussions and reflective questions, the guiding questions in the report form are not fostering group discussions. We would wish it would be more reflective and group opinion oriented questions as a guideline.
- To provide time for short national presentations during the study visit.

At the end of this study visit the whole group is very thankful for the organisation and the learning opportunities provided by the hosts. We enjoyed the Icelandic hospitality, atmosphere and food as well as the picture presentation on our last day. The group is deeply impressed about how well educated Icelandic people are and we are all looking forward to coming back to this beautiful country.

Reykjavik, 11th of April 2008.