Minutes:

2. Transnational Workshop 'Networks'
8. -9.3.2006, Budapest/Hungary

Participants:

Beneke, Elke
Bodnar, Zoltan
Crawley, Sarah
Pibilová, Mirka
Potts, Alan
Reay, Pam
Vamos, Gabor
Wiese, Petra
CHAIRED BY:
Wingerter, Perdita (German DP)

Agenda:

1. Introduction and outcomes of transnational steering group meeting

2. Presentations of best/bad practices of networks

3. First theses concerning „How to install and run an effective network"

4. Common website of the transnational workshop "Networks"

5. Joint design of networking tool

6. Joint agreement of work plan for transnational workshop

1. Introduction

After a short introduction of all old and new members of the workshop Perdita presented the planned outcomes of the transnational workshop "Networks", agreed by the transnational steering group meeting, Dec. 2005 in Budapest.

1. Production of a 'How to'guide
- Exchange learning and information including best practice to produce handbook on how to maintain efficient and successful networks.
- Work packages**:**
  - Each country collects information about good and bad practice networks/ case studies
  - Methods of running networks

2. Production of a database tool for maintaining a network
- Joint design of criteria of tool
- Language issue to be considered, that this tool can be used all over Europe
- Joint agreement on programming language
- Technical implementation
- Pilot testing in each country

3. Design and Organisation of a networking conference
- Joint development of a concept of a networking conference
- Pilot testing in different countries

4. Work shadowing; piloting; testing etc
- Job centres exchange/meeting
- Park rangers exchange
- Employers/workshops of disabled people
- Capacity building: for example Financial management of ESF funding, project management
- Learning networks (for example Local area planning groups in Birmingham, Learning regions in Cham)
- Strategic networks

As agreed in the last workshop in Regen, Germany each country presented 3 examples of network case studies, by using the template/structure as agreed in workshop.

2. Presentations of best/bad practices of networks

'Learn Forever' (Austria)

Elke presented following best/bad practices of the Austrian DP (copies were distributed):
- Job Alliance Styria
- Local networks for employment and economy INTERDISK_Vienna
- Territorial Employment Pact Carinthia

'Fuzesabonyi Rehabilitacios Centrum' (Hungary)

Zoltan presented following best/bad practices or the Hungarian DP (see appendix):
- Local Governments in project regions LGPR
- Employers of disabled persons involving in EQUAL Hungary (EDHU)
- Employers of disabled persons involving in "Workability-Europe" (EDEU)

These 3 networks have been recently initiated and are under construction. The used template had been helpful to keep in mind all relevant aspects of a network.

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

As Mirka started her work shortly before this transnational workshop, she had no description of best/bad practices of networks. She will present them next time.

'Engage' (UK)

Alan presented following best/bad practices of the British DP (copies were distributed):
- Information Advice Service Network
- Birmingham Lifelong Learning Partnerships
- Solihull Lifelong Learning Partnership

He mentioned that it is important to use existing partnerships instead of creating a new "network". The experiences showed that networks fail if they have no clear strategy, no aims, no similar contact person and too much changing.

'Bridges to work" (Germany)

Perdita presented the best/bad practices of the German DP (see appendix)
- National thematic network „Professional integration of especially disadvantaged persons", Germany EQUAL round 1
- Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV, German Association of General Adult Education Centres)
- Lernenden Regionen (DLR, Learning Regions Germany)
- Kuwi-Netzwerk (Student Association of Cultural and economic studies in Passau/Germany)

3. First theses concerning „How to install and run an effective Network"

The group had a short discussion about the usability of the networks template. Everyone agreed it was sufficient. Only following topics have to be integrated:

− History and background information of the network (under the heading "Cause and purpose")
− Funding/ Access to funding; Access to information; trust building; different levels of motivation; communication and information streams; the human side: personal interests (under the heading "Conditions")
− Top-Down/Bottom-up; free will vs. must-to; visibility (under the heading "Characteristics of network")
− Additional information (f. e. "Soft facts") as a new heading at the end of template

The group also has to agree on a definition "What is a network?" because during the research Perdita experienced, that people have different ideas on "what a network is and is not".

Perdita distributed copies for everyone, one about a "EQUAL Partnership Development Toolkit", printed by the EU-Commission, Employment and Social affairs, and one "Successful partnerships – A guide", printed by the OECD Leed Forum on partnerships and local governance.

These are already exist guidelines. So discussion was about the sense of producing a new one, when there are already some.

The groups agreed, to continue the work and still work on a handbook "How to maintain efficient and successful networks", but with a more practical orientated focus.

The product will be a

− Quality tool that supports the development of the network (checklist, "traffic light" system)
− Identification of different models (and linking it with best practices e.g. 4 generic models)
− "Tips and tricks"
− Integration and inclusion of best and bad practice from each country to illustrate the given statements.
− Use the template

Format:

− Electronic and paper version
− Handbook in 4 languages

Draft of the 'How to establish and maintain a network' guide
The group worked out the first draft of the "Checklist".

Table of the networks handbook draft:

1. Partners and stakeholders
- Involve key stakeholders to ensure that they have an overview of local issues in relation to needs and problems
- Keep the network small to the optimal size (at least at the beginning)
- Invite a good mix of people (specialists, generalists, experts, idealists, communicators, innovators etc.)
- To involve appropriate movers, drivers, motivators from key partner organizations where appropriate
- Membership needs to be at the appropriate knowledge level for the issues to be addressed
- Everyone who is involved must recognize the added value, must benefit from attending
- Members should be aware of conflicting interests, everyone must work towards the common interests
- Competitors must work for the common cause
- Where possible to make membership voluntary
- The first contact should be face to face

2. Cause and purpose
- Members need to exchange information about interests, expectations and background to help the group to bond and establish a common ground
- People need to personally identify with the ideas and goals of the network and be motivated to be involved and take ownership
- Network must have clear terms of references
- Network members need to agree on the purpose
- Network must have achievable, specific and real aims
- Network need to define and agree on milestones
- It might be better to have short-term, easy goals to start with for early successes
- There must be noticeable added value for all participating members
- Don't be too ambitious initially
- Agree on where the network fits into the wider picture (i.e. top down or bottom up) strategic or grass routes

3. Characteristic of networks
- Professional and/or personal trust and respect should underpin work of the network
- If appropriate agree the lifespan of the network
- Clear rules and regulations of the network, with an agreed code of conduct
- The network needs to be flexible to be able to adapt to changes
- Members need to be committed
- High standards of inputs

- Clear and commonly agreed strategy
- Have a work plan every one agrees
- Flexible agenda to share relevant information
- Consistent attendance

4. Steering and Controlling
- clear leadership and cordinated management function must be established
- As structured as necessary as flexible as possible
- Maintain the structure if appropriate
- Network members must have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and each others skills
- Don't promise what you can't do
- Set dates for future meetings well in advance so people can get them booked in their diaries
- Be as democratic as possible
- To be prepared to make decisions within appropriate timescales
- Leadership needs to have a strategy
- If possible have an impartial coordinator

5. Duration and intensity
- Agree how often the network needs to meet and how long the meeting will take
    - Agree on the format of the network

6. Character of the network/ Relationship within the network
- treat all members as equal
- Commitment of members needs to be clearly demonstrated
- Balance of give and take needs to be established
- respond to feedback where appropriate
- Flexibility to be able to delegate authority/tasks to sub-groups (!!! Sub-groups – plenary)
- Clear communication and commitment within the structure
- Using member skills and competencies effectively
- Good and well balanced flow of communication and information internally and externally
- Ensure through feedback/evaluation/monitoring adoption to required changes
- Have face to face meeting whenever possible
- Make effective use of communication tools available (i.e. I.C.T.)
- Funding influences the development of the network (process-orientated, service-orientated)

7. Conditions: There is a need for:
- Reliable funding, especially for management functions as required

- Reliable human resources
- Personal contact to decision-makers is very helpful
- There need to be an understanding of the decision-making process and power
- There is a need for a good communication strategy (internal and external)
- Clearly agreed expectations
- Reflection on process and operations
- A good balance between output and input
- Recognition of existing and potential conflicts, problems, obstacles, personal interests and competition

8. Output/ Specific activities
- successful networking is achieved
- development of members
- win-win situation
- To have a structure for exchange and future contact
- To be part of it is the most important aspect of it
- Achievement of the agreed outputs
- new chance and options
- New opportunities and widen your horizon

9. Positive experiences/ Success factors
- Relevance to the organizations and relevance to the job role
- Widen the experiences of members
- Influence change
- Achievement of trust on a professional or/and personal level
- To be clear and transparent
- Everyone gets something out of the networks but not necessarily the same things
- Evidence of achievement of milestones

10. Barriers and obstactles
- Demotivation
- Competitiveness between members
- No motivation
- Shortage of resources (human and financial and time)
- Conflicting interests
- Low support of policy makers
- Poor results
- Lack of publicity
- Unrealistic goals/strategy
- Too much talking too little action
- No steering, no plan, no strategy
- Insular approach
- Out-of-date information
- Compulsory attendance
- Passive members/takers

11. Sustainability
- Accommodation of changing agendas
- Strategic networks are easier to finance and support
- Provide evidence of impact to key stakeholders

12. Additional headings/topics

- Need to define „What is a network"?
- Accommodate virtual networks
- What enables networks to be sustainable? (Discussion of the TW)
- Need to consider equal opportunities and diversity
- Research of existing material and information and link it with our activities
- Heading „Review process" (terms of references, purpose, membership etc.)
- Empowerment

Sarah and Allan will check the spelling and some details of the draft, mail it to Predate and she will put it on the common website, everyone has access to. The first draft of the handbook can be discussed within each national DP at the next workshop additional information; ideas and bad/good practices can be included.

4. Common website of the transnational workshop "Networks"

The group agreed to create a website for the transnational workshop "Networks" as an overview, pin board and information platform of the workshop. It will be interlinked with the transnational website.

The agreed structure of the workshop will be:

1. Minutes
2. Transnational products/outcomes
   2.1. Case studies
   2.2. Handbook/Guideline
   2.3. Data base tool
   2.4. Networking conference
   2.5. Shadowing visits
3. Links and Documents
4. Photogallery
5. Contact information (List of members of TW Networks, Other relevant contacts)

   Structure of 2.1. – 2.4.
a) Draft
b) final version,
c) Links and Documents

Organisation of Communication
a) All information, data, case studies, documents will be stored on the website
b) Perdita collects all the email-addresses forwards the mailing list to all participants

5. Joint design of networking tool

The group discussed about the type of the planned database tool and the need of it:

Important Questions are:
– What about data protection?
– Usage of the tool -
   How can someone get access to this database tool is it in the www or only on CD-Rom for personal use? Who can use it? Who has access to it?
– Are there any existing database tools, we can use or edit?

        –   Maintaining

        –   Interface with other networks

        –   How much does it cost?

Following aspects would be useful categories of the network tool to describe the network partners:

➤   Status in Network (role; function; competence)

➤   What group or interests are they representing in this context?

➤   Specialised in… (Expert; special skills)

➤   Thematic interests

➤   Context; linkages "to me"

➤   Contacts they have, other networks they are involved in (informal; rules)

➤   Personality

➤   Additional other information

➤   Working style

Alan and Sarah mentioned that Mary Gibbs knows about a tool, which seems to fulfil the required demands on the network tool. Also Mirka knows some tools. It was agreed that we all look out on existing networks tools, and see if the already meet our demands, if we can use them, if some costs are arising, if we have to alter them to our demands etc.

If there are some tools, they should be demonstrated in the next workshop.

6. Joint agreement of work plan for transnational workshop

Milestone	Activities	Who does it? (Till when?)
Forum/website	Create a website for the Network TW within transnational website	UK
	Everyone will send their own contact details to Perdita	All to Perdita (as soon as possible)
Database	Research if there are existing tools and check if they meet the interests	All (next workshop meeting)
Case studies	Finalise template Collect data Input to forum	All
Networking methods (manual)	Collect data Input to forum	All
Plan Network Conference	Collect interests in DP	All (next workshop meeting)
	Design ‚concept'	All
	Pilot testing	
Organise shadowing visits	List of interests and proposals of the DP to the national coordinator	All to the national coordinator and then to Perdita (to the next TMG meeting)
	Proposal: (Who? Why? What? When?)	
Production of manual		

Best Practice NETWORKS in Hungary

Nr1: Local Governments in project region (Regional approach) **LGPR**
Nr2: Employers of disabled persons involving in EQUAL HU projects of (3E:LLL) (Country approach) **EDHU**
Nr3: Employers of disabled persons involving in WE (WORKABILITY-EUROPE) umbrella organisation (EU approach) **EDEU**

Features/Identification	Nr1: LGPR	Nr2: EDHU	Nr3: EDEU
Partners/stakeholders - Size of network - Background of the partners/ stakeholders - Representatives of organizations - Roles and positions - Personality - Heterogeneity/homogeneity	19 Local Governments, Local Regional Job centre Identified interest of more employment, Lord Mayor, and Trustees, Leading and empowered Complexity, characteristic Based upon Evaluation	HU-10, HU-14, HU-15, HU-19, HU-21, HU-24 (6 projects) Identified interest of more employment Directors, pr.managers, Leading and empowered Complexity, characteristic Based upon Evaluation	5 members in EU of WE Identified interest of more employment Managers, key persons Leading and empowered Complexity, characteristic Based upon Evaluation
Cause and Purpose - Origin and causation - Expectations - Added value - Formulation of objectives, goals and aims - Development of a mission statement and overall concept - Level of identification	Approach of Regional and common interest Best practices, know-how's Are to be dedicated Under process Level 2	Approach of Regional and common interest Best practices, know-how's Are to be dedicated Under process Level 1	Approach of Regional and common interest Best practices, know-how's Are to be dedicated Under process Level 2

Characteristics of networks Network model Formal/informal Binding character/level of obligation	Network in operation, Formal – Legislative, Binding statement of cooperation	Network in planned status, Informal - Non Legislative, Agreement of cooperation is to be concluded	Network in operation, Formal – Legislative, Membership driven statement of cooperation
Steering and Controlling - Type/Model of steering and controlling - Responsible steering group - Motivation of steering group	Board of representatives, Members empowered, Activated on Medium level	Group of pr.managers, Members empowered, Activated on Medium level	Members of WE Board Board members empowered, Activated on High level
Duration and intensity	Definite legislation/ 1-2 meetings /quarterly	Definite legislation/ 1-2 meetings /quarterly	Definite legislation/ 1-2 meetings /quarterly
Character of the Network/Relationship within the network - Type and structure of relationship - Quality of relationship between partners/stakeholders - Participation and Empowerment - Code of conduct - Communication/flow of information	Formal and personal, Highly qualified, Part time job Empowerment, Board and Group meetings, Based on official letters, Mobile phone and Email communications	Formal and personal, Highly qualified, Full time job empowerment, Board and Group meetings, Based on official letters, Mobile phone and Email communications	Formal and personal, Highly qualified, Part time job empowerment, Board and Group meetings, Based on official letters, E-bulletins Mobile phone and Email communications

Conditions - Internal/external - Resources (financial, human etc.) - Access to decision-making power	Acceptable/well published Restricted financial sources, Adequate human resources Easy access to DMP	Acceptable/weak published Restricted financial sources, Adequate human resources Easy access to DMP	Good/well published Planned financial sources, Qualified human resources Easy access to DMP
Positive experiences /Success factors	Expected an Edited Survey of Routes to Employments in project region, Identifying more new possibilities for disabled employments	Plan of Positive experiences of tailor made training based new Routes to Employments in project region, Identifying more new job possibilities for disabled employments	Intensive –frequent face to Face meetings, Increasing number of members, Lobbying in EU Commission, Joint participation by Members in EU projects, Joint projects for finding more job in recycling fields, Joint purchasing power of members
Negative experiences/Barriers and obstacles	Difficulties to reach agreements in scheduling work meetings	Difficulties to reach agreements during work meetings, Low level motivation of some partners for cooperation	Relatively high costs of travels for international meetings
Sustainability	Determined conditions and frequent calls for financial development sources by National Office for Regional Developments	Cooperation can be continuously sustainable for duration of EQUAL program	This Network will be built by members with revolving interests of a membership driven international organization WE

Best Practice NETWORKS in Germany

Features/Identification	National thematic network „Professional integration of especially disadvantaged persons", Germany EQUAL round 1	Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)	DLR – Lernenden Regionen	Kuwi-Netzwerk
Partners/stakeholders - Size of network - Background of the partners/ stakeholders - Representatives of organizations - Roles and positions - Personality - Heterogeneity/ homogeneity	30-40 presentations of 36 German EQUAL-DPs A mix of trainers, coordinators, project partners with different professional background and an member from the EQUAL-team of the ministry, at the beginning also representatives from BA 4-6 very outspoken and engaged persons, a "quick" representative from the EQUAL-Team Very heterogen group	- DVV - Bundesverband der 16 Landesverbände der VHS - VHS Landesverbände - Die deutschen Volkshochschulen (VHS) - Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (IIZ/DVV) - Weiterbildungs-Testsysteme GmbH (WBT) - Adolf-Grimme Institut (AGI), Gesellschaft für Medien, Bildung und Kultur mbH	- Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) - DLR-Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt - 70 Regions in Germany - Europäischer Soialfonds der Europäischen Union - Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität in München	- Students - Graduates - more than 2.600 members - economy-people

Cause and Purpose - Origin and causation - Expectations - Added value - Formulation of objectives, goals and aims - Development of a mission statement and overall concept - Level of identification	A „must" by the Equal-guideline, each DP has to the involved in at least one national network Vertical mainstreaming Exchange of best practice on national level Identification of best practice models on national level Measurable outcome of each network EQUAL philosophy Low level of identification	- Arrange alphabetically/ basis training - Integration - Intercultural and global learning - Political education and participation - Further professional education - Public Health and prevention - Fighting against poverty - Ecology and rural development - Promotion of minorities and gender mainstreaming - International cooperation - Promotion of lifelong learning	- Promotion of networks in the "Learning regions" - Regional networks of education - Sustain the personal responsibility of the learners - Promotion of equal opportunities - Motivation of disadvantaged target groups	- Represenation of interests in the course of study - Forum for intercultural exchange of know-how - Interface to the professional world - Meeting point for alumni - Building and conservation of a international network - Support the members with substantial service
Characteristics of networks Network model Formal/informal Binding character/level of obligation	Formal Obligatory, but no consequences if you miss the meetings	- independent and equal partners - no hierarchy - every member has his own field of activity	- independent and equal partners - task forces - cooperation between trainers and trainees	- Absolute hierarchic - Precisely dispatching

Steering and Controlling - Type/Model of steering and controlling - Responsible steering group - Motivation of steering group	Controlled by BMWA, but no steering „Unofficial steering group" of about 6 „active persons" „High motivation of a few people, low of the rest	- partners are independent - no hierarchy - every member has his own field of activity	- independent and equal partners	- mutual monitoring
Duration and intensity	EQUAL 1	Durable	Durable	Durable
Character of the Network/Relationship within the network - Type and structure of relationship - Quality of relationship between partners/stakeholders - Participation and Empowerment - Code of conduct - Communication/flow of information	Loose relationship During the meeting closer relationship between certain people Open, empowered without power No code of conduct Nearly no official rules and regulations For start we had a forum installed by a member, then the BMWA forced us to used their communication platform, after that the „interactive" communication stopped, only Emails via BMWA	- Representation of interests - Code of conduct: Equal opportunities in access to education - In some cases subsidiary company of the DVV	- educational sector and nearby branches are working together - Strong cross-linking	- The managing-commitee decides the strategy of the organisation - The board of trustees supports the managing-commitee in finance and organisation - two managing directors support the managing-commitee and maintain the data base - "Netzwerk aktiv" assumes functions such as project management

Conditions - Internal/external - Resources (financial, human etc.) - Access to decision-making power	Official program of the BMWA Funding by existing ESF-Budget, so extra work and no extra funding Theoretically access to decision-making power, but not in reality			
Positive experiences /Success factors	Good unofficial exchange of information between a few partners 2 brochures with recommendations (long term unemployed people, the relationship health and unemployment)	Corporate Design Lobby group		
Negative experiences/Barriers and obstacles	No moderation and concrete ideas by BMWA The forced communication on the official platform killed flow of information After all this work, our results interested no-one			
Sustainability	No			