

EAEA STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2009

WHAT EAEA MEMBERS
THINK OF
THE GRUNDTVIG
PROGRAMME



EAEA

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

What EAEA members think about the Grundtvig programme

In September 2009, the European Association for the education of adults sent a survey to its members asking for their experiences and suggestions for Grundtvig. We received responses to our questionnaire from the following countries: Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Romania, Spain, Armenia, Israel and the European Prison Education Association / Bulgaria. Below you find a summary of the most important results. If you would like more detailed results, please contact the EAEA office at +32.2.2343760 or gina.ebner@eaea.org

Benefits and impact of the Grundtvig programme

EAEA members agree that the Grundtvig programme has benefitted their organization and their country. Here are some comments:

- *It has broadened our view on general adult education issues and politics.*
- *Our organisation:*
 - *gained wider experience and knowledge in adult education at international level*
 - *enhanced international network of relevant educational and other diverse institutions*
 - *gained more experience in teamwork and intercultural communication at international level*
 - *enhanced visibility at international level*
 - *improved possibilities of learning by sharing ideas and teaching methods*
 - *improved self confidence*
 - *improved language and intercultural communication skills*
- *New international contacts, broader understanding of adult education as well as language-learning in Europe (different systems, models etc.), better insight into the specific topics, a lot of extremely useful discussion(processes), new ideas, concepts, ways of approaching challenges, new projects etc.*
- *It is important that Grundtvig raises new themes such as higher acceptability of non-formal or informal competences or supports projects on “difficult” topics such as integration, gender or senior citizens etc. It widens the view towards Europe and it plays an important role for the improvement of intercultural understanding and learning.*
- *Grundtvig is important to improve the quality of lifelong learning activities also at national level through exchanges of competences, experiences, didactic tools; to increase transnational relations and networking in this field. Particularly, Grundtvig actions are important in our country especially because the LLL politics are currently absolutely insufficient*



When asked about the impact on national policies, EAEA members are more sceptical – the majority see little or no impact (someone points out the big difference to Erasmus), others see awareness raising or an alignment of national policies with Grundtvig priorities.

Why we need more money for Grundtvig

All members of EAEA think that the Grundtvig programme needs more funding. Here are some of their arguments why:

- *Learning in a civil society context has an enormous potential to cope with learners who otherwise often lack alternatives. Functional and effective ways to increase participation in adult learning is a common issue which is addressed by e.g. Grundtvig. The present 4 per cent allocation is not reasonable from this point of view. The gap between the resources from the LLL program to citizens with higher education and those citizens without will become wider, which is a threat to social cohesion.*
- *Modern knowledge society requires every adult to participate in LLL programmes to be able to survive in fast changing labour market, not to feel excluded for the senior citizens and to get better career opportunities for young adults.*
- *The EU stresses the importance of lifelong learning and thus the continuous learning of adults. It seems vital to provide more funds that this sort of learning can take place and to support it where and whenever possible.*

What we are happy with

We have already summarized the benefits of Grundtvig that EAEA members can see. Concerning the programme and its administration, EAEA are happy with the support of the National Agencies. They also underline that the procedures have improved a lot and are now easier than before. EAEA members are particularly happy with Learning Partnerships, In-service training and workshops. They appreciate the introduction of lump sum approaches in some of the strands.

What we suggest for improvement

EAEA members point out that the time for dissemination of project results is too short. Some members also suggest a more centralized approach to exploitation.

The resources needed for application writing in the centralized actions are seen as too heavy for smaller organizations. EAEA members also criticize the long period between application deadlines and results. Members also suggest easier and more transparent financial regulations.

Talking about decentralized actions in particular, members suggest a more uniform and better coordinated appearance and approach of the National Agencies.



Late payments can be a problem in both centralised and decentralized actions.

What we think of the future of Grundtvig

Most members are happy with the programmes in their current structure. When considering a merging of Leonardo and Grundtvig, our members are either opposed to the idea or can only imagine it if both vocational and general adult education receive the same amount of money or if Leonardo became a sub-programme of Grundtvig.

In addition to more funds for Grundtvig, our members suggest a more flexible handling of funds (e.g. the possibility to transfer money from Erasmus to Grundtvig) and the possibility for adult education organization to participate also in other programmes such as Comenius and Erasmus.

Individual Mobility

EAEA members agree that Grundtvig has contributed very much to the professional development of adult education staff. In order to improve the situation even more, they suggest more funds and more courses as well as a more flexible budget. The availability of professional development courses varies strongly between countries, as well as their openness to participants from other countries.

The new measures for staff mobility have had a slow start in many countries, and the information about them is only slowly getting known. Nevertheless, EAEA members are excited about these possibilities, and one organisation has already started working with some assistants.

When asked about the improvement of the information, EAEA members suggest the following:

- *presentation of the ongoing actions to the relevant target groups via different local/national/international events (seminars, conferences, fairs, etc.)*
- *information on line at the relevant websites with wide network of links*
- *information via mass media of success stories, best practices and experience*
- *more financial allocations for mobility receivers in order for them to share their experience with wide relevant audience*
- *through more economic incentives to the AE organisation involved in the staff mobility programmes*

Concerning senior volunteering and workshops, EAEA members emphasise mainly the workshops as building on their way of working and being a very good fit to extend their activities. They also think that they have a great potential in the future and think that the National Agencies should play the most crucial role in the information and dissemination.



Cooperation between organisations: partnerships, projects, networks

EAEA underline their appreciation for these initiatives, especially the learning partnerships. Projects and networks are also seen as very attractive, although some members point out that the results are often difficult to find for other organisations and that the dissemination needs to be improved.

Concerning networks, EAEA members suggest more awareness raising, more funds, and an improved cooperation between the EC and EAEA.

When it comes to Accompanying measures, EAEA members point out that the competition is very high and the percentage of approved applications are very low. Some members do not know this action, for others the application procedure is too low. One member has very specific recommendations:

- *Accompanying Measures should clearly state their high importance in the valorization. It should be clearly identified that using Accompanying Measures each applicant could present products and methods developed in the course of previous partnerships and other relevant institutions could get familiar with and use these products or methods in their education systems*

EAEA members welcome a possible opening of the Grundtvig programme to the wider world, pointing out that many of them already have working relationships with such organisations that could now take place within the Grundtvig programme. They also see a wide range of topics for the cooperation with organisations from other regions of the world:

- *Civil society building, Intercultural education, public-private partnership, capacity building, development and implementation of training courses.*
- *work out of methodology, participation in programs, training of trainers, summer academies, international conferences ect.*
- *Adult Learners' Week, Train the Trainer, low educated persons.*
- *family literacy, intercultural dialogue, inter-generational dialogue*
- *transfer of ideas and of creative methodologies on an international level.*
- *Staff development; (b) Policy building;*
- *(c) vocational training and employability schemes; (d) breaking new grounds for language-teaching targeting new and veteran immigrants; (e) peace and conflict resolution good practices.*



Languages

Quite a few EAEA members think that adult education providers are not aware of the fact that language learning can fall under the Grundtvig programme. An additional issue, in some countries at least, is the low interest in language learning by adults. EAEA members suggest a more thorough dissemination of the possibilities, so that people are more aware of the possibilities. Concerning the mobility of adult language learners, the evaluation of EAEA is split – some see great potential and interest, others experience a lack of interest, others suggest also more support for language learning in the countries of the learners.

