



GINCO: GRUNDTVIG INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF COURSE ORGANISERS

GINCO is a Grundtvig International Network of Course Organisers, funded with support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission, run by an **international consortium of 21 partners** from 14 different countries. GINCO aims to create a European wide network of adult education organisations actually running Grundtvig courses or willing to do so in the future. The aim of the network is to share expertise, to collect, create and share useful material and to 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 Grundtvig IST action and the courses.

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. Quality in adult education provision and delivery, validation of informal learning outcomes, a European scope and intercultural awareness, networking skills and com-



petence 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. In this concept the role of education should change to stimulating and helping the learner to acquire these competences. 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, in which

adult educators as participants experience the approach themselves. This is 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. While a number of 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. In the past two years, the GINCO network collected and developed tools and materials on course quality and validation of learning outcomes, which will be described in this newsletter.

COURSE PROVISION

Currently the network partners are working on a third important topic: course provision. The present Grundtvig course provision and national course provision for adult educators have been analysed and the GINCO network is identifying the levers to enlarge the international course provision in line with the LLP policy for adult education and adult educators' needs. This will be the topic of the third GINCO conference, where the GINCO Quality Award will be presented and the winning courses will be announced. This conference will take place in Hasselt (BE) from 26 till 29 September 2012. More information on this conference is available on www.ginconet.eu.

VALIDATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN GRUNDTVIG IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES.

Validation of learning outcomes is of particular importance in informal and non-formal adult education since this sector focuses on adult learners who, at a possibly long distance from their original formal qualifications, need evidence of their further development of skills and social and personal competences.



This is also made clear in the Renewed European agenda for adult learning (Council resolution 2011/C 372/01) stating: "To encourage the development of effective lifelong guidance systems, as well as integrated systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning" as an action point and "Putting in place fully functional systems for validating non-formal and informal learning and promoting their use by adults ..." as an element of priority 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality.

According to GINCO the Grundtvig IST course system offers the ideal structure for an effective and useful introduction of mechanisms for validation of learning outcomes in the AE sector. There are two reasons:

- There is an intrinsic reason for Grundtvig course organisers to validate the learning outcomes of the participants at their course. Grundtvig courses are run in an international context and - from the perspective of the participant - always in a foreign country. How can a participant get evidence of what he/she has learned and acquired at this course and how can it be recognised in his/her home country? It is also clear that especially adult educators, proven to come from a variety of backgrounds, would benefit from evidenced professional development. A learning outcome validation system would therefore considerably increase the value of a Grundtvig course for its participants.
- There is also a strategic argument. Grundtvig IST course participants are adult educators: teachers and trainers in a sector that is a major contributor to non-formal and informal learning. Adult educators, participating in a Grundtvig course, will experience the mechanisms of validation and will experience the value of evidenced competence development. They will be the most efficient multipliers/ambassadors and are best placed to help introduce these innovative systems in their own country and organisation.

GINCO

Promoting and supporting the introduction of validation of learning outcomes in Grundtvig courses therefore is one of the priorities of the GINCO network. GINCO strives to improve the expertise of course organisers concerning certification, recognition and validation of learning outcomes of their courses and help them conceive and present their courses in the form of course learning outcomes and competences to acquire. This is the basis for a certification and validation approach. The network will also explore ways to get courses certified within existing quality frameworks.

So, GINCO had all good reasons to spend its second conference, Thessaloniki, 7 - 11 December 2011, on the topic: **Validation of Professional Development in Grundtvig Courses**

"Validation of Learning Outcomes in Adult Education and learning: State of the art in Europe" was the first keynote at this conference, presented by **Mrs. Helen Keogh** (Advisor on the Adult Learning Action Plan 2007, IE).

The presentation started with a definition of validation based on the CEDEFOP 2009 guidelines:

"The confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification."

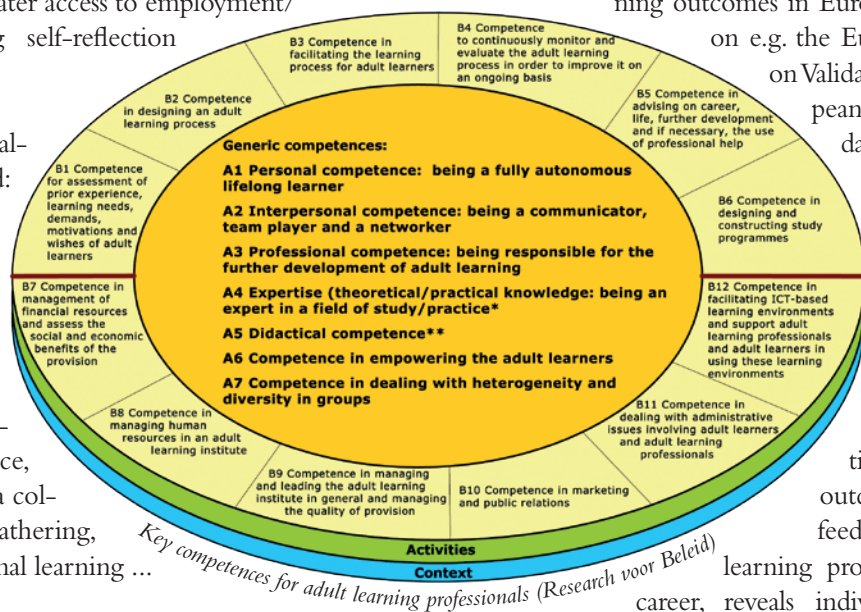
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GINCO: NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES TO UPDATE YOUR COMPETENCES AS A GRUNDTVIG COURSE ORGANISER!

VALIDATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN GRUNDTVIG IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES. *Continued from page 1*

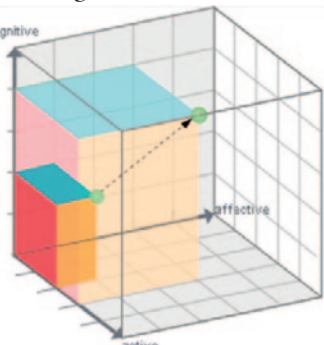
After an overview of the the European policy background concerning validation of the learning outcomes Mrs Keogh paid attention to the benefits and challenges of introducing it in adult education and learning. Benefits were situated at the educational level: improved access & transfer, exemption, partial/full awards; at economic level: makes human capital visible, addresses skills shortages, supports employment; at social level: access to education/employment for the most disadvantaged; at personal level: self-esteem, confidence, motivation, possible greater access to employment/promotion, stimulating self-reflection on prior learning.

But also a number of challenges were put forward: variety of terminology and aims, need for a cultural shift, trust, implementation and mainstreaming, variation in provision, quality and costs to individuals, Quality assurance, the Matthew effect, data collection and evidence gathering, the impact on non-formal learning ...



In order to come back to the professional development of the adult educator **Mr. Bert-Jan Buiskool** (Research voor Beleid, NL) presented the results of a European research project about the creation of the competences overview for educators and staff working in adult education: “Key competences for adult learning professionals”. In this project a EU study was carried out to identify key competences adult educators may need to have in order to provide high quality education. The ambition of the study was to provide a common framework that would allow adult educators to discuss the competences required for staff working in adult education. The framework offers a common ground and a common language to do so.

The results of this study are highly relevant for GINCO. They serve as a basis for the elaboration of identified competences developed in Grundtvig courses and will help in making these competences operational. The keynote led to a workshop on competence development for adult educators in Grundtvig IST courses: what competences do we tackle in our courses, how can we present courses in terms of competence development? Course organisers learned to define their course learning outcomes in terms of competences and learned how to help their participants define their learning paths and the competences they want to develop. It was also made clear that competence driven Grundtvig courses, in which adult educators as participants experience the approach are the best way to introduce competence based education and learning and therefore should be based on the right learning principles: active, realistic, personalised, together with others, holistic, aiming at skills and at learning to learn.



The LEVEL 5 cube

GINCO aims to promote validation tools for Grundtvig course learning outcomes, based on the ‘Key Competences for Adult Learning staff’. This will be an exemplary approach to introduce competences and competence oriented teaching and learning to the participants (the adult educators). There are highly relevant approaches to validation, e.g. developed in the frame of the Grundtvig VIP and VILMA projects. These projects resulted in the LEVEL 5 system that was presented by **Mr. Tim Scholze** (Bupnet, DE) in the third keynote. LEVEL 5 offers an approach and instrument to document and visualise

competence developments with a special focus on personal, social and organisational competences. The LEVEL 5 cube also emphasises the 3-D character of competences. In the following workshop the participants tried to transfer this validation model into Grundtvig courses, using the generic competences as defined in the VIP project.

Mrs. Alexandra Dehmel (CEDEFOP, EL) presented “Challenges, experiences and tools for validation of learning outcomes in Europe” and shed light on e.g. the European Guidelines on Validation and the European Inventory on Validation. The keynote also led to a discussion on the aims and approaches to validation: the formative approach, does not aim at formal certification of learning outcomes, provides feedback to the learning process or learning career, reveals individual strengths,

weaknesses and learning needs and provides a basis to support learning processes. The summative approach explicitly aims at formalisation and certification of learning outcomes, should consider national standards and should be linked to national qualification systems & frameworks.

In the final phase of the conference **Mr. Radu Szekely** (Vastra Nylands folkhogskola, FI) explored the issue of recognition of learning outcomes of Grundtvig in-service training courses. One of the outcomes of the “Analysis and exploitation of the results of Grundtvig in-service training activities 2000-2009”, a research study by the West of Scotland Colleges’ Partnership, revealed that certification of Grundtvig course learning outcomes is of little value in recognition and validation of professional development unless it is coupled with a credit system. In his presentation Mr. Szekely listed possible systems with their pros and cons: in-house certificates, Europass, ECTS, EQF, continuing professional development referenced to the Key Competences for Adult Education Professionals ...

For GINCO it is clear that quality of Grundtvig IST courses is essential for the AE sector to reach the priorities set in the numerous policy papers towards Europe 2020. Quality in the ‘eyes’ of GINCO means that:

- mechanisms for quality care and self-evaluation are in place
- innovative didactics and competence oriented approaches are applied
- appropriate ICT use is applied in all phases: pre delivery, delivery and follow up
- mechanisms for validation of learning outcomes are in place
- attention is paid to personal and social competence development
- the European dimension is taken into account
- courses are linked to LLP priorities

Recognition of Grundtvig courses will only take place if the validation of the learning outcomes is included in this overall approach to quality.

Guy Tilkin, Alden Biesen (BE), GINCO coordinator

All presentations and studies mentioned in this article are accessible via the GINCO website: www.ginconet.eu



Guy Tilkin, GINCO coordinator, Landcommanderij Alden Biesen, BE
“Grundtvig courses: a spearhead for innovation and European priorities”



Bert-Jan Buiskool, Research voor Beleid, NL
“The job profile makes the adult educators’ competences concrete by putting them in a context.”



Tim Scholze, BUPNET, DE
“LEVEL 5: assessing and evidencing informally acquired personal and social competences”

Workshop on terms and definitions



VALIDPACK - VALIDATION OF INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCES OF ADULT EDUCATORS

A lot of competences that are job relevant have been developed in informal and non-formal learning contexts. This also applies to the competences defining **the adult educator** that frequently go unrecognized.

A lot of adult educators interact with adults in a didactical way without an explicit qualification for their activity. Most of them have acquired their specific psycho-pedagogical competences for dealing with adults on the job, through working experiences, during trainings, voluntary work etc.

According to the above mentioned social and economic new developments and challenges in Europe, „Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Psycho-Pedagogical Competences of Adult Educators” (VINEPAC) project (<http://www.vinepac.eu/>) responds to the European needs by initiating and developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators.

The main aim of the VINEPAC project was to create a set of instruments for the validation of real competences of adult

educators. Adult educators here are defined as trainers. The VINEPAC project team focused on the trainer's competence profile as this is the main and more frequent role performed by adult educators in general. A trainer is defined as a person designing and running/ performing teaching activities. The validation of competences of adult educators on European level makes a contribution to professionalization of adult educators in Europe and to quality management in the field of Adult Education in Europe. Validpack, a package of validation instruments, creates a framework for the documentation and the evaluation of competences of adult educators, no matter whether they have been acquired in formal, non-formal or informal learning contexts. For this reason Validpack aims to:

- assess important adult educators competences
- give space for the documentation of experiences
- build a base for certification upon the validation results
- be wide enough to be used on European level
- document a minimum standard of competences of adult educators
- put adult educators in the position to get across the frontier within Europe
- be applicable for different contexts.

Validpack is organised around three main validation steps: (i) self-evaluation, (ii) external evaluation and (iii) consolidation. The validation is complete only after all the three steps have been taken. You as an adult educator have to prove the indicated competences that define/are specific for an adult educator. This can either happen through self-evaluation or through external evaluation. Some of the most important competences needed in adult education are not directly observable, but can be proved through self-evaluation. On the other hand, some competences cannot be easily self-assessed, but they need to be observed by an external evaluator. Both steps are provided for in the validation handbook with additional consolidation to increase objectiveness. The handbook will guide you through all validation steps.

More information on VALIDPACK, the handbook and the way the tool is applied can be found at:

http://www.capival.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=60

By Georgios Zarifis,
Aristotle University Thessaloniki (EL)

GINCO RESOLUTION ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL "ERASMUS FOR ALL"

The conference took place shortly after the first presentation of "Erasmus for all", the follow up programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme. First readings show that only a very limited space and budget is reserved for adult education in this new programme. Therefore a conference memorandum on the "Erasmus for all" programme was discussed and voted. GINCO will play its role as a spokesperson for all course organisers and parties involved, and transmit the message to the European Council and Members of the European Parliament, who have the power to interfere in the decision procedure.

The GINCO network members want to stress the importance of informal and non-formal learning in general and of adult education and learning in particular in today's Europe. The numerous challenges offered by our multicultural and ageing society cannot be met by a narrow focus on vocational training and higher education only. Professional development, cultural development and social cohesion can only be outcomes of a broad view on lifelong learning.

The GINCO network expresses its deepest concern about the fact that

- the well established, successful and meaningful name "Grundtvig" is abandoned in favour of "Erasmus", which has been exclusively linked to higher education
- vocational education and training and general adult learning are united in one action "Erasmus Training" despite very clear messages from the field insisting on two separate funding lines
- While teachers and trainers of all other education sectors are specifically mentioned in the proposed mobility action, there is no explicit reference to adult education staff and their professional development
- Continuing professional development will be 'organisational based' and therefore leave out individual initiatives
- the overall funding level for adult learning, despite an absolute increase, still amounts to no more than 2 % of the total programme budget

Therefore, The GINCO network strongly recommends to the European Parliament and the European Council that they insist on

- the continuation of a separate funding line for adult education and learning
- maintaining the well-established name "Grundtvig" or at least have a reference '... for adults' to any other proposed programme name
- a substantial increase of the relative share of the programme budget for adult learning
- the continuation of the formal and non-formal in-service training actions for adult education staff similar to the existing ones
- establishing an expert group that puts in place adequate funding mechanisms for such in-service training actions taking into account the experiences gained in the present and previous programmes
- developing and implementing a validation and quality assurance system for staff mobility

This text was approved by the conference participants on 10 December 2011. 70 participants.

On behalf of the GINCO network
Guy Tilkin,
GINCO coordinator



GINCO AGENDA

**Third GINCO Conference:
Course provision and GINCO Quality
Award presentation**

Hasselt (BE), 26-29 September 2012.

Want to know more about the conference programme and how to apply for a Grundtvig grant to take part in this conference? More information will soon be available on www.ginconet.eu



Helen Keogh,
Advisor on the Adult Learning
Action Plan 2007, IE
"A validation policy driven by
an 'accelerating credentialism',
making human capital visible,
the social inclusion agenda and
the lifelong learning agenda."



Roxana Brandt,
European Commission,
DG EAC
"IST participants report
a high level of satisfaction
with the quality of the
training, the methods used,
the course content and the
intercultural environment"



Workshop on
the assessment system LEVEL 5

GINCO PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND EVENTS

GINCO's Grundtvig course quality tool

One of the goals of the GINCO network is to provide tools for adult educators that may be helpful for organising high quality international Grundtvig courses. The Grundtvig course quality tool consists of two parts: part one is dedicated to general quality features of Grundtvig courses and part two is focussed in particular on the self-evaluation component of Grundtvig course processes. This tool is the result of an ongoing exploration within the GINCO network of the characteristics, features or requirements that make Grundtvig courses successful. It is rather exhaustive but at the same time we are sure it is not complete yet. It is meant as a source for those who are involved in Grundtvig courses as: policy makers, course organisers, course developers or educators and trainers. From this tool ideas may be selected or derived for quality care, quality control, quality assurance, or recognition of courses and programmes.

Adult education and learning

The quality tool as well as the way it is organised is based on theories on adult education, and more specifically on theories of competence based learning. Competence based learning requires other than traditional approaches to teaching. Competence based learning happens in powerful or rich learning environments which enable learners to engage in meaningful learning processes.

The most distinctive features of this approach may be summarized as follows:

Meaningful contexts

For learning to take place meaningful contexts are needed in which learners will experience in a natural way the relevance and the meaning of the competences to be acquired.

Multidisciplinary learning

Competences are holistic concepts including knowledge attitudes and skills and as a consequence the educative approach has to be integrative and holistic as well.

Constructive learning

Learning is conceived as a process of constructing your own knowledge in interaction with your environment, rather than as a process of absorbing the knowledge others try to transfer to you. By focusing on the construction of models, products, guidelines, reports, or other tangible outputs the learning easily and naturally turns constructivist.

Social, cooperative, interactive learning

Learners develop and construct their own knowledge and seek ways to make optimal use of one another in their learning itinerary. This is what social constructivism is about. Co-operation and interaction are both domains of learning as well as vehicles of learning.

Active learning

Open learning processes require active learning as opposed to receptive learning. This means that the way of acquiring knowledge or competences is not just a process of providing information, but always requires an active discovery oriented approach.

Reflective learning

Competence based learning requires an emphasis on the learning processes. By reflecting on their own needs, motivation, approach, progress, results etc. learners develop learning competences. The competence meant here usually is referred to "learning to learn"

Personal learning

Competence oriented learning is a process of constructing one's own personal knowledge and competences. Knowledge only becomes meaningful for a person if the person can identify with it. In education this implies that learners need to be able to identify with the contexts, the persons, the interests that are included in the learning domains.

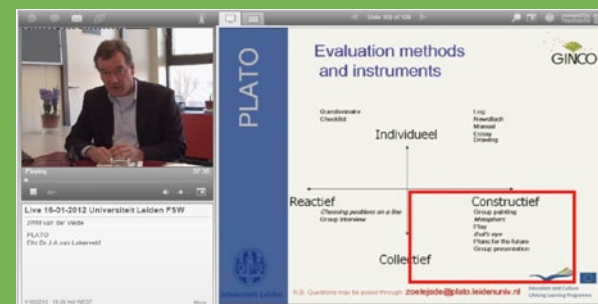
The GINCO network aims to promote all these quality features among course organisers via various information channels and dissemination activities, including webinars. Through the creation of the GINCO Quality Award the network wants to emphasize the importance of course quality and to stimulate course providers to apply all these

approaches in their Grundtvig courses. The complete GINCO quality tool is available on www.ginconet.eu

By Jaap Van Lakerveld, PLATO (NL)

WEBINAR ON GRUNDTVIG COURSE QUALITY

The first GINCO webinar took place on Monday the 16th of January. In this online seminar Jaap van Lakerveld (PLATO) explained some GINCO quality tools. These tools are not only helpful to those who wish to set up a Grundtvig course, but also to those who wish to apply for a Grundtvig project in which a course is envisaged as one of the outcomes.



Two way communication

A webinar consists of a web based presentation. Participants sign up in advance. Shortly before the start of the webinar they receive the URL of the presentation. During the webinar the participants see two windows on their screen: the person giving the webinar in live streaming and the supporting powerpoint is visible in a second window. During the webinar, the participants can ask questions which can be answered during the session.

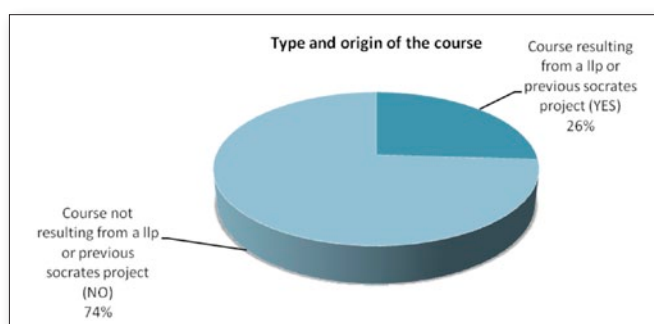
Webinars are a free service of the GINCO network to disseminate its products and enlarge the network. The next webinar will take place in May and will be about Grundtvig IST action rules by Renilde Reynders, Flemish Grundtvig NA and Guy Tilkin, GINCO coordinator. For more information, check www.ginconet.eu.

GRUNDTVIG COURSE PROVISION AND GINCO QUALITY AWARD

One of GINCO's aims is to improve the Grundtvig course provision, in terms of quantity and quality. Therefore GINCO analyzed the Grundtvig course offer as present in the training database at two different moments: June 2010 and October 2011 covering all the courses between January 2010 and December 2012.

Both analyses reveal that there is no equal geographical spreading of Grundtvig courses in LLP countries. The top 3 countries in terms of organized courses are the UK, Italy and Germany, who cover about 45% of the Grundtvig course offer as present in the database. Beside a small sub group of countries reaching an average of 5% of courses (Greece, Malta, France), all other countries organize less than 5%.

The graphs show the thematic division and the origin of the courses.



The outcomes of the statistical analyses confirm the need to further develop the Grundtvig course provision and to stimulate centralised LLP projects to develop and run courses. GINCO will not only do efforts to extend the topics covered by Grundtvig IST, the network will also try to stimulate the Grundtvig course provision in countries which have almost been absent in the course database so far. These two objectives can be reached by the creation and promotion of guidelines for course organisers on how to turn their national course provision - which obviously covers a much wider range of topics - into international Grundtvig course provision.

As for the quality of Grundtvig courses, a survey carried out by GINCO shows that both course organisers and course participants are interested in some form of quality criteria in relation to courses featuring in the course database. In order to promote the quality of course provision, share expertise and good practice in relation to quality and contribute to

the professionalism of course offerings, the GINCO network will launch the GINCO Quality Award at the third GINCO conference in September 2012.

Given their specific knowledge and expertise, the National Agencies have been asked to make a pre-selection of 8 successful courses, based on the reports of participants of their country. Where possible cross reference will be reported, ideally by combining evaluations of participants of 3 different countries per course.

Further deliberations on those courses selected and put forward by National Agencies will take place in consultation with GINCO Network partners in relation to an agreed list of quality criteria drawing on the GINCO quality guidelines. This will result in the announcement and presentation of GINCO Awards at the 3rd GINCO Conference in Hasselt, September 2012.

More information on the database analyses and on the third GINCO conference is available on www.ginconet.eu.

By Muir Houston, Glasgow University (UK) and Renilde Knevels (BE)

