A blue door with a silver handle and lock. The door has a classic panel design with a central rectangular panel. The handle is a horizontal bar with a circular end, and the lock is a circular knob with a vertical slot. The text is written in a white, serif font on the central panel.

Opening Doors to Adult Education for Migrants

*Guidelines for working with Education Ambassadors –
Grundtvig “Learning Community” Project*

The publication was developed in the framework of the project “**Learning Community – Migrants as Education Multipliers Pave the Way for Migrant Access to Lifelong Learning**”.

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Local funding
Austria



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Content of the CD

This publication includes a CD on which additional material developed during the project is available (see back cover).

► General material

- Power Point presentation on the project (English)
- Executive summary (English)
- Recommendations (English)
- Compilation of the country analysis (English, and parts in Dutch, German and Greek)

► Country specific material

The country chapters of this brochure (Chapters A, B, C) and additional material are available in the individual country languages on the CD.

Greece

Η αναφορά στις χώρες του παρόντος εγχειριδίου (Κεφ. Α,Β,Γ) και επιπρόσθετο υλικό διατίθενται στις εθνικές γλώσσες στο επισυναπτόμενο CD.

Υλικό για το σχέδιο στην Ελλάδα

- Country report: ανάλυση της αρχικής κατάστασης στην Ελλάδα
- Υλη της Κατάρτισης
- Παραδείγματα εκπαιδευτικών υλικών που χρησιμοποιήθηκαν στην κατάρτιση
- Υπόδειγμα του πτυχίου των Εκπαιδευτικών πλοηγών
- Υλικό Δημοσιότητας (φυλλάδιο)
- Εγχειρίδια για τους Εκπαιδευτικούς Πλοηγούς
- Το σχέδιο LC στην Ελλάδα συμπεριλαμβανομένων προτάσεων δράσης για την Ελλάδα

Germany

Die Länder-Kapitel dieser Broschüre (Kapitel A, B, C) sowie zusätzliches Material ist in den jeweiligen Landessprachen auf der CD erhältlich.

Material des Projekts aus Berlin, Deutschland

- Analysepapier zur Ausgangssituation in Deutschland
- Curriculum des Trainings
- Vorlage der Teilnahmebestätigung für die BildungslotsInnen
- Informationsblätter zum Projekt
- Das Projekt Learning Community in Berlin, Deutschland

The Netherlands

De teksten in deze brochure over de verschillende landen (hoofdstuk A, B, C) en aanvullend materiaal vindt u in de nationale talen op de bijgevoegde CD.

Projectmateriaal Nederland

- Analyse van de huidige situatie in Nederland (Engels)
- Curriculum training Educatie Ambassadeurs (Engels, Nederlands)
- Het certificaat voor de Educatie Ambassadeur (Nederlands)
- Het vrijwilligerscontract met de Educatie Ambassadeur (Nederlands)
- Folder Project Learning Community (Nederlands)
- Folder Educatie Ambassadeurs (Nederlands)
- CESO Nieuwsbrief (Nederlands)
- CESO Nieuwsbrief (Engels)
- Educatie Ambassadeurs aan het werk. Het project Learning Community in Nederland (Nederlands)

Austria

- Analysepapier zur Ausgangssituation in Österreich

Czech Republic

- Good practice manual for working with volunteers (English)

Foreword

Dear readers,

These guidelines take you through the story of the EU Grundtvig “**Learning Community – Migrants as Educational Multipliers Pave the Way for Migrants to Access Lifelong Learning (LC)**” project. Migrants are a heterogeneous group, and as such they are often underrepresented in terms of participation in adult education offers. The reasons and obstacles are multilayered; most of the needs are not specific to migrants but apply to all so-called educationally and socio-economic disadvantaged or hard to reach groups.

Since the aim of the project is to improve access for migrants, which **means opening doors to adult education opportunities**, the door was chosen as a symbol and guides the reader through the publication. We invite you in and ask that you get to know the approaches developed and implemented by the LC project for improving the access of migrants to adult education.

You will learn in particular about project activities in Germany, Greece and the Netherlands and hear the voices of those involved. Multipliers in the field of education called “Education Ambassadors” will talk about their intentions and experiences in offering low-threshold educational guidance based on the interests and living situations of other migrants.

Furthermore, project activities were set on the institutional and structural level to initiate opening processes. Public relations and networking as well as awareness raising among various institutions and stakeholders were conducted by the project staff and the Education Ambassadors. Cooperation partners, professionals from adult education institutions and other experts will share their knowledge and perspectives regarding facilitating access.

In the chapters about the experiences in Germany, Greece and the Netherlands you will find similarities and differences concerning the local conditions and project implementation strategies. You will hear about success stories and also challenges regarding reaching the goal of equal access for all and relatedly supporting migrants in (re)entering the education system. Recommendations were developed at the local level to overcome these obstacles. In the final chapter, you will find recommendations on a more general level regarding improving the participation of migrants.

On the attached CD you will find more material developed during the project (sections in English, Dutch, German and Greek) which gives additional support and information on working with the multiplier approach (e.g. templates, manuals).

The project is an example of a successful cooperation between partners coming from five countries and working in different sectors. We would like to thank everyone involved for their participation, for sharing their knowledge, expertise and commitment in working towards our common goal – opening doors and achieving equal access to adult education for all.

And to those who will realise future projects based on the presented approaches and develop them further – good luck, perseverance and joy!

All the best,

The Learning Community Project Team

Executive summary

Lifelong learning for all

(Adult) education is of central importance for sustainability, competitiveness and employability, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development. Access to lifelong learning should therefore be provided and guaranteed for all citizens. Equal opportunity regarding access to adult education availability and social participation is nonetheless not currently a reality. The challenge throughout Europe is to provide opportunities for all, especially disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities, the elderly, migrants and ethnic minorities.

The EU Grundtvig “**Learning Community – Migrants as Education Multipliers Pave the Way for Migrants to Access Lifelong Learning (LC)**” project operates in the field of promoting equal opportunity for disadvantaged groups, in particular the improvement of migrants access to adult education. In the LC project, partner organisations from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands came together. The chosen countries and partners are intentionally heterogeneous in order to cover different initial conditions and perspectives within the EU, and also to capture the specific phenomena and situations of different migrant populations across the EU.

Migrants as a target group in adult education

Migrants constitute an important part of all European societies. The group of migrants is characterised by marked heterogeneity. However, migrants are often underrepresented in terms of participation in adult education. The issue of lack of access to adult education for migrants can be seen from several perspectives. On the individual level of the migrants, inadequate access has consequences regarding their personal development and also regarding career perspectives and employability. On the level of society and economics, the lack of education makes integration more difficult. Furthermore underrepresentation of migrants is also an issue for adult education institutions as many adult education institutions find it difficult to reach migrants.

Factors in participation in adult education

Factors making for low participation in adult education are often related to a lack of time due to work or family responsibilities, difficulties in accessing information about learning opportunities, lack of accessible educational structures, individual attitudes to learning, inflexible entry requirements and funding or transport obstacles. It is important to keep in mind that these needs are not specific to migrants but apply to all so call educationally and socio-economically disadvantaged or hard to reach groups. The accumulation of multiple factors leads to disadvantages in adult education as well as in society in general. Great importance should be placed on the connection between social and educational disadvantage. The reasons and obstacles are multi-layered, and barriers can be found to exist on three levels: the structural, institutional and individual. All LC project activities on all levels were aimed at opening doors to adult education for migrants.

Education Ambassadors can open doors to adult education

As a method for reducing barriers on the individual level of the migrants, a peer-to-peer multiplier approach was used. Persons who are migrants themselves and have good access to the target group were trained and since

then have been active as multipliers; in the project we call them “Education Ambassadors”. Since (educationally) disadvantaged individuals are often difficult to reach, the multipliers work with offers that are low-threshold and based on the interests and the life circumstances of the target group. Therefore the role of Education Ambassadors is to offer low-threshold educational guidance (give information and advice, connect people with offers, etc.), build bridges between the migrant target groups and (adult education) institutions and their options, paving the way for personal betterment as well as accompanying migrants on their paths to integration.

During the project, the international project team recognised similarities and differences in the partner countries. Of particular relevance for project implementation were the varied immigration histories and recent situations of the migrant population and the different levels of existing multiplier structures in the project areas, i.e. Germany, Greece and the Netherlands.

Resources and possibilities of the Education Ambassadors approach involve the ideas that peer-to-peer multipliers have a high acceptance within the target groups, face to face encounters on the same level are possible and they have knowledge about the needs, capabilities and access barriers of the target group. Therefore they can supply socially relevant information. Furthermore their language skills can be beneficial. Some of the most important limits and boundaries of the Education Ambassadors approach relate to the financial security of Education Ambassadors and the over burdening of often already very active people. A professional long-term support system including guidance and support of the volunteer Education Ambassadors is crucial.

Networking and awareness raising

Furthermore, LC project activities were set on the institutional and structural level to initiate change processes. Public relations and networking as well as awareness raising amongst different institutions and stakeholders about the issue of access and equal opportunity for migrants were conducted by the project staff and the Education Ambassadors.

Intercultural opening

Intercultural opening means changing processes in (adult education) institutions in order to better meet the needs of a diverse population and heterogeneous target groups. Intercultural opening responds to demographic changes and the increasing diversity of the population. The aim of intercultural opening is equal access for and participation of migrants in all offers and services. Intercultural opening needs to be understood as an essential aspect of equal opportunity policies. Here equal opportunity as a strategy which crosses all areas is the intention, similar to equality for men and women in gender mainstreaming. Therefore all fields within adult education institutions are important in considering these change and adaption processes: staff development, organisational arrangement of the courses, teaching methods and organisational questions.

Glossary

Here you will find explanations of some of the key terms used in this brochure.

The following terms are based on the definitions in the Communication from the European Commission entitled "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" (2001, Annex II Glossary):

lifelong learning

"All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective."

active citizenship

"The cultural, economic, political/democratic and/or social participation of citizens in society as a whole and in their community."

empowerment

"The process of granting people the power to take responsible initiatives to shape their own life and that of their community or society in economic, social and political terms."

The following terms are based on the Eurostat definitions (European Commission, Eurostat 2006). Four categories of education are defined:

Formal education is education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal education institutions which is usually full-time. Examples included primary and secondary level education and university/college diploma and degree programmes.

Non-formal education is defined as any organised educational activities that do not correspond to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside education institutions, and can cater to persons of all ages. Depending on the country context, it might cover educational programmes that increase adult literacy, provide basic education for out of school children, enhance life skills, work skills or improve cultural understanding.

Informal learning is defined as intentional but is less organised and less structured; it might include learning events that occur within the family, at the workplace or in the course of daily life of every person.

These three forms of education are considered to be intentional learning and are often referred to as lifelong learning.

Random learning is not considered to be intentional learning and is therefore not included in statistical observations.

Various terms are used to describe the immigration population in different national contexts. In this brochure the terms used are based on the European Migration Network (EMN) glossary.

Migration

"In the EU context, a broader-term of an immigration and emigration. In a global context, the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border (international migration), or within a State (internal

migration). It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.”

Migrant

“A broader-term of an immigrant and emigrant, referring to a person who leaves one country or region to settle in another.”

Person with a Migratory/Migration Background

“A person who has:

- (a) migrated into his/her present country of residence; and/or
- (b) previously had a different nationality from their present country of residence; and/or
- (c) at least one of his/her parents previously entered his/her present country of residence as a migrant.”

Heterogeneity of the migrant population

Societies are characterised by great plurality and diversity. Many different factors influence the living circumstances of individuals and the availability of opportunities; care should be taken that they are considered when exploring an issue. These factors include gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, ethnic background and socio-economic background. In our project we focus on the category “migrants”. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that besides the status of being migrants, other factors are important to consider as well when exploring the factors regarding access to adult education (see chapter 2).

Above all, migrants are a heterogeneous group. When looking at the situation of migrants, two levels need to be taken into account: the structural and individual. The conditions, frameworks and regulations in the respective nation states where migrants reside have an impact on their life circumstances. The legal conditions surrounding establishing oneself in the different societies and labour markets vary greatly (see chapter 4). For explanations on the individual level, see section 2.2.1.



Introduction: Adult education in a diverse society

”*Adult learning is essential to competitiveness and employability, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development across Europe. The challenge is to provide opportunities for all, especially the disadvantaged groups.*“

1.1 Lifelong learning for all

Lifelong learning is considered to be a key strategy in meeting the demands of the present society in Europe as it must be thought of as a knowledge society. In the communication from the European Commission entitled “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality” (2001), a broad definition of lifelong learning that is not limited to a purely economic perspective or only concerns adult learning is stressed. “In addition to the emphasis it places on learning from pre-school to post-retirement, lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The objectives of learning include active citizenship, personal fulfilment and social inclusion as well as employment-related aspects. The principles which underpin lifelong learning and guide its effective implementation emphasise the centrality of the learner, the importance of equal opportunities and the quality and relevance of learning opportunities.”

Improving access to adult education for disadvantaged groups

Adult learning is a vital component of EU education policies as it is essential to competitiveness and employability, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development across Europe. At present, adult participation in lifelong learning varies greatly and is insufficient in many EU countries.

The challenge is to provide opportunities for all, especially the most disadvantaged groups who need learning most. Here the so called Matthew effect – those who have will be given more – is evident: those with a high level of education also participate most in adult education. In programmes and strategies for lifelong learning, on the European and also on the national and local levels, a policy trend is apparent: improving access for disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities, elderly, migrants and ethnic minorities. As a result of increased awareness, the Action Plan on Lifelong Learning from the European Commission (2007) included the following priorities:

- ▶ “To reduce the persistent problem of poverty and social exclusion among marginalised groups. Adult learning can both improve people’s skills and help them towards active citizenship and personal autonomy;
- ▶ To increase the integration of migrants in society and labour market. Adult learning offers tailor made courses, including language learning, to contribute to this integration process. Furthermore, participation in adult learning in the host country can help migrants to secure validation and recognition for the qualifications they bring with them;
- ▶ To increase participation in lifelong learning and particularly to address the fact that participation decreases after the age of 34.”

Educational guidance

As increasing participation in adult learning is high on the agenda in all countries, the importance of adequate guidance in motivating adults to participate in and to stay in learning programmes has been underlined in European and national policies. Two EU resolutions of the Education Council (2004, 2008) highlighted the need for strong guidance services throughout individual lifetimes to equip people with the skills in managing their learning and careers and better handling the transitions between and within education/training and work. In 2007 the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) was set up to take forward the concrete national implementation of the Resolution priorities (see e.g. ELGPN report 2010).

Lifelong guidance services, including outreach activities, are particularly central to increasing participation in adult learning, especially for adults who have a low level of education and/or training.

Migrants in adult education

Migrants constitute an important part of all European societies (see Chapter 4.1). They are underrepresented in terms of participation in adult education. The perception is that migrants have qualification deficits; however they make use of adult education possibility to a lesser extent or are represented only in a small segment of educational offers (e.g. in language and integration courses). Here the Matthew effect becomes apparent as well. The exclusion mechanisms and effects regarding access to adult education are manifold. See Chapter 2 regarding the issue of access to adult education and factors influencing (non)participation.

The issue of lack of access to adult education for migrants can be seen from several perspectives. On the individual level of the migrants, inadequate access has consequences regarding their personal development and also regarding career prospects and general employability. On the level of the society and the economy, the lack of education makes integration more difficult. Furthermore underrepresentation of migrants is also an issue for adult education institutions. Many adult education institutions find it difficult to reach migrants. In order to stay competitive, it is necessary to make offers available that correspond to the varied needs and aims of as many customers as possible. This of course includes the different groups of people having a migrant background which constitute part of the population and therefore are target groups and potential customers of adult education services (see section 2.2.2).

1.2 The “Learning Community” project

The “**Learning Community – Migrants as Education Multipliers Pave the Way for Migrant Access to Lifelong Learning (LC)**” project is focused on the area of promoting equal opportunity for disadvantaged groups, in particular the improvement of access of migrants to adult education.

Project aims

- ▶ Improvement of access of migrants to lifelong learning possibilities in non-formal and vocational adult education.
- ▶ Empowerment of the target group, stimulating personal development and social participation.
- ▶ Dismantling institutional and structural barriers.

The project partnership

The LC project was funded by the European Union adult education programme called “Grundtvig”. It is a partnership between organisations across the EU, bringing together partners from five countries and operating in different sectors: a vocational adult education centre called Olympic Training (OT) in Greece, NGOs active in the field of migration, education and health (CESO – Centrum voor Europese Studies en Opleidingen in the Netherlands, Gesundheit Berlin-Brandenburg in Germany and ZEBRA – Interkulturelles Beratungs- und Therapiezentrum in Austria). IQ Roma Service (IQRS) in the Czech Republic gave valuable recommendations at the beginning of the project regarding working with volunteers. IQRS is an organisation working with a disadvantaged group, namely the Roma, who are an ethnic minority and are not (necessarily) migrants but nonetheless suffer under similar discrimination mechanisms as migrants. Furthermore, through strategic partnerships the project brings together adult education institutions, NGOs, migrant organisations and political stakeholders. The overall project coordination lies in the hands of BGZ Berlin International Cooperation Agency in Germany. The countries and partners chosen are intentionally heterogeneous in order to cover different initial conditions and perspectives within the EU and also to capture the specific phenomena and situations of different migrant populations across the EU.

The core project activities:

▶ **Multipliers are trained and act as Education Ambassadors (EA) in Greece, Germany and the Netherlands**

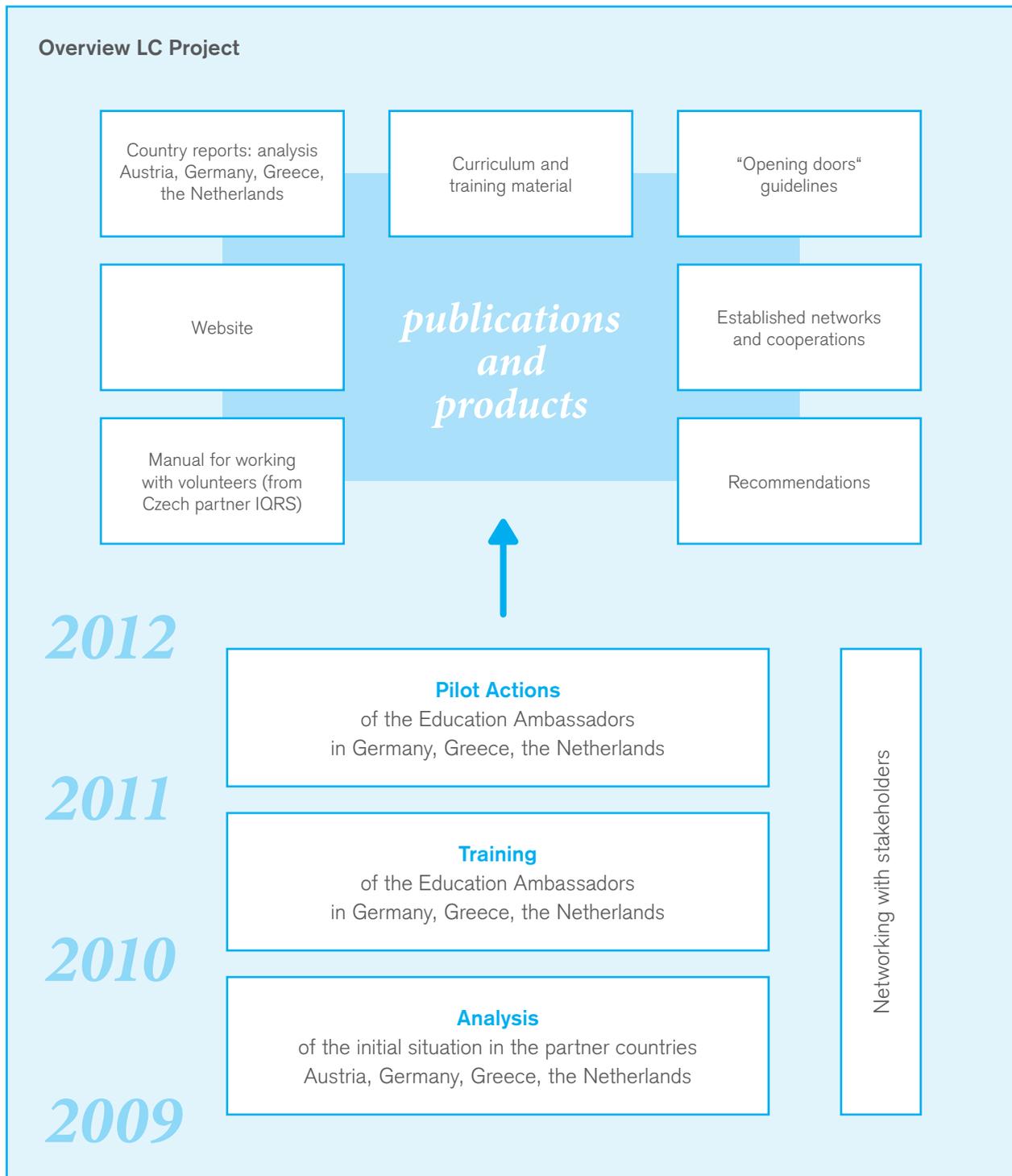
In the project, a peer-to-peer approach is used; this means the multipliers themselves belong to the target group. Since (educationally) disadvantaged persons are often difficult to reach, the multipliers work with offers that are low-threshold and based on the interests and the life circumstances of the target group. The aim is that offers will be openly accessible to everybody.

▶ **Networking awareness raising**

Further project activities aim to initiate change processes on the institutional and structural level. Therefore networking and awareness raising within (adult education) institutions and among other stakeholders about the (educational) needs of migrants by the project staff and the multipliers is an essential part of the project. Institutions and stakeholders are sensitised to the needs of the migrant population and are encouraged to take the requirements of migrants into account. Here the aim is to make existing structures also openly accessible for migrants (and other disadvantaged groups).

Resulting written material

Several publications and products were developed as part of the project, e.g. analysis reports concerning the local situation in the participating countries, curriculum and teaching materials, Good Practice Manual for working with volunteers and policy recommendations. See the CD and the project website <http://www.learning-community.eu/> for further information.





2

Participation in Adult Education

“The accumulation of multiple factors leads to disadvantages in adult education as well as in society in general. The interaction between structural, institutional and individual conditions needs to be taken into account. Great importance should be placed on the connection between social and educational disadvantages. When looking at the reasons for lower participation, it is important to consider the fact that migrants are not a homogeneous group.”

2.1 Utilisation of adult education opportunities

To what extent do people participate in adult education? The results of the European **Adult Education Survey** (AES) shed light on participation rates of the European population. The survey was conducted between 2005 and 2007, respondents were between 25 and 64 years old; no separate data is available for the country-specific situations of the migrant populations (Eurostat/Boateng 2009). AES data shows that a third of the respondents participated in formal and non-formal learning activities; 6% of those participated in formal education and 94% in non-formal activities. Of the non-formal activities, 80% are job related. Employers and non-formal education institutions are therefore the most significant providers of non-formal education and training. More than two-thirds of the respondents to the AES did not participate in formal or non-formal education and training. People with low education and in low-skilled professions had the lowest level of participation.

Participation of migrants

Generally, there are only a few studies available on the participation of migrants in adult education, but some conclusions can be drawn from the available data and the interviews which were conducted for the project. In the following section an overview is provided. For detailed descriptions, please see the country analysis on the CD.

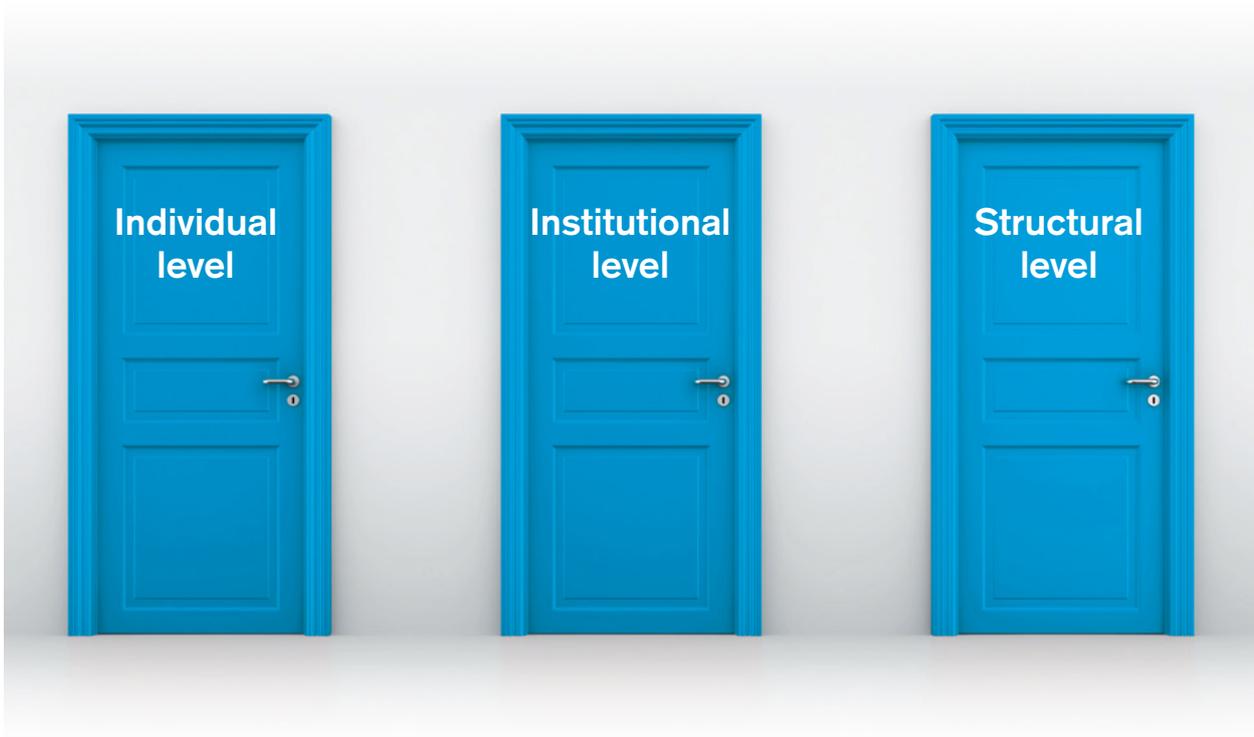
In the initial stage of the project the situation regarding access of migrants to adult education was analysed in Austria, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands, with a particular focus on the region where the project was implemented. The results were summarised in individual country reports and a compilation of the analysis reports.

Overview

- ▶ The educational and vocational training **level** of migrants (years of education, educational achievements) is **on average** lower compared to the total population, particularly the first generation migrants.
- ▶ There is a lower level of migrant **participation** in adult education activities compared to the total population (though there are differences regarding the different migrant populations and the sectors of adult education).
- ▶ Where migrants do participate:
 - High participation rate for language classes (languages of the respective countries) and so called “integration courses”
 - Low participation rate in other adult education classes

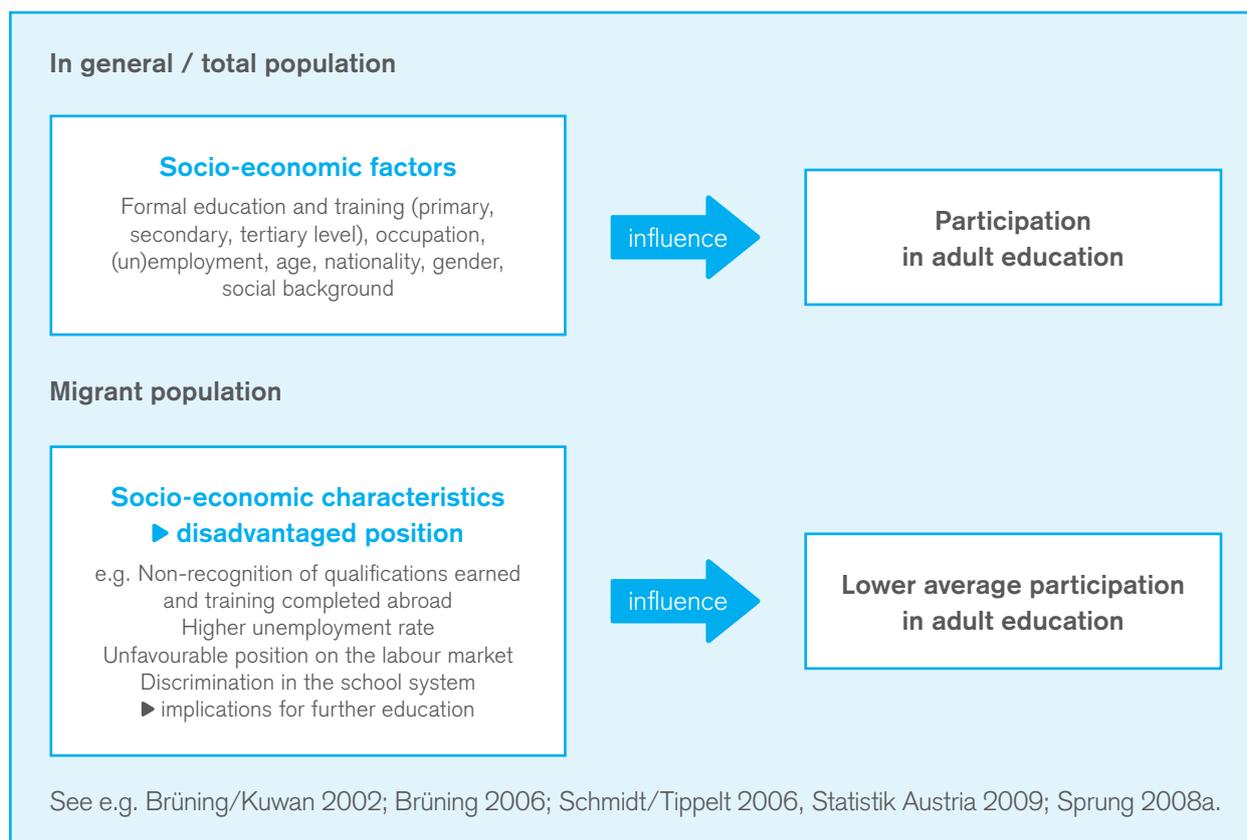
2.2 Access barriers - Factors leading to (non)participation

Migrants are generally interested in adult education, but there are various obstacles to their participation. Barriers to participation in adult education are multilayered. For the purpose of the project, three levels are discussed: the individual level, the institutional level and the structural level.



2.2.1 Individual level

Several factors for (non)participation in adult education need to be taken into account, e.g. gender, age, educational attainment, employment situation, citizenship and the rural-urban divide. The accumulation of various factors leads to disadvantages in adult education as well as in society in general. Great importance needs to be attributed to the general conditions and frameworks within a society. Beyond question in the social sciences is the connection between social disadvantage and educational disadvantage (e.g. Brüning/Kuwan 2002).



2.2.1.1 Differentiation between different groups of migrants

When looking at the reasons for lower participation, it is important to distinguish between different groups of migrants. Migrants are not a homogeneous group; they differ regarding several characteristics. Furthermore, the factors listed below have different implications and consequences for each individual.

- ▶ **Residence permit status** (e.g. EU or third country citizen; asylum seekers, refugees; documented migrants, undocumented migrants; naturalised citizen) has different implications regarding such things as immigration procedures, access to the labour market, right of residence and rights regarding benefits or financial support.
- ▶ **Stability of living conditions:** For new migrants, the first priority is to secure subsistence. Material and personal resources for participation in adult education are usually not available or are not given priority. Even more settled migrants might be in a socially disadvantaged position, e.g. having financial difficulties, lack of employment or have a precarious job situation. Furthermore the legal conditions surrounding establishing oneself in the immigration society and the labour market need to be taken into account (see Chapter 4.1 - MIPEX regarding international legal frameworks for the integration of migrants).

- ▶ **1st and 2nd/3rd generation:** The so called “first generation” describes people who actually experienced moving from one country to another; whereas their descendants are often called the “second/third generation”; they were born and brought up in the country of immigration. They normally participate in the local school system and have better opportunities in terms of establishing themselves. Nevertheless (social) disadvantage persists in many cases.
- ▶ **Education background:** The educational and vocational training level of migrants is generally lower in comparison with the overall population. One influential factor is immigration history – in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands in the 1950s and 1960s workers with low educational qualifications were recruited for manual jobs. Participation in education depends on previous experience. The first generation usually has little experiences with education, in particular with adult education. This can be down to their education background; people were primarily recruited for blue collar jobs. Furthermore, less experience with (adult) education might be linked to the offers available in the countries of origin. Either there were none available or the people in question did not know about them or have access to them. On the other side of the spectrum there are migrants with a high level of educational achievement. They therefore belong to a group which usually has a higher participation rate in adult education. In particular, academics with a migration background tend to participate more in lifelong learning. Nevertheless the qualifications of many highly skilled migrants are not (officially) recognised and so they work in sectors in which access to (vocational) education is restricted. For an in-depth study regarding the situation concerning the issue of recognition in adult education in Austria see e.g. Sprung 2011.
- ▶ **Position on the labour market:** As seen in the Adult Education Survey, the majority of individuals participate in non-formal vocational training. This is also a result found in the interviews conducted for the country analysis (see CD); many migrants are particularly interested in vocational training. Since segments of the migrant populations have an unfavourable position on the labour market, their preconditions for participation are worse when compared to non-migrants. As the AES shows, the employment situation has an impact on adult education participation, i.e. employed people are more likely to participate. Since the unemployment rate of migrants is higher compared to non-migrants, they are at a disadvantage. Furthermore many migrants are working in lower level jobs and particular in sectors where access to (vocational) education presents more of a challenge.
- ▶ **Further socio-economic factors** such as age and gender play an important role regarding participation and obstacles which prevent utilisation of adult education offers.
- ▶ Moreover **subjective factors** such as interest in learning, cost-benefit considerations and individual values and attitudes have an influence on peoples’ motivation to participate. For participation in education good preconditions are essential, and furthermore such factors influence motivation and interest. Moreover previous experience with education, class-based attitude and behavioural strategies have a significant influence.

2.2.1.2 *Reasons for (low) participation in adult education*

The three most important obstacles to participation in education and training according to the findings of the Adult Education Survey (AES) and our analysis are

- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Family obligations
- ▶ Financial limitations

There are however major gender differences in terms of obstacles to participation, e.g. 30.9% of the male and 14.6% of the female respondents listed working schedule as being a major obstacle. Family responsibilities were an important issue for 12.3% of the male and 31.7% of the female respondents (see AES - Eurostat/Boateng 2009).

These are some of the key findings of the AES regarding reasons for (non)participation in adult education in Europe. Because of the composition of the AES data, no detailed analysis regarding migration background can be made. Regardless, based on AES data Erler and Fischer (2012) could draw some conclusions regarding the situation of migrants in Austria. They generally also correspond with the findings regarding the total population. Furthermore, the results of the analysis of the interviews undertaken for the country reports (see CD) comply with the other research findings.

Further obstacles which especially impact (low skilled) migrants:

In the following experiences and results from the LC project (see e.g. country analysis on the CD) and findings from research and other (EU) projects are brought together (see e.g. AGE n.d.; Brüning 2006; Götz 2008; Kloyber/Sprung 2008; Reinprecht/Ates n.d.; Schmidt/Tippel 2006; Sprung 2008a,b,c).

- ▶ One key factor affecting participation and access is a **lack of information** about adult education offers. This is primarily a lack of information regarding structures and opportunities in (adult) education. People find it difficult to find their way in complex systems. According to a German study, 17% of German citizens and 63% of foreign citizen don't feel adequately informed about the available (adult) education offers (Sprung 2008c). See also Schmidt/Tippelt 2006 regarding the issue of lack of information and the role of educational guidance.

Socially embedded information: The issue surrounding this lack of information is linked with another issue identified by Reinprecht (2006) and Reinprecht/Ates (n.d.). They investigated educationally disadvantaged elderly migrants in Vienna and observed that information which is socially embedded can best reach the target group. There is a good amount of information about such issues as the differentiated offer structure of social welfare and adult education available, e.g. brochures, websites. Nonetheless, these products require previous knowledge or they are not specific enough. Translation of flyers for example is one important element, but this is not enough. Information needs to be socially embedded, which means that it is only effective if it is readily available and relates to the real world context. Therefore additional advice and guidance is necessary

- ▶ **Application procedures and bureaucracy** related to course enrolment can be another barrier.
- ▶ A **lack of nearby facilities** or no adult education centres in the area: mobility patterns in relation to the social background present another important access barrier. In addition to the actual distances, the fear of entering a new place can prevent individuals from (re)entering education.
- ▶ A **lack of self confidence:** personal perceptions such as "not confident about going back to school" or "not having the prerequisites to (re)enter education" inhibit utilisation of educational offers. Some influential factors include fear of exam requirements, negative experiences in the past (in school, and also adult education), fear of embarking on something new.
- ▶ Lack of **language skills** or fear of not having good enough language skills.
- ▶ Illiteracy or **missing basic education** (e. g amongst elderly migrants).
- ▶ Existing **legal conditions and rules** on several levels such as entrance regulations and the availability of financial support (e.g. host country citizenship is often required to attend a course or apply for financial help), recognition of qualifications, eligibility to attend a course (for example courses for unemployed are not accessible for migrants who work in uninsured conditions such as domestic workers or in agriculture).

Most of these needs are not specific to migrants but apply to all hard to reach groups and people with low social status or who live in educationally disadvantaged circumstances. As a conclusion regarding the question of access, an approach focusing on target groups and needs is essential.

2.2.2 Institutional level

When dealing with barriers that prevent participation in adult education, also the preconditions in the institutions which offer training and courses need to be considered; some of the factors which were raised in the section on the individual level can be related to the institutional level.

Migrants as target groups of adult education

Migrants are served by various adult education offers. On the one hand, migrants are addressed as a particular target group by adult education institutions and non-government organisations. These offers are usually unidimensional, i.e. they consist mainly of language courses in the national language, are so-called integration courses or offer basic education. On the other hand, migrants also participate in educational possibilities which are not particularly directed towards them, e.g. training courses offered by job centres. The majority of migrants take part in language courses, computer courses and vocational training at a low level. In most other (general) adult education courses, migrants are underrepresented. Furthermore there are only a few programmes that are developed for and target skilled migrants (Brüning 2006; Dollhausen 2006; Reinprecht 2005; Schmidt/Tippelt 2006; Sprung 2008b).

In his study on migrants in adult education in Vienna, Reinprecht (2005) highlights four important findings. First, in adult education institutions there is only a vague picture about the structure and the educational needs of the customers; this points to a lack of a systematic analysis of demand as well as an analysis of potential. These could form the crucial background for planning and better target group orientation. Second, vocational training institutions model their planning on compensatory learning concepts. From this perspective, migrants are only perceived of as bearers of educational deficits; their competencies, qualifications and experiences are often ignored. Third, a revision of perspective is linked with an opening up of the market for the target group of migrants. Many migrants are classed as being in low-income groups, but at the same time there is a high demand by migrants for the transfer and development of existing qualifications and a high willingness to invest in education as a precondition for a secure labour market position and a chance at social mobility. Fourth, the adult education institutions show a high need for measures regarding intercultural opening of their offers as well as related interculturality.

Intercultural opening

Intercultural opening means changing processes in institutions in order to better meet the need of a diverse population and very heterogeneous target groups. Intercultural opening responds to demographic changes and the increasing diversity of the population (see e.g. Bauer/EQUAL-Entwicklungspartnerschaft "qualifikation stärkt" 2005; Handschuck/Schröer n.d.; Handschuck/Schröer 2001; Jungk 2001; Schröttner/Sprung 2003; Sprung 2008d; Zebratl 2009).

The aim of intercultural opening is first equal access to and participation of migrants in existing offers. Secondly is the active consideration of migrants as a target group and the development of new offers and the adaptation of existing offers. Intercultural opening needs to be understood as an essential aspect of equal opportunity policy. Here equal opportunity as a field which covers all areas is pursued, similar to the sought after equality of men and

women in gender mainstreaming. Therefore all areas of adult education are important when considering these change and adaptation processes:

- ▶ Staff development
- ▶ Organisational arrangement of the courses
- ▶ Instructional methods
- ▶ Organisational

See the recommendations developed by the LC project regarding the different areas in section 5.2.

2.2.3 Structural level

Legal frameworks and political circumstances are important elements in the living situations of migrants in general, and they also impact the field of education. The following are some of the most important factors:

- ▶ Regulations and laws (regarding such things as residence, working, education)
- ▶ Mechanisms on the labour market and structural position of migrants on the labour market
- ▶ Qualification structure of migrants (immigration history) and (non)recognition of their qualifications
- ▶ Financial funding for adult education (institutional and individual level)
- ▶ Discrimination and exclusionary practices

2.2.4 Contributions of the “Learning Community” Project regarding the three levels

In the Learning Community project, activities regarding all three levels were included. On the individual level, the focus was on the empowerment of the target group and the issue of a lack of information. To help potential learners in finding their way through the complex adult education possibilities available and building bridges between migrants and adult education institutions, a low-threshold guidance system via the Education Ambassadors was put in place in order to open doors for migrants.

The mentioned obstacles to participation such as employment, family obligations and financial reasons are connected with conditions on the structural level. Direct influence is not in the scope of the project, but through networking with stakeholders the LC project staff tried to raise awareness about the situation and needs of the migrant population. Furthermore through networking on the institutional level with the staff of adult education providers and other relevant organisations, awareness raising and potential cooperative efforts were sought with the aim of making existing structures openly accessible for migrants (and other disadvantaged groups).

See recommendations developed by the LC project regarding the three levels in chapter 5.

3

Education Ambassadors as door openers to Adult Education

”Approaches & experiences from the Learning Community project“

3.1 What are Education Ambassadors?

“Education Ambassadors” as multipliers in the field of adult education

During the LC project, multipliers were trained and then worked as Education Ambassadors in Germany, Greece and the Netherlands. Education Ambassadors are migrants who act as multipliers in the field of education with a particular focus on adult education. In the course of the project we decided to use the term “Education Ambassadors” (EA) following the suggestion from the Dutch project partners. In the Netherlands the word “ambassador” is also used in other fields of education (for example in illiteracy work) and the health service (Ambassador of the New Health Law). Furthermore the title Education Ambassador is in recognition of the importance of the work of the volunteers.

Multiplier structures as a tool to reduce barriers for disadvantaged groups

Providing equal access for the diverse target groups which form part of the society is a sometimes challenging task for institutions and organisations. In particular reaching socially disadvantaged target groups is not always easy. Therefore it is essential to make low threshold offers available which are close to the living environments

and realities of the target group. In different settings, multiplier structures are used to improve the usefulness and accessibility of offers and services (see e.g. von Unger/Gangarova 2011; ANE/Arbeitskreis Neue Erziehung 2009; Eltern.leben.Vielfalt). In the project, a peer-to-peer approach is used which means the multipliers belong to the target group themselves. Multipliers who share the same background (e.g. share the experience of being migrants), have a deeper knowledge of social and cultural backgrounds and/or speak the same language. They might be valuable key persons in the community and so can act as intermediaries.

Role of the Education Ambassador (EA)

Peer to peer multipliers act as effective bridges or door openers between (adult education) institutions, (social) services and migrants. They provide possibilities and guidance that are low in threshold and based on the interests and the life circumstances of the target group. Furthermore, peer to peer multipliers can provide socially embedded information.

The trained multipliers with a migration background are active in different settings. They guide and accompany other migrants and present them with lifelong learning opportunities. An important task is to orient individual to adult education institutions and their offers and the possibilities for access to those opportunities. Furthermore, the Education Ambassadors will try to make clear the benefits that additional learning has in terms of personal development and professional life. Beyond that, they also try to raise the awareness of adult education institutions, i.e. among the staff about the (educational) needs of the migrant population. Through their efforts, Education Ambassadors aim to reduce access barriers to (adult education) institutions for migrants.

3.2 Recruitment

In the three partner countries – Germany, Greece and the Netherlands – different strategies were used to recruit potential participants for the project. Requirements for multipliers include strong communication skills, intercultural competence, (specialised) knowledge and information about the structure of offers as well as a reflective/self-critical approach to their role as multipliers.

The selection process was based on the principle of diversity, not nationality. Having participants from a broad spectrum of backgrounds makes reaching a diverse range of migrants more likely. The approach of working with multipliers also depends, amongst other things, on the personal contacts of the multipliers. In most cases their networks are not restricted to others with the same migration background. To be sure, the selection will have a certain influence on which target groups will be reached in the future. Depending on the characteristics of the target groups, different approaches will be necessary, e.g. a native language approach might be necessary for older migrants. For examples, see the chapter on individual countries.

3.3 Training

The Education Ambassadors were provided with a multi-day training. On average the training lasted 25 hours. The aim of the training was to prepare the participants for their volunteer activities as Education Ambassadors. A mix between theory and practical topics was presented. Furthermore, if the group is very diverse in terms of previous experiences (e.g. in working as multipliers), a modular curriculum might be beneficial.

- ▶ The **curriculum** of the training was adapted to the requirements and needs of the participants. As a basis for the development of the curriculum, the results of the country analysis (see the CD) and personal talks with the participants as well as discussions with the trainers were used. For the concrete curriculum of the training in Germany, Greece and the Netherlands see the CD.

- ▶ **The manual:** The participants in all three training courses were given manuals. The manual is a compilation of the material used in the training along with additional information which will be useful for their future work as Education Ambassadors. The folders include sections on diverse topics depending on the needs of the respective target groups.
- ▶ Different **teaching methods and didactical approaches** were used during the training, e.g. presentations, workshops (e.g. finding learning opportunities on the internet), visits to relevant provider organisations (e.g. a health insurance provider or an adult education centre), role-playing (e.g. an interaction between multiplier and a member of the target group).
- ▶ **Trainers:** The seminars were presented by project staff and external experts. Inviting external experts who were specifically practitioners in the relevant fields, for example representatives from adult education institutions, was very beneficial. Such guest speakers could give up to date information about what is going on in their field of expertise. Additionally personal contacts could be established between the Education Ambassadors and the adult education professionals, yielding insights into each other's positions and perspectives. Furthermore a valuable resource was the input of the participants. They were very relevant to everyone's learning; using and valuing the knowledge and experiences of the participants themselves was a boost for their self esteem.
- ▶ **Time and location of the training:** The training consisted of five to six modules. The times and dates were adjusted to meet the needs of the participants. The different time schedules also reflect the different target groups and needs of the participants. As pointed out in section 6.2, the location of the adult education centres is important to consider. The proximity of (adult education) institutions to the place of residence of the target group plays an important role regarding access potential. Also, in the case of the training for the multipliers, this concern was taken into account. The training was held in locations according to the needs of and within reach of the participants.
- ▶ **Conclusion of the training and certification:** In the Netherlands, Germany and Greece different procedures were put into place at the end of the training (e.g. reception where the certificates were presented to the participants). In all three countries the participants received a certificate with reference to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). You can find examples on the CD.

3.4 *Pilot activities*

During the training, the participants were prepared for their multiplier activities. Different tasks and actions were developed as a cooperative effort. After the completion of the training modules, the Education Ambassadors realised the projects and actions they had planned and developed their ideas further. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Systematically informing other migrants about the existing information and guidance so as to encourage participation in training opportunities (i.e. practical information and assistance on procedures to be followed for participating in an educational programme)
- ▶ Facilitation of communication between the potential beneficiaries and the providers of educational programmes through mediation activities
- ▶ Providing personalised information on interesting courses for all migrants to match their individual skills and abilities (promotion of mainly informal courses)
- ▶ Social and psychological support of migrants in order to increase knowledge of self-help strategies and the benefits of networking
- ▶ Provision of additional help with understanding the cultural norms of the local society
- ▶ Group activities for migrants with common educational interests, and organisation of informal training courses in cooperation with local organisations and NGOs

3.5 Relevance of networks and cooperation

Establishing networks on different levels is a very important part of the work of multipliers.

1. Networks within the target group

It is important to have and/or establish broad networks within the target groups; the networks might include local migrant communities and local community centres, places where multipliers meet people of the target groups on a regular basis, e.g. child care providers, schools, parent groups, gatherings for women only (e.g. an organised breakfast for women) and private networks including family, friends and acquaintances.

2. The group of Education Ambassadors

The network of the Education Ambassadors should be visible and easy to reach for other migrants as well as for adult education institutions. Furthermore, the aspect of mutual support amongst the multipliers is essential: on the one hand to pass on new information about offers, and on the other hand to be a platform for exchange and reflection on their experiences in acting as a multiplier, e.g. sharing success stories and also developing strategies for challenging situations.

3. Cooperation with other multiplier structures and networks

To avoid parallel structures, it is beneficial to establish cooperation with other multiplier structures and networks. Synergy effects could be achieved by using already existing structures and developing them further.

4. Networking and cooperation with mainstream institutions

Being in contact with and exchanging information with institutions and organisations such as adult education centres, job centres and trade unions to get information about their offers and to provide information regarding the needs of the target groups.

4

Countries in action: Ambassadors for adult education

4.1 Europe – A continent of emigration and immigration

During its long history, Europe has seen much migratory movement. In the 19th century emigrants left Europe bound for different parts of the world. In the 20th and 21st century the continent has been characterised by immigration flows from outside Europe and also between European countries. Migration has become an increasingly important phenomenon for European societies. Patterns of migration can change greatly over time, with the size and composition of migrant populations reflecting both current and historical patterns of migration movements (see e.g. Fassmann/Münz 1994; Fassmann/Haller/Lane 2009).

In the year 2010, the European Union (EU) had a population of 501 million inhabitants. This included 32.5 million foreigners (non-citizens) who live in the EU-27, corresponding to 6.5% of the total population. Regarding figures concerning the country of birth, there were 47.3 million foreign-born residents in the EU in 2010, corresponding to 9.4% of the total population. Of these, 31.4 million were born outside the EU and 16.0 million were born in another EU Member States (Eurostat/Vasileva 2011).

The figures show that migrants make up an important part of the population. The population with foreign background (citizenship and/or country of birth) is diverse; it is a very heterogeneous group (see section 2.2.1). Studies about the socio-economic situation of migrants show that they have to cope with disadvantages in various areas of life, e.g. the labour and housing market, health and social services (see European Commission, Eurostat 2011). Concerning the issue of discrimination see e.g. the annual report of FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2012. Regarding the legal framework for the integration of migrants, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) shows that 31 European and North American countries have, on average, policies that are

only somewhat favourable for integration. The MIPEX covers six policy areas: labour market access, family reunion, long-term residence, political participation, access to citizenship and anti-discrimination.

4.2 Immigration in Austria, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands

Countries with differing experience with emigration and immigration participated in the Learning Community project: Austria, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands. Migration is influenced by a combination of economic, political and social factors. At the EU Member State level there are big differences in terms of the origin of the foreign population and policies directed towards them.

During the first phase of the project, the situation in the respective countries was analysed via research which focused on access to adult education. The country reports are available on the CD. Summing up the results, some similarities can be found regarding the situations in **Austria, Germany and the Netherlands**. During their long history, these countries have seen various migratory movements. After the Second World War immigration started, largely in the 1960s, with the recruitment of labour migrants. Such workers were mainly recruited from Mediterranean countries. The Netherlands also experienced immigration movements from Morocco and its former colonies. In addition, family reunification is a substantial factor in immigration. Moreover the countries receive refugees and asylum seekers from all over the globe. Due to stricter immigration regulations for third country nationals (citizen of non-EU member states) the most recent immigration movements consist mainly of migrants from other EU countries.

For decades, **Greece** was a country of emigration. The first immigration flows toward Greece started in the late 1980s and 1990s, mainly because of the situation in the Balkan area and in Eastern Europe. Greece was unprepared for the phenomenon, lacking any applicable migration laws or infrastructure for the management of this new reality of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who gathered mainly in urban areas.

4.3 Different situations on the national and regional levels

National level – Local level

In the following chapters experiences and approaches in Germany, Greece and the Netherlands – where Education Ambassadors were trained and active in the frame of the LC project – will be provided. Even if we refer to “Germany”, “Greece” or “the Netherlands”, the results of the project are specific to the region where the projects were implemented. In Germany the project implementation took place in Berlin, in Greece in the Iliia prefecture (province on the Western Peloponnese) and in the Netherlands in the southern province of Limburg.

The examples are set in different contexts but there was one factor that influenced the implementation of the projects in all three LC partner countries: the global financial and economic crisis has had an influence and continues to affect economic growth rates and the labour market. The project implementation in Greece was especially influenced by the economic crisis.

Different levels of multiplier structures

During the project, the international project team recognised similarities and differences in the partner countries. When dealing with migrant volunteering, it is important to consider the different immigration histories and traditions, different (welfare) systems and different traditions in volunteering in the partner countries (see e.g. the European projects MEM-VOL and INVOLVE for background information on the topic of migrant volunteering in different European countries).

Furthermore, of particular relevance for the project implementation were the different levels of multiplier structures in the project areas:

In **Berlin** there is a broad variety of actions that target migrants, and there also has been extensive experience with working with multiplier structures. Despite these facts, some groups are not being reached. In particular there are only a few peer approaches to lifelong learning for elderly people. The relevance of this target group was stressed by all stakeholders and also stems from the data and estimates of demographic trends in Berlin, Germany and the EU.

In the Netherlands, and in **Limburg** in particular, there are some far-reaching activities which target migrants. Multiplier structures are however relatively new, only a few structures exist in Limburg.

For Greece and the **Ilia prefecture**, immigration is a recent phenomenon. The situation for the newly arrived migrants is difficult (e.g. regarding finding work and acquiring work/residence permits), mainly because of the lack of information sources concerning the existing structures and the services available from each institution. Hence the provision of services for migrants is still inadequate since it is being met with many obstacles, and migrants are not participating at satisfactory rates in local level initiatives.

In the country sections we also present the perspectives of some individuals and institutions involved. The Education Ambassadors preferred that their first names be used.

A

The Learning Community project in Ilia prefecture, Greece

In a period dominated by uncertainty about the future of the country and what structures will survive, a group of six migrants trained as Education Ambassadors put solid effort into the promotion of adult education opportunities. Since it is not the first time that they've experienced hardship, they know that it is only through mobilisation that they can achieve positive outcomes.

A.1 Introduction

The basic aim of the Learning Community project was to connect migrants with training opportunities through developing and utilising the concept of mediation. The implementation process included the application of the same pattern – at least in terms of areas of activity, in three countries. However in order to understand and evaluate the outcomes from each separate implementation process, it is important to be familiar with the wider context.

In the case of Greece, the project has been implemented by Olympic Training & Consulting Ltd. (OT), a centre for vocational training. OT is located in the western part of Peloponnese, specifically in the Ilia prefecture, a rural area with economic activity centred on tourism and agriculture.

A.2 The situation in Ilia prefecture, Greece

Recent immigration to Greece

Greece has traditionally been an emigration country. However, new immigration patterns have changed the immigration situation in the EU15, bringing old emigration countries, such as Greece, to the forefront of new immigration movements. Hence, since the early 1990s, Greece has experienced large scale immigration within a short time period and has become a major migrant destination country. Greece has been the recipient of a massive illegal and uncontrolled flow of migrants. This limits the availability and reliability of relevant data and statistics.

The **current economic crisis** did not cause any major changes in terms of allocation of numbers of migrants throughout the Hellenic territory. The migrant population remained concentrated in the capital Athens as well as towns with significant agricultural production and/or tourist activity – the region of LC project implementation is such a place.

Non-recognition of skills

Migrants possess many skills, but in general these go unrecognised. The agricultural sector as well as the light industry and the building construction area (labour intensive sectors with low threshold skills needed for work placement), continue to take the lead in terms of employment while a significant number of migrants are seasonal workers in hotels and restaurants or in households as domestic help.

We are therefore in need of effective intervention that can ensure the smooth and functional integration of migrants. Skills recognition plays a key role in the integration of migrants. Even though there are signs of recognition of the needs for integration (educational opportunities especially for migrants, information and sensitisation activities for migrant issues, provision of mediation services etc.), there are still many obstacles in the society at large, and migrants do not participate at satisfactory rates in local initiatives.

A.3 Approaches and experiences

In this context, Olympic Training developed activities aimed at the improvement of migrant access to lifelong learning opportunities and the empowerment of the target group through the dismantling of structural barriers.

Networking with adult education institutions

The involved institutions included adult training institutions, non-formal and informal education providers, municipal development organisations, NGO's and migrant organisations. The identification of the project with the purpose of each entity formed the foundation of partnerships with local structures. Personal contacts and regular feedback about project development were also important so as to keep the stakeholders motivated and interested in the ongoing activities.

In order to intensify the engagement with and support for project activities by local adult education stakeholders, the training of Education Ambassadors was assigned to trainers who worked in formal and non-formal adult education structures. In addition, the training material was developed in cooperation with the trainers. Actually, this choice offered the opportunity to create an important bridge between Education Ambassadors and local educational institutions. The trainers were able to use their professional experience with the characteristics and limitations of the educational programmes on offer and highlight ways to make these programmes more accessible by migrants. They were to some extent moved to change their perspectives, empathise with migrants, and provide useful guidance, improving migrant awareness of educational networks in order to open pathways to adult education. Hence observation, memory, knowledge, and reasoning were combined to yield insights into each other's position

and perspective (for adult education professionals and migrants). Last but not least, the migrants who participated in the training courses had the chance to develop personal contacts and direct relationships with adult education providers and learn about the systems that such institutions use to enhance the promotion of their training offers.

Therefore, through training activities, migrants had the opportunity to gain insight into structural aspects of processes (tools & systems), communication procedures and information flows between training institutions and local stakeholders. Afterwards, during the pilot activities, they were invited to adapt them to the specific needs and living situations of the local migrant population.

Pilot activities

For the past eleven months, six Education Ambassadors acted as mediators, i.e. promoters of lifelong learning opportunities and supporters of other migrants. Education institutions and stakeholders from the government as well as migrant organisations were actively involved and whenever possible supported Education Ambassadors activities. The tools and methods that the Education Ambassadors used included a multilingual flyer, personal contacts (on a formal and informal level) with local officials, education institution representatives and influential people (local and migrants), meetings with migrants, and participation in festivals and migrant social events. In all contacts, the aim was mainly the presentation of the project and its potential benefits for each participant so as to gain greater supporters in their efforts.

The implementation of the pilot activities did not occur without difficulties. The current economic crisis created many obstacles to provision of services. Many adult education structures have postponed their activities (KEE, PARENTS' SCHOOL, NELE, ODYSSEAS) and formal/non-formal training opportunities accessible to migrants have become rare. In addition, the training opportunities offered often use selection procedures and enforce participation criteria which makes them inaccessible for some categories of migrants. In addition, some migrants decided to leave the area because of unemployment. Due to the economic crisis, a sense of security is no longer taken for granted.

In such an unstable environment, mentoring, support and provision of solutions to problems should be given to the Education Ambassadors in order to enhance their motivation and personal commitment. Their persistence and possibly their personal need to become more socially active and "recognised" was key in reaching successful outcomes.

Opportunities for permanent cooperation between facilitators and institutions were also explored during the last months of the pilot implementation. In three cases ("Municipal Library of Amaliada NGO", "ROMA & Vulnerable Groups Support Office of Pyrgos Municipality" and "Employment & Career Information Hub of Patras Technological Educational Institute") a positive outcome was reached, but the form of these cooperative efforts has not yet been decided upon.

The Education Ambassadors group

The Education Ambassadors group consisted of 12 migrants, all women: Aurelia, Laura and Florentine from Romania, Rezarta and Rezarta from Albania, Alla and Lilian from Ukraine, Natalia from Moldova, Elif from Turkey, Jenny from Cuba, Pon from Thailand and Muna from Palestine. After the completion of the training, only half of them participated in the pilot activities organised by Olympic Training. Growing professional or family obligations, repatriation or a move to another city for further education were the causes of non-participation for the rest of trainees. However, it has to be pointed out that the trainees that did not continue, claiming increased professional or family obligations, were migrants who have been working long and irregular working hours. All active Education Ambassadors were either self-employed or unemployed.

A.4 Interviews with the Education Ambassadors

Education Ambassadors Jenny and Alla (Pyrgos)

“It is not a question of motivating migrants to participate in educational opportunities but instead to help the local community and public officials to understand how they could benefit from enhancing the connection between migrants and available educational opportunities.”



▶ Jenny

Jenny was born and raised in Santiago de Cuba where she studied English literature and public relations. She came to Greece in 2008. She worked for many years in the tourist sector in Cuba, and in Greece since 2011.

The reason for her participation in the Learning Community project was the need to find a way to better understand how the Greek system works.

During her pilot activities, she approached other immigrants and talked to them about the idea of this project and tried to make them understand what we were trying to achieve and improve. She also used social media in order to spread information about available educational opportunities. It was a very useful experience for her: helping other migrants understand that through a search for educational opportunities, they could not only increase their knowledge but also enhance their connections in the labour market.



▶ Alla

Alla came from Ukraine in 2005. She studied to be a mechanical engineer and also studied finance. Before coming to Greece, she was working as senior manager in the finance department in the copper industry. At first it was very difficult for her to adjust to the Greek way of life, and it was only in 2010 that she started language courses. The LC courses were the second training that she participated in since her arrival in Greece.

Jenny's and Alla's experience and improvement through the project

Jenny admits that she was no longer afraid to communicate since she developed a better understanding of the cultural norms. Alla pointed out the need for and the importance of cultural mediation; she saw herself fulfilling that role and becoming a “bridge” between the local community and migrants.

Jenny and Alla's opinion about strategies for improving migrant access to adult education

Jenny believes that the best way to approach a person is to talk in a very sincere way, first explaining how the project helped her and how it can also help others. Also providing information about courses that can improve their qualifications or provide qualification assessment, i.e. the recognition of skills gained through formal and informal experience. This is a secure path to employability and relatedly social integration.

Obstacles *“During this time that the country is passing through a very hard period – it is really facing a crisis – people are worried much more about finding a job and making money than attending a course. The decision is even more difficult if they have to move from one place to another to take part in the training. People have to keep in mind that they no longer have the luxury of spending either money for the transportation or time for the preparation.”*

What to improve *“To reach more migrants, I think that the education institutions should be part of the project, I mean that the project should give people the possibility to be ready to find a job after an intense training period (intense and not long) and help them find a job. Also there should be more publicity for the courses they offer.”*

Alla thinks that it is not a question of motivating migrants to participate in educational opportunities but instead to help the local community and public officials to understand how they could benefit from enhancing the connection between migrants and available educational opportunities. Training need not be offered in a strict educational environment; it might also be offered within a broader set of activities and support. Cultural differences and the reluctance of the local society towards people perceived as being “different” are the main integration barriers in her opinion. In order to attract and integrate migrants, a society must first prove its willingness to understand their differences. Therefore mediation actions could form a first step in this approach.

Education Ambassadors Pon and Elif

“We strongly believe that the current economic crisis can be seen as an opportunity to redefine one’s priorities and choices through communication with other people.”



▶ Elif and Pon

Pon came to Greece from Thailand in 2008. At first she was a seasonal worker in Zante Island. She worked as an Asian cuisine chef in a hotel, and there she met her husband and later moved to Amaliada. Now she has her own restaurant serving Thai & Greek cuisine.

Elif came from Turkey in 2009 with her Greek husband. She studied Public Relations in Istanbul. She’s a person with restless spirit: from her first day in Greece she searched for Greek language courses and for ways to better understand the social environment she found herself in. Elif is “socially active”, communicative and willing to participate in networks that can support her efforts in improving migrants’ position in and integration into the local society.

Together, Pon and Elif participated in dance classes, Greek language courses and pottery classes. They even organised a Greek language training course in Amaliada, and Elif also offers Turkish classes free of charge.

Elif’s and Pon’s experience and improvement through the project

The LC project gave them access to new information, increased their understanding of local educational structures, helped them learn about how educational groups are being created and how they could become a part of and benefit from these groups. Both ambassadors (especially Elif) were in contact with local government representatives and civil society organisations in order to investigate the possibilities for participating in informal training courses or even for organising such courses. The LC project helped them to regain their confidence, and today they feel that they are more able to support migrants from Eastern countries.

Elif’s and Pon’s opinion about strategies for improving migrant access to adult education

They strongly believe that the current economic crisis can be seen as an opportunity to redefine one’s priorities and choices through communication with other people. Now that many people have lost their jobs, they should be encouraged to remain active, socialise and participate in creative activities. However they fear that the economic crisis also threatens free educational opportunities. Civil society organisations must be promoted, bringing unemployed trainers and people willing to remain active together to create informal training courses.

A.5 Interviews with stakeholders

Education institutions, political stakeholders and government representatives as well as migrant organisations were actively involved, and whenever possible supported the LC activities. The tools and methods that the Education Ambassadors used included a multilingual flyer (see example on the CD), personal contacts (at a formal and informal level) with local authorities, education institution representatives and other influential people (local and migrants), meetings with migrants and participation in festivals and migrant social events. In all contacts, the first aim was the presentation of the project and its potential benefits for all participants so as to gain new project supporters.

The institutions that were involved included adult training institutions, non-formal and informal education providers, developmental municipal organisations, NGO's and migrant organisations. The identification of the project with the aims of each group formed the foundation of partnerships with local structures. Personal contacts and regular feedback about project developments were also important so as to keep the stakeholders motivated and interested in the project activities.

Achilles D. Kameas



▶ Achilles

“Another important aspect is the recognition of prior knowledge”

Dr. Achilles D. Kameas is an Assistant Professor at the Hellenic Open University (HOU), and Director of the Educational Content, Methodology and Technology Lab. He has published over 100 scientific articles and participated as researcher, group leader and coordinator in several EU R&D (Research and Development) projects.

Achilles Kameas has been actively involved in EU projects, specifically the training of cultural mediators and migrants. For him the most important barrier to migrant access to education is difficulty in communication – this has both cultural and language aspects. As the majority of educational text, which is the primary means of instruction, is written in Greek and reflects the Greek culture, it is important for all the trainees to have a good understanding of the Greek language and Greek culture. Another important aspect is the recognition of prior knowledge (i.e. the competencies, formal or informal, that the migrant brings with him or her must be recognised by the host country) and gained knowledge (i.e. the competencies acquired as a result of learning must be recognised at an international level). Achilles thinks that the use of new educational technologies, and especially social media, will contribute significantly to improving the diffusion of information and the effectiveness of educational tools and methods.

Tsintoni Titika



▶ Tsintoni

“In the work of providing easily accessible information, the role of cultural mediators seems crucial.”

Tsintoni Titika studied psychology and has a Masters of Arts in Education Sciences from Roehampton University in London. She works at The Educational Content, Methodology and Technology Laboratory (e-CoMeT Lab). In the past, she worked with intercultural learning programmes run by the Institution for Lifelong Adult Education, a part of the Ministry of Education.

One of the most striking realisations for Titika from the very beginning of her involvement with migrant populations and training courses was the fact that a differentiated approach for the different cultures involved was needed. The reasons for migration along with the differing previous educational and professional experience should always be taken into consideration. Apart from that, a solid and stable network comprised of NGOs, migrant organisations and national and local education institutions can help in the realisation and the success of training activities as well as the achievement of goals, providing easily accessible information on such topics. In this effort, the role of cultural mediators seems crucial.

A.6 Recommendations

One of the primary measures of the integration of migrants in the local labour market and into the society in general concerns the provision of information on local institutions and governance frameworks, including the local education system with its educational/training programmes (formal and non-formal educational institutions providing adult educational services). Such information is the prerequisite for the involvement of migrants in any educational programme.

Recommendations for the migrant community organisations

Migrant community organisations along with the different NGOs operating in the region should be encouraged and should aim for the creation of a stable network which would provide free and easily accessible information concerning different educational opportunities provided by the national and local educational and training institutions to the migrants who are interested in being involved in adult learning programmes and courses.

Recommendations for social services

In this way the recognition of existing skills and qualifications obtained in other EU member states is important. Migrants to Greece bring with them many skills, but generally these go unrecognised. What should be underlined is the fact that skills recognition and further development as well as empowerment through adult learning activities plays a key role in the employability of migrants and therefore in their integration. It is therefore necessary to establish a national scheme which will enable the skills and qualifications of migrants from third countries to be assessed, recognised and put to use. Access to and guidance about such assessment systems should be made freely available to refugees and migrants early after their arrival and should involve the help of the different social services concerned. Such assessment and recognition systems should be able to handle skills and knowledge gained through formal and informal experience. Recognition of an individual's previous educational and professional background is important, both by the various social services involved and by adult education providers so as to achieve better outcomes from the educational programmes. The most important outcome is the functional integration of migrants into the community.

Recommendations for adult education providers

Furthermore, centres of adult education focusing on the development of the skills of the local population (including migrants) should keep in mind that this procedure is multifaceted and complicated, and many factors have to come together for it to work. The content of the programmes and the methods used have to fit together in the reaching of realistic goals. The connections between political will and financial resources have to be in place, not only locally but also at the national and European Union levels so as to provide a better educational experience together with professional success and improved positioning of migrants in the society. At the same time one should be careful not to specialise people to extremes and thus limit them to very narrow channels of work. Instead they should be empowered with a wide range of skills which can open doors to diverse professions. Apart from that, it is important to bear in mind the need for a differentiated approach concerning the personal and occupational conditions and

needs of each migrant. In this direction, these centres should establish open communication channels with the different migrant communities and organisations.

As Professor Kameas highlighted, the concept of Education Ambassadors is an interesting tool that has not been used by education institutions in Greece. It would be interesting to explore the possibility for using specialised people – Education Ambassadors – instead of the more impersonal approach that has been applied until today for the promotion of their training offers. Education Ambassadors could be a “human portal” that, combined with push technologies (social media), could become a personalised tool for reaching more potential trainees by offering customised services through the use of negotiation, dialogue, awareness and persuasion.

To achieve sustainability, a suggestion would be to use Education Ambassadors as educational brokers who, through the recording of educational needs, could plan and promote educational opportunities in cooperation with education institutions.

In summary, the Greek experience has highlighted the following:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ High level of education ▶ High interest and motivation ▶ Team spirit ▶ Good networking with local authorities ▶ Multinational group of active Education Ambassadors ▶ Establishment of permanent cooperative efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Not very good but steadily improving command of the Greek language ▶ Support & mentoring is needed at least during the first months of participation ▶ Social & economic instability could lead to disappointment ▶ Lack of a motive for active participation – volunteer services assume that participants feel adequately secure to offer services for free
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lack of similar targeted support structure ▶ Recognition of the need for this kind of mediation services from the education institutions and stake-holders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work mobility of the migrants ▶ Lack of continuity in the provision of adult education opportunities ▶ Still evolving adult education structures – not yet clear administrative system ▶ Fall in personal participation and motivation on behalf of the ambassadors

B

The Learning Community project in Berlin, Germany

In a city like Berlin where many multiplication and facilitation structures already exist, those ambassadors who already work as multipliers in existing neighbourhood institutions had the most wide-ranging impact.

B.1 Introduction

Around 20% of the people living in Germany are either migrants or descendants of people who have immigrated. In Berlin 24% of the population have a migration background (Statistisches Bundesamt 2011). Equal access to lifelong learning opportunities and social participation is still not guaranteed for all. Here Education Ambassadors could effectively bridge the gap between education institutions and public services as well as between different cultures and languages, in order to remove barriers to access.

B.2 The Situation in Berlin, Germany

Many established multiplier structures

A great heterogeneity of people with migration background characterises Berlin's target group. To improve the utilisation of offers and services, multiplication structures with native language speakers have already been used in Berlin for several years. During this time, there have been many different multipliers – or ambassadors – whose approaches, objectives, locations in social contexts, level of involvement, financial support and durability have varied greatly. Primarily adult and continuing education are at the centre of the lifelong learning field, the people addressed are the youth and adults with migration backgrounds before and during the earning phase.

B.3 Approaches and experiences

Project focus in Berlin: Elderly migrants and access to education

Despite the developed multiplier structure, there are few peer approaches to lifelong learning for elderly people. Although educational (and health) activities are an essential resource for self-determined living, participation declines at a certain age, especially in cases of those with a low level of education, lack of participation in gainful employment or when there is a migration background (Friebe/Huelsmann 2011). The relevance of this target group also stems from the data and estimates on demographic trends in Berlin, Germany and the EU. Gradually a comprehensive understanding of learning for all ages is arising slowly through a model of active aging in contemporary society.

There are a number of neighbourhood organisations in Berlin that function in accordance with the Commission of the European Communities (2000) as non-formal adult education systems and in which older people with migration backgrounds are being reached. They also make an important contribution to shaping and maintaining

social networks. Important education institutions, such as community colleges, offer age-specific courses. Informal educational programmes include, for example, fitness, computer literacy, German language and literacy classes, breakfast meetings, readings, dance groups, walking groups, painting, cooking, music and theatre groups, information, counselling and group excursions and museum visits.

The training

An important part of the training was competence building. Furthermore, some questions were also investigated: what does lifelong learning mean for elderly people, which formal and informal services exist regionally as well as close to home (and are as free as possible from barriers). Considerations surrounding lifelong learning in old age showed the need to provide information about the intercultural openness of help for the elderly. Further topics were typical age-related illnesses, considerations of the relationship between physical and mental fitness, the significance of social networks and mechanisms of isolation in old age.

The participants found the training to be very useful and appreciated receiving the folder with the training material. Due to the great amount of formal and non-formal adult education offers in Berlin, the folder content was substantial. The participants liked that the manual is in the form of a binder because it makes it possible to update it and add additional material. Furthermore the participants evaluated the selection of adult education offers with a low charge or with no fee. This addresses concerns related to an important access barrier – financial constraints. Moreover another barrier was taken into account: the accessibility of institutions. The nearness of institutions to the place of residence of the target group plays an important role. Therefore mainly local offers that were close to the potential target groups were included in the manual.

As Education Ambassadors the participants passed on their knowledge to their social and work circles on a voluntary basis, and documented these efforts in the framework of the pilot actions. In conclusion, interviews were conducted with eight facilitators about their experiences.

The Education Ambassadors group

After an analysis of needs and a Berlin-wide recruitment effort, nine women were chosen to participate in the project. Six of the women already act as employed multipliers for elderly people in the Berlin borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. Furthermore three individuals who are interested in working with elderly migrants in neighbourhood institutions participated from the Berlin borough of Neukölln and Tempelhof.



► The group of Education Ambassadors

B.4 Interviews with the Education Ambassadors

Education Ambassador Iman



▶ Iman

“I work a lot with elderly migrants so I wanted to find out what they need for lifelong learning in order to pass on this knowledge to my seniors.”

Iman has been working since 2010 as group and project leader at the Arabic Parents Union e.V. in the Moregenerations House “Wassertorstraße” (MGH). Through her work as a multiplier she primarily reaches Arabic speaking women and seniors, and also others who visit the MGH and speak Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Persian, Afghani, Japanese, Polish, Indian, and Russian. 70% of the visitors to MGH come from the nearby neighbourhood. Through the MGH Iman has access to many local and area partnerships. Iman included her volunteer tasks as an Education Ambassador in her work and tries to integrate them further into her activities after the end of the project. Iman is 39 years old and the mother of four children. She has lived in Berlin since 1976.

Why did you participate in the seminar?

As the coordinator of the Arabic Parents Union, it was interesting for Iman to experience which further possibilities exist, especially for women and seniors. “I work a lot with elderly migrants so I wanted to find out what they need for lifelong learning in order to pass on this knowledge to my seniors. New ideas and exchange about experiences to build contacts with institutions is important for my work.”

Did the training and ambassador activities influence your life and work?

“The seminar gave me the idea to coordinate sport classes for the women I work with and to refresh my contact with the “Volkshochschule”. Now there are literacy classes for Arabic seniors again as well as for Arabic women.” “I have also received information about organisations where I might apply for support (e.g. discounts for senior citizens – SeniorenPass), education vouchers (Bildungsgutschein), the “Berlinpass” which offers reduced fees for education, sports, public transport, etc. That motivates me in my work with senior groups.” The topic of intercultural opening of the geriatric care system was also an interesting one that she passed on to the seniors. As a follow up, she wants to develop a relationship with a multi-cultural home for the elderly.

Iman wants to accomplish a lot as an Education Ambassador. The chance for a special connection is more possible when she speaks to migrants in their language. For Iman, lasting cooperation with education institutions is important. It is still difficult to reach elderly people regularly when they don't come to the MGH. Through the seminar, she now definitely knows about class offers “but they are rarely made use of”. “Perhaps it would be good to focus even more on concrete activities for seniors rather than offering classes.” She also noted that “a lot of help from us is required in order for them to participate at all: for example, to file applications for them from beginning to end.” For some (new) group offers, it is quite difficult to find suitable locations.

Her recommendations regarding which strategies could improve access?

Why is it that services are rarely used?

The services must be made more appealing and less complicated to gain participant acceptance (less bureaucracy). It would be good to financially enable cross-regional services for seniors from different boroughs (fees for services are often connected to the borough) and even when the costs are reimbursed (entry costs, transportation),

regardless any additional discounts, this is still a barrier for many. According to Iman, a good response requires a stable native speaking contact person for the migrants and a coordinator for the multipliers.

Education Ambassador Alida



”In general I gained a much broader picture of what learning is.“

Alida is a native Italian and mother of two children. She has been living in Berlin since the beginning of 2010. She worked as a communication manager for an internet firm and is now making plans for her self-employment. Alida is 39 years old and, at the time of training with the Learning Community project, was also taking part in a seminar about conflict management. As an ambassador she provided volunteer support in her local environment, and thus compared to Iman she had more contact with people of working age. She also wants to continue helping in her area and could imagine working full-time as an Education Ambassador.

Why did you participate in the seminar?

Alida liked the combination of training and the theme of lifelong learning. “At that time I already liked the idea of working with migrants. Furthermore I wanted practical knowledge about educational opportunities in Germany, to expand my social competence, especially in relation to migrants, to exchange information about other people’s experiences. And I thought that it could offer me professional opportunities and contact possibilities.”

She found the connection between educational topics, especially lifelong learning and promoting health, particularly interesting. Both have in common the improvement of people’s chances for participating in society.

Did the training and facilitator activities influence your life and work?

Alida’s life did not change in major ways through her participation in the LC project. “But when filling out applications, it is a very good addition. And in general I received a much broader picture of what learning is. For me it is already always easy to meet and approach other people. As an Education Ambassador, for me it often goes in the direction of coaching, especially when it’s a question of education. This is a very complex topic that requires responsibility in setting priorities together and finding the best and most suitable educational path. The most important topic is often the question of recognition of education and degrees awarded abroad. What happens when a student must remain at home for family-related reasons? What happens when she considers changing fields of work?”

Alida experiences her inability to answer questions often posed to her regarding the German school system as a limitation, but this was not part of the LC curriculum.

Your recommendations regarding which strategies could improve access?

Why is it that services are rarely used?

Alida noted often having experienced the need for more personal advising as well as better and more clear course descriptions in educational institutions. Also regular reminders or contact with migrants from the side of the education institutions could help.

As an Education Ambassador she can help look for appropriate choices among class possibilities, “especially when the language is not so good, then I can translate the class description.” She would be happy to have institutional help in answering questions about degree recognition.

B.5 Interviews with stakeholders

Silke Haist

“VHS has good experiences with low-threshold offers specifically for migrants on the ground in the districts, for example in cooperation with organisations for migrants, district centres, housing facilities and social service centres.”

Representative of Volkshochschule Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (VHS)

As public continuing education institutions, all Volkshochschulen, have a public policy mandate to offer a wide range of educational opportunities for every level of society and to provide opportunities for continuing education and integration. In reality people with a migration background take German and integration courses but use few other services. Yet current data also shows a positive shift.

Experiences with service utilisation by people with a migration background

There are good experiences with low-threshold VHS offers specifically for migrants in the local districts/boroughs, for example in cooperation with organisations for migrants, district centres, housing facilities, and social service centres. Such on-the-ground-work is supported by VHS efforts whenever possible.

At the Moregenerations House in Wassertorstraße, for example, a European Social Fund (ESF) supported course entitled “German and Professional Preparedness for Women with a Migration Background” has been regularly taking place for about four years. In the last class that began during the pilot phase of “Learning Community”, twice as many women took part, which could be attributed to the participation of the MGH Ambassadors. The Ambassadors of MGH documented that they had attempted to increase motivation for participation.

Perspectives in working with multiplication structures

At the present time, no new or enhanced cooperation has arisen between the VHS and the MGH in the context of the Learning Community project. But they continue to be open and interested in working together. The VHS considers visiting MGH with the participants of the VHS courses for the elderly and/or to invite these groups in order to be mutually informed about offers and services. However the coordination necessary for this cannot be guaranteed at the moment.

In order to motivate still more people to participate, VHS is considering including information about the level of German required to participate in the courses in their short course-programme. This addition, aimed at minimising the language gap, is considered helpful by educational facilitators. In view of the elderly migrants specifically, the employees of the VHS see the work on-site offers as being especially promising. It could simultaneously work to counter the restrictions to participation stemming from cash fees.

Meltem Baskaya



► Meltem

“Older migrants are one of the fastest growing population groups, and this requires that the education offers be adjusted in an open and culturally sensitive manner.”

KompetenzZentrum Interkulturelle Öffnung der Altenhilfe

The social scientist Meltem Baskaya (M.A.) has been working for the KompetenzZentrum Interkulturelle Öffnung der Altenhilfe (kom•zen) in Berlin for eight years. kom•zen is the reference model of the federal state Berlin on the topic of “intercultural opening in the care of the elderly”. It functions as an interface between the areas of elder care, migration and the public; it triggers professional debates and gives new impetus for the development and promotion of stable networks.

Intercultural opening of education institutions

“Just as the elderly care needed to be opened up, educational offers need to be adjusted to the diversity of older people according to their individual needs. Older migrants are one of the fastest growing population groups, and this requires that the education offers be adjusted in an open and culturally sensitive manner” said Baskaya. It is a big challenge to involve people, especially older people, in education opportunities or volunteering structures, particularly the economically disadvantaged and less educated. Specific methodological and didactic concepts are needed to reach and address this target group properly which allow them to comprehend the idea of age-appropriate learning.

It is of particular importance to enhance transparency for the target group, to explain why they should participate and what competence enhancement might do for them personally. Multipliers, such as Education Ambassadors are a useful way to ensure involvement and accessibility. Due to the fact that Berlin is already equipped with various multiplier structures, enhancing already existing structures appears to be the best path when working with older people.

The Learning Community curriculum is considered to interesting for a broad range of local institutions. The boroughs Friedrichshain/Kreuzberg already have well functioning cooperation in which institutions and employees are well-recognized in different communities. These cooperative efforts and networks can be complemented with the further participation of (education) institutions through projects like “Learning Community”. This multi-layered composition of participants can be particularly useful when concentrating on the linking element – participation in older age and which opportunities this might offer to older migrants. Older citizens often show an interest in generation-spanning work if they are, for example, able to become involved in the kindergarten or school attended by their own family members.

“An honest discussion needs to be held about the use of the volunteering resources.”

It is of outmost importance to stimulate an open discussion on the topic of volunteer work, particularly regarding the funding. In which societal and political circumstances is it possible to call for volunteer work? To what extent do considerations about ensuring adequate living standards for and supervision of the volunteers need to be taken into account? Where do volunteers start taking over professional posts?

Furthermore, coherent guidelines are needed for local institutions regarding issues surrounding how volunteers are acknowledged and/or reimbursed for their work. An essential requirement for successful volunteer work is people who are advocates for the interests of the volunteers. Institutional support of a communally rooted coordination centre would be ideal.

B.6 Recommendations

Strengthening capacities of existing multiplication structures and the limits of volunteer work

In a city like Berlin where many multiplication and facilitation structures already exist, those ambassadors who already work as multipliers in existing neighbourhood institutions had the most wide-ranging impact. They are already known and trusted in the target group; they know the needs and resources. They are familiar with the social structures and thereby have more chances to deepen need-based cooperative efforts and to develop new ones. As the number of aging migrants grows, qualified Education Ambassadors can also improve access to health care and healthcare professionals. However, there is also the danger of overwhelming the already busy multipliers with additional tasks.

The evaluation of the pilot phase furthermore showed the multiple topics, questions and problems confronting the education ambassadors arising from and often far exceeding educational issues. There is a need for processes of qualification on a continual and not a one-time basis accompanied by practice, as well as making available access to supervision. At the same time there are limits to volunteer work in relation to what facilitators can afford to do and what not, or what can be expected. Also under consideration and often discussed in Berlin (e.g. ANE 2009) is how professional possibilities might be opened for active ambassadors.

Quality assurance

In the coming years the promotion of ambassadors in Berlin (at least in terms of city labour market measures and/or through the Federal/State programme called Social City) will be scaled back in favour of a strategy of intercultural openings and diversity management. Only a few of the existing multiplier structures will probably remain. Against this background it makes sense to systematise the qualification processes through joint formulation of goals and development of minimum standards in order to best meet the needs and secure sustainable opportunities for ambassadors/multipliers and their target groups. The needs and habits of elderly people must be incorporated into this process. It is important to determine to what extent migration backgrounds should be focused on or whether thinking about inclusion makes more sense and is more efficient. This calls for an extensive analysis and discussion process among the various stakeholders, as already successfully initiated at the "Berlin Action Conference for Parent-Led Projects" (ANE 2009).

Continuity of multiplier structures

The experiences in Berlin show the necessity of continuing funding for the effective work and planning of the project. The work of facilitation requires trusting relationships that must be built up over significant time periods and are impossible in the short-run. In addition to the need for long-term trustworthy partners, short-term projects lead to frustration and existential anxiety on the part of the multipliers. The ideal case would be regular financing of the project under a diversity clause in the context of education policy.

Intercultural opening of the educational sector and cooperation on the local and regional levels

The internal structural frameworks must be built parallel to the training of the multipliers. Intercultural openness of regular services and other social services is a necessary basis for the participation of migrants. In many facilities, these processes have already begun and imply further the construction of measures such as increasing full-time employment for people with a migration background, an valuing approach to volunteers through remuneration of costs and expenses, multilingual proposals and coordination of local, county and regional facilities. Area-wide and professional networking and cooperation of actors especially contribute to the overall expansion of opportunities.

C

The Learning Community project in Limburg, The Netherlands

Our vision is to see migrants as individuals with their own unique interests and encourage them to (re)enter education that meets their various interests.

C.1 Introduction

Learning Community aims to improve migrant access to lifelong learning opportunities in vocational and adult education by dismantling structural barriers and empowering the target group. Within this scope, CESO trained a group of seven women with Moroccan, Iraqi, Congolese, Antillean and Japanese migration background to become Education Ambassadors in Limburg. Limburg is a province in the south-east of the Netherlands; its provincial capital city is Maastricht.

C.2 The situation in Limburg, the Netherlands

As a starting point for the project, CESO undertook a descriptive analysis that provided an overview of the Dutch educational context with a strong focus on the adult educational system, its institutions and the participation of migrants in Limburg. The data was collected on the basis of secondary research (e.g. literature review) and primary research including interviews with educational and social institutions as well as with migrants. (see CD)

C.3 Approaches and experiences

The recruitment

CESO involved a number of migrant organisations, a volunteer agency and other local and regional stakeholders in the recruitment stage of the project; this led to ten women enrolling in the Education Ambassador training. Although not intended, the group consisted exclusively of women as they were simply more excited about the project than men were. Men were rather sceptical raising questions such as: "Why do the Education Ambassadors have to do their job for free while the education institutes are spending a significant amount of money on advertisements?".

Three (potential) Education Ambassadors dropped out during or after the training for reasons ranging from too little volunteer reimbursement awarded to illness or other responsibilities (e.g. family and studying).

Activities of the Education Ambassadors

All Education Ambassadors started by informing their own networks about the services offered by Education Ambassadors as well as the concept of lifelong learning and its importance. They made use of their business cards and a PowerPoint presentation. These general information sessions are followed by individual support sessions with migrants. Nawal: "I was so excited when I saw the enthusiasm of the person I helped. It is amazing how something so small can mean so much". Trudy held information sessions at her other volunteer jobs and is currently visiting schools to tell students about the importance of continuous education and lifelong learning. The Learning Community project requires that the Education Ambassadors are highly proactive and take initiative themselves. Although this was made clear from the start of the project, some of the Education Ambassadors nonetheless thought that CESO would provide them with assignments. The Education Ambassadors pointed out that they wished to increase project awareness about the Education Ambassadors as very often they still had to explain their role.

The Education Ambassador training

Prior to the Education Ambassadors training, CESO conducted interviews with potential Education Ambassadors. The potential Education Ambassadors talked about their motivation, talents and how they envisioned being an Education Ambassador. They also completed a so-called "talent analysis" which identified the talents and strengths of the Education Ambassadors, i.e. the foundation of the training.

The training covered a wide range of aspects related to the position of Education Ambassadors, for instance communication (theory and practice) and computer-related exercises including writing invitations or setting up action plans. The training also covered factors such as collaboration and networking; the focus was of course the Dutch educational system, but additionally the offers in Belgium were included as Limburg is a border region. Discussions and role-playing helped the ambassadors to discover opportunities, boundaries and ethical aspects of being Education Ambassadors. The final training sessions was a real life exercise in how to present yourself as an Education Ambassador. Additionally the ambassadors took part in a "speed dating" session with representatives of educational and social support institutions.

Team building and making use of talents and experiences

A guest lecturer explained the Dutch educational system to the Education Ambassadors during the training. Initially it was planned to invite migrants to the training to let them share their experiences with education in the Netherlands; as the Education Ambassadors themselves had plenty of experiences to share, it was decided to not invite migrants to the training. The experiences of the Education Ambassadors added extensively to the training and was the common theme throughout the training which helped to increase their self confidence and team spirit. The talent analysis also continuously fed into the training, for instance "How could you make most use of your organisational skills?", "If you have difficulties with administrative tasks, how can you solve that or which of the other ambassadors could help you?". The experiences and stories of others was also considered a common theme of the training and was very much appreciated by the Education Ambassadors themselves.

Follow up meetings

After the Education Ambassador training, the Education Ambassadors regularly get together during so-called follow-up meetings. Initially the organisation of these meetings was slightly formal. This has been changed to an informal structure, for instance visiting an "Open Day" of an education institution followed by lunch during which the Education Ambassadors exchange experiences and raise and answer questions. During spring of 2012, the Education Ambassadors visited "Mondo Verde" (i.e. an international garden) followed by an informal exchange of experiences and ideas over lunch. In addition to such meetings, the Education Ambassadors can also continue to rely on CESO for additional support and guidance.

The seven Education Ambassadors

The seven Education Ambassadors are, in addition to Trudy and Shatha (see interview section), Thérèse and Justinne from Congo, Shoyo from Japan, Nawal and Fatima were both born and raised in the Netherlands and are children of Moroccan parents.

While some are in paid employment, others have found it difficult to find a job, but all actively volunteer and engage in community activities. To list a few examples, in addition to her job at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fatima volunteers for the Institute for Islamic Studies, Shatha teaches Tai Chi and Arabic language classes and Trudy teaches sewing courses. Some Education Ambassadors work with (migrant) groups; this is sometimes initiated by social institutions. First and foremost, all the Education Ambassadors share a common aim: they want to be meaningful in the lives of others. Shoyo goes on to say: “I met migrants who have been living in the Netherlands for 20 years and still do not know anything about Dutch society. I want to encourage and stimulate people to discover and use their own talents. Many people are scared to engage and participate in society; I myself was once like that too. The teaching methods used in civic integration courses make people feel small but they should encourage people to realise their potential.” According to Thérèse: “One can continue to say that the Netherlands is a racist country but one needs to participate in society in order to see its good side.”

In addition to their work, education and volunteering, most of the Education Ambassadors also act as informal caretakers for their families and, as they are highly accessible to family members and friends as well as Dutch institutions, they are often overbooked and take on too many tasks and responsibilities. The Education Ambassadors however see opportunities for themselves as well, as by becoming Education Ambassador they aim to increase and expand their own networks and increase their knowledge. “Each new experience offers new life [and opportunities]”, says Shatha.



► The Education Ambassadors and LC project staff

C.4 Interviews with the Education Ambassadors

Education Ambassador Shatha



▶ Shatha

” I want to open doors for others. “

Shatha (1961) was born and raised in Iraq where she studied Electrical Engineering at the Technical University; she also provided private lessons to students. She has been living in The Netherlands as of 2003 when it was difficult for her to find paid employment. Shatha is however an active and valuable volunteer and took several training courses to this end. Currently she participates in an international women’s group and teaches Tai Chi. In addition she provides Arabic courses to children and teenagers. Shatha became an Education Ambassador as she wants to open doors for others. “Knowledge is power. One needs to be open to society.” Although Shatha initially expected to be handed assignments and cases from CESO, she now discovered that “I can do it on my own too”. Shatha offers individual support to migrants and she also organises information sessions to groups. “I am exhilarated if a person indeed attends the course that I have helped them find. I would like to do and achieve more, and I can see that the Education Ambassadors concept really works. I noticed that we are role models for others just like our trainers are role models for us”.

Education Ambassador Trudy



▶ Trudy

” I want to encourage and stimulate others just as I was encouraged, and I want to help migrants to make more informed decisions. “

Trudy (1945) was born and raised in the Netherlands. She has Afro-American and Antillean roots. Trudy completed training as a garment worker and had her own sewing business. She has been infected with the “lifelong learning bug” ever since she enrolled in a course to improve her Dutch at the Open School; she hasn’t stopped learning since. She earned her Bachelors Degree in Social Work and Training/Supervision. During her career, she has worked as a community worker with migrants and was a teacher in the vocational education and bachelors degree sector, and also provided mentoring. Although Trudy is officially retired, she is now busier than ever. Trudy is an active volunteer; she is a board member for SMKK (Stichting Meer Kleur en Kwaliteit) and PAZ (Platform Allochtone Zorgvragers). Through PAZ she was trained to become a WMO Ambassador. As a WMO Ambassador she also handled educational questions and so she decided to become Education Ambassador in order to combine the two. Trudy says “I want to encourage and stimulate others just as I was encouraged, and I want to help migrants to make more informed decisions.” Trudy is extremely proactive: when she could not find a sewing course at the request of a group of migrants, she decided to organise one herself. Trudy recently supported a Moroccan woman in finding doctor’s assistant training at the hospital where she was recently laid off; this she considers to be her biggest achievement as an Education Ambassador thus far.

C.5 Stakeholder involvement

Following the analysis, CESO implemented a stakeholder involvement strategy in order to ensure the involvement of local and regional organisations including migrant organisations, regional training centres, adult education centres like Volksuniversiteit (adult education centre), HOVO (organisation for elderly learners) as well as womens' and welfare organisations. Without exception, all stakeholders were highly enthusiastic about the Learning Community project and acknowledged its potential and capacity to add value.

The institutions pointed out that although no official record is kept, few migrants participate in their courses except for the courses that target migrants specifically (e.g. community integration courses). The Volksuniversiteit reported that migrants attended English courses but not the more creative courses. Learning Community acknowledges this observation from the education institutions and therefore the project essentially aims to approach migrants as human beings with their own unique interests and encourages them to (re)enter education that meets these interests (i.e. courses targeting the individual) rather than to support them only in finding language or civic integration courses (i.e. courses targeting "the migrant").

Concerning support received from stakeholders, the volunteer agency and welfare organisation Alcander in Heerlen supported in recruiting the Education Ambassadors. One of the "Neighbourhood Contact Persons" (in Dutch "Buurtcontactvrouwen"), which is a project managed by Arcus College, became an Education Ambassador. Arcus College also provided a classroom to hold the Education Ambassador training as well as the follow-up meetings, and one of their teachers made an interesting and "eye-opening" guest lecture about the educational context in Limburg.

Despite the positive feedback towards the project, ensuring stakeholder involvement was challenging. Although many institutions acknowledge the potential and added-value of Learning Community, several explained that they were unable to be involved in the project and/or to collaborate with the Education Ambassadors due to budget cuts and time constraints. Despite the fact that the institutions could not be convinced to put effort into targeting migrants, an important target group, they praised the added value of Learning Community. A manager of a regional educational centre explained that "Learning Community is indeed an interesting project. Tailor-made and small-scale projects work best and I am convinced of the fact that Learning Community is of added value, now and after the project lifetime ends. The Education Ambassadors need to build (sustainable) networks and it takes time before one can pick the fruits of that labour."

Informing and engaging stakeholders throughout the project is an essential element in its success. CESO maintained close contacts with stakeholders from the early stages of the project, followed by the dissemination of the project leaflets and newsletters throughout the project lifetime. CESO also invited all stakeholders to attend a "speed date session" and festive graduation ceremony during the final training session. Two stakeholder representatives also attended the ceremony.

¹ WMO (Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning) is a Social Support Act and is designed to foster the life skills and social participation of citizens and to increase the social cohesiveness of Dutch society. The Act incorporates a compensation duty, whereby local authorities must compensate citizens in a number of areas for the consequences of their impairments wherever appropriate by providing equipment or services, for example to help with running a household, to increase mobility and use more means of transportation and improving social contacts. See http://www.scp.nl/english/Topics/P_Z/Social_Support_Act_Wmo

C.6 *Retrospective view and recommendations*

Empowerment of the Education Ambassadors

One important aim was empowering the participants. So how do the Education Ambassadors look back on the training and the activities undertaken? “It gave me a creative push and highly motivated me” says Nawal. “It feels like we have known each other for years. I can do everything, and if I cannot do it, then I can learn how to do it. I also discovered that there are more people like me with similar goals.” “We learn from each other, and we too are a real Learning Community” says Shatha. The Education Ambassadors also put forward several areas for improvement: Shoyo: “I expected more enthusiasm from the migrants themselves.” Several Education Ambassadors also mentioned the following: “We would like to meet the Education Ambassadors from our partner countries. We need to practice more with using PowerPoint presentations. We would like to cooperate more with others during our activities.”

Stakeholder involvement

There are also suggestions for the Dutch institutions: “Everyone is very friendly at the Open Days, if only it would be always like that.” “Education institutions need to take time to provide information and support when people are not doing well in school. Staying positive and not crushing dreams is key here. Providing information to parents is very important. Teachers need to not be prejudiced and need to know about the background of their students, and they need to be aware that the backgrounds of students can vary greatly. Teachers need to know about the family situation of their students. Education with a job guarantee would be a wonderful thing.”

Working with volunteers

The project managers would liked to have seen a lower rate of absence during the training of the Education Ambassadors. The volunteer reimbursement could also be increased. Ways to increase the involvement of men should also be explored as well as ways to increase project awareness. The project helped in dismantling a number of barriers, but the structural barriers still remain.

Looking forward

“It would be great if our project could grow to become an information centre for migrants with educational queries. I could work there.”, says Nawal. All Education Ambassadors would like to continue their work as Education Ambassador after the project lifetime ends. “The quality improves and project awareness increases” says Trudy.

5

Recommendations – How to open doors to adult education for migrants

The following recommendations are directed towards the three levels in which the Learning Community project found barriers which limit the equal access of migrants to adult education opportunities: the individual, institutional and structural level. Therefore the target audience includes several actors:

- ▶ The recommendations for sustainability in working with volunteers address actors who plan or who are working with multipliers.
- ▶ The recommendations for intercultural opening address staff and decision makers in adult education institutions.
- ▶ The recommendations for the structural level address policy makers and other stakeholders.

Some of the recommendations are overlapping – both as far as actors are concerned and in terms of the different levels. This illustrates the complex reality of the situation. Furthermore, the contexts vary greatly amongst the countries that participated in the LC project. Depending on the country and its conditions and frameworks, different recommendations may apply. For specific country recommendations, see the country chapters. Nonetheless, following are some similar approaches and general recommendations that have been proposed by the LC partners.

5.1 Individual level – Recommendations for working with volunteers

5.1.1 Migrant Volunteering

To improve participation and access to adult education for migrants on an individual level, a peer-to-peer approach with multipliers who work on a voluntary basis was used (see chapter 3). When dealing with (migrant) volunteers,

it is important to consider the country context in which volunteering takes place. The panorama of situations in different countries shows that there are many facets to the integration debate, and that the concepts and realities of volunteering vary greatly from country to country (for example, see the results of the European research projects MEM-VOL and INVOLVE on migrant volunteering; for the situation in Austria, see Reinprecht 2009). Migrants are far from being a homogeneous group.

The following recommendations regarding working with volunteer Education Ambassadors were developed on the basis of the experience with the Learning Community project and IQRS. At the beginning of the project, the partners from IQ Roma Service (IQRS) in Brno/Czech Republic shared their expertise concerning working with volunteers. IQRS has extensive experience working with volunteers and they assembled this expertise into a written manual. See the manual on the CD.

5.1.2 *Arrangements at the beginning of the project involvement*

Initial meeting between the coordinator and the applicant: The main aim of the initial meeting is to find out about the applicant's motivation, expectations and his/her ideas about volunteering. At the same time, the coordinator provides information and feedback on the nature of and principles involved in volunteering. The goal of the first meeting is to unify the applicant's expectations with the needs and possibilities of the organisation/project.

Written agreement: After the initial meeting, the applicant has time to consider being involved as a volunteer. If the applicant decides to become a volunteer, a volunteer agreement is signed. The agreement defines the scope of the work, its content and the project duration as well as the rights and duties of both the volunteer and organisation. A written contract is signed by the volunteer and a representative of the organisation.

5.1.3 *Motivation and commitment*

The methods of motivating volunteers are based on the individuals' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself. It takes place within the individual rather than relying on any external pressure. Intrinsic motivation is based on taking pleasure in an activity rather than working towards an external reward. Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain an external outcome. For examples, see the interviews with Education Ambassadors in the country chapter.

Taking into consideration the fact that volunteering in general can be demanding, stressful and time consuming, in addition to being rewarding, it is important to consider the tasks and activities that the volunteers/Education Ambassadors should engage in maintaining high standards of quality in their work in order to remain beneficial to and supportive of the members of the target groups. It is for example motivating for the volunteer to witness the changes (preferably positive) which his/her work caused in the target group.

Sustainability and stability of the volunteer base is equal to the effort which is invested in them by the organisation and to the capacity of the organisation to resolve any possible difficulties which the volunteer will surely encounter while working.

There are similar motivational tools for employed staff and volunteers. Some of the tools are, for example, coaching by a more experienced colleague, supervision, intervention, continuous guidance concerning methods used along with evaluation. Beyond that, there is a general need for an open and comfortable environment that is inviting in terms of expressing one's opinions, suggestions, points of view, and articulating one's needs and possible doubts – so that every volunteer/staff person knows that every idea will be heard and listened to with respect and an open mind.

The whole process of volunteering is guided and regularly evaluated; this can also be a handy tool in working with volunteer motivation.

See also the other sections which deal with motivation and commitment.

5.1.4 Expectations

As was already stressed above (see 5.1.2), it is important to harmonise the applicant's expectations with the possibilities of the organisation/project. One expectation very often voiced by prospective volunteers is that their voluntary position will lead to full-time paid employment. It is very important to make clear from the beginning that this expectation cannot be fulfilled as it is usually not within the capacity of or sphere of influence of projects. Despite these reservations, through volunteering competencies and skills are acquired which can improve both practical skills and chances on the labour market.

5.1.5 Volunteers are simultaneously members of the target community

In the project a peer-to-peer approach was used which means that the multipliers themselves are part of the target group. Some special considerations are needed. One point of reflection might be considering the multipliers social status within the community. Through their affiliation with the project, the social status of the volunteer might change. Furthermore, the multipliers need to be able to be self-reflective concerning their roles as multipliers, and also the boundaries involved.

The support system developed for the Education Ambassadors is varied: the Learning Community project staff offer advice and support (see section below regarding professional volunteer coordinator) and at the same time the Education Ambassadors support each other. It is considered to be very important that the volunteers recognise and make use of their own strength, skills and abilities.

5.1.6 Long-term support for volunteers

In all three countries it became apparent that the participants needed additional support from the LC project staff after the completion of the training. In particular some of the multipliers needed advice and guidance for the realisation of their activities in the pilot activities. For this reason, steering and supporting volunteer involvement needs to be planned on a long-term basis. Working with low-threshold offers especially, the time factor is of utmost importance. In low-threshold and resource-oriented offers and educational programmes for disadvantaged target groups, time is needed for the development of mutual trust and social interaction. Mutual trust is required between the volunteers and the organisation, amongst the group of Education Ambassadors (EAs), between the EAs and the target group and last but not least between EAs and the (adult education) institutions. Furthermore, decision makers on the political level are key stakeholders for several reasons: regarding financial and personal support for the project and also for information and dissemination activities.

5.1.7 Professional volunteer coordinator

We strongly recommend that there be a professional volunteer coordinator who has sufficient time resources to support the volunteers. It is very important that the volunteers are not left on their own and that there is professional assistance which answers their questions and listens to their needs; discussion of their suggestions and points of view is very important. Experiences during the project show that a continuous and trusting contact is of significant relevance; this is also true regarding motivation, perseverance and willingness to be involved. The assistance of the coordinator is as complex as the work of the volunteers and is dependent on the local conditions. Summing up, the following areas might be of relevance:

- ▶ Support regarding the conception and design of activities
- ▶ Support regarding networking
- ▶ Provision of opportunities to exchange, supervision and individual empowerment

Assistance for the coordinator might take the form of follow-up meetings which are organised in a variety of settings. One facet is further training modules for the volunteers on topics they choose; another option is more informal meetings for exchanging experiences.

5.1.8 *Excessive participant workload*

We would like to point out the danger of “overwhelming” already busy people with additional tasks. Sometimes there are so-called key persons in a target group, people who act as representatives for their community in various positions. The big advantage of their inclusion is that they are already known and trusted. Furthermore, they know the needs and resources of the target group. They are also familiar with the communal structures in place and thereby have more chances to deepen need-based cooperative efforts or to develop new ones. On the other side, there is a risk that such key individuals take on too many tasks and get involved in too many projects. Therefore a self-reflective approach is necessary and should be promoted by the project staff/volunteer coordinator.

5.1.9 *Rewarding and recognising volunteer work*

The involvement of the participants who were trained and act as Education Ambassadors was on a voluntary basis. In return for their involvement, the participants received a training course, supervision and follow-up meetings organised by project staff. Monetary rewards were only provided in the form of expense allowances (travel costs, photo copies, etc.).

It is the nature of voluntary work that no substantial monetary compensation is given. Nevertheless the project team reflected the danger of reproducing the structural disadvantaged position of migrants. Some migrants groups are socio-economically disadvantaged, and in some cases only have restricted access to the labour market. A lot of people in the target groups live near or below the poverty line. This needs to be taken into account when involving migrants from these backgrounds in volunteer work. Migrants can certainly become involved in low paid or voluntary work, but at the same time they need to earn a living.

The issue of financial rewards became apparent even at the beginning of the project, e.g. during the recruitment of potential multipliers. Some of the people interested in participating dropped out when it became clear that there was no monetary reward for their participation. Considering the often precarious situation of migrants (low paid jobs, unemployment, etc.), this is understandable. Here a gender dimension became apparent as well: while all the interested males declined participation, the females agreed to being involved.

Furthermore their personal circumstances (e.g. unemployment) might lead to an expectation that involvement in the project will lead to a paid job at some time in the future (see section 5.1.4). Therefore it is essential that the expectations of the volunteers and the possibilities of the project are compatible. This tuning process should start at the beginning (see 5.1.2), but it is nonetheless a continuous process.

Recognition

Continuous recognition of the accomplishments and efforts of the volunteers is crucial. For example, the follow-up meetings are essential in showing the Education Ambassadors that they are being supported and taken seriously (see section 5.1.6 regarding long-term support).

If no monetary rewards can be given, other forms of recognition need to be part of the programme. These might include an invitation to lunch or dinner by the major stakeholder or others involved, well wishes for birthdays or other important holidays or invitations to project excursions. In the city of Berlin, a “volunteer pass” (Freiwilligenpass) was introduced in 2006. The volunteer pass should contribute to the recognition of volunteer work. In the pass the actual volunteer work done (tasks, accomplishments) and the acquired competencies and skills are documented.

Another issue regarding recognition is the formal recognition of the training. In Berlin the document presented to the Education Ambassadors at the end of the training was called “confirmation of participation in a course”. Due to legal requirements, the term “certificate” could not be used. Certificates can only be issued by formally recognised institutions and therefore have a higher value on the labour market. This is an important aspect which should be taken into consideration regarding recognition and the further practical use of the training for the participants.

5.1.10 Working as Education Ambassador under an “official” framework

In addition to the aspect of recognition the volunteer contracts and coaching also emphasised the feeling that they are part of an organisation. The Education Ambassadors found it very useful to have business cards printed particularly for their work as Education Ambassador. Furthermore flyers with information on the project (in different languages) were used during the pilot actions. Provision of a work space with access to telephone, computer and the internet is very helpful as well. Furthermore, in the case of the Netherlands, third-party liability insurance was taken out for the volunteers.

5.1.11 Sustainability after the end of the project

A crucial topic is the issue of the time-limited project duration and sustainability. During the project people were trained, they became active as Education Ambassadors, and professional structures were offered to support their engagement (see sections on long-term support, professional coordination and working under an official framework). What happens after the end of the project? This was one of the first questions we asked ourselves; it is very important to develop ideas and actions to take after the end of the project.

Different measures were developed in the project countries. In the case of Berlin, most of the participants were already active as multipliers in other fields. They were given additional training in the field of adult education, and they can therefore use the knowledge gained in their field of engagement. In the Netherlands and Greece, the project staff, through networking with adult education institutions and other stakeholders, tried to explore the possibilities for cooperation between the institutions and Education Ambassadors (see the country chapters for details). See also section 5.2 on recommendations for the institutional level regarding possible forms of cooperation.

5.2 Institutional level – Recommendations for Intercultural Opening

When trying to open doors for migrants to adult education, the respective barriers on the level of adult education institutions also need to be considered. The aim of intercultural opening is equal access for and participation of migrants. However, most of the requirements are not specific to migrants but apply to all hard to reach groups and persons with low social status or educational disadvantage; the key are target groups and approaches specific to existing needs.

In this process of intercultural opening, all areas within the adult education institutions are important to consider.

- ▶ Staff
- ▶ Arrangement of the courses (organisational)
- ▶ Instructional methods
- ▶ Organisation

For further information and examples regarding implementation measures see e.g. Bauer/EQUAL-Entwicklungspartnerschaft “qualifikation stärkt” 2005 (in German).

5.2.1 *Staff development*

On the level of personnel development in the adult education institutions, the employment of staff with a migration background is important. In this way access barriers are lower and a better representation of minorities amongst employees of social and education services is established. A diverse workforce is actively supported in working in their team and with the customers. Moreover, the further training of all employees regarding intercultural competence is necessary.

In this area regarding employment of staff with a migration background, cooperative work with the Education Ambassadors might be explored.

5.2.2 *Arrangement of the courses (organisation)*

▶ Information and guidance services: (low-threshold) information concerning the offers should be made available (e.g. user-friendly webpages, information material in different languages, clear description of the courses). Furthermore some potential learners might have difficulty with bureaucracy and they might need assistance with application procedures for course enrolment. To facilitate accessibility, educational guidance services made available by the institutions for personal orientation regarding how and what learning involves can be beneficial.

In this area, in consideration of the importance of socially embedded information, cooperation between adult education institutions and Education Ambassadors might be very beneficial.

▶ Location of the adult education institution: here the actual and also the symbolic dimensions play a role. In what environment is the institution located? Is the place considered to be open and accessible for all? Furthermore mobility patterns in relation to the social background need to be considered. Institutions that are located near the places of residence of the target group are at an advantage. In addition, accessibility via public transportation needs to be taken into account as well as the cost of transportation.

▶ Costs: how high are the fees for courses? Another financial factor is transportation costs. Also important is how the payment system is organised, for example is assistance available, is it possible to pay in instalments.

▶ Time of the courses: do the times of the classes match with work and family responsibilities and the working hours of schools, kindergartens, etc. In low qualified jobs, employees often have irregular working hours (e.g. shift work) which do not match well with courses which take place at a regular times once a week.

Another aspect is customer-friendly hours of the (enrolment) office.

Length of the courses (connected to teaching methods): if courses are characterised by having a tight time budget, this might prevent learners from asking questions or learning through exercises. Participants with the local language as a second language are more affected because they might need more time to work through the teaching material. A balance between content and duration of the course are of particular importance for the learning process and a positive learning experience (see also teaching methods).

▶ Availability of child care.

▶ Temporal and thematic discontinuity of educational opportunities offered (e.g. in Greece in the province of Ilia, only two of the four levels of the Greek language learning programme are available, which means there are no courses for the more advanced levels).

5.2.3 Teaching methods

When working with heterogeneous groups, there are particular requirements which need to be taken into consideration. One particular aspect to consider are the needs of second language learners.

- ▶ Sensitivity regarding the educational needs and experiences, language, cultural and social background of the learners
- ▶ Learning methods and materials according to the needs and capabilities of the participants
- ▶ Flexible course layout (e.g. modular courses)
- ▶ Courses taught in the native languages or allowing more time for interpretation
- ▶ The social and intercultural competencies of the trainers are other important aspects; this means for example competence in dealing with learning situations with learners with the national language as a second language and not over or underestimating the significance of “culture”
- ▶ Socio-paedagogical tutoring

5.2.4 Organisational

Implementation measures on the structural level of the organisation regarding interculturality, anti-discrimination and gender mainstreaming need to be put into practice in several areas. Based on the experiences in the LC project, the following measures have been proposed:

- ▶ Establishment of responsibility at the management level: Targets regarding interculturality, anti-discrimination and gender mainstreaming are set and are committed to by the leadership.
- ▶ Public relations: Measures for addressing multilingual clientele are put into place (e.g. informational material, signage, course catalogues and events are presented in multiple languages; interpreter services are provided). Here also the importance of socially embedded information needs to be considered.
- ▶ Planning: When planning courses, the specific educational and/or training needs of migrants are surveyed in the run-up and introduced in the planning. The results might lead to the adaptation of already existing offers to make them more accessible for all; this might also lead to the introduction of tailor-made new courses.
- ▶ Outreach work: One important result of our project is the realisation that outreach work might be a very successful tool in gaining access to hard to reach groups. This includes visits by adult education staff to neighbourhood centres, migrant organisation meeting places, mosques and churches as well as kindergartens to introduce and explain the educational offers. Another possibility is “going local” which means that adult education institutions conduct some of their courses outside their usual venues, for example locations such as those noted above.

See e.g. Moser 2006 about the cooperation between adult education institutions and migrants' organisations.

- ▶ Cooperation with Education Ambassadors: A low-threshold measure to reach migrants would be to establish cooperative efforts with the Education Ambassadors who would act as bridges between the adult education institutions and potential customers.

5.3 Structural level

Legal frameworks and social conditions are important influencing factors in the lives of migrants in general and also in the field of education. During our project, issues regarding access for migrants to adult education in several areas became apparent. Some are directly related to the field of adult education, some concern broader areas but nevertheless have a direct impact on participation in adult education and in society in general. The recommendations presented are neither entirely new nor unique. Some of the recommendations have already been implemented in some European countries or correspond with policy strategies on the European, national or local level. Building on the experiences and insights gained throughout the project, the LC partners propose to draw special attention to and underline the importance of follow-up in the following areas and issues regarding the equal access to and participation in adult education for migrants.

The recommendations are grouped into activities on the individual and institutional level. Furthermore, we would like to point out measures regarding sustainability for working with volunteer multiplier structures. This grouping is mainly for analytical purposes. It is important to keep in mind that the identified areas of action are closely interlinked. Naturally, the measures taken in all areas need to work together harmoniously.

5.3.1 Measures to improve equal access and participation on the individual level

Issues

Employment (working schedule), **family obligations and financial limitations** were identified as the three most important obstacles to participation in education and training in the European Wide Adult Education Survey. Another important obstacle to participation in education and training is **lack of (low-threshold) information** about adult education opportunities and offers; for recommendations regarding this topic see the section covering the institutional level below.

- ▶ Migrants are affected by discrimination, racism and exclusionary practices in many areas of life. In our project it became apparent that the **(socio-economically) disadvantaged** situation of migrants in society in general, and in the labour market in particular, has an important impact on participation. All too often migrants find themselves in an unfavourable position on the labour market. Many migrants work in low-skilled jobs (even if they are skilled) where access to education and training is restricted.
- ▶ The issue of **recognition** became apparent during the project. Migrants are in many cases affected by the lacking recognition of their qualifications, skills and competencies. This applies to their degrees and training qualifications gained in their countries of origin, and similarly also informally acquired competencies and knowledge are in many cases not recognised by the destination society.
- ▶ **Gender dimension:** The results of the Adult Education Survey show that for men work scheduling is the major obstacle to participation, while for women the most important issue that inhibits participation is family obligations. There are major differences in the participation patterns of men and women in different areas of society. These differences have been and are being shaped by the varied conditions in society for men and women, for example the unequal distribution of paid employment, providing of unpaid care and domestic work.
- ▶ **Financial aspect:** Legal regulations have an impact on such things as the availability of grants and support (e.g. support schemes may be for citizen only).
- ▶ The **legal status** of the individual is important regarding formal access to adult education offers. Furthermore, **(legal) security** is an important prerequisite regarding the ability to learn.

Recommendations

► **Improvement of legal status (security) for migrants and asylum seekers**

- With regard to the focus of the project, we would like to emphasise that measures to improve the residence status and associated rights also have an impact regarding formal access to adult education offers (and social services).

► **Improvement of the (structural) position of migrants on the labour market**

- Improvement of (legal) access to the labour market.

► **Promotion and validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning for all citizens (also for migrants from third countries)**

Such measures might include the following:

- Establishment of a national system which will enable the skills and qualifications of migrants from third countries to be assessed, recognised and utilised.
- Free access to and guidance about such assessment systems for refugees and migrants at an early stage following their arrival, including the involvement and the assistance of the different social services concerned.
- Such assessment and recognition systems should be able to accommodate skills and knowledge gained through formal training and informal experience – the recognition of previous educational and professional backgrounds is important; this applies both to the different social service providers and the adult education centres (the aim is achieving better outcomes from the educational programmes).

► **Strengthening of anti-discrimination laws and policies**

- With regard to the focus of the project, we would like to emphasise measures to improve equality in the labour market and in education.

► **Strengthening of laws and policies for improvement of gender equality**

- This applies in particular to measures to improve the balance between family, vocation and education. An important factor in participation in adult education is needs based course schedules for employed as well as persons with a care responsibilities at home. Furthermore adequate childcare availability (free of charge, flexible scheduling) is essential.

► **Financial support for individuals wanting to make use of adult education offers**

- An important measure would be the introduction of grant systems (also for residents who are non-citizens, e.g. educational allowances, vouchers, promotion of vocational training) or free of charge offers.

Link with existing policies and measures

Recognition and validation of all forms of learning: On the European Union level, measures regarding validation of formal and informal learning and the processes involved in the development and implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the Bologna Process in the national contexts need to be strengthened, also taking into account the situation of migrants from third countries.

Anti-discrimination laws and policies: At the EU as well as at the national levels, anti-discrimination legislation and other strategies have been implemented in the past in order to combat discrimination and racism, for example “Race Equality Directive 2000/43/EC”, implementing the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of race or ethnic origin and “Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC” which aims to combat discrimination in the workplace. Additional policies and activities need to address these issues.

In the Netherlands, discrimination can be reported to special anti-discrimination checkpoints. Germany also has various organisations where discrimination can be reported. Furthermore the “European Coalition of Cities Against Racism” established a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

Gender equality: At the EU and national levels, anti-discrimination legislation and other strategies have been implemented in the past to fight discrimination based on gender, for example the “Equal Treatment Directive 2006/54/EC” implements the principle of equal treatment of men and women in EU labour law. Future policies and activities need to address these issues and contribute to the improvement of equality.

Financing: An example is the Austrian initiative for adult education entitled “Initiative Basisbildung” (Initiative for Adult Education). Its objective is to enable adults who lack basic skills or did not graduate from a lower level secondary school to continue and finish their education. The programmes are free of charge for young people and adults. In the Netherlands the local authorities offer special stipends to social support recipients.

5.3.2 Measures to improve equal access and participation on the institutional level

Issues

Several considerations need to be taken into account on the level of the institutions to improve access for and increase the participation of hard to reach groups, and in particular migrants. Based on the LC project experience, we would like to raise awareness of the importance of the following:

- ▶ **Intercultural opening:** Measures to improve the equal access of migrants (and other disadvantaged groups) need to consider all areas within the adult education institutions, i.e. staffing, course scheduling, teaching methods and organisation.
- ▶ **Target group oriented approach:** In order to combat access barriers to adult education, a target group oriented approach is necessary. When planning course offers, it should be kept in mind that this procedure is a multifaceted process and many factors have to come together for it to work. The content of the programmes and the methods used have to fit together in the reaching of realistic goals.

It is important to consider the need for a differentiated approach concerning the personal and occupational conditions as well as the needs of each migrant. In many cases, there is a focus on adult education offers for low skilled migrants only, but since the migrant population is heterogeneous (e.g. regarding their educational level and learning experiences), multifaceted provision to cater to diverse needs is necessary.

Therefore the specific education and training needs of migrants need to be surveyed in the run-up and introduced in the planning of adult education offers. The results could lead to the adaption of already existing offers in order to make them better and more accessible for all, and it might also lead to the introduction of tailor-made new courses.

- ▶ Another important obstacle to participation in education and training is **lack of (low-threshold) information** about adult education opportunities and offers. Two important results of the project are the realisation that outreach work might be a very successful tool in gaining access to hard to reach groups and that low-threshold guidance is beneficial in increasing participation. This corresponds with the need of socially embedded information (information which relates to the real world context and is readily available). Furthermore, another important obstacle – the lack of nearby facilities – is tackled through measures in these areas.
- ▶ **Financing:** Different institutional initiatives are necessary to improve the access of hard to reach and (educationally) disadvantaged groups. For the implementation of these measures, appropriate financial resources are necessary. The connections between political will and financial resources have to be in place, not only locally but also at the national and European Union levels so as to provide a better educational experience as well as encourage professional success and the improved positioning of migrants in the society.

Recommendations

- ▶ **Measures to encourage equal access of migrants (and other disadvantaged groups) need to consider all areas within the adult education institutions**
 - Staffing (e.g. staff with a migration background, intercultural and social competencies).
 - Planning of the courses (e.g. measures to address a multilingual clientele; needs based course schedules, good location and available child care).
 - Teaching methods (sensitivity regarding educational needs and experiences, language, cultural and social background of the learners; special attention to the needs of second language learners).
 - Organisation (e.g. taking responsibility at the leadership level).
- ▶ **Development of target group oriented adult education courses**
 - Analysis of the needs of the target groups and implementation of the results in the planning of offers.
- ▶ **Systematic coordination and cooperation**
 - Introduction of a systematic consultation and cooperation system with a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach, including adult education providers, migrant organisations, neighbourhood centres and job centres.
- ▶ **Outreach work**
 - Visits by adult education staff to neighbourhood centres, migrant organisation meeting places, mosques and churches as well as kindergartens in order to introduce and explain the educational offers.
 - Adult education institutions conduct some of their courses outside the usual venues.
- ▶ **Development and implementation of low-threshold educational guidance measures**
 - Cooperation between adult education institutions and migrant organisations.
 - Education Ambassadors act as door openers and bridges, offering low threshold educational guidance
- ▶ **Adequate financing of adult education institutions for the implementation of measures to improve equal access**

Link with existing policies and measures

During the project, we came across several good practice examples in a number of European countries, for example adult education institutions conducting some of their courses outside their usual venues (e.g. in neighbourhood centres or libraries) and operating outreach services for hard to reach groups.

The Resolutions of the Education Council (2004, 2008) highlight the lifelong need for adequate guidance services and systems. Future policies and activities, for example of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) (2010), need to better address the situation of adults who have a low level of education/training, and in particular the needs of migrants.

5.3.3 Sustainability for volunteer multiplier structures

Issues

Several considerations need to be taken into account when working with volunteers and multiplier structures. Here we would like to raise awareness of the importance of the following aspects: since multiplier structures rely on (personal) networks and cooperation, significant time is needed for building up trusting and cooperative relationships. Furthermore, volunteers need advice and guidance in the realisation of their activities. Therefore, long-term support systems for volunteers are essential. The support system should include a professional volunteer

coordinator who has sufficient time resources. Furthermore, the recognition of the accomplishments and efforts of volunteers is crucial. Moreover, to be able to take part as a volunteer, an adequate level of income needs to be ensured (see connection with recommendations on the individual level to improve the socio-economic situation of migrants).

Recommendations

▶ **Quality assurance measures for working with volunteers**

- This includes the organisation of the qualification processes through joint formulation of goals and development of minimum standards.

▶ **Long-term adequate (financial) resources for multiplier structures**

- Long-term support structures for the volunteers.
- Professional volunteer coordinator.

▶ **Financial security of volunteers needs to be ensured (sufficient reimbursement)**

▶ **Improved recognition of competencies and skills acquired through volunteering**

Link with existing policies and measures

The European Union proclaimed the year 2011 to be the “European Year of Volunteering” to emphasise the importance of volunteering.

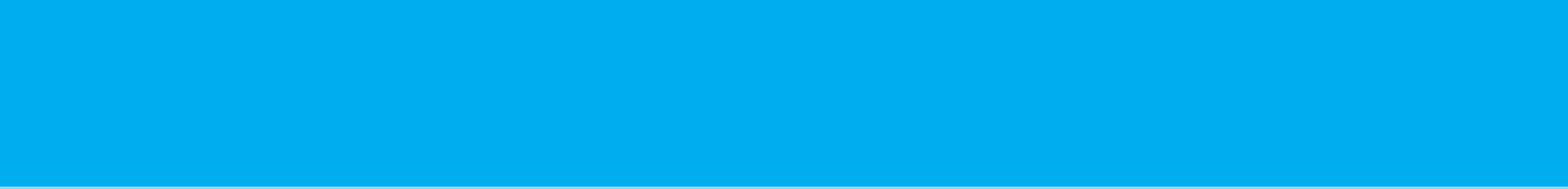
In the city of Berlin a “volunteer pass” (Freiwilligenpass) was introduced in 2006. The volunteer pass contributes to the recognition of volunteer work. In the pass the actual volunteer work done (tasks, accomplishments) and the acquired competencies and skills are documented.

In the Netherlands the volunteer agencies provide advice and support, for example a “model contract” and guidelines for good volunteer policy.

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