

above. The West University of Timsoara is starting an accredited study programme with expected 20 students. They have developed new courses for their individual offer, because there is no other programme with which they can link the EMAE.

The accreditation process at the University of Duisburg-Essen is underway. In winter semester 2006 they will offer in a pilot phase all courses of the first semester for the students which are enrolled in the study programme Diplom-Pädagogik/ diploma paedagogy. The achieved certificates will be accepted for the study programme Diplom-Pädagogik/ diploma paedagogy. They can also be accepted for the EMAE, if students enrol in the EMAE-Programme from winter 2007.

The University of Barcelona is discussing the accreditation for winter 2007. The other universities are also thinking about possibilities for the implementation in the near future.

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Studies of the past and cooperation for the future in the training of adult educators at universities Preparation, implementation and results of the TEACH project

Abstract: The professional training of adult educators at University level is of highest importance for the development of the profession, and the quality of the provision in the education of adults. Two studies, one for Germany and the other for several countries in Eastern Europe, looked closer into the University training of adult educators. The findings were discussed at a conference, and then the TEACH project was prepared and later funded by the EU. The process and major outcomes are presented and discussed.

1. Context and process

1.1 Context

On a European level there are currently major changes going on within the development of lifelong learning policies, strategies and programmes, often in the context of strengthening the European dimension of education and culture for the further integration and enlargement of the European Union (EU). The revival of the four pillar approach to the education system – based on equal recognition of schools, vocational training, universities and adult education (AE) – is one of the cornerstones for a systematic support to lifelong learning, including adult learning. The EU has developed four programmes for those four pillars using the well sounding names of Comenius, Leonardo, Erasmus, and Grundtvig, and is looking at different priorities in their new education and training 2010 programme.

The development of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) will soon lead to national NQFs in the different countries. Both shall include AE, especially all which is vocation oriented, and to some extent non-formal and informal adult education. The respective document from the Commission discusses at length the “validation of non-formal and informal learning”, and looks for “an integrated credit transfer and accumulation system for lifelong learning”. (Commission, 2005, 27-30)

The Bologna process is transforming universities in Europe

dramatically. It goes beyond the member states of the EU as it was signed by the European Education Ministers Conference. It started in 1999 with the Bologna declaration which aims at comparable degrees, a two cycle BA/MA model, a European credit transfer system, all of which should help to improve mobility, quality and a European dimension in higher education. The institutions training adult educators within universities are no exemption in this. (Knoll / Hinzen, 2005)

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV) cooperates with AE organisations in many countries of the world. The political changes in Central and Eastern Europe increased the network for cooperation into this region strongly. A sectoral approach towards strengthening AE called for collaboration with Governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), professional institutions and universities. Key areas were and are policy, legislation and financing of structures and programmes for AE. This includes the training of adult educators a higher level, and this is where the universities played a key role in the past, and they will have to do so in the future – of course within the Bologna process. However, not much was known in detail outside the countries, and no comparative perspective looking at similarities, communalities and differences in the many countries going through a difficult period of transition had been applied. The simple question therefore was: What has happened to the many University institutions training adult educators and their programmes during the last decade? What is there to learn? Where are the areas for future cooperation?

1.2 Process

From different levels of prior cooperation it was known that some institutions in some countries had embarked on quite substantial changes in their University institutions and training for adult educators. To name a few: The University of Pécs in Hungary has by now up-graded their former Institute of Adult Education and the Development of Human Resources (FEEFI) into a faculty, in order to cope better with more than 3000 students, full and part time, regular and via distance mode. The University of Iasi in Romania has created an Adult Education Regional Centre (CREA), which amongst other programmes has started a European Master in Adult Education. High level of cooperation between Iasi and the New Bulgarian University in Sofia and their adults education master programme is there,

especially due to the cooperation with the University of Hanover in Germany, and strong backing of IIZ/DVV regional office for the Balkan Stability Pact area. (Siebert, 2005)

The IIZ/DVV regional office in Warsaw for Central Eastern Europe supported cooperation with universities in that region to a certain level, especially using seminars, symposia, and conferences as places for exchange and discussion. At the same time cooperation with several universities in Poland was intensified during the nineties. The Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun strengthened their Department for Lifelong Learning and Comparative Studies, and this is when and where the idea was generated to have a more systematic look at what was happening in the different universities of the region.

2. Studies and conference

2.1 Study in Germany

Already since 1995 the German Association for University Continuing and Distance Education (DGWF) has taken a closer look at the situation of AE within German universities. They were interested in both: academic AE in different disciplines as well as the professional training of adult educators. The latter one benefited immensely from the development of adult AE policies and legislation in several states (there is responsibility for education and culture) of Germany, and subsequently the financing of AE at local level got stronger support. This asked for more and better qualified staff, which in turn helped to develop adult AE as an academic discipline with training and research as two important domains. The diploma or magister in education with a specialisation in adult education was a major result during this period. Follow-up research 2002 was a possibility for comparison at the advent of major changes following the Bologna process. (Faulstich / Graessner, 2004)

The amount of data they generated from responses of 49 institutions of higher education (117 were approached) helped to get a clearer picture of recent developments:

- there are now 25 universities (against 21 in 1995) offering 41 courses (against 40 in 1995)
- there are 287 staff members in the field of AE, out of which are 71 full professors
- calculation resulted in about 11.000 students studying AE, or as part of education

- out of 64 types of qualifications mentioned, the diploma degree in education (34) and the magister (13) dominated, with BA (4) and MA (5) just coming up
- research interests rank high on performance of students and target groups, theory, teaching and learning, quality
- teaching emphasizes the learning/teaching process, history, policy, theory, management
- inter-University cooperation had national (33) and international (11), in all 121 contracts
- cooperation with practitioners included AE providers, NGOs, enterprises, in all 135 contracts
- in the future several universities wanted to intensify their research, their cooperation with practitioners and saw the need for new courses.

Since that study of 2002, follow-up was provided concerning recent developments of the Bologna process at German universities. This time they had 30 responses which showed that within this fairly short period nine additional BA and eleven MA courses are being planned, and some ten courses called master in continuing education are either being implemented or in planning. This leads them to state "that the process of transition to consecutive courses is already well underway". And looking into the future they argue "it would be wise to press ahead rapidly with developing a consecutive BA/MA model..." (Faulstich / Graessner, 2005, P. 58-60).

2.2 Study on Eastern Europe

2.2.1 Background situation

At most universities in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, that is in most countries in the previous Eastern bloc, there were AE courses before the political changes which took place in the 1980s. Courses were subject to each country's own specific regulations governing higher education policy. Since then, changes have been made, so that provision has expanded and become more diverse, but has so far not been documented.

In most Central, Eastern and South Eastern European countries a market for continuing education has developed and has been trying to meet growing demand – particularly in cities – for general and especially vocational adult education. The staff of the institutions (along with their professional bodies, in either the national, private or University sector) require professional training and continuous improvement. Some countries have begun working on legislation

concerning continuing education, and some laws have already been implemented.

2.2.2 The objective and benefits

The objective of this research was to collect data and to evaluate as many adult education courses as possible at the most significant colleges and universities in the Central, Eastern and South Eastern European countries within our reach. The basic data were collected through a survey, with German, English and Russian language versions of the questionnaire. These were distributed among all the institutions identified. Apart from the survey, materials additionally provided by the participating institutions about AE courses were evaluated.

The research was of practical help in two ways. At the level of each college or University, the survey evaluation may lead to re-examination of current arrangements in the light of the experience of other institutions in the region. Thanks to this outside inspiration, implementation of educational processes and changes were possible.

Secondly, similarities, common features and differences were described and University courses compared. This comparison enabled the introduction of exchange and cooperation between institutions in terms of programmes, good practice, professional staffing, etc., and the joint development of media and materials.

The research positively influenced future cooperation in the area of adult education between:

- higher education institutions at national level,
- higher education institutions at regional level,
- higher education institutions and other partners active in the adult education area in the particular countries.

2.2.3 The Scope

Geographically, the research covered the area from the Baltic region to the Balkan countries, the Russian Federation in the East, and part of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Politically, the Central, Eastern and South Eastern European countries could be divided into three groups:

- countries which were about to enter the EU,
- countries cooperating within the Stabilization Pact for South Eastern Europe,
- members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Such a division was equivocal, although it might be helpful

because of historical similarities, such as language, and therefore very useful in possible cooperation in the region. In the research it had to be taken into account that Slovenia, for example, was one of ten countries about to enter the EU and cooperated at the same time within the Stabilization Pact, or that Uzbekistan is an Asian country but also a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

2.2.4 Research results

The questionnaires and additional materials about the institutions and study courses included information about:

- Institutions: the full name of the University/college division, department or institute dealing with AE. The purpose was to discover the level of the organisational structure of a unit at which AE was placed.
- Major courses in AE/continuing education.
- Supplementary courses in AE/continuing education.
- Research activities of the units: main research subjects; academic achievements; cooperation with other institutions and holding of conferences; quality management and public relations; AE/continuing education development plans.

From analysis of the research results we might attempt to evaluate the condition of the discipline of AE in the region:

1. The first general conclusion from the available data was that AE as an academic discipline has a long tradition, at least in some countries in the region. It was begun mainly after World War II and was taught from then. This was the situation until the late 1980s, shown, among other things, by the traditional titles of courses (General Andragogy, Comparative Andragogy, etc.). On the other hand, after 1989, a number of new educational programmes have been developed in the region. These initiatives, however, do not aim mainly at research but at expanding teaching. A clear tendency was here to make a profit out of education, and less invest in it.
2. As regards the AE units, most of them were universities or other colleges which are dependent on state funding. There was absence of the non-governmental sector, which was needed especially that governments in the region were increasingly withdrawing from financing education. The lack of educational provision explicitly directed to the unemployed was one symptom. Only two units have addressed that problem through supplementary courses. This was difficult to understand when the main social plague in the region was unemployment.

3. Taking into account the size of the region and its population, and particularly the complexity of the full range of its educational problems, the network of the units dealing with adult education was poorly developed. The following facts led us to formulate such a conclusion:
 - in many countries there were only single units of AE
 - in many units no research activities were conducted
 - in some units the activities undertaken were quite narrow.
4. We might preliminarily sum up the academic status of the units: There were seven units which seemed stronger than the rest of the group. They are Pécs, Ljubljana, Lvov, St. Petersburg-AE, Toruń, Minsk and Belgrade.
5. One of the weaknesses in the case of some units was insufficient (and sometimes even non-existent) commitment to "external" activities. That weakness was easily detected on three levels:
 - In a country there might be no initiatives in AE extending outside the unit
 - outside the country there might be insufficient participation in international research enterprises and academic meetings
 - in the region as a whole there was no close cooperation between units in neighboring countries; instead of using the academic literature published in the region, units often referred to Western literature.
6. Irrespective of the limitations, a number of units saw the need for self-development based on internal organizational structures and international co-operation, and primarily on constant development of Internet networking.
7. Being aware of the limitations of a diagnosis which was based on a questionnaire mostly with closed questions, we would like to make another suggestion. The questionnaire could become a starting point for further investigation of particular AE units. We should then be able to prepare monograph studies of units. (Hinzen / Przybylska, 2004)

2.3 Conference in Pécs

All institutions who participated in the Eastern Europe study sent their representatives to the conference held at the University of Pécs, 2-5 October 2003. Additionally there were some key experts, and a colleague of the study in Germany. Invited guests came from countries in Central Asia who are as well in reform processes after the Soviet period. The event created very good opportunities to

inform each other beyond the findings of the study, and the personal contacts helped to prepare for better cooperation in the future. Additionally, the participants felt that the conference was a good opportunity to come up “A call for cooperation in the education and training of adult educators through higher education” (Hinzen / Przybylska, 2004 P. 13-14) pointing to the need for

- the introduction of new study programmes at BA and MA level
- the acceptance of mutually respected examinations and the modularisation of study programmes
- the integration of fundamental elements into common modules whilst accepting different contexts in practice of individual countries
- cooperation in establishing these programmes and modules.

The Call was adopted, and the report states: “Participants concluded that the ground had been prepared and the first steps taken to create understanding and share experiences and data in a meaningful way. Appreciation of diversity and cultural differences, including the obstacles that these represented, was frank and clear. A common interest in international cooperation was clearly shown. The Conference created a springboard for future cooperative work.” (Duke, 2004, P. 20) And the key partners in the research and the conference got then together to prepare a project proposal which later was named TEACH.

3. Project TEACH: Teaching Adult Educators in Continuing and Higher Education

3.1 Background

It is the aim of European education policy to create an area of lifelong learning for all European citizens in order to improve their chances of employment, foster their communication and problem solving skills in intercultural, pluralistic social contexts, and prepare them to assume active roles in democratic society and the market economy. As an important sector in the education policy of every country, AE is crucial to this effort. Special consideration must be given to the needs of people from ethnic and religious minorities and other socially disadvantaged groups. Initial and in-service training in the interest of skilled and specialised staff plays a key role in improving the transparency of qualifications, increasing student mobility, upgrading the quality of educational counselling, and facilitating the transfer of academic theory into AE practice.

The EU therefore supports AE through the Grundtvig programme, and the TEACH project has been funded for two years from these sources. Exchange was realized with a second project called EMAE (European Master in AE) in a different partnership, covering three years got support from Erasmus, the EU programme for higher education, is still going on.

3.1.1 Aims and objectives

The TEACH project sought to provide students (educators) with opportunities for learning and understanding the theories and methods of instruction and training in order to strengthen and promote lifelong learning and AE on an individual, national, and European level.

The project was intended to develop a three-stage framework for University courses in line with the European BA/MA model:

- an element (module) to be contained in a first vocational Bachelor of Education degree;
- a framework of modules for a second, professional Master of Adult Education degree;
- a modular postgraduate European Master of AE programme incorporating the European dimension of AE, to expand the Master of AE into a European Master of AE.

This three-stage structure is closely linked with the modules to be developed, and its examinations fit into the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). By linking the development of curricula with the European concept of lifelong learning, the project was intended to contribute to the Europeanisation of University training in AE and to joint agreements of content and mutual recognition of qualifications and certificates.

3.1.2 Project partners

Participating partners are: Nicolaus Copernikus University of Toruń, European Association for Education of Adults (EAEA), University of Bielefeld, Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV), University of Pécs, Vytautas Magnus University of Kaunas, Polish Association for Adult Education Regional Branch in Szczecin (TWP), A.I. Cuza University of Iasi, New Bulgarian University of Sofia, Bogazici University of Istanbul, Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL), University of Stirling.

3.1.3 Innovation

TEACH is innovative in seeking for the first time to develop a

systematic basis for harmonisation of University courses in AE

- incorporating the experiences and needs of various stakeholders (universities, AE associations, educational organisations, students and adult learners);
- relating University adult education courses more closely to educational practice;
- promoting social inclusion for people from socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities;
- taking the principles of European transversal policies into account;
- supporting development of a European Area of lifelong learning and Citizenship; and
- drawing up joint lists of learning objectives and international examination standards.

Mobility of staff and students in line with the European dimension, and exchange of research, is facilitated by mutual recognition of qualifications. This in turn is made easier by increased transparency of course content. The Bachelor's degree provides initial professional training for organisers of AE. The Master's degree is a more advanced professional qualification for teachers designing and teaching their own courses. The additional postgraduate European Master of AE programme responds to the growing need for cooperation at a European level. It is practice-based and designed to be taken by students of education, and by teachers and staff in AE, social and cultural establishments.

3.1.4 Pedagogical and didactical approaches

While being based on developments in the theory of AE, the project emphasised equally practice as the basis for the teaching of skills, taking into account learners' experience of life and work, linking formal and informal learning and fostering learners' creativity, flexibility and motivation. Given the increasing effects of globalisation on everyday life, employment and social values, the project aimed at a skills profile based on a range of core areas:

- methodological skills – the ability to use and combine specialist knowledge, develop systemic thinking, willingness to learn, acquire skills, solve problems, make decisions;
- specialist skills – the ability to use specialist and more general professional knowledge;
- social skills – team and communications skills, ability to take responsibility, show solidarity.

The project was thus an essential prerequisite for meeting the anticipated need for skilled specialists able to:

- promote lifelong learning within the pre-school, school and vocational training sector, motivating learners to pursue further training and education;
- link adult education and the social sciences, promoting social skills training in non-formal and informal learning settings as a way of improving participation and inclusion of people from socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities;
- encourage mobility of learners, students and teaching staff in accordance with the principles of free choice of working place and place of residence for citizens of the European Union;
- teach effectively using IT;
- encourage problem analysis, development of creative solutions and practical implementation;
- strengthen learners' identity development, social participation skills and employment orientation.

The parameters for the modules developed during the project were: topic and description of content (system level, conceptual level and applied level); location within BA/MA structure; admission requirements; number and type of teaching sessions; overall length; and links with the ECTS testing system.

3.1.5 Target group

The immediate target group are students of educational sciences, teachers and organisers working in AE institutions, those employed in the field of social and educational work, and staff of cultural and youth centres. The indirect beneficiaries are large sections of the adult population who profit as participants in learning groups from the improved professional skills of adult educators and be taught course contents that better match their abilities and educational desires.

3.2 Outcomes

After the successful implementation of TEACH we can now look at some of the project results, which include:

1. Case studies identify the current status of existing AE courses at the universities taking part in the project.
2. The project website sets up a forum for discussion of the project objectives and documents all project results and findings (case studies, recommendations, interim reports and evaluations, guidelines). The website www.teach.pl is in English.
3. The book: "Guidelines for teaching adult educators in continuing and higher education" was published in all the national languages of partners (total 3000 copies), to include:

- Recommendations describing the AE module to be contained in a Bachelor of Education degree, the framework for a Master of AE and Postgraduate Programme in European AE analysing the case studies and additional comments from outside experts. The recommendations set out a framework to harmonise contents of examination requirements and certificates. They contain also information on professions to which qualifications lead and on consequent opportunities for exchanges of teachers and students of AE.
- The curriculum for the three-stage structure of AE courses was developed, with particular regard to the European dimension of AE: thematic modules, reflecting the interdependence between European transversal policy issues, principles of the European lifelong learning concept and related tools for educational practice. Learning objectives, recommendations for teaching resources, and examples of best practice were provided.
- The database on recommended teaching and learning materials for adult educators (including E-learning, research-based learning and participatory research) was compiled to improve the use of new and innovative approaches and methods in educational practice and to set up a generally valid basic canon of AE knowledge, skills and competences to be taught in Europe by teaching staff, organisers of educational activities, social workers and people working in culture and the social sciences. The intention was also to make national differences and cultural peculiarities affecting adult learning in the relevant countries more visible.
- Examination requirements were brought into line, according to the ECTS system, to ensure that qualifications are comparable and to facilitate mutual recognition.
- The joint agreement on implementation and dissemination, maintenance and further development of the three-stage structure of AE courses was signed at the international conference in Iasi, Romania (8.-9.09.2006).
- The CD-ROM was produced, with the same content as the TEACH book. The CD contains materials in all the national languages of project partners.

4. Where to go from here?

The Bologna Declaration signed by the Ministers of Education from 29 countries on 19 June 1999, initiated the entire process of material

change in the European system of higher education. The objective of the Bologna Process is to establish the European Higher Education Area by 2010. This initiative is supported by the EU as it is an attempt to take a common stand and face problems affecting most European countries. The objective of the process is to increase mobility, modify education systems to meet the needs of the labour market, enhance attractiveness and competitiveness of the European higher education institutions. The Bologna Process does not aim at standardization. The goal is to develop a cooperation framework based on mutual respect for diversity and autonomy of individual states and higher education institutions.

The TEACH project is part of the Bologna Process towards the European dimension of lifelong learning, and as it was financed by the Socrates / Grundtvig Programme it demonstrates the strong interest of the EU and at the same time a commitment of academic centres and adult education institutions from Europe to infuse the concept of the European Higher Education Area with the spirit of life. TEACH and its products are results of a partnership among universities and professional associations that influence AE policy and financing.

Universities and AE institutions participating in the TEACH project are highly motivated to implement the results themselves, and disseminate them further for more cooperation with others. Given the marketing strategy developed under the project, coupled with undeniable determination of the TEACH partners and a very good evaluation of the study program by AE experts, we trust that the successful dissemination of this product is just a matter of time. However, each country applies different accreditation procedures and it is difficult to predict precisely when they will be offered by individual universities. Comparative studies in a few years from now could be helpful to find out where and why the implementation of the TEACH results were easier and more successful than elsewhere.

Cooperation between universities from different countries has been invigorated and exchange of students and academic staff has been intensified. We have positive examples of students learning based on online communities and blended learning methods. Finally, comparative adult education has become a popular subject of diploma thesis.

As a follow-up, we examine possible cooperation with universities and adult education institutions operating outside the European continent. The EU opens up these new avenues designing programs

and ensuring financial support, Erasmus Mundus may be one of them. Reaching beyond Europe is an inevitable challenge which we have to face. We need to answer this call of globalization being aware that it serves the best interest of European and worldwide AE.

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