

BRIDGES OVER BORDERS TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Thematic group 'Networks' – workshop notes

DAY 1 – Tuesday 8 November 2005

Personal introduction

Everybody in the group introduced themselves, telling a bit about their own personal interests and situations, as well as their involvement with this Equal Lifelong Learning Project, and more specifically the area of 'Networks'.

Frame of the meeting and the transnational cooperation

Perdita presented the structure of the two-day thematic workshop and reviewed the aims and objectives of the activity

Presentation of the DPs

1. 'Engage' (UK)

Alan & Mary gave an overview of the Engage project (3 handouts: Engage General Overview, Powerpoint Presentation more specifically about networks and a word document titled 'Description of the Labour Market').

2. 'Partnership for the Centre of Bohemian Switzerland' (Czech Republic)

In the setting of a national park – trying to build up tourism. Unemployment rate 22%, half of which are above 45 years old. Target group of around 4,000 people. Retirement age is 62 years.

3. 'Learn Forever' (Austria)

Project scopes three rural areas, and Vienna. Main target group is women non-learners. They approach it as a triangle, made up of the three sides of ICT, LifeLong Learning (LLL) and the target group. They now have money from the ministry of education to promote LLL. Only 66% of women between 25-64 years finished their education whereas 84% of men did.

Have done some research on learning among women and men active in work, with the following results:

	Women	Men
Company training schemes	25%	41%
Distance Learning	14%	24%
Further training courses	29%	35%

Part-time jobs only in tourism and trade. There is also a mobility issue – it's very difficult for women without a car to get to training centres. Access to computers another issue.

They run four projects:

- mobile ICT workshop. Going out to women in communities, finding themes they may be interested in (eg. E-government) and motivating them to use computers.
- 'Train-the-Trainer' (as facilitators). Creating networks and raising awareness for education centres.
- Experts doing campaigning for LLL – brochures, materials, hand-outs etc.
- Developing software. Knowledge and learning platform for women.

They are also starting to develop regional networks for LLL, different ones in each area, and have done some research on key factors for companies joining networks.

4. 'Fuzesabonyi Rehabilitacios Centrum' (Hungary)

Their target group is 60-100 people with disabilities. It is the biggest private organisation in Hungary. Their region is 200km away from the headquarters in Budapest. They are building a community centre for non-learners. They have no support at all. They try to integrate services like training, counselling, medical services etc. Very successful aspect of their project is the ICT training they provide for people with disabilities.

Crucial factors for sustainability are: timing, personal engagement, regional/international focus.

75% ESF funding, rest from partners themselves.

Issues raised

Throughout the discussions emerging issues were noted and shown below:

- Who is driving the agenda?
For Germany – Ministry of Education, for Czech Republic – schools.
- Support structures
In Hungary and Czech Republic, it's 'Green Law' ie. no support structures for disadvantaged groups or those out of work. People know that they will have to fend for themselves. This is part of the reason why for them, networks are so important. In the UK where these support structures do exist it has a very different effect psychologically on people, and sometimes they have to battle with the mentality of 'When I leave school I'll go on benefits'.
- Rural areas
The German and Czech projects are both focused on rural areas and national parks, trying to develop tourism. In the Czech project, learning is being delivered through park rangers – good example of how to deliver and create jobs at the same time.

- Participation of women and men
In the UK and Germany, the participation of women in learning is much higher than men, but in Austria this is not the case and there are more men engaged than women.
- Barriers to learning eg. access to car, computer, childcare
Germany's project includes a childcare network scheme.
In the UK they are trying to 'personalise' services by bringing them together in one place eg. childrens centres or at least by understanding each other's services and signposting effectively.
- Challenges of Equal
Germany and Hungary both suffer from a slow flow of money which can impede their activities. Funding tends to be the main focus of networking.
The Czech Rep. and Hungary are finding it very challenging trying to cope with the management and legal side of Equal. It is a lot for their small DPs to take on.

Common threads

Throughout the discussions, common threads were also noted:

- How to create a network?
- Establishing „focus groups“ for delivering LLL to different target groups
 - gender aspects
 - mobile vs. immobile
 - 45+
 - rural vs. urban
 - low skilled
 - ethnic minorities
 - entrepreneurs (Germany & Czech Rep. in particular need to attract businesses into their areas)
- Collaborative planning
- Infrastructure/resources
- Co-ordination of demand-orientated qualifications / LLL
- „Collecting data“ for analysing the demands
- connecting the different data from various institutions
- utilisation?
- who delivers LLL to whom?
- who is responsible for LLL (regional, national level)?
- Mainstreaming/promotion of LLL
- Sustainability
- Expectations
- (Re) Evaluation of the network

Definition of Networks - Input by the German DP on 'Characteristics and success factors of networks'

Partners/Stakeholders:

- Size of network
- Background of the partners/stakeholders

- Representatives of organizations
- Roles and positions
- Personality
- Heterogeneity/homogeneity

Cause & Purpose:

- Origin and causation
- Expectations
- Added value
- Formulation of objectives, goals and aims
- Development of a mission statement and overall concept
- Level of identification

Characteristics of Networks:

- Network model
- Formal/informal
- Binding character/level of obligation

Steering & Controlling:

- Type/Model of steering and controlling
- Responsible steering group
- Motivation of steering group

Duration & Density

Character of the Network/Relationships within the network:

- Type and structure of relationship
- Quality of relationship between partners/stakeholders
- Participation and Empowerment
- Code of conduct
- Communication/flow of information

Conditions:

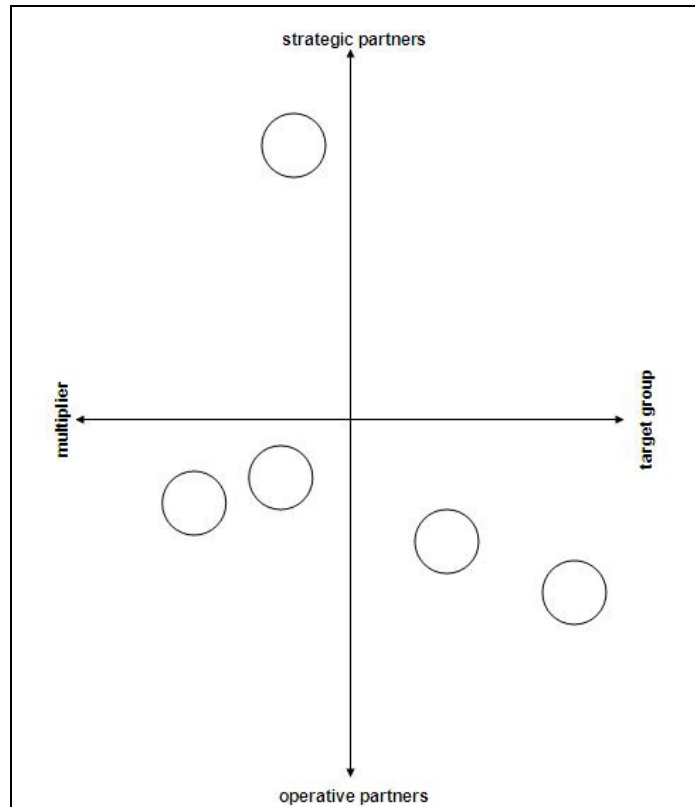
- Internal/external
- Resources (financial, human etc.)
- Access to decision-making power

Networks of each DP's see here:

http://www.equal-ostbayern.de/downloads/Networks_Workplace_DP.doc

Germany's evaluator is evaluating the DP as a network as well by using for example the method of "network cards". He evaluates the network at the beginning, middle and end of EQUAL II.

Austria had an interesting method of deciding if the network has enough partners. Partners must be plotted on a coordinate system (*see next page*) according to how strategic/operative they are, whether they work with specific target groups or if they act as multipliers, in other words mainstreaming partners. The idea is that there should be some in all four sectors.



coordinate system, Austria

Expectations concerning the meeting and this transnational workshop

After a refreshing walk in the Bavarian national park, we got back to work!

In the afternoon, we did an exercise to determine interests and expectations for us as individuals, as a project or organisation, and as a DP. We discussed issues such as added value and expected outcomes and pooled our ideas. The question we had to answer was 'What's in it for us?' In this way we as a group are an example of what we're trying to achieve ie. successful networks.

Added value	Expected outcome
personal/individual:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have a good time ➤ Exchange, how to get a network running and let the energy in the network ➤ Meet people ➤ Contact with the English language ➤ New inputs for work ➤ Supervision when having barriers ➤ Access to new ideas ➤ Knowledge and understanding of partnerships ➤ Planning events ➤ Visit different countries ➤ Increase knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ exchange information ➤ learning new practices to focus into participated target groups ➤ awareness of processes in different countries ➤ increase contacts ➤ visit projects in other countries ➤ fixed dates an which regular meetings and activities are held

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve report writing ➤ Make new experiences ➤ Improvement of knowledge about other countries policies ➤ Help and support ➤ Personal growth 	
project/institution:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Innovative ideas/projects/products ➤ Connections for European projects, added products ➤ Learning from good and bad practices, find models for them ➤ Variety ➤ Structure ➤ Efficiency ➤ „Get known“ ➤ Find new participants ➤ Find companies for practical trainings ➤ Get information about the labour market ➤ Get information about a company who is changing something and to react target-oriented ➤ Get references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Network meetings ➤ exchange
DP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ political power ➤ funding/flexibility and greater value ➤ look at structure of other DP's ➤ Produce new way of communication ➤ Identify benchmarks for successful networks ➤ Ideas and best practices how to run the DP ➤ To get known better in a wider range ➤ Better contacts, options, opportunities (even having a small budget) ➤ Give and take ➤ Ideas how to sustain connections and networks ➤ To solve the problem to be identified as the institution vs. the EQUAL project ➤ Commitment of the involved partners ⇒ how to identify yourself with the network ➤ Money and resources ➤ How to keep key actors involved and committed ➤ Synergy effects ➤ Contacts with jobcentres in other? ➤ Identifying things not to do when had failed ➤ Status of project funding ➤ What is necessary to lead through a process of networking ➤ How to create a network including policy makers ➤ Consultations with other partners ➤ Save time and money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ visit projects of other DP's ➤ compare structures ➤ create a DVD ➤ conference calls ➤ print versions of ideas (pdf versions) ➤ network conferences with input and workshops and room for network ➤ curricula/script „How to create/sustain a network?“ ➤ Concept for a network database with eg. Contact details, photos, substantial information ➤ Theoretic basics in a manual ➤ Share good practise ➤ Shadowing ➤ Decrease of unemployment ➤ Improving skills and quality of people ➤ Create new network

Agreement on the common objectives and realistic outcomes of this workshop

Key outcomes:

- Create a Brochure/Manual: Identify/Exchange ideas of best and bad practice (eg. Case studies/success stories/methods) in order to produce a kind of 'How to' guide on creating/maintaining successful networks
- Create an ICT Networking Database Tool. To be piloted by ourselves. Must be widely applicable, for different contexts and in different languages
- Networking conference – possibility of organising the final event for 'Bridges over Borders' as a culmination of our thematic workshop's activities?
- Work shadowing/extra project visits to look at specific areas of interest to do with networking, sharing best practises

It was decided that we would use the note on 'Definitions of Networks' (see above) as a template for each country to fill in, in order to create a map of the DP networks across the transnational partnership. Each country to fill in the details under each heading and bring to the next day's workshop.

Day 2 - Wednesday 9 November 2005

Each country talked the group through their own DP networks. This exercise, as well as constituting a starting point to map our networks (which was the main aim), highlighted some interesting positive/negative aspects of these, and differences in the type of structures which each DP is working with. It also encouraged each participant to examine and assess their own networks perhaps more closely than they had done before.

Creation of an activity plan

The group then reviewed the common objectives/outcomes discussed on the previous day, and prepared an activity plan up until June 2007 (see next page).

Milestone	Activities	Who does it?
Forum	create forum/Email system roles and responsibilities contact details	UK
Database	Ideas to Perdita (template, content etc.) produce draft look into technical implementation	all draft (Germany)
Case studies	finalise template collect data input to forum	all
Networking methods (manual)	collect data input to forum	all
Conferences	design ,concept' pilot testing	all
shadowing visits	List of interests email to group	all
production of manual		