

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME GRUNDTVIG

Learning Partnership 2008-2010

European community education across borders

The aim of the learning partnership is to further active and European citizenship 'from below', enabling citizens to build communities across internal borders and cultural division lines. The project builds upon the field knowledge of local community educators working in of urban neighbourhoods and rural districts.

Partners are institutions in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Ireland. During a range of local workshops and enquiry visits they will exchange best practices of community education in complex and sensitive situations. Topics include the furthering of good-neighbour relations between former enemies ('Eurode'), connecting people across the former Iron Curtain (Burgenland), thwarting lines of armed conflict (Vigo /Ireland), and preventing the seclusion of 'old' and 'new' migrant groups (Frankfurt, Amsterdam).

The partners expect that the learning partnership will result in innovative methods of community education, toolkits for specific topics and practical suggestions. By building an interdisciplinary team of experts, they will support local community educators and facilitate a European network for knowledge sharing. Finally, through local media and public events, the partnership will enhance professional and public understanding of active European citizenship at neighbourhood level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Specific objectives of the learning partnership are:

- To develop innovative educational tools for furthering active European citizenship
- To connect local community building initiatives across European inner borders and division lines
- To support educators engaged in community education across borders
- To deepen understanding of European civic values at professional level
- To promote public understanding of active European citizenship

The partnership intends to address the key problem that education for active and European citizenship often seems contradictory. At the level of local communities, there is a growing tendency of passive citizenship and anti-European resentments. Educational programs to promote European citizenship are often 'top-down' and restricted to formal education. At the other hand, community building initiatives that are actively citizens 'bottom up' often remain limited in scope, hardly exceeding neighbourhood and districts borders.

The approach taken in this learning partnership is to link active and European citizenship on the basis of practical knowledge, gained by experts and professionals in the field local community education. By focusing on best practices of community education in complex and sensitive situations, the partnership is expected to provide innovative and evidence based educational tools. These will be offered to active citizens living in city neighbourhoods and rural districts where problems and chances of European integration are most deeply felt.

Learning partners

Foundation Roodkoper is part of a network of private educational initiatives based in and around cultural center De Rode Hoed in Amsterdam. The center was created in 1980 with an explicit reference to the Amsterdam tradition of cosmopolitanism, tolerance and social solidarity. In this spirit, Roodkoper is editing a journal for informal learning through cultural and historical education, political debate and in-depth dialogue between religions, with special emphasis on war commemoration and reconciliation between Christian and Jewish communities. Roodkoper has a regular audience of 1100 readers, many of them engaged in local educational work as teachers, artists, scholars and civic activists.

The **Nell-Breuning-Haus** in Herzogenrath is a modern congress and training centre dedicated to employment and labour issues which is located in the Euregio Maas-Rhine (in the borderland between Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands). The NBH focuses on lifelong learning processes in politics, the work environment and occupational skills inside social and political networks. Its services and expertise are in demand by employee organisations, enterprises, schools and social initiatives. The NBH integrates professional training courses and academic research under a single roof and continuously explores new ways of providing a mutually beneficial interdisciplinary dialogue between people at the grass roots of the economy and social scientists.

The **Deutsche Angestellten-Akademie** Frankfurt/M branch institute is active in the field of vocational training for adults. Due to the high percentage of migrants in the area's population and the Frankfurt airport as an important international traffic junction the DAA in its training activities is working mainly with migrants of all nationalities at the moment with an emphasis on Turkey, Marocco, Russia and the Balkans. Beside Training in office technique, administration management, trade and commerce the DAA Frankfurt is specialised on training for security personnel working in the region's industry, transport services, administration (mostly banks) and the airport controlling incoming and outgoing freight as well as passengers and staff.

Südwind Entwicklungspolitik is situated in the border region of Austria, Hungaria and Slovakia. Until now the border area Austria Hungaria and Austria Slovakia has the image of a disadvantaged area, but since the year 2004 the image slowly is changing. However, many learners still have prejudices about people from the other side of the border. There are misunderstandings, intercultural conflicts and language barriers. The central question for this project is, how to promote and support cross border learning processes for life long learning.

The **Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft** (Research Society Burgenland - BFG) was founded in 1987 as a non-profit organisation in the city of Eisenstadt, the capital of the Austrian federal province of Burgenland. The BFG is an interface between science and research on the one hand and adult education on the other.

The **County Sligo Vocational Educational Committee (VEC)** is the Community Education provider in one of the six designated border counties within the Republic of Ireland. It has a long history of strong relationships with the counties within Northern Ireland (particularly Fermanagh). Since the publication of the White Paper in 2000 on Adult Education entitled "Learning for Life", the Irish government actively furthers Community Education with the aim of enhancing learning, empowerment and contributing to civic society. In this approach of Community Education, the local group of participants can control what, when, where and how the learning takes place.

Contact:

Marten van Harten M.A.
Roodkoper /European Learning House Initiative
Program Coordinator

Nachtegaalstraat 41 1021ET Amsterdam, Netherlands
Ph. +31-6-46730034 Email mailto:m_vanharten@hotmail.com