



Leonardo da Vinci

LEONARDO DA VINCI TRANSFER, ADAPT AND MULTIPLY GOOD PRACTICE IN EUROPE. COMMUNITY BASED GUIDANCE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Leonardo da Vinci Programme is part of the European Community's lifelong learning framework. An important goal of the Programme is to promote good European practices in new learning contexts through the processes of dissemination, transfer, adaptation and multiplication. This document reports on the aims, activities and outcomes of one such multiplier-effect project entitled Community Based Guidance Assistance (CBGA). It presents a summary review of the pilot project, examines the challenges presented by the new partners, provides details on the processes of transfer, adaptation and multiplication in the new partner countries and considers the learning from the project.

THE CONTEXT

Learning about life and learning for life is dependent on having access, at every phase and in every facet of life, to rich learning contexts with high levels of interactivity between people to ensure that learning is both conscious and valued. Learning systems and structures are in a process of transformation raising standards and quality, increasing the relevance, flexibility and adaptability of provision and its coherence in the continuum of learning, in relation to access, accessibility and progression.

In tandem, individuals are expected to improve their capacity to gauge their own learning needs and their ability to identify, source and exploit suitable learning opportunities. These developments are taking place in a climate of rapid and constant change in which individuals are also required to take increasingly onerous decisions, with regard to life choices, ethics, rights and responsibilities, with reduced support from traditional structures and social mores. For many in our society who have been ill-prepared for the extent of change, the demands on them as individuals are too high and the obstacles too difficult to overcome and this is resulting in higher levels of inequality and growing numbers at risk of social exclusion.

In order to ensure equality of opportunity effective strategies must be devised to prevent alienation from learning, compensate for lack of opportunity and provide more "made- to-measure" support services. To meet new demands, more holistic and inter-disciplinary approaches to facilitate learning need to be adopted, particularly for the most vulnerable. New actors, both professionals and non-professionals, need to assume roles as learning facilitators and greater emphasis must be placed on the pooling of resources through more effective inter- and intra-institutional liaison and partnership.

THE CBGA PILOT PROJECT

The CBGA pilot project was a response to a European wide concern about the increasing numbers of young people leaving school early and the negative impact of this on their life choices. Over a five year period institutions from Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK, each supported by national consortia, aimed to improve the effectiveness of guidance strategies in preventing early school leaving and reaching out to, and reintegrating, disaffected young people into formal learning systems. The project resulted in a jointly devised, developed and tested model comprising the following processes:

- IDENTIFICATION** of groups of early school-leavers "out of reach" of guidance services, in a community setting and significant adults or peers whom they trust.
- CONSULTATION** to gauge the interest of these "intermediaries" in availing of training in guidance related issues, mediation and mentoring skills.
- ANALYSIS** of the reasons for early school leaving and recommendations for prevention and reintegration support measures in association with the target groups.
- PARTNERSHIP** formation with organisations whose expertise would increase the quality of the project and whose services could be directed more efficiently and effectively towards meeting the needs of the target group, through closer liaison and networking initiatives, devised to meet the knowledge and know-how needs of the intermediaries
- TRAINING** in the form of continuous monitoring, assessment and feedback processes and procedures
- EVALUATION** of the outcomes of the project at every phase of the project.
- DISSEMINATION**

THE TRANSFER, ADAPTATION AND MULTIPLICATION PROCESSES

In 1999 the European Commission provided additional funding to facilitate the transfer, adaptation and multiplication of the CBGA project in Bulgaria, Greece and Slovenia. From the outset the partnership was faced with three significant challenges.

TIMEFRAME AND RESOURCES

The initiative that had taken 5 years to develop had to be replicated within an 18-month timeframe. This had repercussions for the *modus operandi* of the transnational partnership and the extent, to which the new partners could tailor the initiative to meet their own needs. The initiative required a greater investment of people's time than was feasible within this timeframe to engage in, and learn from the developmental processes that characterised the longer pilot project. Financial constraints reduced the possibilities of transnational exchanges.

SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

The initiative had to take into account and respond to new sets of realities in Bulgaria and Slovenia in particular, comprising some or all of the following:

- Economies in transition from "Planned" to "Market".
- Over strained economies and the consequent difficulties in securing political interest to improve services for the least advantaged and the necessary funding to maximise the impact of the project.
- Constant and radical political changes resulting in confusion and insecurity in the Public Sector regarding remit, responsibilities and roles.
- Weak traditions of inter-institutional collaboration and networking.
- Structural transformation of the guidance system concurring with the project.
- Weak traditions of community-based initiatives with the resulting difficulty of locating "a community", as defined in the original project and the impact of this on the profile of the intermediaries and the target group of young people.

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES

Within the timeframe the initiative had to respond to the need to:

- Recognise and cater for the new sets of cultural differences.
- Engage in "Culture proofing" practices.
- Ensure the cross-cultural competences of those engaged in the transfer of processes.

THE FRAMEWORK

The new partners were offered a ready-made framework that comprised the following components:

- A shared goal.
- A supportive partnership.
- Reference documentation.
- Project implementation guidelines and instruments.
- A methodology and a model for a flexible introductory training course for non-formal community based guidance assistance.

The original partners acted as a consultation and advisory forum for the new partners. Bi-lateral mentoring partnerships were established and an external evaluator facilitated the continuous assessment of the project.

BULGARIA

BACKGROUND

The numbers of young people dropping out of the educational system, which is relatively rigid making re-entry difficult, is rising rapidly. Without qualifications, regular employment in the formal economy is hard to obtain. Whilst educational and vocational guidance appear to be low on the political agenda the deficit in guidance services is of high concern to professionals working in related sectors. At the start of the project the nation-wide network of Pedagogical Counselling Offices (PCOs), that provided educational guidance, was dismantled resulting in greatly reduced guidance services for school going pupils.

PARTNER PROFILE

The Bulgarian partner, The National Institute for Education (NIE), is for the most part engaged in educational research. With the closure of the PCOs and the establishment of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training in 2001, its role in VET and guidance has greatly diminished. The aims of

participation in the project included the gaining of experience in developing a coherent infrastructure for more effective guidance provision and expertise to tackle challenges related to equality of opportunity and the prevention of social exclusion.

PARTNERSHIP

The Bulgarian partner worked closely with its Irish mentoring partner throughout the project. Through seminars, visits and reference materials, representatives from the Bulgarian project were exposed to a range of Irish experience and expertise in developing community networks and managing partnerships, social inclusion and empowerment approaches, person-centred guidance practices, holistic and learner-centred methodologies, modular learning and new forms of accreditation.

Two advisory councils were established one at national level and the other at local level. In addition, a large national project team was set up to adapt the project, contribute new elements, engage in training, monitor, evaluate and disseminate the outcomes.

THE TARGET GROUP

The target population chosen for the project comprised two groups of adolescents at risk, young Roma (Gypsies), and young people with drug-related problems. The pilot groups for the project were located in two districts in Sofia, Vrabnitza and Fakulteta, both characterised by extreme poverty, crime, high unemployment and severe social problems. The Roma target groups presented the Bulgarian partners with a challenging range of issues including the multifarious barriers preventing both the reception and integration of Roma in "mainstream" society.

THE TRAINERS

The trainers were selected from a range of formal governmental and non-governmental structures operating in relevant fields, *inter alia*, health, education, qualifications, and career-related services. They both developed and delivered the training.

THE INTERMEDIARIES

To compensate for the lack of a community development infrastructure in Vrabnitza and Fakulteta, the initial task was to contact NGOs and Government bodies providing health, education and social services in the districts. Following consultations a number of frontline professional staff employed by these services agreed to participate in the training course. They had no experience in the field of career guidance, had not been identified by the target groups as potential mentors, and the majority had limited, "outsider" experience of the Roma culture. In addition two young people from the Roma community, who were held in esteem by their peers and had the potential to be effective intermediaries, were invited to participate in the course.

THE TRAINING

The model training course methodology and contents were adapted to meet the needs of the professional intermediaries. The level of the academic input was high. However, the participation of the two Roma in the course encouraged the trainers to employ methods and techniques that increased inter-activity and placed a greater emphasis on tasks, role-play and group discussion. Sofia University accredited the course.

DISSEMINATION AND MULTIPLICATION

The sustainability of the CBGA model in Bulgaria was hindered by the absence of a functioning formal guidance in education infrastructure and strong community empowerment and development policies. However, the project provided valuable experience in how to lay the foundations for co-ordinated, coherent, effective and inclusive development strategies through partnership, networking and joint ventures. On the condition that the same group of partners contributes to the course delivery, it may be replicated in which case the target group would continue to be frontline professionals.

SLOVENIA

BACKGROUND

Whilst the need for vocational guidance has increased significantly in the past decade in relation to the transition from a planned to a market economy, it is not given high priority on the political agenda.

PARTNER PROFILE

The Slovenian partner, The Employment Service (ESS)-Department of Vocational Guidance, supports the activities of psychologists working in ESS Vocational Information and Counselling Centres. The aim of participation was to develop a training course for mentors employed by the ESS, to increase their knowledge of vocational guidance and provide them with the ability to diagnose needs and make client referrals to appropriate professionals.

PARTNERSHIP

The Slovenian partner (ESS) exclusively managed the project at the national level. The absence of a national multi-actor network to support the project resulted in limited interaction with other key national institutions and there was little evidence of new partnership formation or plans for future joint action.

It worked closely with its UK mentoring partner on the adaptation of the UK course. The learning transferred included syllabus design, teaching methods, materials and techniques, assessment and evaluation tools and accreditation procedures.

THE TARGET GROUP

The target population chosen for the project consisted of young people still at school but considered at high risk of "dropping out" and young people who had left school early but were enrolled in ESS funded training centres. This population includes young people with poor exam results, poor attendance, behavioural problems, non-academic talents and those with troubled family backgrounds. The guidance needs of the young people were largely determined from existing literature. The project did not involve early school leavers who were out of the reach of the formal services.

THE TRAINERS

Two mentors who had also worked in the ESS supported initiatives were selected to deliver the course in Slovenia. A psychologist and a social worker by profession, neither of whom had pedagogical training. Following an induction programme in the course contents and methodology offered by the UK partner in Bradford, these facilitators translated and localised the course contents. Whilst working on the project they were offered full time jobs.

THE INTERMEDIARIES

The targeted intermediaries comprised professionals engaged, in an ESS employment scheme, as mentors in a range of initiatives also sponsored by the ESS. These professionals came from a wide range of sectors including industrial, technical and scientific fields.

THE TRAINING

The Slovenian partner decided that the course developed by the UK partner, in the context of the CBGA project, was suited to the needs of the intermediaries. The concentration of resources on adapting and delivering the course resulted in insufficient emphasis being placed on some of the underlying principles fundamental to the success of the UK course. These included ensuring course relevance and responsiveness to learner needs and selecting effective learning facilitators with extensive experience in the course contents, and appropriate pedagogical qualifications. An unexpected and highly valued outcome of the project was the successful negotiations entered into between the UK partner and the West and North Yorkshire Open College, resulting in the agreement by the latter to accredit the pilot training course in Slovenia.

DISSEMINATION AND MULTIPLICATION

In addition to providing certification for the facilitators and the trainees, Open College validation increased the status of the course and the possibility of accessing other funds for its replication. In the short-term the Slovenian partner is planning to offer the course to the same target group. A training manual, based on the UK model, is currently being produced. The course will be adapted for professionals working with drug addicts.

GREECE

BACKGROUND

In 1997 a new law on Educational and Career Guidance made provision for 68 Regional Centres with responsibility for, *inter alia*, educational and career guidance. These centres, operating under the auspices of the National Pedagogical Institute (NPI), support teachers in schools to provide guidance; they do not interact directly with young people or their families. A new Masters Degree in Educational and Career Guidance was also introduced.

PARTNER PROFILE

The IEKEP is a private and non-profit making company. One of its main fields of activity is vocational guidance and counselling. Prior to 1997, private organisations filled certain gaps in vocational guidance services in Greece. The purpose of IEKEP's participation in the project was to gain experience and expertise in the field of non-formal guidance provision; this could enable the IEKEP to perform a new role in the continuum of guidance provision in Greece. IEKEP based its model on the theoretical frameworks that had emerged from the pilot project.

PARTNERSHIP

The Greek partner, IEKEP, managed the project in association with the NPI. It made every effort to engage other key institutions in the project but met with limited success.

The partnership with the Portuguese mentoring partner was limited in scope. The latter had not maintained links with the community in which the CBGA project had been piloted and the project itself was not sustained after the pilot phase. With no surviving project infrastructure the support it could provide to its Greek partner was limited to retrospective consultancy on the model.

THE TARGET GROUP

The target community was located in the suburb of Athens characterised by its high rate of unemployment, large numbers of young people leaving school at or before the minimum school leaving age and its range of ethnic groups, including refugees and asylum seekers. The area has a high degree of social problems. A Greek Orthodox Church in the suburb has achieved considerable success in reaching out to young people, potentially "at risk", by providing a dynamic social centre that welcomes all nationalities and faiths.

THE TRAINERS

The training course was delivered by a psychologist/psychotherapist with considerable experience of working with socially marginalised people and a vocational guidance counsellor from the NPI. They were directly involved in the development of the course and offered high degrees of flexibility with regard to its location and timing.

THE INTERMEDIARIES

Twenty- three of the intermediaries were volunteers from the community who had no professional training to support adolescents with difficulties in making life choices. Five front-line professionals were also included in the group in order to lay the foundations for future liaison and networking. The intermediaries were actively involved, through effective needs analysis procedures, in determining the nature of the training course.

THE TRAINING

The Greek partner organisation considered the existing documentation on the CBGA project to be very comprehensive. The existence of "tried and tested" methods, techniques, materials and instruments significantly reduced the time and other resources normally required in the design of an innovative training model. All the training took place in the community centre in accordance with the wishes of the volunteers. In addition to the familiarity of the setting and the ease of access, including child-minding facilities, which ensured a positive affective environment for learning, it was felt that this adult learning activity occurring in their social context could also positively influence the young people.

DISSEMINATION AND MULTIPLICATION

Through its association with the NPI it has laid the foundations for the dissemination and possible mainstreaming of the model. The training course contents will be made available through the NPI's web-site and the model may be replicated within its network of Regional Centres. As an accreditation body, the NPI could provide formal recognition for the course.

MODEL-TRANSFER	Model group			Transfer group			
	IRL	P	UK	BG	GR	SL	Summary
<i>Type of body</i>	National Centre for Guidance	University	Municipal Careers Service	National Institute for Education	Training/ Guidance Company(IEKEP)	Employment Services	Profile is a critical issue (status, remit, partners)
<i>Identification of target groups</i>	-out of reach early school leavers -non professionals from communities	out of reach early school leavers /ethnic minorities -non professional individuals	out of reach early school leavers - /ethnic minorities -non professionals and professionals	-young people-socially excluded ethnic minority -Front line non-guid. professionals	out of reach early school leavers /ethnic minorities -non professional individuals	-early school leavers in the formal system -non-guidance professionals	Political will is an issue. Need for a permanent 'critical mass' (dissem.) Different mentor-types strongly affect model.
<i>Consultation with intermediaries</i>	Multi-actor partnership incl. university	University	Careers Service	Multi-actor partnership incl. university	IEKEP with Pedagogical Institute	Employment Services	Effective transfer is dependent on suitability & active involvement of intermediaries
<i>Analysis</i>	Need for mentors in the community to link TG with formal services and provide more individualised attention.	Need for mentors in the community to link TG with formal services and provide more individualised attention.	Need for mentors in the community to link TG with formal services and provide more individualised attention.	Training in non-formal guidance assistance for non-guidance professionals working in health and other services.	Need for mentors in the community to link TG with formal services and provide more individualised attention.	Training for mentors of young people at risk of leaving school early in state sponsored learning centres	Process must result in the establishment of success indicators and the means to determine same.
<i>Partnership</i>	Guidance Services Community groups University (training provider) Employment services Local authorities Mentor-BULGARIA	Community groups University (training provider) Mentor -GREECE	Formal guidance services Community groups University Mentor SLOVENIA	Education services University Local authorities Community groups - mostly through mediators. Model-IRELAND	Formal guidance services Community groups Local authorities Model-Generic	No formal national partnership Model- UK	Suitable, effective partners are required for the appropriate and effective transfer of a highly process orientated model attempting to influence societal change.
<i>Training -contents -accreditation</i>	Core modules Learner centred, holistic. Formal Accreditation with informal access.	Core modules Learner centred, holistic. No formal accreditation.	Core modules Learner centred, holistic. Formal accreditation.	Core modules Holistic. Formal Accreditation with no informal access.	Core modules Learner centred, holistic. No formal accreditation.	Core modules Formal and experiential. Formal UK accreditation.	Learning concepts and practices must not be taken for granted as shared. The training model is affected by accreditation and profiles
<i>Evaluation</i>	Formative & summative evaluation of the transnational partnership and project by external EU Expert	Continuous assessment nationally: of partnership and training with feedback mechanisms.	Insufficient attention paid to indicators of success and statistical data collection.	Formative evaluation of the transnational partnership and project and in-situ monitoring visits by external EU Experts.	Selective assessment nationally in relation to the training.	As Model Group Insufficient attention paid to relevance (B/SL), partnership (SL) and impact.	External formative evaluation increases the learning potential, helps to keep a highly process orientated project on track and assists in overcoming barriers
<i>Dissemination</i>	Product&process Mainstreaming of the course	Project ended after pilot phase.	Product&process Ongoing delivery of the course	Partnership process. Training may be repeated.	Product&process may be utilised by Ped. Institute.	Training may be repeated.	Relevance & usefulness of model, proof of effectiveness and suitable networks critical.
Summary Transfer by country	Social &political realities limited the impact on the TG. Processes useful. Training contents suitably adapted.	Due to similar circumstances, goals and expertise the model transferred well.	Intermediaries and TG were in the formal system. The training course transferred.	Practice in networ-king and working in partnership. New learning approaches. Greater awareness of social inclusion issues	Experience in community and institutional capacity building and outreach services.	Experience in delivering a short training course with a vocational guidance dimension.	The model transferred best in GR where the conditions most closely matched the original. Important aspects of the model, especially process in BG and training contents in SL, also transferred

THE LEARNING FROM THE PROJECT

The partners held the view that the CBGA model was a "work in progress", open to ongoing review and further experimentation and enrichment. The main learning outcome was the acknowledgement that the model, which aimed to bring about social change, could only be considered in a long-term perspective. The seeds sown by the project would need to be nurtured and observed over time.

The model demonstrated its value as a framework of good practices, procedures and products that could be selectively transferred and applied in different national and social contexts and for different purposes. The aim of the partnership was to make use of the model to address a common problem, in a flexible way in order to suit the new contexts.

The CBGA partnership did not place a high priority on securing systematic data on the outcomes of the objectives set. Without evidence of this kind it was not possible to evaluate fully the benefits and effectiveness of the project. However, the most significant lessons learned were considered to be the following.

DROPPING-OUT AND/OR BEING EXCLUDED.

The project clearly identified two different "at risk" groups. Firstly, young people who were "socially accepted" but without direction or motivation who were, often unknowingly, placing themselves at risk of becoming socially excluded and needed assistance and care to get back on track. Secondly, young people who were fully integrated members of a "sub-culture" that was excluded from the "mainstream" society. In the short term the model was more effective in relation to the former group.

VALUING AND SUPPORTING INFORMAL LEARNING AND LEARNING CONTEXTS.

The project operated in a range of informal learning contexts and the partners gained direct experience of the effectiveness of such environments and non-traditional actors in nurturing, socialising and mentoring young people at risk. The project also highlighted the vulnerability of these learning contexts, which often depended on the personal drive, resources and commitment of certain individuals. The project tested ways of stabilising and sustaining these contexts by increasing their formality through institution building, creating linkages between formal and informal contexts and services and applying procedures from the formal system to the informal. In some cases these processes increased the formality of the informal and the informality of the formal. Success depended on the responsiveness of the formal structures to share their expertise, improve their accessibility and increase the provision and quality of outreach services. To strengthen partnership important issues must be addressed with regard to taking charge, planning, resourcing, organising and managing the process.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CAREER-RELATED GUIDANCE

Although the aim of the initiative was to enhance the provision of career-related guidance it became evident that personal guidance was the primary need of the young people, and from a much earlier age. Training tended to increase the level of priority that the intermediaries placed on integrating career-related guidance in their approach to assisting the target groups. It was acknowledged that this aspect of their training helped them to better understand education and training structures and services and therefore would make it easier to mediate and advocate on behalf of the young people.

ENGAGING NEW ACTORS IN THE CONTINUUM OF GUIDANCE AND RELATED ISSUES.

The project reinforced the need for increasing the number of actors, professional and non-professional, who can effectively support young people to make important life choices. It provided a practical, achievable and flexible model that assisted in the identification and training of new actors and the development of an infrastructure to support them in their tasks.

The project addressed important issues with regard to informal learning facilitators such as how best to recognise their capacities and their experiential learning, how to cater for their ongoing development and how to deal with their new status and expectations.

The courses facilitated the acquisition of career-related guidance knowledge and skills but the extent to which the intermediaries then engaged in guidance activities, how effectively and to what extent requires monitoring.

TRANSNATIONAL TRANSFER, ADAPTATION AND MULTIPLICATION OF PRACTICES

The model provided many of the necessary ingredients for successful transfer. It had been developed, tested and positively evaluated transnationally. The model partnership had established an effective *modus operandi* that facilitated the easy and speedy integration of the new partners. For the most part the bi-lateral mentoring arrangements were appropriate.

The other conditions of success identified by the partners, included:

- A necessary level of political and social willingness to tackle the identified problem
- The involvement of appropriate institutions to manage the project and take responsibility for mainstreaming.
- Dedicated and tenacious project personnel
- The importance of gaining sufficient knowledge of policies, systems and practices in both the model and transfer contexts, by both sets of key actors, before embarking on a transfer process
- Thorough interrogation of concepts and definitions
- Maximum sensitivity to the needs of the new contexts
- The setting of achievable and measurable indicators of success from the outset
- The establishment of procedures to collect , analyse and present significant data
- Linked external and internal evaluation, of processes as well as products, nationally and transnationally, with the necessary expertise to manage linguistic and cultural challenges

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