

Support for Flexible and Self-directed Learning

Grundtvig 8th Learning Partnership Conference

October 6th – 9th, Nacka, Sweden

Conference Report

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1. Background: The Grundtvig Programme

The Grundtvig Programme was launched as one of the means to reach the European Union's policy objective of raising economic growth and competitiveness while nonetheless strengthening social inclusion. An effective system for life-long and life-wide learning is a key factor to achieve these objectives. Adult learning can raise the level of knowledge, skills and competences in employment related fields and for personal fulfilment and active citizenship. It can provide a chance for large number of adults who leave school early and it may help to address the societal challenges of Europe's ageing population.

The Grundtvig Learning Partnership is a framework for practical co-operation activities between organisations working in the field of adult learning in the broadest sense – formal, non-formal or informal. Compared with the generally larger-scale Grundtvig multilateral co-operation projects, which are more “product-” or outcome-oriented, the partnerships focus more on process, and aim to broaden in particular the participation of smaller organisations wishing to include European co-operation in their education activities.

In a Grundtvig Learning Partnership trainers and learners from at least three participating countries work together on one or more topics of common interest to the co-operating organisations. This exchange of experiences, practices and methods contributes to an increased awareness of the varied European cultural, social and economic scene, and to a better understanding of areas of common interest in the area of adult learning.

2. Rationale and Aims for the Conference

“Support for flexible and self-directed learning” was the eighth conference of Learning Partnerships within the Grundtvig programme. It was organized by the Swedish International Programme Office for Education and Training. The aim of the conference was to provide a forum to exchange experiences and innovative efforts in the Learning Partnerships and in adult learning, with a focus on different modes for support for disadvantaged learners. Adult learners are a diverse group. Disadvantaged learners and support for learners in a wide context where a theme at the heart of this conference. Partnerships dealing with learner support in various ways – through outreach activities, information, guidance, counselling, coaching etc. – were invited to the conference. Since the quality of staff is crucial in motivating and supporting disadvantaged learners projects dealing with staff development were also invited. While a special attention was given to different ways of involving learners in the Learning Partnerships, a number of learners were also participating in the conference.

More specifically the conference focused on support and guidance to learners:

- Before studies are commenced;

- Throughout the ongoing studies, and
- For continued studies and/or re-integration in society and the labour market.

The conference programme consisted of three main parts:

- Plenary presentations and introductions to workshops;
- Six parallel workshop groups with three sessions each;
- The social programme including the European Fair, study visits and meals.

Apart from the organizing team some 140 people attended the conference, including learners, project partners, national Grundtvig coordinators, speakers, and representatives from the European Commission.

3. Grundtvig Learning Partnerships Participating in the Conference

Organisations participating in the Grundtvig Learning Partnerships are encouraged to monitor and evaluate their transnational work and to interconnect it with the initiatives of their local community. They are also encouraged to cooperate with organisations and authorities at the national level, to ensure a sound basis for their ideas and activities and open up channels for dissemination. By way of three workshop sessions the conference was designed to focus on exchange of experiences between the projects, both between learners and project staff and between national Grundtvig coordinators. In this way the conference was intended to be a vehicle for short term monitoring of the projects and long term competence development among staff.

In order to prepare the workshops, as well as for the purpose of this conference report, the organizers of the conference invited the National Agencies to provide background information on the participating projects. 24 responses were delivered using a web-based tool, which together forms a rich material to study. The information covers most of the 50 projects participating in the conference. The questions asked were related to the themes of the conference. Hence information was asked about how the learning Partnerships reach disadvantage learners, what is done to prevent learners from giving up their studies, how learners can be motivated to further raise their qualification levels, and supported in their re-entry and integration in society and the labour market?

The first question related to the issue of *how to reach out to disadvantage learners*, asked *what kind of learners the projects are targeting?* With such an amount of answers from across Europe the range of groups is large. A summary of the kind of disadvantaged learners mentioned most often includes:

- disabled people with either physical or mental disabilities;
- migrants of different kinds including immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers;

- people living in disadvantage areas most common rural areas;
- women, particularly mothers, with difficult social circumstances and with little formal education;
- early school leavers, youth with no or little formal education and working skills;
- inmates or former prisoners;
- drug addicts and homeless people;
- senior citizens.

Again, this list is not exhaustive but illustrates the most common groups in the information sent to the Swedish International Programme Office.

These projects cooperate with a variety of partners. Most commonly mentioned are local authorities and social services at local level, local training centres, language centres, immigration centres, mother centres and health centres. Other common partners include educational institutions of different kinds, like adult education centres and secondary schools and sometimes universities. Different kinds of NGO's are also frequently mentioned as well as local businesses.

It was asked *what is innovative in these activities or with this constellation of partners?* Few answered the question regarding the constellation of partners. Mentioned here was cooperation and networking between public and private resources and also to have international partners. Coming to the issue of what is innovative with the activities the answers divides in two categories, one related to methodology and the other to the issues or problems the projects are dealing with. Among the innovative methodologies mentioned are using learners as tutors to peers, using art both as a means to address social exclusion and for communication, therapy and education. Sometimes theatre is used in similar ways. Different kinds of engaging learning methods were mentioned such as class-room mini-projects, students do research and presentations. Some uses different kinds of ICT tools such as Skype, Facebook and blogs or other ICT equipment to produce project websites or communicate. Also mentioned was having international workshops with partners interested in the same issues. The most common answer to the question of what is innovative is to describe the problems or issues the project is addressing, such as gender specific disadvantages, international cooperation to help former inmates to find a job after their release, multi-sectoral cooperation (i.e. municipalities, local communities and NGOs), or to offer the possibility of learning at the learners own pace coupled with recognition and accreditation of informal learning. The fact that the issues the projects deal with are new and innovative, may in itself be an indication that the Grundtvig programme is innovative and takes on problems not really worked with before.

A second set of questions were related to *what can be done to prevent learners from giving up their studies*. The first question in this second set asked *what support systems for learners are used in the project*. Mentoring, sometimes by peers, screening, counselling and guidance are often mentioned. A common way seem to be to try to engage and involve the learners even more in the project, by having them involved in the planning and evaluation etcetera. Again the use of ICT, particularly the Internet, is frequently mentioned. This is above all the case when answering the second question – *which of these support systems are new or innovative and in what way?* Two categories of answers stand out: the use of ICT in different ways, and the close involvement of the learners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities. Closely related is also the question if *any evidence can be presented that the support systems work?* Many of the projects are using new and innovative methods and they are still running, therefore most of them cannot give more than preliminary answers to the question. Most commonly answered is that the motivation, involvement and enhanced knowledge and skills of the learners are evidence enough. Continuing demand from other organisations for further participation in Grundtvig activities is another way to respond to the question.

The third and final set of questions focused on *what can be done to motivate learners to further raise their qualification levels, and to support re-entry and integration in society and in the labour market?* It was asked *which the key factors are for reintegration and how is the project focusing on these factors?* Among the key factors mentioned the need to involve the learners from the start and through the whole project comes up once again. This also relates to a second factor – creating motivation and raising the self-esteem of the learners. This is done both by individualised education, career counselling as well as guidance and social services. For migrants, language skills (the language of the host country) are also frequently mentioned as a very important factor together with intercultural exchange – to getting to know “the other”. Also commonly mentioned is the need to familiarise the learners with ICT and Internet.

The ending question asked *which innovative approaches the projects have taken to information and guidance*. Again the use of ICT and the Internet are frequently mentioned. Projects set up websites with information, web logs (blogs) where all the current information is published, student blogs in which different chat themes for the learners of participating projects are being announced, the use of Skype conferences and Facebook, YouTube, production of e-books and other use of multimedia etcetera. Apart from technology and in previous sections, the use of peer-to-peer guidance and mentoring has often been mentioned. Intercultural dialogue is also common as a way to get learners to reflect on their own situation at the same time as they learn about their rights and opportunities for lifelong learning. “Empowerment” is another frequently used description what the projects try to achieve.

4. Summary of the Conference

4.1 The European Fare

Even before the official opening of the conference by the Director General of the Swedish International Programme Office for Education and Training, *Mr Ulf Melin*, the conference started with a European Fare. This is an occasion for the participants to display their projects. The fare showed richness of the Grundtvig programme both in terms of the variety of projects and countries. Together with information leaflets, CD-roms, books and pictures the exhibitors offered snacks and beverages to give the audience a flavour not only of the projects but also of the country and culture it comes from.

4.2 Plenary sessions

The conference mixed plenary sessions with workshops. In all seven speakers made presentations in plenum and two learners were interviewed. *Mr Alan Smith*, Deputy Head of Unit from the European Commission, gave an overview of the Grundtvig programme and its role in the larger European context. He stressed that the programme fulfils a number of important tasks within the Lifelong Learning Programme. This is particularly true at the moment when Europe, as well as the rest of the world, is facing difficult economic times which might end up in a social crisis. This was also stressed by *Ms Amelie von Zweigberg*, State Secretary in the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science. She pointed out that in the short term Europe is facing an economic crisis, but the long term challenge is demographical: the ageing population and the low birth rate in European countries. This will call for action in several ways – lifelong learning and adult education in order to make people able and willing to stay in the work force longer is one of the most important. “Adult education is one of the businesses of the future“, according to *Ms von Zweigberg*. Increased migration is another remedy for Europe, which again will call for adult learning in many areas not least language learning. *Mr Smith* emphasized that as a result of the growing political awareness of the need for people to constantly upgrade their skills and for a growing number of people to learn new languages, there is an increased recognition in the political sphere of the role of the Grundtvig program. He also described some of the improvements the programme has undergone during the last years which has made the program more efficient, increased the number of decentralised actions, partners supported, the level of the grants as well as the acceptance rate of proposals. The idea of learning partnerships is successfully exported to the Leonardo da Vinci program, and is recognised as a key instrument.

Ms Ylva Malm, Director of Education at the Swedish National Agency for Education, in her presentation described the formal part of adult education in Sweden. The education system is among the most decentralised in Europe and almost all education is carried out by the municipalities. *Ms Malm* described the role of the Agency as having a focus on asserting the right of the individual to knowledge and personal development. Sweden has recently launched an

initiative regarding vocational education and training within adult education comprising €200 million for 2010-2011. The aim is to expand and upgrade vocational education within the municipal adult education with the goal of addressing vocational skills shortages, reaching individuals without a complete upper secondary education and unemployed people who studied theoretical programmes in upper secondary school and are in need of re-training.

Two learners, *Mr Amanuel Debessai* and *Ms Ann-Kristin Sundberg* were interviewed by the moderator regarding the reason for them to engage in adult education and their motivation. *Mr Debessai* has previously studied medicine in his home country and is now studying Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) in hope for a job career. Although the studies are not easy, since the Swedish language is very different from his mother tongue Tigrinya, his motivation is high. He wants to be able to support himself and his family and lead his own life. *Ms Sundberg* has a previous career working in child care but is now studying English and ICT, web design etcetera in order to have a change in her life. Another important motivation is to be able to use computers and communicate with her grandchildren who live in Africa. Together they bore witness to the importance and joy of learning.

Mr Carl Holmberg, Secretary General at the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), discussed new infrastructures for adult learning. He used the Swedish county Hälsningland as an example of how new learning structures are being developed via two Grundtvig projects. Hälsningland is a scarcely populated county in the northern part of the country characterised by relatively high unemployment and a low skilled work force. Research shows that the two projects result in engaging new groups of learners who climb the education ladder. They give local businesses access to educated labour and makes young people stay in the region. Furthermore they result in increased cooperation between societal sectors. Finally they make people value learning, or as one inhabitant expressed herself: “When I was a kid my daddy told me: Go out there and find a job. I say to my kids: Learn, educate yourself!” One of the innovative elements of the projects is the establishment of adult learning centres, which can be seen as substructures to educational institutions. Sometimes they are the results of local initiatives incorporating formal, as well as non-formal and informal learning. Their main task is to be physical or virtual supporting environments for adult learners offering academic support, emotional support and, most important, social organisation support. Moreover the adult learning centres can act as local or regional nodes for needs analysis and recruitment of students. These centres and the way they are run is, according to *Mr Holmberg*, a good example of the trend long spoken of where the perspective is shifting from where the supplier and the teaching is in centre of attention towards a focus on flexible learning where the attention is on the learner.

Mr Staffan Ström, Director of municipal adult education in Nacka, gave an introduction to the study visits conducted at the end of the conference and offered some reflections from the point of view of local government. Nacka is a neighbour to the capital Stockholm, a growing municipality with some 90 000 inhabitants. The municipality practices a voucher system for adult learning,

giving the learner a choice between some 30 local educational providers – both public and private. The learner is free to choose any formal course or programme without fees or tuition. They are also offered career counselling services. Results from evaluations shows that learners appreciate the individual treatment and flexibility of the system. A substantial, and growing, part of the approximately 2 500 people involved in formal adult learning are migrants. Hence the municipality is involved in two Grundtvig projects, the Language Café and creative writing courses, both focusing language learning for adults. From the perspective of local government adult education is the key to integration and inclusion. Migrant learners should have a focus in getting a job and to be economically independent. Nacka is expanding its cooperation with local employers. In short the philosophy of the municipality's work with adult education can be summaries in three bullet points: (i) people can and want to be self sufficient through work or operating their own business; (ii) change the primary focus of the municipality, from handing out financial aid to active support the “matching” processes; (iii) facilitate the integration process for the learner by creating a one-stop-shop for all kinds of learner needs.

4.3 Workshops

As mentioned earlier the exchange of experiences and information among partnerships, learners and national agencies formed an important part of the conference. This exchange mainly took place in the workshops. In order to have workshop groups of a good size, the participants were divided into six different groups. Each group had three sessions. The sessions were facilitated by one of the participants and each group worked itself through a set of themes or questions handed out by the organisers. The list of the facilitators can be found in Appendix C, together with the standing rapporteur's from each workshop group. The groups were composed as to maximise the learning opportunities and to have fruitful discussions. Each workshop group met three times (Session I, II and III).

The questions were almost identical to the ones sent out to the National Agencies before the conference. But compared to the responses sent in electronically, the information from the workshop sessions is more elaborated regarding the themes of the conference and less concentrated on individual projects.

Workshop Session I

The session was introduced by *Ms Sigríður Disa Gunnarsdóttir*, from the Department of career guidance in Reykjavik, Iceland. She described a groundbreaking project where career guidance were offered at the workplace, thereby reaching out to new groups of clients. The project started as a pilot in 2003, financed by the Icelandic government. Since 2006 the operation is run from a centre with a contract with the Education and Training Service Centre, owned by the Icelandic Federation of Labour and the Confederation of Icelandic Employers. The target groups of the centre are people in the labour market not having finished upper secondary school i.e. having

neither formal vocational training nor matriculation examination, migrants and other groups in similar situations. The main goal is to motivate and support the target groups to actively participate in lifelong learning and competence development. The innovative element is the idea of meeting people where it is most likely to get in contact with them, i.e. the workplace. The centre offers both formal and informal group introductions at the workplace followed by individual interviews where the client's needs, motivation, barriers and goals are discussed. *Ms Gunnarsdóttir* summed up the results of the work. The centre have reached out to groups that would probably never have come to guidance and counselling on their own. The number of interviews and the number of people making appointments for guidance at the centre is growing. But she also noted that it is still a challenge to market the centre and the idea of career guidance in companies and for the target groups. They need to have the consent of the company before they can start their work, and this is the main challenge for the project.

The first question regarded which disadvantage groups the projects represented at the conference are targeting. The list seem to cover more or less all the target groups mentioned in the Grundtvig Programme, including disabled persons (physically and mentally); people with psychiatric problems; seniors (younger and older); migrants, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers; local ethnic groups; women in rural areas; drop-out learners and female learners; Roma people, socially excluded groups; ex-offenders; inmates; former drug users etcetera.

The partners involved in the different projects also cover a comprehensive list, including local authorities (social, health), charities, local businesses, NGO's, adult education authorities and second chance schools. The partners seem also to form a way to reach out to the hard to reach groups. On top of the partners and ways of reaching out already mentioned, media was also mentioned several times. Some projects managed to get the local newspaper or radio station to present the project and its activities and in that way inviting new people to participate in open activities. Some used notice-boards and posted notices in churches, local service centres and the premises of NGO's. Others stressed the importance of using the learners themselves as ambassadors to people with similar background and needs.

When it comes to innovations both new kind of activities and new constellations of partners were mentioned. In terms of new activities or ways of working ICT was often pointed out. Internet is used to find and communicate with partners. Working with and learning how to use information technology motivates the learners to continue their learning also in other areas; Skype, MSN and other so called social media enables the learners to stay in touch whenever suitable and after the completion of the project. Digital videos and snapshots published on project web pages make learners proud of their work and functions as recruitment activities. ICT tools also facilitates communication and contact with people abroad and is used to prepare learners and project administrators for the mobility parts of the projects. Other ways of working include different sorts of activities stressing the importance of involving the learner and his or her needs already in the preparations as well as in the evaluations – in other words not thinking *about them*, but *with*

them. Different kind of interactive learning methods were mentioned. Finally it was pointed out as an important strategic issue for the Grundtvig program to maintain the principle of process oriented working methods emphasising the process as much or more than the outcome of the project, as a way to promote social cohesion among other things.

A reflection coming from this session is that the importance of meeting people as they are, with both strengths and weaknesses. Do not start by labelling them in different ways. The involvement of the learners from the very start of the activities was often put forward as a way both to get them more engaged in the project and to raise their self-esteem.

Workshop Session II

The second session was introduced by *Ms Lena Axelsson*, National Prison Education Manager in Sweden. She made a presentation of adult education in Swedish prisons. The situation for arranging systematic studies is complex with 55 prisons and about 12 000 inmates in total a year (5 000 at a time) coming and leaving every day, and frequent transfers of inmates between prisons. For a prison education system to be efficient it needs to be able to mix individuality, flexibility, continuity with validation of prisoners' previous knowledge and competence. Since 2005 Sweden can offer a learning centre with two-three teachers at every prison which together forms the national prison education system. In all the system have 120 teachers and gives almost 150 courses a year from basic education to upper secondary level using blended learning, i.e. a mix of local and distance education. The studies are totally individually planned and performed – there are no classes, no lessons, and no terms. An individual inmate can start his studies at any level and any time in his own pace and with an individually organised study plan. The teachers are not only coaching inmates in their own prison but by the use of ICT also at other places. This means that when an inmate is moved from one prison to another he can resume his studies in the new place. On top of the teachers two career counsellors are offered on national level. A high-secure intranet is used for communication and some of the learning. Although no formal evaluation has yet been made, preliminary statistics show a rapidly growing number of students and given grades. In 2005 there were 140 students and 197 given grades compared with 870 students in 2008 and 1 363 given grades. Prisoners themselves believe the studies gives them better chances to lead a normal life when leaving the prison and it raises their self-esteem.

The session focused on measures to prevent learners from giving up their studies and how individual learners can be supported.

To begin with the importance was made clear of establishing a trustful relationship with the learner as soon as possible. "Sometimes a warm welcome is decisive". Openness to the learners' individual social background and circumstances is important as well as offer guidance and social support.

Several groups also stressed the importance not only to identify learners' individual needs but also each persons' strengths and ambitions. One way of making use of learners' strengths is to engage them in peer-to-peer learning and to act as mentors for other learners. This seems to be a successful way to counter learners' lack of confidence and lack of commitment. It was said that learners should be given the space necessary to create their own communities in order to support each other and share experiences and help new learners.

Also mentioned was the importance of taking small steps. Otherwise the task may look impossible for an inexperienced learner. "Don't try to eat the whole elephant in one piece" was one way of expressing this advice. Many of the learners in the Grundtvig partnerships have low self-esteem and bad education experiences which makes the incremental approach suitable. To establish individual tailor-made learning paths or itineraries with a flexible time table and clear and reachable targets, was also pointed out as a successful approach to keep the motivation of the learner high. Teachers and learners were encouraged to pay attention to learner's individual learning style and adapt teaching accordingly. A validation and follow-up system for measuring the skills and competencies of adults was said to be essential to keep the motivation for adult learning.

Furthermore it was said that to involve the learners in the "mobilities", the opportunity to travel abroad and meet peers from other countries in similar situations, functions as a strong motivator. It gives opportunities to reflect on ones own situation and it raises the self-esteem of the participants.

Finally, different kinds of innovative and engaging learning methods were discussed. In one group a card game developed in one Learning Partnership project was introduced. The aim of the game is to teach foreign languages to migrants and the game includes among other things role play and story telling, body language and practicing the new language.

One reflection that can be made from this session is that it is sometimes very difficult to get adult learners involved in learning, given previous bad experiences. It is of utmost importance to treat learners as individuals and recognise the knowledge and experiences they already posses. On top of support for learning, social guidance and counselling might be very important.

Workshop Session III

The final session was devoted to the question on how learners can be motivated to further raise their qualification levels and how their re-entry and integration in society and the labour market can be supported. One group stressed the fact that the Grundtvig programme focuses on learners' demands as holistic personalities and this involves more than getting a job. The process of reproducing society has to consider all fields, such as culture, active citizenship, gender equality

and others. The need to remove the stigma of disadvantage groups was mentioned in one group as well as the fact that some disadvantage groups might need on-going support.

Another group had similar discussions emphasising four different aspects of the learner's situation that should be taken into consideration: needs, networks, competencies and qualifications, and lastly guidance and support. Their conclusion was that "no one learns alone".

Different methods to keep the motivation of learners high were also mentioned. One method is using portfolios where individual learners work is collected over time. This is a way to show learning progress and thus to motivate learners to continue their learning. Language learning, especially targeted to different professions and language training at work, was another method discussed. A third was the training not of employees but of employers, to make them more ready to welcome and know how to work with disadvantage groups. A similar proposal was workshops between the social partners in the labour market and target groups to broaden the understanding and get to know each other better. One recommendation was that adult education organisations should establish good relationships with working places (employers) and other educational institutions. In vocational training linking the world of learning with the world of work is essential. A fourth method put forward was career counselling, and different forms of guidance.

The reflection regarding the final workshop session is not to lose sight of the holistic person. There is a need to work simultaneously with learning and social support.

4.4 Study visits

Before the cultural visit and final dinner concluding the conference, all participants were invited to participate in one out of four study visits in the municipality of Nacka.

- ArbetslinjeN (the way to work) is a new body for collaboration between national and local entities, creating a one-stop-shop for its clients helping them to get a job or start up their own business. The visit gave insight into how the cooperation between public authorities might support the individual on his way to learning or work. Instead of risking to fall between chairs the individual is strengthened in his ambitions to study, re-enter the labour market or start up his own business.
- The Language Café which is a Grundtvig project where formal and informal learning of languages meets. It is a way to socialise and meet new people at the same time as it is an opportunity to develop language skills. It takes place at a library in the municipality of Nacka and is very informal with a "leader", a private person acting as a teacher and any and all are welcome to join in on the conversation, which on the day of our visit was in Spanish, Italian and French. It is mostly unemployed and retired people, since the times they can offer this great learning possibility is during daytime but they are hoping to get

an evening café going too, in the not too distant future. Furthermore, parallel to this a SFI, Swedish for Immigrants, group had there last class in a separate part of the library where they were studying for their final exam that coming Monday.

- KompetensUtvecklingsInstitutet, (the Institute for Competence Development) is giving courses in creative writing as a way to language learning. It supports flexible and self-directed learning. They offer a range of models and opportunities for adult learning and vocational education and training, particularly in the health sector. The typical learner is a woman who has been working in the health sector without formal qualifications, now studying to validate and formalise her knowledge.
- Tollare Folk High School, for non-formal learning situated in Nacka. At the folk high school, which is owned and run by the Temperance movement, they take their starting point in the needs, knowledge and experiences of the learners. The Folk High School thus fulfils an important role in supporting the individual to grow as a person and to move on as a learner. Since the school is free to design its courses the participants have the opportunity to influence the direction and content of the studies. The study visit at Tollare gave an important complement to understanding the important role of non-formal learning in supporting adult learning organisationally, pedagogically and methodologically.

When the study visits were over all participants in the conference joined for a moment of reflection on what could be learned from the visits. Participants briefly summed up their impressions and offered some considerations regarding what could be learnt and what they could bring back home.

5. Conclusions

It can be concluded that the 8th Grundtvig Learning Partnership Conference was very successful in terms of being well organised and much appreciated among the participants. Also the conference gave plenty of opportunities for people to meet, exchange experiences and discuss their own projects. In addition to this, some more far reaching conclusions can be made regarding the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the learning Partnership projects and thus the Grundtvig programme.

As was pointed out in the plenary sessions that Europe is facing a number of considerable challenges, both in the short and the long term. In these demanding times the relevance of the Grundtvig programme seems to be both greater and more acknowledged than ever. The possibility to involve different groups in intercultural dialogues is an obvious way to enhance social cohesion and strengthen the participants as active citizens. By way of the Grundtvig programme this is done both within countries and across borders.

Without doubt the Learning Partnership projects manage to reach out to a wide range of disadvantaged groups and thereby contributing to their integration in society and strengthening their situation on the labour market.

Many of the Learning Partnerships seem to be well connected and much appreciated within the local setting. This relates both to many local ethnic communities and local authorities and appears to be effective ways to combat racism and xenophobia. Those close contacts vouch for the projects being of relevance. It deserves to be pointed out once more that the participants at the conference considered it as an important strategic issue for the Grundtvig programme to maintain the principle of process oriented working methods emphasising the process as much or more than the outcome of the project, as a way to promote social cohesion among other things.

During the conference a number of innovative methods and ideas were displayed. The use of visual arts and theatre as means of communication and methods for language learning is but one method among many. Furthermore, on top of using much appreciated “mobilities” to get people to meet face to face, information and communication technologies, particularly Internet, seems to be increasingly used as a way to increase the extent of the activities and the efficiency of the projects. Web pages, Facebook and blogs are used for visual and written communication, Skype for verbal communication. The use of ICT also characterizes many of the activities within countries sometimes as a means to achieve other goals and sometimes as an end in itself. To conclude, the Grundtvig programme seem to be innovative in at least three different ways. Firstly the ICT-based methodologies used in the projects are often novel. Secondly is the close involvement of the learners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities. Thirdly are the issues or themes dealt with in the projects. In many cases they seem to take on problems not really worked with before.

Judging from the projects present at the conference and the wide range of participants in the Learning Partnerships, the National Agencies are very effective in their out to activities. Most, if not all, of the Grundtvig target groups seem to be involved in the projects represented at the conference. Most of the projects have a firm grounding in the local setting. They are working together with different kinds of local partners raising the self-esteem, willingness to learn and ability to re-enter into the labour market among disadvantaged groups. By involving groups hard to reach for other activities they indeed contribute to fulfilling the goals and priorities on national and European level, set by the Programme for Lifelong Learning (LLP). By relating to these groups often not available for measures by other means, the Grundtvig Learning Partnerships seem also to complement and add value to other national and international programmes.

To conclude, the conference succeeded eminently in its aim to provide a forum for exchange of experiences and innovative efforts in the Learning Partnerships and among learners as well as national coordinators. New and novel ways to support disadvantaged learners were shared and staff was motivated to continue their important work.

Appendix A. Conference Programme

Tuesday, October 6th

16h00// Arrival and registration of participants

17h00// Setting up the European Fair

18h00// Meeting for the facilitators and rapporteurs for the work shops

19h00// Opening of the European Fair

20h00// Dinner and official opening of the conference – *Mr Ulf Melin, Director General International Programme Office for Education and Training*

Wednesday, October 7th

Moderator: *Ms Anna Gudmundsson*

09h00// *Mr Alan Smith, Deputy Head of Grundtvig Unit, European Commission*

09h30// *Ms Amelie von Zweigbergk, State Secretary, Swedish Ministry of Education*

10h00// News in Swedish Adult Education – *Ms Ylva Malm, Swedish National Agency for Education*

10h20// Coffee Break with refreshments

10h50// Learner's perspective – *Ms Ann-Kristin Sundberg and Mr Amanuel Debessai*

11h10// On the way to new infrastructures for Adult Learning

Mr Carl Holmberg, International Council for Open and Distance Education

11h30// Project presentation and introduction to study visit - *Mr Staffan Ström, Head of the Adult education and Swedish for immigrants office, Nacka Municipality*

12h00// Lunch

13h30// Introduction to workshops *Ms Sigridur Disa Gunnarsdottir, Mimir, Iceland*

14h00// Workshop first session (coffee and refreshments during work session)

17h00// Possibility to make use of the bathing facilities at the Japanese Spa

20h00// Dinner

Thursday, October 8th

Moderator: *Ms Heléne Säll Mattsson*

08h30// Workshop second session

Introduction to workshops session – *Ms Lena Axelsson,*

10h45// Coffee Break with refreshments

11h00// Workshop third session

12h30// Lunch

13h30// Feedback from workshops – *Mr Jan Hylén* and rapporteurs

14h15// Study-visit to adult education providers, Nacka Municipality/ Tollare Folk High School

16h00// Reflections from the study visits, Dieselverkstaden Nacka

17h15// Cultural visit to “Skansen” the oldest open-air museum in the world, located on the island of Djurgården, a royal park near the centre of Stockholm which also provides insights into Sweden’s heritage and natural history relative to the present day and with an eye on the future.

The guided tour will mainly focus on the popular movements in Sweden and their origin

19h00// Farewell Dinner Restaurant Högloftet, Skansen

Friday, October 9th

06h30-10h00// Breakfast

Departure; buses will leave for the Stockholm City centre at 7.30 and 10.00

Appendix B. List of Participating Projects

Projektlista Grundtvig konferensen 6-9 oktober 2009				
			Kontaktperson:	
Titel Partnerskap	Ämne Partnerskap	Hemsida	Namn	Efternamn
A NEW CHANCE	<u>Website:</u> www.anewchance.net , <u>Final product: E-book</u>	http://www.klaipedospi.lt	VAIDAS	VIRSILAS
active	EDUCATION AND LIFE LONG LEARNING OF mdVI students	mIDSTOD.IS	Dagny	Kristjansdottir
Active Citizens For Europe	active european citizenship, COMMON EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN AULT EDUCATION		Guillermo	Sanchez Verdoux
auch wir sind europa	Learning about politics, employment, Living for Disabled People in Europe	www.jaw.at	Ksenija	Andelic
Audience Participation in Digital Culture	Digital Culture, Audiences, Performance	Www.altart.org	István	Szakáts
aware-active role for women in anatolia and regions of europe	women in social life		Mine	paskap
BELLA – Better Access – local and regional networks for lifelong learning		www.bildungshaus-zeppelin.de	Marcus	JANAS
bIAid (BLENDED LEARNING AND INTERCULTURAL dIALOGUE)			Helle	Primdahl
CAIC (Creative approach to intercultural competence)		WWW.sorum.kommune.no	Lise	Kristensen
Connecting +55	Intercultural education, learning in later life (senior citizens) and ICT	http://www.fhsk.skurup.se/	Karl-Magnus	Eklundh
creative friendship in europe		www.fenacerci.pt	Carla Vitória	Santos Silva
creative steps to social activation	Activation and integration of unprivileged, migrants and isolated people	www.LESEZENTRUM.AT	Elisabeth	Wörter
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LIFE LONG LEARNING		WWW.LUMS.SI	Vesna	Laissani
Disabled in teatre and music	Addressing target groups with special needs, Artistic Education, Social	www.psouu.gda.pl	Jarosław	Marciszewski

	integration/exclusion			
Disadvantaged people, Culture and European dynamic	Intercultural dialogue, language (english), Knowledge of Europe and European union	www.adsea77.com	Frederique	Rueda
distant word-closer lives	intercultural education- no formal education	www.gijon.internacional	Daivinson	Encarnacion Menendez
education- strategies for the inclusion of adult drop outs in educational contexts	adult learning strategies- social network- community inclusion	www.alessionarbone.it	Francesco	Pignataro
Eguidya	integration of second chance school-students into the european labour market	www.beltanoda.hu	Dóra	Oláh
ELSITO	The aim of the partnership is to exchange good practice and to develop community based projects in partnership with persons from vulnerable social groups (persons experiencing mental health problems, immigrants and refugees), empowering their active inclusion and recovery of citizenship through economic, social, cultural and civic occupations, based on their learning and on the education of society.	www.buitenkans.info & www.ggzingeest.nl	Marion	ammeraal
empowerment and learning through the arts	culture social development integration of excluded persons by culture (theatre, design, painting..)		Jean-Paul	Ayme
european fire celebrations	learning by doing / disadvantaged adults	www.cyrenians.co.uk	Conrad	Watkins
EUROPEAN LIBRARIES AS EDUCATION CENTRES FOR ADULTS LEARNERS		www.minabibliotek.se	Leif	Mårtensson
European Mentoring and Befriending Group	mentoring and befriending development across the EU	www.mandbf.org.uk	Steve	Leach
european values, european future	european values	www.eoicoruna.org	Susana	ALDAO
European Women Between Tradition and Transition-Intercultural Exchange of Female Life Concepts	In this project we analyze the differences and similarities between grandmather-mother and daughter.By the help of the materials prepered for the exhibition we want to show that how we change our lives.Also we searched how women change their lives during the past years.		Funda	Çerçi
ex memo 4 all		www.ovsq.be	Bavo	van soom
FLISSO – Female Leadership in sozial service organisations	female leadership, leadership styles, diversity management, women ´s forthcoming (reflection at personal and organisational	www.caritas-linz.at	Helene	Sageder

	level), career development of women, role models, approaches/methods for professional advancement of women, training module, change management			
frism 50+	how to find, reach and involve senior migrants in lifelong learning	www.hawaa.dk	Else	Plauborg
futeuropeproject	study circle	www.eletfaegyvesulet.hu	Emese	Marosszék
G&G ENHANCEMENT		WWW.ENAIP.FVG.IT	Gilberto	Collinassi
Green paths to employment (franska: Insertion environnementale)	Integration, rehabilitation, empowerment, art and nature	Www.basta.se	Kristina	Blixt
GRUNDTVIG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP PROJECT "SENIOR TO ELDERLY"	LEARNING OUTSIDE THE FORMAL SYSTEM, LEARNING FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP, LEARNING AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION	WWW.SIDMC.ORG	Danguole	Boguseviciene
grundtvig 2 lifelong learning			Liam	Kilbride
Grundtvig All-in	adults learning languages and intercultural awareness	www.turiba.lv	Inese	Ate
Grundtvig- European Storytelling through Arts (ESTA)	DVD for Hearing impaired adults Stories from Greece; Iceland and UK	www.The-Share-Initiative.co.uk	Clarissa	Haley
Grundtvig Learning Partnership		www.apres.be	Emmanuelle	Jacquerie
ICT AS A TOOL TO ACTIVATE SENIOR EDUCATION	Intergenerational learning, senior citizens, New technologies, ICT, Addressing target groups with special needs		Skaidrite	Medvecka
INDACO - Increasing Disabled Abilities and Competencies	Disability and learning opportunities	www.cooss.marche.it	Francesca	Cesaroni
inter2-project	ict, distance learning	www.aikuislukio.tampere.fi	Kaisu	Lager-RUuti
inter4 - Intercultural dialogue – Forum in our society groups for creating better European active citizens	Active citizenship, Intercultural education, Learning opportunities for people at risk of social marginalisation	www.bozcaadahem.meb.k12.tr/	Bilge	Güllüsaç
learn to empower		www.exilio.de	Margitta	Hubmer
Learning in later life_Students to senior citizens:ICT and Inter generation Communication	senior citizens education, computer literacy, e-exclusion (e-inclusion), intergenerational dialogue	www.educanet.cz/	Lenka	Pacovska
Les mythologies dans le panier de la ménagère	the european mythology	www.rbs.lu	Simon	Gross
LET'S ACT – Theatre Therapy for Psychophysical Disabled people	Pedagogy and didactics ADDRESSING TARGET GROUPS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	www.formazionepn.org	Lorenzo	Gant
Little Stories, Great Hopes. Autobiography as an instrument for re-planning in consequence of an	The aim of the project is predisposing an autobiographical activity inside penitentiaries for promoting and encouraging	www.cvoturnhout.be	Gert	Hurkmans

imprisonment experience	the reconsideration of one's own past and re-planning one's future "beyond the bars".			
LLP European Dimension in Parent Education	parent education	www.heaaligus.ee	Gerda	Sillaste
Me in europe, Europe in Me	Eurperan cooperation	www.nieuwemuziek.nl	Maaïke	van Steenis
Parent Education in Europe	Family Learning/ Parent Education	www.wicklowlearners.ie	Niamh	Maguire
RESO	prisoner's social reintegration		François	Marquet
Support for flexible and self-directed learning		www.edupoli.fi	Gun	Monto
the disabled-self-reliant and creative	Addressing target groups with special needs, ASSESSMENT, CERTIFICATION, VALUING LEARNING, ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP	zaz.mazury.info.pl	KATARZYNA	MICIUKIEWICZ
The grassroots women's international academy a peer learning strategy applied to the mother centers movement	LEARNING ABOUT MOTHER CENTERS	www.icc.org.tr	KADRIYE	YURDAKÖK
THEATRE AS A TOOL IN ADULT EDUCATION (thea)		WWW.DUNDEECOLLEGE.AC.UK	Fiona	JuRk
understanding the value of adult learning	The project covers the whole life cycle of studies from introduction to studies to accomplishment of studies and the evaluation of the whole cycle	www.hkhk.edu.ee	Triin	Laasi
WAYS OF ATTRACTING ADULTS TO KEEP LEARNING	New technologies, ICT – second chance education - Foreign language teaching and learning	http://sde-volou.mag.sch.gr/	Katelis	Vigklas
Ways of Helping Immigrants Through Education	supporting integration if migrants	www.vhs-regen.de	Herbert	Unnasch
Women between TRADITION and transition	intercultural dialogue, WOMEN'S rights, equal opportunities, inclusion	www.unic.ac.cy	Panayiotis	Angelides
	European cooperation	www.nieuwemuziek.nl	Marco	Kalkman
	social inclusion, accesability to study and work of people with a greater distance to these	www.gekopwerk.nl	Ronald	Oosterhof