
European Initiatives and Lifelong Learning



“The most innovative projects have resulted from the most heterogeneous partnerships . . . and from the mixing together of the most dissimilar experiences.”

(Adult Education and Learning in Europe: 1999)

This is the forty-first in a series of briefing sheets which aim to provide an introduction to a variety of lifelong learning issues

Also available:

- 40. Increasing participation and raising achievement of black and minority ethnic group adults in post-16 education
- 39. ICT in active citizenship
- 38. ICT mentors
- 37. Valuing People – for LDPB’s
- 36. Valuing People – for education providers
- 35. Cultural diversity and older people
- 34. Learning and health
- 33. Fees charged to part-time adult students 2001-2002
- 32. Older people and learning – key statistics
- 31. Financial literacy and older people
- 30. Meeting the needs of older learners
- 29. The learning needs of young adults with mental health difficulties

Many earlier titles in the Briefing Sheet series are still available, please contact us for more information about these titles

Copies of this and other sheets are available from NIACE, 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE.

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E-mail: information@niace.org.uk

They are also available on the website at www.niace.org.uk/information

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In today’s constantly changing labour market, it is vital that people continue to develop skills and knowledge throughout their lives to enhance employability. Continual learning is recognised and reflected in both European and national employment strategies.

The European Union acknowledges the importance of lifelong learning by providing funding programmes to encourage a European dimension to education and training. By giving lifelong learning a high priority, the EU aims to develop and test innovative approaches to educational challenges, to disseminate information, share good practice and to develop sustainable transnational networks to facilitate these aims.

There is a great deal which can be learned from the education and training initiatives of other European countries. By communicating effectively and forming strong links, educators in Europe are establishing a stronger platform from which to influence the development and implementation of the European Commission’s policy on education.

In the mid-1990’s, with the publication of a White Paper on education and training, the European Commission made a substantial shift in thinking, placing lifelong learning at the centre of its policies in this area and designating 1996 Year of Lifelong Learning. This emphasis became clear with the publication of the proposals for the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes over the period 2000-2006.

At the Lisbon European Council (2000) a new strategic goal was set for the next decade – for Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

The Education Ministers stressed that the development of lifelong learning is an integral

part of this strategy. Post-Lisbon actions have included:

- the publication by the European Commission of a Memorandum on Lifelong Learning;
- a work programme on the concrete objectives of member states' education systems;
- an agreement to enable access to lifelong learning for Europeans of all ages.

European Funding Sources for Education, Training and Lifelong Learning

The **Youth** programme provides for youth initiatives, including the training of youth leaders and supporting active citizenship, political empowerment, social inclusion and joint activities undertaken with Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes. It aims to foster co-operation in the area of youth policy.

Leonardo da Vinci is a programme designed specifically to encourage innovation in vocational training, especially through pilot projects. The aims are to enable people to keep pace with change, to develop lifelong skills and update existing skills. The programme also funds study visits.

Europass aims to assist mobility by enabling periods of training to be recorded which are undertaken by apprentices/trainees outside the member state in which their training is based. The period of training, to be known as a European Pathway, must be part of a structured vocational training programme. It is a voluntary scheme.

Socrates provides opportunities for all levels and sectors of education. It is now in its second phase, from 2000-2006, and aims to promote and facilitate co-operation and mobility in the field of education, strengthen the European dimension, improve knowledge of European languages and encourage innovation. A total of 31 countries will take part.

There are various actions within Socrates:

- Comenius – focusing on school education
- Erasmus – supporting the European dimension in higher education
- Grundtvig – concentrating on lifelong learning
- Lingua – the Socrates languages aspect.
- Minerva – an ODL, ICT and multimedia programme.

Equal is an ESF funding programme aimed at combating discrimination in the labour market. It has nine themes:

- A** Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated.
- B** Opportunities to promote potential for ethnic minorities within the world of work.
- C** Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas.
- D** Strengthening the social economy with a focus on improving the quality of jobs.
- E** Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive working practices which encourage the recruitment of those suffering from discrimination.
- F** Supporting adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of new technologies.
- G** Reconciling family and professional life by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.
- H** Promoting gender equality in the work place.
- I** Helping the integration of asylum seekers.

NIACE Work

NIACE is a member of the **European Association for the Education of Adults**, a transnational, non-profit organisation whose purpose is to link and represent European organisations directly involved with lifelong learning. Its primary focus is NGOs whose principle aim is the education of adults, and it works where possible through national co-ordinating bodies for adult learning. It was founded in 1953 and today is made up of 110 organisations in 30 European countries.

The EAEA publishes newsletters and reports and organises training, information seminars and awareness raising activities about EU programmes, sources of funding and policy development. Further information is available on the EAEA website: www.eaea.org

Grundtvig – NIACE is contracted by the British Council to undertake development and dissemination activities in support of Grundtvig, including the production of a newsletter and the

organisation of a series of promotion and dissemination events. These events provide information about how to take part in Grundtvig, key issues and themes, examples of good practice, and advice on preparing proposals and finding European partners. For further information see the Socrates – Grundtvig pages on the NIACE website:

www.niace.org.uk/funds/Grundtvig/Default.htm

NIACE is one of six partners in a Grundtvig 4 project called **Adult Study Net (ASN)** which aims to broaden the use of ICT in adult education, aimed particularly at those with little or no computer skills. The project consists of a conferencing and email facility created to enable groups or organisations to communicate online. NIACE provides free access to any group (16 years +) who want to use the facilities for any learning or learning support activity. For further information see the Adult Study Net pages on the NIACE website: www.niace.org.uk/projects/ASN

The **NILE** project (Network of Intercultural Learning) is a partnership-based project supported under Grundtvig for three years. The first meeting took place in October 2002. Its main aim is to share information about inter-cultural learning in Europe, with a view to identifying good practice, exchanging ideas, developing materials for publication and drawing out common intercultural learning principles.

EQUAL – Asset UK

In 2001 Fiona Aldridge and Sue Waddington conducted a pilot skills audit of asylum seekers in the East Midlands in order to identify their skills, qualifications and educational and training needs. This revealed that many asylum seekers are well qualified and have a wealth of skills to offer. NIACE is a partner in a project called **Asset UK**, which gets 50% of its funding from the ESF **Equal** fund (Theme I). The Development Partnership is led by the British Refugee Council and aims to address the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.

NIACE is contributing to Asset UK in two ways: through the Asset East Midlands project and the Asset UK National Collation and Promotion project.

Asset East Midlands

NIACE employs four project workers in the East Midlands, based across five locations, who conduct skills audit interviews with asylum seekers. The project subsequently facilitates tailor made volunteering opportunities, work orientation placements or appropriate training courses for asylum seekers based on their needs, desires and abilities.

Asset UK National Collation and Promotion project

This project aims to discover good practice in working with asylum seekers and promote this on a UK-wide scale. NIACE is organising a series of regional dissemination events to build up an overall picture of services for asylum seekers, culminating in the publication of these findings in the form of a good practice guide.

These initiatives will help to raise the profile of asylum seekers' skills, qualifications and employability and raise awareness among employers and training providers of the benefits of integrating asylum seekers into the UK labour market.

For further information see the asylum seekers and adult learning pages on the NIACE website: www.niace.org.uk/projects/Asylum/Default.htm

Key contacts at NIACE

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Email: fiona.aldridge@niace.org.uk

Useful Contacts and Information

The **British Council** is the UK's National Agency for Grundtvig and other key actions of the Socrates programme. Information about Grundtvig including an information sheet can be found on the website.

Address: British Council
Education and Training Group
10 Spring Gardens
London SW1A 2BN

Tel: 0207 389 4383

Email: education.enquiries@britishcouncil.org

Website: www.britishcouncil.org

Key contacts:

Grundtvig 1 & 2 – Julia Stone/Karen Davis
020 7389 4545

Grundtvig 2 – Luke Buffery
020 7389 4654

Grundtvig 3 – Stuart Scott
020 7389 4786

Team Leader – Dawn Long
020 7389 4517

British Council in Scotland – Joe Wake
0131 524 5721

British Council in Northern Ireland – Bernie McAllister
028 9024 8220

Grundtvig information can also be found on the Socrates UK website:

www.socrates-uk.net/grundtvig/index.html
and

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/adult/overview.html>

Useful partner-finding sites are

<http://partbase.eupro.se>

and www.siu.no/vev.nsf/start/PartnerEn

European Union

The official website of the European Union, Education and Training is:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html

Adult Learning Information Centre Europe (ALICE)

SoCiuS, Steunpunt voor Sociaal Cultureel Werk
vzw, Gallaitstraat 86 bus 4

B-1030 Brussels

Tel: 0032 02 215 27 08

Website: www.alicedata.net

Contact: Els Bertels

The ALICE databank contains the results of the ALICE information network, which is building the ALICE Information Centre, a searchable database with information on organisations for adult education in Europe and educational programmes.

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)

27 rue Liedts
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium

Tel: 0032 2 513 5205

Email: eaea-main@eaea.org

Website: www.eaea.org

Contact: Ellinor Haase

European Social Fund Department for Work and Pensions

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7712 2171

Website: www.esfnews.org.uk

The Department for Work and Pensions is the managing authority for the European Social Fund programmes in England and Gibraltar.

The **Scottish Executive**, Education and Lifelong Learning Department manages the ESF programmes in Scotland: www.scotland.gov.uk
Tel: 0131 556 8400.

The **Welsh National Assembly**, Department for Training and Education manages the programmes in Wales: www.wales.gov.uk Tel: 029 2082 5111

The **Department for Employment and Learning** manages the programmes in Northern Ireland:

www.delni.gov.uk/eu Tel: 02890 257 874

Eurydice

Website: www.eurydice.org

An information network on education in Europe. Produces reliable, readily comparable information on national education systems and policies. Eurydice also acts as an observatory, highlighting both the diversity of systems and their common features.

Platform of European Social NGOs

Secretariat
Avenue des Arts 43
B-1040 Brussels
Tel: 0032 2 511 3714
Fax: +32 2 511 1909
Website: www.socialplatform.org
Email: platform@socialplatform.org

Brings together over 1700 direct member organisations, associations and other voluntary bodies at local, regional, national and European level representing the interests of a wide range of civil society. Key areas of activity include enhancing civil dialogue with the institutions of the EU, fighting for policies to eradicate social exclusion and seeking to strengthen the EU anti-discrimination policy. The Social Platform is open to all networks or federations from the non-profit sector working in the social field at European level.

**EQUAL Partners – Asset UK
Development Partnership****British Refugee Council**

240-250 Ferndale Road
London SW9 8BB
Tel: 020 7346 6746
Website: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
Deputy Chief Executive: Margaret Lally
Email: margaret.lally@refugeecouncil.org.uk
Programme Manager: Lynda Lawrence
Tel: 07789 905 404

Basic Skills Agency (BSA)

7th Floor, Commonwealth House
1-19 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1NU
Tel: 020 7440 6531
Website: www.basic-skills.co.uk
Contact: Celine Castelino,
Email: celinec@basic-skills.co.uk

London Language and Literacy Unit (LLLU)

Southbank University
103 Borough Road
London SE1 0AA
Tel: 020 7815 6290
Contact: Helen Sunderland
Email: sunderhc@sbu.ac.uk

Midland Refugee Council

5th Floor, Smithfield House
Digbeth
Birmingham B5 6BS
Tel: 0121 242 2200
Contact: David Forbes

**Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit
(RAGU)**

London Metropolitan University
The Learning Centre
236-250 Holloway Road
London N7 6PP
Tel: 020 7753 5044
Website: www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu
Contact: Azar Sheibani
Email: a.sheibani@unl.ac.uk

Sheffield College

Castle Center
Granville Road
Sheffield S2 2RL
Tel: 0114 260 2643
Contact: Peter Harrison
Email: peter.harrison@sheffcol.ac.uk

Transnational Partners:**Danish Red Cross**

Asylum Dept.
Strandgade 100 – Building E
1401 Copenhagen
Denmark
Contact: Mads Terman Olsen
Email: mto@redcross.dk
Contact: Vagn Sparre-Ulrich
Email: vsu@redcross.dk

Kista Open Academy, Sweden

Kista Stadselsnamd
Bod 7049, 164 07 Kista
Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: 0046 85080 1200
Contact: Rashid Chowdhury
Email: rashid.chowdhury@kista.stockholm.se

**Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic
Minorities (NICEM)**

3rd Floor, Ascot House
24-31 Shaftsbury Square
Belfast BT2 7DB
Tel: 02890 238 645
Contact: Sharon Dillon
Email: sdillon@nicem.org.uk

References and Further Reading

Adult education and learning in Europe : evaluation of the Adult Education Action within the Socrates Programme. Edited by Ekkehard Nuissl. Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 1999

Asylum seekers' skills and qualifications audit pilot project. Fiona Aldridge and Sue Waddington. NIACE, 2001
www.niace.org.uk/projects/Asylum/Asylumreport.pdf

Broadening horizons : new European opportunities for adult learners. Grundtvig newsletter published by NIACE
www.niace.org.uk/funds/Grundtvig

Choosing to Grow: Knowledge, innovation and jobs in a cohesive society. European Commission, 2003
http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/pdf/5_en.pdf

Grants from Europe : how to get money and influence policy. Ann Davison. Eighth Edition. NCVO Publications, 1997. ISBN 0719915023

LlinE : lifelong learning in Europe. Journal published by the KVS Foundation in co-operation with the Finish Adult Education Research Society. Four issues a year. ISSN 1239 6826

Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality. European Commission. Directorate General for Education and Culture and Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs. European Commission, 2001. COM (2001) 378 final
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/communication/com_en.pdf

A memorandum on lifelong learning : Commission staff working paper. European Commission. Directorate General for Education and Culture. European Commission, 2000. SEC (2000) 1832
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/memoen.pdf>

A memorandum on lifelong learning : response from the consultations carried out by NIACE from UK NGOs working in the field of adult learning. Sue Waddington. NIACE, 2001
www.niace.org.uk/Organisation/advocacy/memorandum/Response.pdf

Promoting European dimensions in lifelong learning. Edited by John Field. NIACE, 2002. ISBN 1 86201 048 X £15.95

NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training. It aims to do this for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties or disabilities, or insufficient resources.
Registered charity number 1002775; Company registration number 2603322