



CEDEFOP

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of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Study visit group report

Group No 246

Title of the visit Beyond 2010 - Reforms in education and training
Topic Reforms in national education and training systems
City, country Reykjavik, Iceland
Type of visit Mixed
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I FINDINGS

This section summarises the findings of the group while visiting host institutions, discussing issues with the hosts and within the group. You will be reflecting on what you learnt every day. But to put them together and give an overall picture, you need to devote a special session to prepare the final report on the last day of the visit.

In this section, it is important that you describe not only things you learnt about the host country but also what you learnt about the countries represented by group members.

1. One of the objectives of the study visits programme is to exchange examples of good practice among hosts and participants. Cedefop will select well-described projects/programmes/initiatives and disseminate them to former participants and a wider public, including potential partners for future projects. Therefore it is important that you identify and describe all aspects that, in your view, make these projects/programmes/initiatives successful and worth exploring.

Describe each of the good practices you learnt about during the visit (both from the hosts and from one another) indicating the following:

title of the project/programme/initiative	country	name of the institution that implements it (if possible, provide at website)	contact person (if possible) who presented the programme to the group	whom the project/programme/initiative addresses	what features of the project/programme/initiative make it an example of good practice
Centre for laboratory teaching in science	Greece	http://www.ekfe.gr	Mr. Christos Dedes	Science teachers	In-service training on experimental teaching in science
EU Placements for future childcare professionals	Germany	Fachschule fuer Sozialpaedagogik, http://www.grosshepacher-schwesternschaft.de	Mrs. Sabine Birchall	Childcare trainees	The placement gives the opportunity to work abroad and be mentored by teachers as well as instructors on site. In addition, the placement gives students intercultural competences.
Parenting School	Greece	Institute of Continuous Adult Education (http://www.ideke.edu.gr)	Mr. Christos Dedes	Pupils parents and teachers	Promote the knowledge of parents regarding the physical, social, spiritual and other needs of children at each stage of development, to encourage parental involvement in school activities and to support cooperation with the teachers and to inform parents on health issues for themselves and their children
COMPETENT	Belgium	SERV, VDAB, Actiris, Forem, social partners www.synerjob.be	Mrs. F. Vermeersch	Education and labour market actions	Competence based description of jobs (labour-market wide) aimed at designing training and qualifications, hiring, and labour market matching, validation of acquired competences
Validation of non-formal and formal learning	Iceland	1.Education and Training service centre (Ingibjorg Godmundsdottir) http://www.frae.is/english/ 2.IDAN -	(see previous box)	Sectoral training funds, workers, employers	Counselling based approach on validation of non-formal and informal learning aimed at creating shorter learning tracks towards formal education and formal qualifications

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		Centre for continuing education (Edda Johansdottir) http://idan.is			
Designing art courses aimed at bridging the gap with higher education and with the labour market	Iceland	Myndlistaskolinn Reykjavik http://www.myndlistaskolinn.is	Ingibjorg Johansdottir	All people wishing to deepen their artistic competences	Modular training programme elaborated with the sectoral labour market actors aiming at developing artistic competences and providing graduates with job opportunities.
Lifelong Learning for pupils and teachers (EU co-financed project / EACEA grant)	Netherlands	The Dutch Council of social partners in the education labour market (The SBO) www.onderwijsarbeidsmarkt.nl	Mrs. M. Van Dijk m.vandijk@aop.nl	Pupils in primary and secondary education and teachers/school leaders. The idea is that a diversity of stakeholders are involved in the project and will implement the results of the project	Two expert meetings and a final conference will be organised for this one year project on lifelong learning for pupils and teachers. All relevant stakeholders in the Dutch education will together formulate an answer on the following questions: - What are lifelong learning competences? - What competences are needed from the teaching body to support the development of young people into fully autonomous lifelong learners? - What competences are needed to equip student-teachers and the teaching body with lifelong learning competences and continuous professional development throughout their career?
Education for a better life	Romania	Adventist Theological School of Craiova	Mr. Constantin Popescu	Student and people in rural areas	Developing empathy with the old people and children from disadvantaged rural areas
Introduction	Austria	Vienna Board of	Mrs. U. Huber	Pedagogically institutes,	Supervising or consulting and training for teachers

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programme for teachers (beginners)		Education		teacher trade unions and hr departments of schools	in their first years of working
Occupational councils	Iceland	Ministry of Education	Mr. Thorir Olafsson Thorir.olafsson@mm.is	Social partners, vocational schools	Occupational councils have an equal number of representatives of employees and employers in the area concerned. The occupational councils make suggestions on new lines of study and course curriculum. The goal is to meet the need of companies, speed up introduction of new technology with vocational education. 12 councils cover the various occupations.
Principle "money follows the student"	Latvia	Ministry of Education and Science, www.izm.gov.lv	Mrs. Elīna Petrovska	Students, schools, local governments	Funds are allocated to schools on the basis of the number of students. It is the sole competence of each local government to decide on the development of the school network located in its territory. It stimulates development of a cheaper and more efficient network of schools.
Qualification system	Italy	Regione Piemonte	Mrs. Roberta Richiero	VET schools and their students (both adults and young people)	In the whole region (4.4 million inhabitants) there is an established system of qualifications to which VET organizers have to comply. The recognition of prior courses/competences a person acquires is in this way made easier. Also the training programmes are the same in the whole region.
"Joyful School" program	Poland	Ministry of National Education http://www.men.gov.pl	Maciej Lasota maciej.lasota@men.gov.pl	Primary schools and local government	The government program "Joyful School" offers financial support for building playgrounds and equipping classrooms in

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		w.radosnazkola.men.gov.pl			primary schools with didactic tools for the youngest students. Schools will receive over PLN 2.5 billion until 2014. The financial contribution of the local government amounts to 50% of costs necessary for setting up playgrounds, while the cost of didactic tools is financed entirely from the state budget. As of September 2010, 80% of schools were already taking part in the program.
Development of “public education programme packages” and large-scale teacher training (in parallel with the package’s trial) between 2004 and 2008	Hungary	The former SULINOVA Public education development and professional teacher training Public Company (presently integrated to Educatio Plc.) and EDUCATIO Public Service Nonprofit Plc.	from the study visit group: Petra Perényi perenyi.petra@oh.gov.hu (for further info on the programme questions will be forwarded to persons who were involved in the programme development)	The whole public education; as for the actual realization of the program the addressees were schoolteachers. “Beneficiaries” are the pupils through the improved pedagogical methodology	The programme aimed to transform both the content and methodology of education. The name ‘package’ covers a complex instrument system which, along with teaching tools, also includes tools used for education process design, organisation and evaluation. Educational programme packages were made in six priority competence areas: text comprehension and composition, mathematics, foreign languages, and ICT. Plus: social, lifestyle, environmental and career-building skills. The elaboration of the independent programme package for pre-schools lays the basis for competence development.
Launch of the Integrative System of	Hungary	Former Ministry of Education and	From the study visit group: Petra Perényi	Children who are disadvantaged in multiple	IPR is a legal framework relating to special pedagogical methodologies. It’s a

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Pedagogy (IPR in Hungarian); from 2007		Culture, present Ministry of National Resources	perenyi.petra@oh.gov.hu (for further info questions will be forwarded)	areas	measurement to improve equal opportunities. . The programme's main point is not to differentiate disadvantaged children, but rather to provide specialised support within the mainstream class community, so that they are able to successfully complete their school years. It is a certain type of individual learning-path management, based on an individual development plan, which identifies areas where the learner needs to improve.
Transformation of the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (OKJ) and the modernisation of the Examination Requirements for Vocational Qualifications; Completed in 2006.	Hungary	Former Ministry of Education and Culture, present Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour	From the study visit group: Petra Perényi perenyi.petra@oh.gov.hu (for further info questions will be forwarded)	Vocational education	The national qualification reform of 2006 transformed the qualification structure into a modular system. This allows trainees to obtain basic qualifications by obtaining a set of partial qualifications successively. The modular system also makes it possible to obtain a higher level of vocational qualification step by step.

* You can describe as many good practices as you find necessary. You can add rows to the table.

2. The study visits programme aims to promote and support policy development and cooperation in lifelong learning. That is why it is important to know what you learnt about such policies and their implementation during your visit. You are invited to describe your findings concerning the following:

2.1 APPROACHES TAKEN BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS') REGARDING THE THEME OF THE VISIT. ARE THERE ANY SIMILAR APPROACHES/MEASURES IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES? WHAT ASPECTS ARE SIMILAR AND WHY? WHAT ASPECTS ARE DIFFERENT AND WHY?

We have learned through the study visit that Iceland is in a different situation than most other countries. This is due to the structure of the country (76 percent is wasteland), its small population (around 320.000 inhabitants), economic situation (since 2008 a high unemployment rate of 8 percent and prior to that near full employment) and other variables. During the study visit it became clear that a high percentage of the older working population have low formal education levels. Due to the economic crisis this has become a problem for unemployed people. Therefore Iceland is very active in validating non-formal and informal learning. This influences the lifelong learning programmes and education&training programmes in Iceland and therefore differs to other European countries.

A similarity between all participating countries is that all are active in implementing lifelong learning strategies. However, it differs to what extent these strategies are being implemented and on the target group they focus. In Iceland for example the main target group is the adult working population with a low formal education level.

A difference between the Icelandic education system and other European countries is the structure. In Iceland primary education and lower secondary education starts at the age of 6 and ends at the age of 16. This is compulsory. Upper secondary education runs from 16 to 20 and this is not compulsory. Iceland would like to shorten this track to 18 years of age; however there seems to be quite some discussion on this.

All participating countries in the study visit are engaged in implementing the European Qualification Framework and converting this to the National Qualifications Framework. During the meeting at the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture it was explained that Iceland is in the middle of the process of referencing the NQF to EQF. The difference is that Iceland has just started this process. Other countries are further developed in this respect. They have for example already designed policies and are in the process of implementing the policies on an operational level.

Another interesting aspect is that Iceland has upgraded their teacher training and training of childcare teachers from vocational to university level. Training takes five years now instead of three years. They are also in the process of developing a 'need-analysis' of teachers. This means that each year they calculate how many teachers they need in upcoming years and they match this with the admission of students for teacher training.

In other countries there is also a lot of discussion on upgrading the formal education level of teachers.

The close cooperation between Nordic countries on educational matters is also worth mentioning. Nordic countries are united in a formal network and exchange good practices with each other.

2.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (INCLUDING HOST) IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES RELATED TO THE THEME OF THE VISIT. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES? ARE THEY COMMON CHALLENGES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

- Validation of non-formal and informal learning remains a challenge; there is a persisting gap between the formal education system and non-formal/informal learning.
- Common problem of drop-outs from formal education and early school leavers.
- The implementation of lifelong learning remains a challenge for most European countries. Learning is associated with the working population. Many groups are underrepresented in this respect (unemployed, older people, migrants, etc).
- Another challenge is making education systems innovative. This implies that systems continuously need to be updated and changed to the latest knowledge and technology. But due to long decision processes in most countries this is impossible to implement.

2.3 NAME AND DESCRIBE EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED THAT PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS) APPLY TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES MENTIONED IN QUESTION 2.2. PLEASE MENTION SPECIFIC COUNTRY EXAMPLES.

- The Icelandic validation system of non-formal and informal learning is showing significant improvements over recent years. For more than 30 professions the Education and Training Centre has developed a methodology for validation. It could be set as an example for other countries.
- The Adult Education Act adopted by Iceland (on 31 March 2010) is an example of potentially effective legislation aimed at organising adult education by providers that receive accreditation based on the Act and public allocation for its implementation.
- The successful and close cooperation between different interest groups (e.g. employers/employees) on the matters of education and training in Iceland is an interesting development. In many other countries social partners are striving for different interests.

- As mentioned before, Iceland is dealing with a high percentage of adult people obtaining a low formal education level. To reach out to individuals with non-formal education and assists them in the validation process, education&training centres in Iceland offer educational and career counselling at the workplace. This is an innovative working method to guide individuals with their lifelong learning in the trades after their formal education.
- Iceland and some other countries are very developed in using distance e-learning. During the study visit we have visited Keilir ‘the Atlantic Centre of Excellence’. Keilir uses innovative teaching methods for distance e-learning. At the moment they are implementing the MINT system through which a teacher can explain the materials to students online.

2.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSFERABILITY OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES. COULD ANY EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT BE APPLIED AND TRANSFERRED TO OTHER COUNTRIES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

No two countries are the same. Each country is formed by its own historical, political and social context. This can be a difficulty when countries are interested in implementing good practices from each other. However, countries also face similar challenges. The study visit to Iceland has been an extraordinary opportunity to broaden the perspective of all participants on a diverse range of topics. The group believes that policies and practices can be applied and transferred to other countries, but keeping in mind the context a policy or practice has been developed for.

3. Creating networks of experts, building partnerships for future projects is another important objective of the study visit programme.

Please state whether and which ideas for future cooperation have evolved during meetings and discussions.

All participants in the group have exchanged contact details with each other and with organisations that we have visited during the study visit. This will enhance future cooperation on similar topics and creates the opportunity to contact each other on information if needed. It also provides the opportunity to make more contacts in other European countries.

Topics on which we could contact each other are for example: EQF/NQF, validation of informal and non-formal education and the involvement of social partners.

However, no network on future projects has been made during the course of the visit. This is partly due to the different backgrounds of the participants and fields of expertise and partly for lack of time.

TO SUM UP

4. What is the most interesting/useful information that the group believes should be communicated to others? To whom, do you think, this information will be of most interest?

We have learnt a lot of our study visit to Iceland. But from all good practices and examples we have seen, the group believes that one good practice in particular can be valuable and interesting to share with other stakeholders in Europe:

Iceland has successful solutions to validate non-formal and informal learning. The Ministry of Educations perceives all learning as valuable and thinks this should be documented irrespective of where it was acquired. A high percentage of working population in Iceland has a low formal education level but worked in organisations for years and build valuable work experience. Iceland is very engaged in validating these skills and providing them with a qualification. For nearly 30 professions, the Education and training centre (ETSC) in Iceland has developed methodologies to validate non-formal and informal learning. The target group for ETSC is people with little formal education. By giving recognition for acquired competences the individual can continue his/her education based on his/her competence level at any given moment and does not have to start from where his/her formal education ended.

Validating competence is of use for the community and for the individual. First of all validation can increase the formal education level in society. Through recognition of competences it can be avoided that those who have been on the labour market for a long time will have to start from scratch in their learning. On an individual level, validating competences is a way to shortening formal learning and will benefit the individual both economically and timewise. In addition it strengthens the position of the individual and gives an employer a better view on the employee's competence

THANK YOU!