



Grundtvig International Network of Course Organisers
International courses for professional development of adult education staff

Newsletter 5

Grundtvig courses: a spearhead for innovation and European priorities

Grundtvig courses are European courses for professional development of adult education staff. These courses with participants from different European countries are supported by the European Commission through the Grundtvig action of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Participants can apply for grants at the respective National Agency. Through the transnational character of their content and delivery mode these courses are the ideal way to disseminate and mainstream educational innovation arising from didactic trends or European priorities.

European view on professional development in adult education

The European Commission's [Action Plan on Adult Learning](#) has set the targets and steps for building a "high quality and accessible adult learning system". A number of priorities in this Action Plan deal with the quality of adult education staff and the introduction of innovation. These targets are in line with the [Europe 2020](#) priorities. Following the open method of coordination the different LLP member states are in the process of introducing a number of steps to reach these targets, each at their own pace, in the light of national needs and priorities, in a process of mutual comparison, sharing and learning.

Quality in adult education provision and delivery, validation of informal learning outcomes, a European scope and intercultural awareness, networking skills and competence driven teaching and learning are elements contributing to this innovation and envisaged raise in quality of adult education.

European in-service training courses, as developed in the Grundtvig programme, can be a model for innovative solutions in these priority areas. They can help create a European area of adult education and be a driver for innovation and the transfer of knowledge and expertise. GINCO, the Grundtvig International Network of Course Organisers strives to enhance and improve this role of Grundtvig courses in a European innovation policy.

Competence driven teaching and learning

As part of the Lisbon Strategy the concept of lifelong learning implies a focus on competences - rather than knowledge - as outcomes of the learning process. The [European Reference Framework](#) provides the eight key competences that "each citizen will need to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world". In this concept the role of education should change to stimulating and helping the learner to acquire these competences. The on-going (r)evolution in the information society and the opportunities it offers reinforce this need.

Further professional development of the adult educators is crucial in this process, they too have to become lifelong learners. In this respect the Grundtvig courses can be the ideal vehicle for the

professionalization of adult education staff. To this end, GINCO strives to enlarge the Grundtvig training provision, including courses on competence driven education, moreover the network will help course organisers adapt the course delivery and organise competence driven courses.

A European Commission study on [Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals](#) - by Research voor Beleid - proposes a set of competences for adult education staff which could serve as a useful reference for staff development. This study will be the starting point of a debate on competence development for adult educators in Grundtvig courses at the next GINCO conference in Thessaloniki (7 – 11 Dec. 2011). Course organisers can there learn to define their course learning outcomes in terms of competences and learn how to help their participants define their learning paths and the competences they need to develop. Competence driven Grundtvig courses, in which adult educators as participants experience the approach are the best way to introduce competence based education and learning.

Validation of learning outcomes

Another element of this approach is the validation of learning outcomes. Adults should have the possibility to have their learning recognized and validated.

A lot of work in this respect has been done via the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as a reference for the development of national qualifications frameworks and systems (NQFs). Also ECVET enables the documentation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes in formal or non-formal vocational training contexts abroad. Europass is another useful tool in this context. While these instruments have proved to be very useful for vocational education and training, at this stage the validation of learning outcomes in informal and non-formal general adult education is largely missing. It is important that validation of this 'Grundtvig type' of adult learning gets included in national frameworks as well.

Several Grundtvig projects have developed LEVEL5, a system for the validation of informal learning and resulted in a Research and Evaluation Group for Validation, Evidencing and Assessing of Informal and Non-formal Learning: [REVEAL](#). Specifically the approach and tools developed in [VIP](#) (Validation of Learning in Projects) and [VILMA](#) (Validation of Learning in Mobility Activities), offer tools to validate learning outcomes in Grundtvig courses.

The GINCO Thessaloniki conference will be an opportunity for the participants to experience a self assessment and validation approach of the competences they develop during the conference. The LEVEL5 validation system will be presented and the participants will be able to apply these to the competences they hope to develop and validate during the conference. In this way participants not only get an idea of the potential of the tools but will also experience the added value of validation of learning outcomes for the quality of the course and for the learner..

Practice what you preach

The great power of Grundtvig courses is exactly the fact that they not only are in the position to offer innovative content but also can practice innovation while delivering that content. The participating adult educators will learn and experience. They are the ideal disseminators and multipliers for the new content and expertise, the 'mainstreamers' in their organization and in their country. Course participants are also professionals and can offer a European added value for organizers and participants; they can also offer professional feedback on the products and add their national view on the methodology and the applicability of the approach and outcomes.

Course quality as seen by GINCO, does not only mean quality care and self-evaluation of these courses. It also means application of innovative didactics, appropriate use of ICT, networking techniques, cultural awareness, European scope, a competence driven, learner centred approach and validation of learning outcomes. This is the quality GINCO will help course organisers implement in their Grundtvig courses, a quality in line with Europe 2020.

Key stones

Grundtvig course are key stones in a European system of raising quality in adult education. Are you interested in finding out more about Grundtvig course development, course quality, ICT-use, validation of learning outcomes? Join the GINCO network. GINCO networks present and potential Grundtvig course organisers. The network shares good practice and offers material to help course organisers in their task to deliver a quality course. The network also acts as a spokesman in relation to important stakeholders such as the European Commission and the National Agencies. GINCO also organises major conferences on priority topics (see below).

More on www.ginconet.eu

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Validation of Professional Development in Grundtvig Courses

Thessaloniki, 7 – 11 December 2011

GINCO is a Grundtvig network consortium aiming to create a European wide network of adult education organisations actually running Grundtvig courses or planning to do so in the future. In the network we will **share expertise, create and share useful material and enhance communication and cooperation** in order to improve the quality of Grundtvig courses, to **enlarge the scope of provision** and to **improve the visibility and success** of the action and the courses.

“Validation of Professional Development in Grundtvig Courses” is the second international conference organized by the GINCO consortium focusing on the **validation and recognition of learning outcomes in non-formal settings**. The conference targets actual Grundtvig in-service training course organisers, all adult education organizations willing/planning to organise such courses and all actors in the field: LLP National Agencies, adult education policy makers, programme developers etc., interested in the validation of learning outcomes.

All themes will be explored in keynotes and workshops, relevant material will be presented, expertise will be exchanged, good practice will be highlighted. The conference will also be the ideal space for networking and creating useful contacts.

The conference offers an overview of the state of the art concerning validation of competence development in in-service training and the results of a European research project on competences for educators and staff working in adult education. This key note will lead to workshops on competence development for adult educators in Grundtvig courses: what competences are tackled in the courses, how can courses be presented in terms of competence development? Validation systems for formal and informal learning are introduced and a transfer of these models in Grundtvig courses will be discussed. Certification is an important issue in this conference as well. The Level5 validation system will be applied on the participants’ own learning.

This conference is registered in the [Grundtvig Training Database](#) under the reference number: BE-2011-182-001. Participants can apply for a grant under the Grundtvig action: [Visits and Exchanges](#) (variable deadlines, please check with your LLP National Agency). Application forms are downloadable from the website of each National Agency.

Participation is for free (participation fee = 0), accommodation and all meals: 400 Euro. For more info and a pre-registration form please go to www.ginconet.eu.

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